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OFFICE OF SPECIAL OPERATIONS

NOV 21 1949

Washington, D. C.

MEMORANDUM FOR: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR FOR POLICY COORDINATION

SUBJECT: Albanian Operation - Activities and Personnel
of the Committee for Free Albania

1. Information has been received from a well-placed source that the principal advisor of the Committee for Free Albania, during its recent visit in Washington, was Harry Fults, well known to Albanian intellectuals as having been for many years Director of the American Red Cross School in Tirana. (Fults had been forced to leave Albania in 1932 when Zog closed all foreign and religious educational institutions which were, in the opinion of his Minister of Education Kol Ivanaj, sources of foreign political agitation and espionage. Subsequently he became adviser on Balkan problems to the State Department.) In talks with the Albanians, Fults reportedly told them that he would like to see the country where he spent so many years freed from Communism, and he promised them all his personal support, as well as that of the organization of which he is the director. In taking leave of them, he reportedly gave each member of the Committee for Free Albania a gift of \$5,000.00. (Another report from the same source had indicated that the members of the Committee for Free Albania had each received a gift of \$5,000.00 from the State Department.)

2. Finding a replacement for Midhat Frasherri as chairman of the Committee for Free Albania has not been easy; for the moment, therefore, it has been decided merely to select a president of the Balli Kombetar, leaving the Committee for Free Albania chairmanship vacant. After prolonged discussions, the choice for Balli Kombetar presidency fell on Hasan Desti.

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3. Dosti, a former judge and Minister of Justice during the Italian occupation of Albania, although classified as a war criminal by the present Albanian government, is not considered one of the worst collaborationists. He is an unimpressive man, about 50 years of age, who lives at 32 Via Calabria, Rome. He has many Italian friends, including some who are highly placed, and he has worked steadily during the years of his exile to mitigate the traditional anti-Italianism of the Balli Kombetar and win the support of the Italian authorities.

4. For the time being, Dosti reportedly is still in New York, where he went at the beginning of the year as a representative of the Balli Kombetar, charged, according to source, with the thankless task of "proselyting among the notoriously pro-Communist Albanian colony in the United States." Source states that Dosti has not yet decided whether to stay in America, where the political headquarters of the Committee for Free Albania will remain, or whether he will return to Rome, which will serve as a base for the "practical" actions intended to liberate Albania.

5. Dosti's selection was strongly opposed by Abas Kupa, the Albanian Monarchist leader, a political and personal opponent of both the Balli Kombetar and of Dosti himself. The choice of Dosti was also opposed by a group within the Balli Kombetar itself who had selected as their candidate Nuredin Vlora, scion of one of Albania's first families and son of a Pasha and Prime Minister of Turkey during the reign of Abdul Hamid. Vlora, source adds, is a picturesque and slightly anachronistic figure who, despite his 60 years, continues to live comfortably and well on the island of Capri. He married a niece of Woodrow Wilson, former President of the United States, but is apparently now separated from her. His connections in cosmopolitan and American circles would have been in his favor, but it was held against him that, although an eminent member of the Balli, he had for some time neglected the affairs of his party for the wordly life of Capri. The most compelling reason for his failure to be elected, however, allegedly was the fact that many of the most important members of the Balli felt that Dosti would be much easier to control.

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Assistant Director
Special Operations

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