

REPORT 175,000 BRITISH TROOPS LAND IN GREECE

10 Divisions From Army
of the Nile and Libya
Arrived, Belgrade Hears

DEBARK AT PIRAEUS

Belgrade, March 12 (Wednesday) (BUP).—Reports reached diplomatic circles here early today that a big British expeditionary force from North Africa is being landed at Piraeus, the port of Athens, for action on the Greek front.

It also was reported that British transports were about to land troops at Salonika, key Greek port at the top of the Aegean Sea, barely sixty miles from where German mechanized forces are massed along the Bulgarian-Greek Macedonian border.

(The Cifra News Agency in Algeria said that British reinforcements were pouring into Gibraltar, and the defense setup was being strengthened.)

(The agency said new forces being added to the British garrison were largely infantry and artillery units. It said long-range batteries were being set up at various places.)

It was reported that forty British military transports arrived Tuesday at Piraeus, heavily bombed Greek port on a hilly peninsula, five miles southwest of Athens, and began unloading troops.

The British expeditionary force, it was said, was drawn from Gen. Sir Archibald Wavell's Army of the Nile in Egypt and Libya after the shattering of Marshal Rodolfo Graziani's Italian North African forces.

For several days it had been reported in Belgrade that the British had assembled at least ten divisions—approximately 175,000 troops—in Africa for transportation to Greece,

but it was not revealed how many of these, if any, had been actually disembarked.

If a British expeditionary force has landed in Greece, for action either on the Albanian front or to be brought face to face with the German Balkan army along the Bulgarian-Greek border, it is presumed to be a result of the recent Athens consultations of British Foreign Secretary Anthony Eden and Gen. Sir John G. Dill, Chief of the British Imperial General Staff.

May Affect Yugoslavs.

The situation may have its repercussions on Yugoslavia's shift toward "closer collaboration" with Germany, which would complete Adolf Hitler's encirclement of Greece. This encirclement, it is now taken for granted, is aimed at forcing the Greeks to submit to peace with Italy.

However, a high Yugoslav source said yesterday that "everything is settled" for Yugoslavia's signing of a non-aggression pact with Germany except the date and manner of the departure for Germany of Yugoslav leaders.

(In London it was reported that "increasingly severe" German demands on Yugoslavia, going beyond a mere non-aggression pact, had brought about postponement of the signing of the treaty, originally scheduled for Tuesday in Berlin.)

It is believed in Belgrade that Premier Dragisha Cvetkovich and Foreign Minister Alexander Cincar-Markovitch will go to Germany Saturday for the pact-signing ceremony.