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PLAN FOR ALBANIA

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I. Purposes

The purposes of the present paper are to consider the current situation of Albania, internal and external; to review United States policy with regard to Albania; and to recommend the course which United States policy should follow in the immediate future.

II. The Nature of the Problem of Albania

A. Strategic: Historically, the strategic significance of Albania derives from the country's position on the Eastern shore of the Strait of Otranto, at the entrance to the Adriatic and astride the land route between the Adriatic and the Aegean. In this position, Albania has long been a focal point of conflicting power interests, especially those of Greece, Italy, and the Slavs. Thus Albania as an "independent" national state is more an artificial creation of Great Power politics, than an expression of national will and power of the people. Albania is, in other words, an entity arising from the essentially negative factor of the unwillingness of any of the Powers interested in the area to allow any other power to control it; it does not arise from positive factors of inherent strength, and therefore, even during periods of formal "independence", Albania has in one way or another been controlled by one of the Powers.

Much of the area of Albania is mountainous; only one fourth, along the sea, is arable. Although the country is believed to possess, in addition to forests, considerable subsoil resources such as oil (with a high sulphur content), iron, chrome, copper, and some coal, these have never been effectively exploited. There is no industry in Albania; communications are primitive, with few roads, no significant railways (one link from Durazzo to Tirana has recently been completed for operation as far as Peqin), and only a small airfield at Tirana. On the other hand, a highly effective grapevine enables the rapid spread of news - and rumors and propaganda - throughout the country by word of mouth.

B. Population: Of the total population of 1,000,000 in Albania, some 45% are illiterate; 80% of the people engage in agricultural or pastoral pursuits. The country is about 75% self-sufficient in food; this percentage is, however, only a function of the very low standard of living which prevails. The society is largely tribal; in large areas, the basis of law is the power of a tribal leader, buttressed by the pledges of tribesmen. There are three ethnic groups: The Ghegs of the mountainous center and North, largely Catholic, and tough; the plainsmen of the coastal area, largely debilitated by malaria and the Mediterranean climate; and the Tosks of the south, of whom 70% are Moslem and 20% are Orthodox. The middle and upper classes, which before the War were a small percentage of the whole population and which, because they had some education, were a "ruling class", have either left Albania in recent years or been eliminated by the present regime. Differences of religion are not a significant irritant in the society; on the other hand, between Tosk and Gheg there is traditionally mutual dislike and distrust.

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National "politics" has been in Albania a monopoly of the "ruling class"; there have never been political parties in the Western sense. Indeed, the tribal nature of the greatest part of the people has led inevitably to a feudal relationship: a phenomenon which in turn implies that only an authoritarian regime can exist in Albania, and even such a regime can only "govern" beyond the plains and its towns to the extent that it avoids antagonizing the tribesmen.

C. Long Term Problems and Issues:

1. Territorial: About 444,000 Albanians now live in the Kossovo, which now is an "autonomous" district in Yugoslavia. The Kossovo was assigned to Yugoslavia when that country was created, and has not since then been a part of Albania except for a brief period during the German occupation of Yugoslavia during the late war. When the Communist regimes of Tito and Hoxha came into power in Yugoslavia and Albania, the Kossovo was returned to the former.

Southern Albania is considered by the Greeks as "Northern Epirus"; some 35,000 Greeks live in the area, and their "redemption" is a fixed objective of Greek policy. Albanians of course reject Greek claims to the area; the issue is, accordingly, a severe irritant in the relations between the two countries.

Some 250,000 persons ethnically Albanian live in Macedonia and what is now Greece; they are not, however, a source or irritation in the relations between the countries concerned.

2. Pan Slav Movement: As a result of having been pulled and hauled for years by Italians, Greeks, and Slavs contending for mastery of their country, Albanians are instinctively opposed to Italian or Greek imperialism, and especially to Pan Slavism; thus passively arises what small feeling of "nationalism" there is in Albania. A corollary is, of course, the Albanian's hostility to any form of "Balkan Federation" which contemplates their inclusion; they are at the same time aware that proponents of Balkan Federation tend to assume that Albania must be included in such a Federation.

3. Form of Government: The "institutional" question of the form of Government is today an issue more among Albanian rulers than among Albanians generally, to whom, given the tribal-feudal nature of the society, it is a matter of some indifference whether they live in a Monarchy or a Republic; whichever it is, it is expected to be in the hands of a "ruling class" with an authoritarian chief, be he Zog or Hoxha. The issue is, of course, sharply debated within the "ruling class".

4. Economic development: In its present state, Albania is a liability to any patron. Quite apart, therefore, from sociological considerations, the economic development of the country and the raising of its standard of living and education must be accomplished through guided exploitation of the country's own resources. The Communists have pursued this problem to an

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extent not reached by their predecessors; any successor to the Communist regime must be prepared to face it as well.

III. The Present Regime

Consideration of the present regime in Albania is necessarily limited by a paucity of reliable, authentic information; analyses therefore involve a necessary reliance on conjecture and projection of propaganda against known facts.

The origins of the present Communist regime headed by Colonel General Enver Hoxha are found in the National Liberation Front (LNC) which he, with the assistance of a number of Moscow-trained Communists dispatched to Southern Albania from various parts of Europe, set up to conduct partisan warfare against Germany during the late war. Regardless of the truth or falsity of allegations that other Guerilla formations in the mountains of North and Central Albania were less than persistent in their activities against the Germans, the LNC did fight effectively, and in accordance with Allied policy of the time (1942-44), received assistance from the Allies. As the strength of the LNC increased, it faced resistance both by these Germans and by anti-Communist Albanian guerillas; among the latter was established the Balli Kombetar, which, like other unorganized Nationalists including those loyal to King Zog, fell under the suspicion of collaboration with the Germans. As the LNC moved northward it eliminated all Nationalists ***** on whom it could lay hands.

Late in 1944, the partisans reached Tirana and, concealing their cadre of trained Communists behind Hoxha and the National Liberation Front, proclaimed the latter the provisional Government of Albania. One-list "elections" were held in December 1945, preceded by promises of economic reform, the Communist nature of which was not, of course, emphasized. The LNC candidates were overwhelmingly victorious. Immediately thereafter began the process of consolidation of the regime, during which the remaining anti-Communist Nationalists who were unable to escape were "purged".

The constituent assembly elected in December met in January 1946, proclaimed the "People's Republic of Albania," and in March approved a constitution replete with reference to civil liberties and democracy and bearing a striking resemblance to the then new Yugoslav constitution.

In the ensuing months all the usual trappings of Soviet style "democracy" were brought into being, and the usual network of mass "popular" organizations, all forming a part of a "democratic front", were instituted. Hoxha became Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs and of National Defense, Commander-in-Chief of the Army, and President of the Democratic Front. The real power of the Communist Party was kept under cover, and it had few members; meanwhile, the police state mechanism rapidly operated to pervert what had probably been, at the time of the elections, a considerable measure of popular support. The Communist Party of Albania as such came into the open only after the Tito-Cominform break of June 1948

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and since that time government propoganda has omitted mention of all the mass "front organizations".

With the elimination of the "ruling class", the age of the under-privileged has come to Albania; the present bureaucracy has been described as "trash and scum" and as comprising a "large group of untrained opportunists". The Communist Party itself is said to have little or no prestige, yet it is in effective control of most of the country, exercised through an army of about 65,000 and an elite police, the DMP, which are considered loyal to their masters. The government publishes a propoganda "newspaper" called Bashkimi, which cannot be widely read in the country; and maintains a radio transmitter at Tirana. With a few notable exceptions among the tribesmen, most of the people of Albania, while they dislike and distrust the regime as oppressive and essentially Slav, seem to pay it lip service in order to avoid harm.

From the time when the LNC achieved a position of effective power in Albania until 1948, the Kremlin exercised its control over the Albanian apparatus through Tito and the Yugoslav Communist party. During this period a series of political, social, economic and military "agreements" was concluded between Yugoslavia and Albania which in effect made the latter a complete dependency of the former. Yugoslav "advisors" and technicians came in considerable number to Albania to assist in the utilization of the material aid which their Government provided, and no occasion was lost by the Albanian leaders to extoll the virtues of their Yugoslav "friends and allies".

A recent study of events in Yugoslavia and Albania in late 1947 and early 1948 indicates that the dispute between Tito and the Kremlin was reflected in Tirana almost as soon as it began. The Kremlin clearly intended to keep Albania under its power, directly if necessary, to prevent Tito from carrying the little country out of the Soviet orbit. Accordingly, when the dispute erupted, the Albanian Ministers lined up promptly on the side of the Kremlin, joined shrilly in the recriminations directed at Tito and his ilk, and promptly abrogated all the agreements which had bound them to Belgrade. The Yugoslavs in Albania were unceremoniously ejected, and the border between the two countries closed. Albanian Communists who had become too compromised by blind devotion to Tito were, of course, purged.

The place of the Yugoslavs in Albania has now been taken largely by the Soviets, who probably number as many as three thousand. A Soviet Colonel General now controls the Albanian Army, and is assisted by a Soviet military mission of about a hundred officers who are attached to the Albanian Army at corps and division level; Soviet technical advisors stand at the shoulder of every Minister. Bulgarian officers have also come to Albania, and are attached to the Army at division and regiment level. The recent conclusion of a Bulgarian-Albanian trade agreement suggests that the Soviets would like to foist off on the Bulgarians the burden which the Yugoslavs formerly bore of pumping material necessities into the country.

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Absence of direct overland contact between the loyal Soviet Satellites and Albania obviously jeopardizes the success of this attempt, and it has been observed that Soviet ships have brought cereals and other supplies to Albania by sea, the only available route. The panegyrics previously reserved for the Yugoslavs have since mid-1948 been showered by the Albanian propaganda machine on the Soviet Union, which is given all credit for supplying the people of Albania with needed food and industrial and farm equipment. The proportion of hot air in such "shipments" is not determinable but is presumably large. There have also been reports that arms have been shipped to Albania under cover of food shipments from Poland; the Albanians have not, of course, mentioned this twist in their public propaganda.

Consolidation of direct Soviet control over Albania has not been accomplished at a single blow; in fact, reorganizations of the government have occurred at relatively brief intervals ever since February 1948, the latest after the first congress of the Communist party of Albania in November 1948. The resultant confusion is, however, more psychological than material. Within these ten months Albanians such as Maleshova and Nako Spiru, who had played no little part in the establishment of the Communist regime, have been replaced with men hand-picked by Moscow. In the latest step, the third in less than two months, Minister of the Interior Xoxe, President of the Planning Campaign Christo, Assistant Minister of Interior Kerenxhi and a number of other lesser officials, all therefore prominent in the Albanian Communist party, were fired. Xoxe was replaced by Major General Mehmet Shehu, who was also given title of Chief of Staff; and Tuk Jakova was brought in with the title of Vice-Premier. Both are Moscow-trained; Shehu will presumably control security, and Jakova ideology.

It is significant that both Xoxe and Christo had survived the early anti-Yugoslav purges; and both were in their time faithful denouncers of Trotskyite Tito; their ouster followed shortly on Jakova's return from a "trade mission" to Moscow. Although Xoxe and Christo have now been denounced by the propaganda machine as being pro-Yugoslav, it seems more reasonable to suppose that they are victims primarily of Soviet desire to have men in control of Albania who are completely loyal - and beholden - to the Kremlin, and partly of the duplicity of their countrymen. It is also reasonable to conjecture that another Soviet motive has been a desire to demonstrate to Tito, and incidentally to other satellite regimes, the supremacy of the Kremlin's wishes. However these factors may be, it would appear that Hoxha, once powerful in his own right, is now but a figurehead, and that direct, complete Soviet political control of the Albanian Government is now exercised around him.

One significant element is lacking in this complex of Soviet domination of Albania: a lack which demonstrates concisely both the cynicism of Soviet motives in Albania and the depth of abjection to which Albania's indigenous opportunists have fallen. In foreign affairs, Albania under the Soviets is included in none

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of the satellite family arrangements except the Council of Mutual Economic Assistance, and at the same time is used tactically by the Soviets in their battle against the Western nations and their friends. Yugoslavia at least undertook to represent Albanian interests abroad where no Albanian mission existed, a service which no country now performs; Albania, although the Government announced its approval of the objectives of the Cominform soon after the latter was proclaimed, has never, so far as is known, been represented at a meeting of that body; and Albania, notwithstanding the "aid" it claims to receive from the Soviet Union, has only in the last few days admitted to the Council of Economic Mutual Assistance. On the other hand, Albania has been dragged beyond any real capacities into the Communist adventure in Greece, has been called upon to revile the Yugoslav deviationists, and has adopted a virulent attitude toward Italy. While thus able to belabor its traditional foes, Albania has been led also to vilify the United States and Great Britain, countries which have traditionally been the closest approximation of friends that it ever had. In consonance with Soviet policy, only France among Albania's western friends has been spared the full indignities of Albanian attack, and that at the expense of notable forbearance on the part of the French. Against this background such "friendly" Soviet moves as early recognition of the Hoxha Government and unsuccessful Soviet advocacy of Albanian membership in the United Nations only serve to emphasize that Albania is when convenient being used, along with the other Balkan satellites, as a helpless tool in the hands of the Kremlin.

Regarding the important long-term issue in Greek-Albanian relations, southern Albania, the Hoxha Regime has not unnaturally proclaimed the inviolability of Albanian territory, and in this has, at least until recent changes in the Greek guerilla "Government", had the agreement of that Government. Since the National Government of Greece has not found it possible publicly to renounce its claims on northern Epirus, Communist propaganda has been able to include this national issue in the cacophony of charges of Monarcho-Fascism which has accompanied the Guerilla Movement in northern Greece. When the Yugoslavs were in charge of Albania, that country was obviously being used as an operating base for the Greek Guerillas; such activity has, however, undoubtedly diminished with the sealing off of Albania from land communication with Soviet-controlled territory. If, as has been conjectured, the removal of Markos presages a shift in emphasis and direction of the guerilla operation in Greece, it may well be that Albania will cease to be used as an anti-Greek base.

It is not clear that use of Albania as a base for anti-Yugoslav operations will be found by the Soviets either practical or desirable. Thus far, participation of the Albanian Government in the Kremlin's campaign against Tito has involved for Albania many words and basic rearrangement of the country's economic life. For their part, the Yugoslavs initially denounced Hoxha and his regime as ingrates and scoundrels; for a short period, they adopted an attitude of disdain, which also had the advantage of not giving Albania free publicity in

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Yugoslavia; more recently, Yugoslav anti-Hoxha propaganda has increased in volume and virulence. This latest attitude may well also be related to reported recent Yugoslav action in releasing from prison two Gheg Chieftans, Bajran Bajraktari and Gani Kryeziu, the former of whom had continued anti-Hoxha guerilla warfare until caught by the Yugoslavs in June 1947, the latter having been in jail since 1944. According to an unevaluated intelligence report, they have been sent to Prizen to organize guerilla activities against Hoxha; since both men are members of families whose names denote daring leadership among the tribesmen of northern Albania, since they are old friends, and since Kryeziu is a Kossovar, the report is not incredible.

There is, however, no present indication that either Albania or Yugoslavia is prepared to drag the issue of the Kossovo into the open; the Yugoslav policy of advertising the "autonomy" which the Kossovars have enjoyed as part of the Federated Peoples' Republic would obviously be compatible with development of anti-Hoxha activity in the area. The effectiveness of such activity would, however, be related to the activities (discussed below) of Albanian guerillas who have reportedly established contact with the anti-Tito Montenegrin Nationalists lead by Krsto Popovic.

Albania and Italy have no formal diplomatic relations, and the outstanding issues between them have been handled through the medium first of the Yugoslavs, more recently of the Soviets themselves. The Italian Government, which under the Italian Peace Treaty, owes Albania 5 million dollars in reparations, has refused to discuss either these or the more immediate problem of Albanian demands for restitution of property taken to Italy during the Fascist era, until the Albanians make good on their undertaking to repatriate some 600 Italians who remain in Albania. Meanwhile, the atmosphere between the two countries has been further poisoned by Albanian participation in Cominform attacks on the "reactionary", "Vatican-inspired" Italian Government. As one Italian official has stated quite informally, it is Italy's desire and interest to have a non-Communist, friendly regime in Albania.

Although the British Government maintained liaison officers with the LNC after withdrawing similar officers from guerilla units in northern Albania in 1944, Britain has not established diplomatic relations with the present government although it has extended recognition. The last British Military Mission left Albania in April 1946, when the shabby treatment it had had could no longer be tolerated. Relations between the two countries deteriorated further almost at once: Albanian shore batteries fired in May on two British cruisers in the Corfu Channel, and two British destroyers struck mines in the same channel in October. When the Albanian Government refused to satisfy British demands arising from the latter incident, which the British felt had been at least condoned by, if not caused by Albania, the matter was brought by the British before the United Nations and subsequently the International Court of Justice, which rendered a decision in favor of the British.

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Britain has, of course, been the target of appropriate vilification by Albania whenever Soviet policy requires. While the British Government has continued its BBC Albanian transmissions, its views regarding current developments in Albania and among Albanian refugees are not known. It is not, however, to be excluded that the British are clandestinely in touch with Albanian resistance, both within and without Albania.

France is the only western nation which maintains direct diplomatic relations with Albania. The French Minister in Albania appears, however, to be so circumscribed in his activities as to render his usefulness as a source of intelligence dubious. The French Government itself has shown a disposition to share with the British and American Governments such information as it does receive, and, in the absence of any outstanding issue with the Albanian Government, is apparently prepared to let matters rest as they are.

IV GUERRILLA RESISTANCE IN ALBANIA

Reliable information regarding the extent and quality of guerrilla resistance within Albania is at least as difficult to obtain as that regarding the regime itself. The flow of reports, usually evaluated at C-3 or lower has, however, recently increased, so that it is possible to establish a general pattern.

In the middle of 1948, it was reported credibly that latent aversion to the Hoxha regime pervades approximately 80% of the population. Factors in bringing this about are said to be traditional mountaineer resistance to coercion, persecution by the regime of all religious faiths, the serious economic situation, lack of prestige of military and political leaders of the regime, and, of course, deep hatred of Pan-Slavism. Most of the active resistance to the regime is found in the northern and central mountainous areas, among the Catholic Ghegs, who see their traditional rivals the Tosks in charge on the plains and in the south; thus to the essentially negative factor of resistance, that the police regime has not avoided antagonizing the tribesmen, has been added a positive factor of ethnic hostility. Available reports refer only occasionally and vaguely to resistance in southern Albania.

The following, based on frequency and evaluation of available reports, represents a composite of information regarding areas of active resistance and the leaders involved:

In the Dibra area:

Cen Elizi
Dan Kiloshi
Prenk Gjergj Keci

In the Mirditza:
Kisheni

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Ndue Bajraktari
Petu Lleshi
Gjion Markaj

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Hoti (Malsis)

Lek Mirashi

In the Puke area:

Ndoc Mirakaj

Kruja figures most prominently as a centre of resistance under the leadership of Dan Kupi, Nicolle Pel Gjini, and others.

Macukull

Met Kola

Prosek

Kros Buna (or Buva)
Marka Dode Gjini

Gramshi

Riza Kishta

Martenesh

Ram Dervishi

Zhellima (Krrabe) Demir Sala

Jonush Meta

Fani

Dode Bib Pernoca

Various members of the
Vokri family

None of the reports on these groups indicates what arms they have; presumably they have a wide variety of ancient fowling pieces, muskets, and a few modern weapons of British, American, German and Italian make. Ammunition probably consists of only what the tribesmen have been able to salvage.

There is no indication whether any of the guerilla groups still has any of the W/T equipment left in the area during and after the war.

For food, the bands undoubtedly rely on foraging and on the beneficence of the mountain peoples.

In the circumstances, it appears likely that activities of the guerillas against the government are confined to harassing actions and that none of them controls a substantial area.

V THE ALBANIAN EMIGRES

Virtually the only surviving members of the middle and upper, or ruling, classes of Albania are those now in exile; the "exiles" comprise professional or commercial people, artisans, and a few former land owners. Many of these are tainted to greater or less extent by collaboration with the Germans and their allies during

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the war; all but a few of those still in Europe are poverty-stricken, and many of them are living on international or local charity.

Principal centers in which Albanians have collected are Italy, Egypt, Greece, and the U.S. With the exception of those in the US, the emigrees are divided into 3 political groups: The Zogists, or Legality, group, which centers in Cairo about Zog himself, was founded in November 1943 by the Cheg Chieftan Abas Kupi. The Balli Kombetar, most of the members of which are in Italy, with a scattering in Greece and the near East, was founded in northern Albania in 1942 under the leadership of Midhat Frasherri. It is Republican, anti-Italian, mildly leftist or reformist, and strongly anti-Communist. The National Independent Bloc was founded in Italy in 1947 under the leadership of a number of former collaborators with fascism headed by Ismail Verlaci, son of the late premier Shefqet. The Bloc is admittedly conservative and capitalistic in nature.

Although the Balli and the Bloc used to publish newspapers in Italy, none of the three now can afford a regular paper.

There is also a small, liberal group in London led by Tajar Zavalani and Dervish Duma, with a few followers in Turkey; and a "Committee" of Kossovars led by Xhemal Deva.

Until the Tito-Cominform split of 1948, the three principal groups, although agreed on their hatred for the Hoxha regime and on their opposition to Greek claims on Southern Albania, were continually at odds. The institutional question has been an important point of difference: The republican Balli Kombetar proposes that, pending a referendum in an Albania liberated from the Communists, a regency representing each of the groups take charge of government; the National Bloc is apparently inclined to sympathy for the monarchy, but has favored a referendum; the Monarchists, though obviously working for the restoration of Zog, have intimated their willingness to accept a referendum. Other issues are the frankly reformist program of the Balli, which has excited the suspicion of the other two groups, and irredentist claims on the Kossovo, which Zog apparently wished to press through Deva's Kossovar group, while leaders of Balli and the Bloc are prepared to forego such claims at least for the time being. Finally, clashing personalities have impeded unification of the three groups.

During 1947 and early 1948, Zog had the initiative in efforts toward unity. He proposed formation of a national liberation committee on the condition that all concerned agree:

1. On the holding of an institutional referendum, preceded by explicit recognition by leaders of the three groups of the 1928 Albanian constitution, which established Albania as a monarchy;
2. That the leaders of all the groups would work toward settlement of Albanian refugees in near Eastern countries, pending liberation of Albania; and

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3. That anti-Zog propoganda among refugees be stopped.

The first and third points were obviously unrealistic, and the second was viewed as an attempt by Zog to bring all the refugees into an area where he could control them; accordingly little progress was made toward unification.

At about the same time Zog sent representatives to the American Embassy in Cairo to state his desire to establish friendly relations with Greece. These emissaries indicated that Zog was ready to form a "Free Albanian Government", from which exiles who had collaborated with Fascism and the Germans would be excluded. It was also indicated that Zog would sanction and support a joint committee with other groups if a Royal Government were unacceptable; and Zog committed himself to the principal of an institutional referendum. Finally, British and American mediation of Albanian-Greek differences was hinted at. The effort apparently broke down when Zog heard that the Greek Minister in Rome was engaging in discussions with Frasherri and his followers; in other words, when Zog thought that he would not be in complete control of every aspect of a unified exile movement.

Although Zog has apparently not entirely given up his efforts along these lines, the initiative has, since the summer of 1948, passed to Verlaci, and, spurred by events in Yugoslavia, prospects for unification appear to have improved. Other quite practical considerations are that Verlaci is virtually the only refugee who has any money at all and can therefore pay for the numerous necessary trips between the emigre centers, and that he and his associates have, at least unofficially, an "inside track" with the Italian bureaucracy. Although the Balli Kombetar leaders in Italy do not appear enthusiastic, Frasherri, who is now in Istanbul, is at least noncommittal about Verlaci's efforts; and Abas Kupa, who has apparently had some differences with Zog, has been amenable. Even with the Balli, Kupa has great prestige; he is, of course, still a monarchist by conviction, but his participation may well be a critical factor in effecting unity.

According to one credible report, initial meetings at which the three principal exile groups and the Kossovar group were represented, have actually taken place, and the name "Beslikhje" (League of Loyalty) proposed for the unified committee.

Of the governments of the countries in which the emigre groups center, none has officially committed itself with regard to them. There are, however, a number of clear indications that the Italian government would like to see unification under Verlaci; in the early summer of 1948, an official of the Italian Embassy in Washington, on instructions of the Italian Foreign Office, informally sounded out an official of the State Department regarding the latter's thinking on the subject; later in the year, Italian officials arranged for Ferenc Nagy to meet with Frasherri and a Zogist, Gazi Khan Bessolt, in Istanbul to discuss unity. The two Albanians reflected strong misgivings over Greek intentions in the event of revolt against the Hoxha regime, and Frasherri still was fearful that Zog himself aspired to control

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the movement. Counter-balancing the sympathy which Verlaci and his group find in Italian official circles is the disdain with which lesser bureaucrats and the general public in Italy view Albanians in general and the emigres in particular.

Reports regarding the Greek Government's attitude are conflicting. It appears certain that the Greeks are intent on playing one group off against the other, largely as a means of forestalling Italian or other support for Albanian retention of southern Albania. In fact, the Greeks arranged for Frasheris departure from Italy, leading him to believe that they were prepared to support resistance to Hoxha and then leaving him flat. At the same time, the Greek Government condones the existence in Athens of an organization of "refugees from northern Epirus" known as Keva, for whose 5000 members resistance to Hoxha is incidental to irredentism.

An informal Greek proposal to the emigres that in return for cession of Southern Albania, Greece would support Albanian attempts to regain the Kossovo, has been emphatically rejected. Finally, there have been reports of a belief in Albanian circles that the British Government is not only opposed to too close relations between the Italian government and the emigres, but actually wishes to promote an Albanian-Greek rapprochement; the relation, if any, between this view and the views and activities of Zog mentioned above can not be established, but it is not impossible that the British are pushing Zog.

In their present state of disunity, the Albanian emigres have no formal relations with emigre groups from other Balkan countries. A representative of the Balli Kombetar has expressed interest in associating with the International Peasant Union, and an unverified report indicates that Nagy is not opposed to such association; the views of other members of the union are not known. It must be recognized that, in not having and never having had an Agrarian or Peasant Party, that Albanians are not qualified by any factor except anti-Communism for membership in the Union.

There have been no reliable reports of attempts by Cominform agents to disrupt that emigre movement; indeed, the need for such attempts, through diplomatic missions or through Communist Parties, would not become pressing for the Kremlin until such time as effective unity is achieved among the groups. Then, of course, all the techniques of penetration and disruption will constitute present dangers to the vitality and even lives of the Albanians involved.

Albanians in the US number approximately 30 thousand, most of whom are Orthodox, southern Albanians; few are actually refugees from the Communist regime. They have settled principally in Boston, with smaller colonies in New York, Detroit, Philadelphia, Bridgeport, Southport, and Worcester. There are two associations of Albanians in the US; although both happen at the moment to be following a pro-Hoxha line, they have been unable to unite, largely owing to the same affliction which plagues their compatriots elsewhere: personal antagonisms.

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"VATRA", led by Bishop Fan Noli, who was a leftist premier in Albania for a period ending in 1924, has its headquarters in Boston. Its record in recent years has been one of vacillation and opportunism: prior to 1944 Vatra was republican; in that year it suddenly became pro-Zog, until September when, as it became obvious that the INC was coming into power in Albania, it shifted to the pro-Hoxha line. Vatra publishes a newspaper known as DIELLI.

Free Albania also has its headquarters in Boston, under the leadership of John T. Nasse. This group was anti-Zog in 1944, and since then has been pro-Hoxha. It publishes a newspaper known as LIRIA.

Periodic efforts to effect reconciliation of these two groups have come to nothing. In 1944 some of their members tried unsuccessfully to establish a joint committee; then in August of 1946, Jakova and Shtylla came to the US, ostensibly to lead an Albanian delegation of the UN Health Conference; they trotted busily about to all centers of Albanian-American settlement, trying to unify Vatra and Free Albania, and to establish lobbies for Hoxha's recognition by the US.

In addition to these two major groups, there is in the US a "branch" of Balli Kombetar, with headquarters in Boston, known as the "Albanian Independent Democratic Group". Founder and prime mover of this group has been Stavro Skendi, who enjoys a degree of sympathy on the part of his compatriots in Italy, and who in July of 1947 presented a 5-point program to the Department of State. This called for a free and independent Albania with a democratic regime based on what he called "representation of the different political tendencies" and respect for human dignity; development of friendly relations among Albanian-Americans; close relations between Albania and the US; and unification of all democratic Albanian elements wherever located. As far as can be ascertained Skendi has not been active in the last 18 months, but is presumably still in New York.

Other prominent Albanians in America include Constantine Chekrezi, until May 1945 President of Free Albania and editor of Liria; and Peter Kolonia, who at one time represented himself as Zog's agent in the United States.

Americans who have taken an active interest in Albanian affairs include the Honorable Charles C. Hart, former American Minister at Tirana; Gerard F. Price of Helena, Montana, who visited Tirana from September to December 1947 as an advisor on social assistance matters; and Harry Fultz, pre-war director of the American School in Albania and attache of the short-lived postwar American Mission in Albania.

There are a number of Albanian associations in Latin America, including the "Albanian Association of Sons of Free Albania" (which in 1945 was pro-Hoxha), the "Patriotic Albanian Association", and the "Skenderberg Association", all in Buenos Aires; and the Albanian Association of Havana. There is also a small Albanian community in Australia.

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VI UNITED STATES POLICY: EVOLUTION AND PRESENT STATUS

As stated in January 1947, United States "policy toward Albania aims at supporting the independence of that country and assuring to the Albanian people freedom to conduct their own affairs without domination by any foreign state or group of states"; on the other hand, it has been stated that "Albania's political influence, economic resources, and military strength are negligible from the point of view of US security. Its strategic significance resides solely in its location, as a potential base of operations, at the entrance to the Adriatic and on the northwest frontier of Greece. US interest in Albania is therefore a consequence of US interest in Italy, the Adriatic and Greece."

The position taken by President Wilson against proposals to partition Albania at the Paris Peace Conference of 1919 ensured at that time the independent existence of the country. In continuation of the tradition thus established, the United States did not recognize the annexation of Albania to the Crown of Italy, following the Italian invasion of April 7, 1939 but looked upon Albania as a victim of Axis aggression. During World War II encouragement and support were given by this country to the resistance of the Albanian people against Fascist and Nazi forces of occupation. On December 10, 1942 Secretary Hull declared that the restoration of an independent Albania was inherent in the principles of the Atlantic Charter.

US has not recognized the Hoxha regime. On May 8, 1945 an informal American Mission went to Albania to survey conditions and developments there preliminary to consideration by the United States Government of a request by the Hoxha Regime for recognition.

Although our informal relations with the Albanian authorities underwent marked deterioration following the establishment of diplomatic relations between the USSR and Albania in November 1945, we continued to seek an understanding along the lines of our proposals, also made in that month, regarding recognition of the regime. The fulfillment of two conditions had been laid down by this country as prerequisite to recognition, first, the holding of free elections, and secondly, an affirmation of the continuing validity of treaties and agreements in force between the United States and Albania on April 7, 1939. While the first of these conditions was met by the holding of elections in December 1945, the second was made an occasion for delay on the part of the Albanian authorities, during which period the US Mission in Tirana was increasingly subjected to discourteous, suspicious, and unfriendly treatment. Finally, on August 13, 1946, nine months after the original US offer of recognition, the Albanian regime indicated its acceptance of these treaties and agreements of a multilateral nature to which the United States and Albania were parties, but declined to honor bilateral instruments existing between the two countries. Failing to receive assurances of the kind requested, or to discern signs of a change of attitude on the part of the Albanian regime, the United States withdrew

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its Mission from Albania on November 14, 1946. Further motivation to this step were the public indication by the Albanian Prime Minister that the Albanians might request removal of the Mission, and the fact that the Mission was so circumscribed as to preclude its obtaining any appreciable volume of intelligence.

Thereafter another issue between the Albanian and the US GOVERNMENTS arose in connection with the Communist guerilla movement in Greece, which was obviously being supported from Albania, as well as from Yugoslavia and Bulgaria. Albanian participation in this adventure, as well as Albanian obstruction of the work of the UN Special Commission on the Balkans, have on a number of occasions been publicly excoriated by the United States.

In March 1948, the Department of State informed American Missions in Balkan capitals that ultimate US objectives regarding Soviet satellites in that area were to establish those states as democratic, independent members of the family of nations, under conditions guaranteeing 1) the peoples' effective enjoyment of human rights and 2) non-discrimination against US interests and the interests of other peace loving states.

It has also been recorded that, while the US would favor the participation of Albania in any general Balkan regional arrangement freely arrived at and consistent with the welfare of the member states and with the principles and purposes of the United Nations, we would oppose Albania's inclusion in any bilateral federation or wider grouping the effect of which would be to establish an exclusive ideological bloc, a development which might well be contrary to the wishes of the Albanian people themselves. As for outstanding Albanian territorial questions, particularly the controversy with Greece concerning Southern Albania (Northern Epirus), which is the most acute of these problems, we felt that for the sake of more important long-range aims of Balkan peace and stability the United States must favor retention of the pre-war boundary and, in concert with the other principal Allied Governments, oppose any measures by either country which would violate that boundary.

The United States has given no encouragement or support either formally or informally to the anti-Communist refugee groups in the United States or abroad; neither has it taken any measures against these groups.

At the present time, the following are available as instruments for the execution of US policy with respect to Albania:

1. Normal friendly diplomatic relations with other governments interested in Albania, including Great Britain, France, Turkey, Italy and Greece. In its relations with these countries, the US enjoys a position of influence.
2. Diplomatic relations with other countries concerned directly or indirectly with Albania, including Yugoslavia, Egypt, and the Cominform nations.

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3. Membership in international agencies: the UN, IRO, IECF, etc.
4. Agencies equipped to conduct clandestine intelligence, political, psychological and strategic operations.
5. Overt propaganda agencies, especially the Voice of America.
6. The facilities of the armed services comprising the National Military Establishment.
7. Anti-Communist groups of Albanian emigres.
8. Anti-Communist emigre groups from other Eastern European countries.
9. Guerrilla resistance groups within Albania.
10. Economic resources and agencies for their utilization for peaceful purposes abroad.

VII CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

1. Soviet denial of US access to Albania deprives the US of no important military-strategic advantage. Access to the economic resources of the country would be of only limited, incidental, and local benefit. Access to its terrain, as a strategic beachhead in the Balkans in the event of a major conflict, would also be of little consequence, in view of the inadequacy of port facilities, airfield sites, and overland communications to support a major advance.

Similarly, Soviet control of Albania confers only slight advantage to the USSR in terms of a major conflict. The economic resources of the country are relatively inaccessible by land. Their development would require an investment of manpower and machinery which would be disproportionate to the prospective gain and which the USSR could ill afford. Although access to advanced air and submarine bases in Albania would be of some initial advantage in time of war, the potential sites are limited in number and capacity, their logistical and military support overland would be extremely precarious and they would prove unusable in the face of superior air and naval power.

In effect, Albania's military-strategic significance to the Great Powers is essentially negative and largely in terms of the country's potentialities as a base for guerrilla operations and for harassment on the flank of larger operations.

2. Soviet control of the governable parts of Albania is apparently complete. This control is exercised in part through native Albanian

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Communists, in part by Soviet personnel. In the event of internal emergency, the Soviet Government, deprived of direct access to Albania, would probably ditch their Albanian stooges but would attempt to salvage their own personnel. Indeed, the Soviet Government would not be able to do any more without risking a general conflict.

3. The present sporadic, uncoordinated resistance in Albania, cannot overthrow the regime without guidance from outside Albania. Furthermore, there is no alternative to the Hoxha regime now in Albania and capable of governing the country. The only such alternative, comprising persons accustomed to ruling in that country, is now outside of Albania.

4. No Albanian regime or government can exist without support and assistance from one or more of the great powers. The present economic and social standards of Albania are not favorable to the functioning of a democracy, in the Anglo-Saxon sense of the word; a non-Communist regime can and must, however, observe the forms of democratic procedure and assure enjoyment of basic human rights in the country.

5. Of Albania's neighbors, Yugoslavia, increasingly in difficulties with the Kremlin and the Cominform, appears to be planning to create trouble for the Hoxha regime. Such trouble may well take the form of harassing guerrilla action as well as of economic sanctions and propaganda. As long, however, as the Hoxha or a similar regime is in power in Albania, the Tito government is not in a position to attempt to overthrow that regime without running the direct risk of being hit by the Soviets from the North and East.

Should the Communist regime in Albania fall other than through the efforts of Tito, the situation at the time would determine whether the Kremlin would oppose any attempt by Tito to move in. Consequently, in the development of anti-Hoxha activities, careful consideration must be given to the state of the relations between Tito, the Kremlin and Albania, and between Tito and the non-communist world. Action looking to the overthrow of the Hoxha regime would redound to our benefit only if taken when the situation is such that Tito is not in a position to move into Albania or can be influenced to stay out through his desire to maintain and consolidate his own regime.

6. Greece has been hitherto unwilling to give up territorial claims against Albania or to neutralize 'irredentist resistance' based in Greece. While steps are being taken to prepare the ground for the abandonment of Greek claims, considerable diplomatic pressure may well be necessary to insure that the Greek government will refrain from seeking to take advantage of any internal crisis in Albania.

7. Italy has no current claims against Albania, although Albania has a number of claims against Italy. Accordingly, Italy would be willing to condone if not actively support activity directed against the Hoxha regime, especially if urged to do so by the United States.

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8. The situation is propitious for carefully planned unification of Albanian emigre groups under the control of the United States and its allies. There are among the emigres persons qualified to establish a Liberation Committee and to conduct its activities both abroad and in liaison with resistance in Albania. Such a committee would need monetary and other support; it would be impeded in the attainment of its objectives if King Zog were personally to participate and would be similarly impeded if members of VETRA or Free Albania were to participate.

9. Overthrow of the Hoxha regime by anti-Communist Albanians, and the establishment of an anti-Communist regime in Albania, would have an important psychological effect in lifting the morale of resistance groups or other countries now under Soviet domination. Even **though** such resistance would not, and probably could not, lead to the early overthrow of those regimes, the difficulties of the Soviets throughout the Balkans and eastern Europe would be measurably increased.

10. Current United States policy toward Albania should be revised to take advantage of the present situation in Albania and the Balkans.

11. The instruments available to the United States for the execution of US Policy in Albania are not by themselves sufficient for complete implementation of desirable US Policy in Albania; therefore the full cooperation of the British Government and the limited cooperation of the French Government and their agencies must be sought and obtained. At a later stage, consideration should be given also to possible cooperation of the Turkish Government.

B. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. As to Policy: United States policy with regard to Albania should be redefined as follows: "Current United States policy with regard to Albania has as its objective the restoration of Albanian independence through the overthrow of the present Moscow controlled regime and its replacement by an enlightened government acceptable to the people of Albania. Such a government would enjoy the support of the United States as long as it remains friendly to the United States and its objectives and hostile to the Soviet government and its objectives. The United States Government views with favor steps taken to bring about the realization of its objectives in Albania."

The economic support which the U.S. would be required to give a non-Communist Albanian Government would, in view of the size and nature of Albania, be slight in comparison to current U.S. commitments in other countries.

In pursuing this policy, U.S. should operate in complete cooperation

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and agreement with Great Britain; the two countries together should assume direct responsibility for action vis a vis Albania and not delegate this responsibility to any other nation, however friendly to the United States. Use of the facilities and assistance of other friendly nations, e.g. France and Italy, is however, possible and desirable.

The United States and its allies should take every precaution against any attempt by Tito to intervene in Albania; this risk will however, be diminished if care is taken that no vacuum be created in Albania, that is, that there be no interval between the disappearance of Hoxha and the assumption of power by Western-orientated Albanians. Before this plan is submitted to the National Security Council, the National Military Establishment and General Van Fleet should be consulted.

2. As to Action: Covert contacts should be established with the various emigre groups with a view to the organization of a united front of all anti-communist Albanian refugee groups regardless of political opinions. The Bllli Kombetar group headed by Midhat Frasherri appears best qualified to assume the leadership of the united front. The other Albanian groups should be invited to collaborate with the Balli Kombetar group and to accept the leadership of Frasherri in the struggle to liberate Albania from the domination of the communists. The headquarters of the National Committee should be set up in an appropriate city, presumably Trieste, and branches established in New York, Paris, Rome, Cairo and possibly Athens.

At an appropriate time the Greek and Italian Governments should be informed of our benevolent attitude towards the Albanian National Committee with a view to their refraining from interfering with the activities of the Committee.

2. The British Government should be approached, informally at first, with a view to ascertaining British thinking in regard to Albania and reaching an early agreement on overall policy and program. Provision should be made for close cooperation in respect to subsequent action.

3. The French Government should be approached, informally at first, with a view to ascertaining its views on the Albanian situation and the formation of an Albanian National Committee. The extent of French involvement in the Albanian operation, particularly in covert activities, should be determined as occasion arises, having in mind security and effectiveness of the operations contemplated.

4. The Voice of America should institute daily Albanian programs. The Committee referred to in paragraph 1 above should designate a liaison officer to assist in the preparation of these programs, which should also be in consonance with the Albanian program of the BBC. To the extent possible, the programs should emphasize, in their reports of "news", the following lines:

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- a. how much the people of Albania have been betrayed by those whom they elected to office in 1945;
- b. favorable reference to the activities of the committee itself;
- c. factual reports of activities of resistance groups in Albania, sufficiently delayed after the fact to avoid jeopardizing the safety of these groups;
- d. the extent to which pan-Slavism is still alive outside Albania;
- e. past and present evidences of U.S. friendship for the Albanian people;
- f. reference to "democracy" should be carefully defined, so as to avoid any possibility that the audience in Albania, which has been exposed to a good deal of propaganda about "new democracy", and which has not previously been accustomed to hearing the word, shall not become confused;
- g. such other matters as may come up in the course of events and which can be used to keep the programs dynamic and encouraging to those who resist the Communists.

5. When the National Committee has been established, the Committee should undertake the following activities:

- a. The committee should establish and operate a newspaper, with the assistance of funds provided covertly by us.
- b. Arrangements should be made for the clandestine distribution in Tirana and principal towns such as Durazzo, Valona, and Shkoder, of the committee's newspaper. No particular effort should, however, be made to get other forms of written propaganda, black or otherwise, into Albania, since the high rate of illiteracy renders the risks involved excessive.
- c. Plans should be drawn up to assist the committee in the establishment of a gray radio in Italy to be used to fade in on radio Tirana and, if and when possible, radio Belgrade. This transmitter must be operated clandestinely and should probably be mobile; the Italian Government should be secretly informed of its existence and invited not to interfere.
- d. The Committee will establish contact with the resistance elements in Albania, utilizing exclusively Albanian liaison personnel, with a view to ascertaining the present situation of the underground forces, the facilities available to them and the assistance required for the maintenance and reinforcement of their anti-communist activities. The objective of the Committee should be the development of an effective underground based on a spirit

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of national resistance to the communist regime and, if the present resistance elements in Albania cannot be used as a basis for the development of such a movement, steps should be taken to organize an underground on another basis. The Committee should undertake to keep us fully and currently informed of the situation and activities of the resistance groups.

The Committee should take steps to neutralize the activities of Tito-inspired guerrillas, giving careful consideration in this regard to the potential value of the services of Said Eryeziu in Rome and Muharren Bajraktari in Greece, both brothers of the principal Albanian guerrillas now under Tito's wing.

6. Clandestine intelligence operations of U.S. and British agencies should be continued in Albania, and should be kept entirely separate from all other clandestine operations; thus they will provide a means of checking on information provided by the committee and its agents.

7. At an appropriate time, to be determined by us in conjunction with the British and possibly with the French, the Committee should proceed to the preparation of action looking to the overthrow of the present Moscow-controlled regime in Albania. The size and nature of the armed force required will depend, of course, upon the situation existing at the time of its organization.

The Committee should draw up, at the same time, for our approval, detailed plans for taking over the administration of the Government in Albania, such plans to include inter alia: Measures for the elimination of the DMP and the substitution of an effective police force; prompt elimination of the Communists from the army; neutralization (by elimination where necessary) of Communists in the bureaucracy; participation for those who have led the guerrilla effort, etc.

Our support should be made conditional upon the Committee undertaking the following commitments to us; that as soon as possible after reaching Albania and, in consultation with us, proclaiming themselves as provisional government, they will proceed to the holding of (1) elections to constituent assembly which will write a new Constitution, and from which a government can be chosen, and (2) a referendum to resolve the institutional question; that upon establishing a provisional government to Albania, they will forthwith explicitly recognize the full force and effect of all agreements between the United States and Albania in effect on April 7, 1939; that they recognize that the borders of Albania shall remain as they were on April 7, 1939.

Detailed projects should be developed and fully coordinated with the National Military Establishment, so that the latter's facilities may be used for getting supplies of arms and ammunition, and other needs to the resistance in Albania through the committee. Overt American and British military and other personnel should not be sent to Albania until the committee itself has reached Albania and established a provisional government.

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8. Shortly before, or simultaneously with, the initiation of the action envisaged in the preceding paragraph steps should be taken through diplomatic channels by the United States and British Governments to obtain from the Greek Government a commitment at least to refrain from pressing its claims on Southern Albania and to abstain from intervening in any shape or manner in any crisis that might develop in Albania.

9. The State Department should initiate planning for the full support of the committee upon its arrival in Albania, pending which there should be no overt relations between the Department and the Committee. Such planning should cover provision for a competent staff to reopen the American Mission at Tirana, and the steps to be taken to advance Albanian membership in the United Nations and other international agencies. Plans for economic support in the form of essential foodstuffs, rail and road equipment, etc., should also be drawn up, with a view to ensuring the stability of a non-Communist Government.

It will also be observed that a major premise underlying this paper is that Albania will remain sealed off from direct, land contact with the Soviet orbit of loyal satellites. Should this condition be altered either through (a) a Soviet coup in Yugoslavia, ousting Tito and establishing the Red Army on the Adriatic; or (b) establishment by Soviet power of a Greater Macedonia comprising parts of territory now in Bulgaria, Greece, and Southern Yugoslavia, this entire project for overthrowing the Hoxha regime in Albania would have to be revised, if not completely abandoned.

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APPENDIX A

Albanian refugee personalities who may be considered desirable for participation in a Committee-in-exile, and its activities. (This list is not exclusive, but is intended solely as a guide to indicate persons who through ability and background are probably suitable.)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Now In</u>
Balli Kombetar:	
Midhat Frasherri	Turkey (Istanbul)
Abas Ermenji	Greece
Vasil Andoni	Italy (Rome)
Vasil Dhimitraj	Italy (Rome)
Stavro Skendi	U.S. (New York)
Muharrem Bajraktari	Greece
Jani Dilo	Italy (Turin)
Said Kryeziu	Italy (Rome)
Hasan Dosti	
National Independent Bloc:	
Ismail Verlaci	Italy
Ali Vrioni	Italy
Gzon Markagjoni	Italy (Vatican)
Ndue Markagjoni	Italy (Rome)
Legality (Zogists):	
Ferid Dervishi	Italy (Rome)
Asaf Djadjuli	Turkey (Ankara-Istanbul)
Abas Kupa	Egypt (Cairo-Alexandria)
Caço Gogo	Egypt (Cairo-Alexandria)
Abdul Sula	Egypt (Cairo)
Others:	
Tajar Zavalani	London
Ishan Toptani	Rome
Muredin Vlora	Rome
Asim Jakova	New York
Kristo Maloki	Graz U. (Austria)

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APPENDIX B

ALbanian refugees who should be excluded from any Committee-in-Exile and its activities:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Now In</u>
Balli Kombetar:	
Ali Klissura	Syria
Koco Muka	Egypt
National Independent Bloc:	
Ernest Koliqi	Italy (Rome)
Kol Bit Mirakaj	Italy (Rome)
Zogist:	
Zog	
Prenk Pervisi	Greece
Jake Koci	Italy (Tivoli)
Zef Sereqi	Italy (Rome)
Musa Juka	Egypt (Ciaro)
Hysai Dema	Greece
Others:	
Qazim Mulletti	Italy (Rome)
Djafer Deva	Egypt (Cairo)
Mehdi Frasherri	
Redjip Mitrovitza	

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