

21 October 1952

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Possible Diplomatic Action Relating to Albania

PRESENT: Mr. Robert Joyce, Department of State
Mr. Walworth Barbour, Department of State
Mr. Henry P. Leverich, Department of State
J, CIA

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1. As a result of numerous past conversations I have had with Messrs. Joyce and Barbour of the Department of State, a meeting was held in Mr. Barbour's office on 14 October 1952 for informal discussion of certain ideas on the subject of Yugoslav intentions toward Albania and possible action which the Department might wish to consider with a view to forestalling any unilateral Yugoslav move to promote the collapse of the current Cominform-controlled Albanian regime.

2. Emphasizing the fact that the discussion is entirely informal and based on past indication that such conferences were welcome and of mutual benefit, I stated that the material I have to present should not be considered an attempt to intrude into the Department's sphere of activity, but merely reflects certain ideas developed as a result of close association with the Albanian problem. Both Mr. Barbour and Mr. Joyce reassured me that this exchange of ideas was both desirable and very welcome.

3. I then explained that I had three items to present:

(a) A set of chronological notes outlining significant events relating to Yugoslav and Western relations toward Albania.

(b) A proposed and tentative propaganda line which should be considered in the event of a unilateral Yugoslav move resulting in a revolution within Albania.

(c) Some suggestions for possible diplomatic action which could be taken to forestall a unilateral attempt by Yugoslavia to overthrow the Hoxha regime and establish a privileged position for her with respect to a successor government.

4. With reference to the set of chronological notes, I said that the Department might find these useful pending the preparation of the National Intelligence Estimate which was requested through Mr. Joyce a little while ago. In discussing this paper, both Mr. Barbour and Mr. Joyce agreed with our estimate that there was no likelihood of Yugoslav action to precipitate a revolution in the immediate future, i.e. within the next few months. Mr. Barbour commented that this set of notes represents a very useful paper.

5. With regard to the proposed interim propaganda guidance relating to the possibility of a Yugoslav sponsored Albanian revolution, I explained that the paper is a tentative emergency plan which is still under consideration and not yet formally approved. However, since the official line should be determined

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In the near future on how to react to the hypothetical situation, our paper might contain certain useful ideas, and we would be happy to receive informal comments and suggestions. Mr. Barbour replied that his office would be glad to let us have their comments.

6. With regard to the suggestions for possible diplomatic action, this paper was discussed in some detail and Mr. Barbour said that a decision on the matter would naturally take some time since it dealt with a number of complicated policy questions which required high level resolution. I replied that I only wished to submit these ideas for what they were worth, as the whole question was entirely outside our jurisdiction.

7. At the conclusion of the discussion, Mr. Barbour said that all the material presented would be very helpful as it assembled a mass of information and ideas in useful form, and that he wished to extend his congratulations to us on this job.

8. Copies of the three papers in question (T.S. Nos. 83783/4/5) were left with Mr. Joyce with the understanding that dissemination in the Department would be restricted to Mr. Barbour's level and above.

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Attachments: 3

1. Chronological Notes - TS 83784
2. Tentative Propaganda Guidance - TS 83783
3. Suggested Diplomatic Action - TS 83782

NOTE: PAPERS GIVEN TO STATE DID NOT INCLUDE
" U.S. STOCKPILE OF ARMS IN GREECE " IN " 8378Y

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Recommendation for Diplomatic Action Relating to Albania

1. General Discussion

a. The problem of what diplomatic action should be taken in regard to Albania, and of the timing of such action, is approached with the following basic premises in mind:

1) The U.S. desires the ultimate creation of an independent Albanian state favorably oriented towards the West.

2) Should the present regime collapse or be overthrown, the character of the new regime should not be determined by any one outside power but eventually by the U.N.O., and in the interim period jointly by the U.S., U.K., and Yugoslavia.

3) In the event of unprovoked aggression against Yugoslavia, military occupation of Albania by Greece and Yugoslavia cannot be avoided.

4) In spite of the realistic view expressed in para. 3) above, nothing is to be gained and much is to be lost by indicating before the event, through diplomatic channels to either the Yugoslavs or Greeks, that the U.S. is prepared to countenance military intervention in Albania on the part of either or both.

5) The Yugoslavs have an active interest in Albania, and possess the capability to promote an Albanian revolt through semi-covert means, although the rapid execution of such a coup would be facilitated if it were supported by Albanian political groups known to have the sympathy of the U.S.

6) The Yugoslavs have decided that the Soviets are unlikely to intervene militarily and risk a world war because of Albania. They also believe themselves to be so important to the U.S. that American material and political support would not be withdrawn or substantially reduced if Yugoslavia were to promote unilaterally and effect a revolution in Albania through semi-covert means.

7) Yugoslav-sponsored covert or semi-covert action resulting in the overthrow of the Albanian regime or in a protracted period of disorder in Albania will result in international complications involving countries friendly to the U.S. and vital to the effective development of NATO defense plans. The countries most directly concerned are Greece and Italy, the former being interested to the extent that she may attempt armed intervention in the Northern Epirus area, especially in the event of a protracted period of anarchy or civil war.

8) British views are in general agreement with U.S. views regarding Albania.

9. Any U.S. action

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9) Any U.S. action to discourage or prevent Albania's defection from the Soviet satellite block, whether through Yugoslav or other influence, would not be consistent with U.S. policy, and were it to become known, would be subject to the most severe public censure in the U.S.

b. The principal conditions which it would be desirable to secure in the event of any attempt to change the status quo in Albania are these:

1) The course of events should be predictable insofar as possible. The U.S. should know what is to be attempted, when, and by what means.

2) In order to prevent a complicated international situation, there should be a carefully timed advance understanding among the countries most directly interested in Albania on the stand each would take in the event of an internal coup.

should be spelled out for each

3) It should be clear to all concerned that the U.S. considers the character of any new regime in Albania to be a matter for joint settlement through the U.N.O. by the countries most directly concerned, and that partition of the country cannot be accepted.

c. The countries towards which diplomatic steps should be taken at the appropriate time are:

- 1) Yugoslavia
- 2) Greece
- 3) Italy
- 4) United Kingdom
- 5) France
- 6) Turkey *why?*

d. It would be preferable to reach an agreement on coordinated demarches to Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy by the U.S. and U.K. However, if preliminary discussions with the British show signs of developing into protracted negotiations, it would be desirable for the U.S. to approach the Yugoslavs, Greeks, and Italians unilaterally to state the Department's views.

e. Before any steps are taken on the diplomatic level, the question of Albania should be thoroughly explored in U.S.-Yugoslav conversations on the Secret Service level and close continuing liaison should be maintained before, during, and after any diplomatic action.

2. Specific Action - Diplomatic

a. Yugoslavia

1) It would be desirable to make coordinated U.S., and British representations to Yugoslavia along the following lines:

a) Since Albania is an isolated satellite with a shaky regime, and since it is in an area which can be considered delicate and important in the light of local international interests and aspirations, she represents a factor which could disturb the effective

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development of defense measures in which the democratic West has a vital stake.

b) Albania should be an independent country.

c) Because of her geographical position, it is recognized that Albania is of particular interest to Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy, but no one country has special interests giving it a privileged position.

d) It would be most desirable if the present Albanian regime were to collapse and the country were in a position to join the democratic nations. However, it would be most unfortunate if any fundamental change were to occur in the regime without some prior understanding among the most interested countries since such an event could lead to strife and friction at a time when it is particularly important to maintain a solid front in the Eastern Mediterranean area.

e) It would be very desirable for Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy to make public announcements that each has no claim to a privileged position, recognizes the right of the Albanians to independence and institutions of their own choosing, and considers that there are no issues outstanding which cannot be settled by peaceful means.

f) It would be very desirable if Yugoslavia, Greece, Italy, the U.K., and the U.S. were to exchange assurances that they agree that in the event of a collapse or overthrow of the present regime in Albania, they will adhere to the principle that the character of the new regime should be determined by the United Nations and not by any single outside power.

b. Greece

1) The diplomatic approach to Greece should cover points: a), b) c), e), and f), listed above for Yugoslavia. In addition, it would be desirable to make it clear that:

a) One of the important factors in rallying whatever support the current regime can muster is the fear that Communist propaganda has successfully instilled in the Albanian mind concerning Greek intentions to partition the country by force.

b) The idea of an Albania partitioned by her neighbors is totally unacceptable.

C. Italy

1) The approach to the Italians should cover points: a), b), c), e), and f) listed above for Yugoslavia.

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1) The precise manner and timing of the demarches to Yugoslavia, Greece, and Italy should be worked out jointly with the British. In the event the British show a disinclination to act promptly, they should be informed that the U.S. will make the approaches unilaterally.

e. France

1) After the manner of approaches and the timing have been decided by the U.S. and U.K., France should be invited to associate herself with them.

f. Turkey

1) The Turks should be informed of the demarches at the time they are made.

3. Specific Action - Secret Service

a. After the subject has been presented to the Yugoslavs on a diplomatic level, close liaison on the service level should be maintained in order to explore more fully Yugoslav intentions and to maintain some control over their activities if possible.

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~~TOP SECRET~~NOTES ON DEVELOPMENTS IN YUGOSLAV-WESTRELATIONS WITH RESPECT TO ALBANIA.

1. Beginning in 1948 Tito counseled the West to let the Albanian Stalinists "stew in their own juice" and in 1949 Mr. Cavendish Cannon, then U.S. Ambassador to Yugoslavia, reported that in conversation with Tito the latter expressed concern that any anti-Hoxha action would be seized upon by the Soviet Union as a pretext for Soviet aggression against Yugoslavia.

2. Subsequent to the formation of the NCFA in 1949 and the approval of the overthrow of the Hoxha regime as one of the aims of the FIEND project, the State Department and the British Foreign Office became increasingly worried about the delicate position of Yugoslavia. As a result, FIEND was reevaluated and its aims scaled downwards to meet State Department and Foreign Office policy.

3. In November 1949, King Zog reported a Yugoslav overture to six of his ex-officers then in Syria and Turkey. The officers in question received letters from a General Yoko Mirasovich, said to be a Montenegrin, inviting them to come to Belgrade. Nothing further developed at that time as far as we know.

4. On May 10, 1951, there was formed in Prizren, Yugoslavia a "League of Albanian Refugees", sponsored by the Belgrade Government and led by anti-Cominform Albanian Communist refugees, which claimed to represent not the "reactionary emigres in Italy and Greece but the "democratic" Albanians who had fled to Yugoslavia. This League of Albanian Refugees dropped leaflets in North Albania exhorting the people to unite against the Hoxha regime and appealing to Albania's spirit of national independence from any foreign power. In a special edition of the newspaper Shqipëria the NCFA replied to this leaflet and questioned Yugoslavia's intentions toward Albania while acclaiming Tito's stand against Soviet domination.

5. In March 1951, Nik Sokoli, a leader of the League of Albanian Refugees, wrote to Abas Kupa suggesting a meeting between them be arranged, with a second meeting with King Zog present to follow. Due to Kupa's reluctance to meet Sokoli under the conditions we thought advisable, and because of the passage of time while the matter was under discussion, this meeting never took place. With the exception of the overture to Zog's ex-officers in November 1949, this was the first approach to Albanians abroad made by the Yugoslavs.

6. In July 1951, NCFA leaflets which floated over into Yugoslavia were turned over to the U.S. and British Embassies in Belgrade with the statement that in view of the costs involved in their preparation it was assumed the leaflets were done by the West. The Yugoslavs were very polite about the incident and made no issue of it.

7. In July 1951, through the Yugoslav Ambassador in Cairo, Zog asked Tito whether Yugoslavia would remain neutral or possibly even collaborate indirectly if Zog were to organize the overthrow of the Hoxha regime. In reply, Tito stated that no collaboration with Zog was possible at that time; the overthrow of the present regime was not desired but the removal and replacement

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of four or five key figures was desired; and that he assured Zog that the violation of Albanian territory by the Greeks would not be tolerated or permitted by the Yugoslavs, who stood for the territorial integrity of Albania. Immediately following this, high calibre Yugoslav agents working in the name of the League of Albanian Refugees began wooing Zogist followers in the Middle East.

8. In the early summer of 1951 the Albanian Government tried and condemned, along with American, British and Italian agents, some 20-25 Yugoslav agents who were caught in Albania.

9. During all of 1951 there were rumors that the British and the Yugoslavs were engaged in discussions which included Albania. There was nothing definite on this.

10. In March 1952, we were informed by King Zog that he intended to send Lutfi Satfet Tozan to see Tito. Tozan saw Tito in May and reported that his reception was friendly; that Tito stated it would not be easy to overthrow the Hoxha regime; that Tito would allow no aggression against Albania from Yugoslavia for fear of precipitating war; and that the Yugoslavs did not care whether Albania is a monarchy or a republic provided it is friendly to Yugoslavia. The discussions were to have been continued in late May but were postponed, finally materializing at the end of August in Skoplje where the Yugoslavs met with a three-man delegation sent by Zog.

11. In April 1952, Randolph Churchill interviewed Tito. During the course of the conversation Tito is reported to have stated that Yugoslavia believed Albania must be independent and that any interference with that country's internal affairs, from whatever quarter, would constitute a great mistake, and that he thought the Albanians would muster enough strength to rid themselves of the present satellite government and set up a genuinely democratic government.

12. On May 26, 1952, in a conversation with Mr. Louis Fischer, Mr. Milovan Djilas stated that Yugoslavia wished to see Albania independent; that there were democratic groups as an alternative to Hoxha; that Yugoslavia, although afraid in 1950 and before that a change in Albania would provoke the Soviet Union, is no longer afraid. The next day, however, Mr. Leo Mates, Assistant Minister for Foreign Affairs, expressed the opinion that Russia's prestige would be involved and that she might march. Another high ranking Yugoslav told Mr. Fischer that he did not believe the Soviet Union would do anything if the Hoxha regime were overthrown.

13. On June 28, 1952, a Colonel Cedo (Milevic or Mijovic), a Yugoslav emissary, approached Ndue Markagjoni, BKI leader, in Rome. Col. Cedo, in conversation with four BKI leaders, made no concrete proposals but stated that Yugoslavia desires the union of all Albanians without regard to political opinions with a view to Albania's liberation; Communism, although necessary to Yugoslavia, might be harmful to Albania; Yugoslav Albanians are preparing to overthrow the present Albanian regime at an opportune moment; the liberation can come only from Pristina; Yugoslavia does not believe that Russia will go to war for Albania; and that no move against Albania could be made without

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the consent of the Americans. He added that mature plans and organizations ready for action must be presented to the Americans, who are too busy with vast scale problems to take care of minor details. The BKI members stressed the necessity for respecting Albania's territorial integrity and political independence, for keeping the U.S. fully informed, and for making no moves against Albania without U.S. approval and consent. Col. Cedo appeared to agree with all of these points.

14. In early August 1952, we received from Rome what purported to be a Yugoslav approved plan for the invasion of Albania. The plan is said to have originated with Ndue Pjeter Gjonmarkaj in Priaren and to have been delivered to Gjon Markagjoni, BKI leader in Rome. The plan calls for the use of 6,000 Albanian exiles, which it is claimed have been mobilized; they will be deployed in six operating sectors. The sector commanders have not been told the date of activation but have been led to believe that it will be soon. The operation is to be completed within ten days of activation.

15. The above chronology of events suggests that there has been a change in Yugoslav thinking, and that they may be prepared to face the problem of sponsoring a change in regime.

YUGOSLAV CAPABILITIES

According to reports, the Yugoslavs have a trained body of 4-6,000 Albanians which could be used as a striking force. Additional men could be drawn from the population of 7-800,000 Albanian-Yugoslavs living in the Kossovo. The Yugoslav action would be fast and, probably, effective. The operation could be handled covertly and at least initially made to look like a spontaneous or entirely Albanian up-rising. The Yugoslavs could probably equip these forces from arms available for the Yugoslav army, some supplied by the West and some old Russian and German materiel still on hand.

U. S. CAPABILITIES

The U.S. has available in Greece sufficient arms and ammunition to equip 6,000 men for two months. In addition Russian arms and ammunition sufficient for an additional 6,000 men for a period of two months are available in the U.S. and could be shipped on very short notice. The U.S. could, through its clandestine radio and intensified propaganda leaflet drops, call the Albanian people to the support of any liberation force, and could drop substantial amounts of arms and ammunition to resistance centers on signal, provided all covert craft in the area could be employed. The U.S. could also supply a few a few U.S. and Albanian liaison teams to accompany troops. In addition, the U.S. has approximately 25 trained agents of whom 6-10 are W/T operators. In addition there is a reservoir of 205 low-grade personnel in the Albanian Guard Company in Germany which could be used in some capacity.

U.S. STOCKPILE OF ARMS IN GREECE

3,100 German rifles 7.92

1½ million rounds of 7.92 ammunition

2,000 Russian rifles 7.62

3 million rounds of 7.62

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400 Schneissers (sub-machine) 9 mm.

700 Pistols (Lugers, Walther, Lati) 9 mm.

700,000 rounds ammunition 9 mm.

25 light machine guns (German) 7.92

300,000 rounds of ammunition belted

100 Russian Light Machine Guns 7.62

400 Hand Grenades (British)

2,000 Pounds pd Plastic C-4 with accessories

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