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6.2(d)

Special Analysis**ALBANIA:****Intimations of Another Romania**

Albanian President Alia, the last of Europe's Stalinist dictators, is increasingly showing concern that his regime will fall to the political upheaval sweeping Eastern Europe. [redacted]

6.2(d)

The Romanian uprising appears to have attentive observers who labor under Albania's oppressive regime. News of the violent overthrow of Nicolae Ceausescu reached Albania through factual reporting in the official press and foreign broadcasts and may have helped spread discontent among Albanian youth. Recent [redacted] growing threat of juvenile delinquency—two-thirds of the population is under 30—suggests unrest, and small demonstrations reportedly took place in several Albanian cities late last month, most notably in Shkoder near the Yugoslav border. There had been earlier reports of student demonstrations in Tirane, the capital. [redacted]

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The regime has made modest gestures to appease popular grievances. Alia has eased restrictions on private ownership of livestock, an important concession for Albania's predominantly rural population, and may make other short-term economic moves to address basic consumer needs. Hardline party leaders undoubtedly would have blocked similar moves in the past but probably were unnerved enough by events in Romania to give Alia more latitude on economic and agricultural reforms. There is little chance they will agree to substantive political reform from above, as in Bulgaria. [redacted]

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Any significant political change would probably follow the violent Romanian pattern. The Albanian security forces are brutal, but probably poorly trained and equipped for riot control. Although they could quell small urban protests, they would be stretched thin by mass demonstrations and would have little alternative to using lethal force. Extensive bloodshed and prolonged fighting almost certainly would subject military discipline to the same stresses that led the Romanian Army to turn on Ceausescu. [redacted]

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Emergence of a more liberal Albania would probably spur the predominantly ethnic Albanian populace in neighboring Kosovo Province in Yugoslavia to press for unification with Albania, almost certainly provoking large-scale ethnic violence in Yugoslavia and threatening that already shaky multiethnic state. Tensions are already building between Athens and Tirane over alleged Albanian mistreatment of its large Greek minority; a senior Albanian official will visit Athens on 26 January in an apparent effort to smooth relations. Instability in Albania might encourage some Greeks to try to revive irredentist claims. [redacted]

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