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The Albanian Armed Forces

Albania is struggling to create a credible military force after decades of isolation but cannot afford to modernize its armed forces with its own resources--defense spending amounted to only \$33 million in 1992--and is seeking military assistance from NATO, especially the United States.

- Tirana is likely to ask for US help to modernize its military. The Albanians want modern air defenses--including F-16 aircraft--surplus weapons for their ground units, and a modern command and control system. In the past they have threatened to turn to radical Islamic states such as Iran and Libya for help if the West is not more forthcoming.
- The Albanians were among the first to sign NATO's Partnership for Peace program but have been slow in formulating a plan for joint training and exercises, [redacted]
- Few of the NATO Allies have devoted any attention to Albania's security needs, and Tirana has threatened to turn to the Islamic world for help, [redacted] Turkey, the only Islamic country in NATO, has periodically provided instructors for Albanian units and is educating a few Albanian officers in its military academy; Malaysia recently agreed to train some Albanian officers. [redacted]

Army. Albania's 58,000-man Army is a territorial defense force that depends heavily on reservists and is armed primarily with weapons from the 1940s and 1950s.

- The Army reorganized from 23 to nine divisions and plans to reduce active manpower to 30,000 last year. The new divisions are manned at 20 percent in peacetime, [redacted]
- Tirana reduced conscript service from 24 to 18 months and resumed military training last year after years of neglect.
- The Albanians [redacted] had not received any spare parts for their Chinese-produced copies of Soviet weapons for over 20 years and desperately need foreign assistance to modernize their units. [redacted]

This memorandum was prepared by the Office of European Analysis. Comments and queries are welcome [redacted]

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[REDACTED]

Air and Air Defense Force. The 4,000-man Air and Air Defense Force has 87 1950s- and 1960s-era aircraft and an assortment of aging anti-aircraft artillery and surface-to-air missiles [REDACTED]

- Pilots are able to fly their antique aircraft only 15 hours each year, partly because of fuel and maintenance problems. [REDACTED]

Navy. The 3,000-man Navy has an odd assortment of old patrol boats and minesweepers, and four Whiskey-class submarines for coastal defense.

- Only one of the four submarines is operational because of maintenance problems, and it can submerge only to 30 meters. [REDACTED]

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