
Estimate of the Possible U.S. Intentions to Use Military Force against Bulgaria, 28 May 1989

Top Secret

Copy No. 1

TO: Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Comrade Lyuben Gotsev
In reply to your Letter No. P-1575/9. 55. 1985

We do not have any information about US intentions to issue threats of military force or to directly use military force against Bulgaria.

The open use of military force or the creation of a threat for the territorial integrity of BULGARIA ... necessarily imply the use of the territories of Greece and Turkey as a bridgehead.

Under the current political conditions in Greece, the use of Greek territory for such purposes must be considered out of the question. Steps aimed at a radical change of the Greek political course would necessarily precede it, which, in the current correlation of the political forces in that country would be difficult to implement. In its new pre-election political program, the ruling party PASOK has again set the goal of removing all foreign bases from its territory. Generally, Greece's position on its relations with NATO and the USA, including its refusal to participate in NATO exercises, exerts a certain negative influence on the intensity of military efforts of the USA and NATO near Bulgaria's borders. This is expected to continue in the near future. At the same time, it should not be ignored that Greece has activated its military preparations on the national scale, including enhanced operational and combat preparedness of its armed forces, which ... is in accordance with NATO plans. In this respect, during the forthcoming negotiations with the USA (1988-89) Greece can be expected to formally limit the activity of the American bases in order to put pressure on the USA and NATO to back the Greek position on the outstanding issues with Turkey.

The conditions in Turkey are relatively more favorable for the USA. The Turkish government steadily carries on its course of getting closer to the USA and NATO, and pursues an increasingly right-wing policy while at the same time playing a substantive role in the US plans in the Near and Middle East.

It can be expected that during the negotiations about US bases and equipment in Turkey (1985-86) the USA will seek to increase its military presence in the country. In order to destabilize the situation in Bulgaria, the USA will instigate Turkey to step up its anti-Bulgarian campaign in connection with the changing of the Turkish names of Bulgarian citizens, including reduction of its cooperation with Bulgaria, especially economic cooperation. It is not probable that Turkey would take steps to threaten the use of force or directly use military force against Bulgaria or place its territory at US disposal for such activities.

Further activation of the radio, electronic, and air reconnaissance along the border can be expected (increase of single reconnaissance flights by AWACS airplanes). The following kinds of actions cannot be excluded: single reconnaissance flights along the border as well as the intrusion of single planes, air infringements on the territorial integrity [of Bulgaria], shadowing and even shelling Bulgarian sea vessels in international waters, especially in proximity of conflict areas, and other small-scale provocative actions. [...]
Infringements on our land border are not probable.

Appendix: Information on NATO AFSOUTH exercises during the period 1975-1985.

Deputy Chief of the General Staff and Chief of the GS Intelligence Department, Colonel-General Zikulov

28 May 1985

[Source: Diplomatic Archive, Sofia, Opis 58p, a.e. 11, pp. 6-9. Translation by Vassil Yovchev]