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MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, FPC

SUBJECT: The Albanian Operation

1. Attached is a short summary statement concerning the Albanian operation.

2. Should further information on this matter be desired, please contact [ ] Extension 2445.

[ ]  
Chief, SE

Attachment: Summary

Distribution

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## The Albanian Operation

1. Although aggressively engaged in anti-regime activities in Albania since 1950, CIA has not attempted to stage a coup d'etat or to overthrow the government by any other means. For a brief period before actual operations began, i.e. from June to December, 1949, the objective of the project was explicitly stated to be the overthrow of the Albanian regime. However, following a closer examination of the problem, the objective of the project was limited in December, 1949 to that of encouraging and assisting the Albanian people in their resistance to the Hoxha regime, and of creating and fostering a skeleton resistance organization which could be used as the foundation of a liberation movement if and when such an operation should appear feasible and politically desirable, a question complicated by the conflicting interests of Greece, Italy and Yugoslavia and by uncertainty as to the reaction of the U.S.S.R. and its satellites.

2. In 1953, CIA was requested to prepare a staff study of the Albanian question taking into account all the major factors bearing on any action aimed at overthrowing the present regime. The resultant study recommended a semi-covert coup mounted from the border areas of Greece and Yugoslavia. This study was careful to point out, however, that careful diplomatic preparations would have to precede any such operation, which could only be carried out successfully if agreed to in advance by the governments of Greece, Yugoslavia, Italy, France and the U.K. This paper was accepted by the OCS and submitted to other departments for their views. Both the State Department and the JCS entered strong objections to any attempt to overthrow the Hoxha regime at this time, chiefly on the grounds that the U.S. had more to lose than to gain by upsetting the present political balance in the Balkans. It was subsequently decided to establish an inter-departmental task force to arrive at an agreed policy. However the deliberations of this group were interrupted by the Trieste crisis which resulted in a decision to postpone inter-departmental discussions on Albania until a Trieste settlement had been reached.

3. During this entire period both CIA and MI-6 (British Intelligence) have continued to mount operations into Albania with the objectives outlined in paragraph 1, above, but with limited success. Operations have been hampered by the low level of the

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agents available and the habitual poor sense of security on the part of Albanians, by the effectiveness of the internal security system, and by the reluctance of the inhabitants to assist anyone not personally known to them. Nevertheless, teams operating in 1951, 1952 and 1953 reported the establishment of contact with 231 persons claiming a total of some 650 followers, some of them armed with rifles.

4. Heavy team losses were suffered in these operations. However, a number of teams managed to infiltrate and exfiltrate several times during each operational season in 1952 and 1953. It is feared that most of their contacts were compromised by the capture of eleven agents during those years; accordingly no attempt will be made to reestablish contact until their status can be determined, through refugee interrogations and by investigations made by other teams which it is intended to infiltrate.

5. We are continuing operations into Albania, in accordance with existing policy and in the light of the operational problems which dictate a careful, secure and gradual buildup of our assets in that country.

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