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SWITZERLAND IS TRAINING SHOCK TROOPS.

The following article under the above heading has appeared in the issue of December 20th, 1952, of the "EASTERN EVENING NEWS" Norwich.

Switzerland, resolutely opposed to war, and unscathed through two world conflicts, is nevertheless busy tightening her defences in case of future invasion, Reuter's correspondent in Locarno reports.

Soldiers are encountered in many parts of the country, and there are frequent signs of the preparations going on beneath the surface in case this tourists' paradise one day becomes a battlefield.

The Swiss do not expect to be so lucky again if there was another world war. They expect, in fact, to be invaded — an indirect attack aimed at others, coming in possibly the second phase of the war, in a sudden movement to outflank the Rhine defences.

The small Swiss Army — only 500,000 combatants, plus 300,000 auxiliaries and Home Guards — would then play the role for which it is now being reorganised.

Coming from the north, the invaders could pour into Switzerland at many points between Lake Constance and the Basle bridges which lead from France and Germany.

They might then pass along the Aar Valley to Lake Neuchâtel and Lake Geneva, occupying the Berne-Lausanne plateau. But they would have to fight every foot of the way. The strategy held in reserve in the last war — to fight the main battle from the elaborate

fortifications in the Alps — has been considerably improved to-day.

Shocks for the invaders would begin at the frontier and continue all along the line. As they fell back across well-planned defences in depth, the Swiss Army could inflict great damage.

The narrowness of the midlands would favour the defence, making it difficult for an invader to use his full strength, especially tanks, in the fluid wide-ranging manner of modern war. The defence could be stubborn, with shock troops fiercely fighting on their own soil, though they might still be without the 550 tanks they want from abroad.

It would, however, be difficult for the enemy to get out of Switzerland. The Western nations against whom the attack might really be directed would man the mountains of the Jura and all the hills and ridges to the west of Lake Geneva. Whatever happened, the progress of the invading army would be slowed down.

"This is the main reason," a staff officer said, "why we are trying to show how strong we are. Our attitude towards a potential enemy is: 'Invading would cost you so much in men and materials — and above all, in time — that it would just not be worth your while.'"

The two great dangers to the Swiss in the event of an invasion would be tanks and paratroops. That is why the Swiss Army is now specialising in co-ordinated with a tank-destroying and liquidating mission. The cream of the country's youth are being turned into shock-troops at the school for grenadiers.

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