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SECURITY INFORMATION

1. CIA's intelligence operations in Albania, using personnel of the BKI, were initiated in February 1949 and continued until August 1951. During this period, seventeen agents organized into four teams were dropped into the country. One team operated there for approximately seven months, while ~~two~~ two others remained for nineteen months, maintaining radio contact with the base almost continuously during their stay. A fourth team, intended for operations in the central area, was dropped in the north, made its way overland to the target area, and remained there for several months. We were unable to resupply it, however, because of its w/t set having been lost in a skirmish with the security forces; and four of its five members were eventually killed by the security forces, while the fifth was captured after being badly wounded.

2. A total of nine air drops were made during the two and a half years of operations. These were for the most part supply drops to provide the teams with money and replace radio equipment lost or damaged. Food was obtained from the local population.

3. <sup>In all,</sup> Six team members were killed in action, <sup>and</sup> ~~In addition,~~ at least fifteen locally-recruited supporters died in action while directly helping the teams, which were <sup>afforded</sup> ~~given~~ such aid as the local population had in its power to give. The support of the population continued despite drastic repressive measures of the security authorities. It is significant that this support was forthcoming despite the fact that the population knew the teams' mission was an informational and not a revolutionary one; although the teams reported that it was difficult to interest the population in intelligence activity, they were trusted and aided as representatives of traditional north Albanian leaders.

4. A brief resume follows of the activities of three north Albanian teams and the problems which they faced.

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5. After being dropped jst south of Mirdita in February 1949, Team One proceeded to contact resistance leaders throughout north Albania, including the areas of Fandi, Kashnjet, Kushneni, Kthella,

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Beshkash, Lura, Kruja, Puka, Dukagjin, Malsis se Madhe, and Shkoder. Among leaders contacted were Gjergj Vata (Dukagjin), Martin Sheldija (Shkoder), Ndoc Mirakaj (Puka), Mark Bajraktari (Kashnjet), Ndue Bajraktari (Kushnani), Mark Bib Vokri (Fandi), Zef Preka (Zadrime), Bilal Kola (Mati), and Nik Sokoli (Nikaj). All were willing to cooperate with the team to the fullest extent, although the team leader expressed distrust of Bilal Kola and Nik Sokoli, who were acting on behalf of ~~Geni Bey Krysia (at that time being used as a figurehead by the Yugoslavs)~~.

6. The arrival of Team One had a widespread effect in stimulating resistance to the regime, and a large number of young men, called up for military service, fled to the mountains to join the team. Team One eventually acquired a group of about 20 armed supporters. Its leader reported however that little could be done in the way of active resistance unless the population were provided arms, ammunition, and food. Because of the unwieldy group which had collected around it, Team One took refuge in Yugoslavia after approximately eight months in Albania.

7. Teams Two and Three also received consistent local support following their arrival in Albania in December 1949. No member of these teams was captured alive by the security forces, although the leader of Team Three was critically wounded on two occasions, and once had to go into hiding for a prolonged period while recovering. Numerous arrests of persons suspected of associating with or giving shelter to the teams did not result in their betrayal to the security forces.

8. A continuous flow of information was obtained from the teams regarding the potentialities for resistance in north Albania.

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Although the anti-Communist forces were largely inactive, and were steadily depleted by widespread escapes to Yugoslavia or death at the hands of the security forces, all reports indicated that the desire to resist remained overwhelming. As had been previously reported <sup>by</sup> the leader of Team One, resistance was limited in large measure by the lack of weapons, ammunition, and food.

9. In February 1950, reports based on information provided by some 35 influential anti-Communists indicated the existence of some 2,000 men in the Puka, Zadrina, and Mnella areas prepared for armed resistance if the means were afforded them. In March 1950, a delegation headed by Mark Melyshi Bajraktari <sup>contacted one of the teams to request arms</sup> for an estimated 1,000 men in Kthella ready for active revolt. Three months later, in June 1950, a personal tribe-by-tribe survey ~~was~~ made by Pal Bib Mirakaj revealed the following estimated numbers of men in the Puka region willing and able to bear arms against the government:

Kabashi	-	600 men
Thaci	-	1,000 "
Iballja	-	300 "
Puka	-	500 "
Qarreti	-	400 "
Berisha	-	300 "
Mali i zi	-	500 "

10. A severe test of the teams' discipline and of their local support was provided by the NCFA leaflet drops, which were the first source of information the teams had of the existence of the Committee. ~~They~~ <sup>The team leaders</sup> requested clarification of the relationship of themselves and ~~the BSK~~ <sup>the BSK</sup> ~~leaders~~.

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to it, stating "it is essential that we answer the questions of those who have supported us, since these individuals regard NCFAs as the principal authority in exile." The BKI leaders at the base station were forced to answer these queries with obviously evasive answers; depending on the temper of the population, it appeared that any clear answer would result in one of two alternatives, both equally undesirable from our point of view: either a diminution of support for the BKI teams, when it was learned that their leaders had been omitted from NCFAs; or a refusal of the population to support NCFAs missions which might be sent into the same areas. This evasion of the issue by the base continued until the teams left Albania, and undoubtedly had a serious, though not fatal, effect on team morale.

11. Another problem for the teams was posed by steadily increasing Yugoslav operations into Albania. Yugoslav efforts impinged very directly upon them, since the UDB on several occasions in 1950 sent missions into Albania to contact ~~the~~<sup>our</sup> teams and as early as October 1950 made an attempt to recruit them. An equally important effect of the Yugoslav activities was the confusion sown in the minds of the population. In November 1950, ~~the~~ one team leader signalled: "Continuous entry into Albania of Yugoslav agents to distribute pro-Slav propaganda greatly damaging our position. Mountain population no longer knows which ~~said~~ to ask for guidance as to whether to place faith in voluminous Yugoslav propaganda, harken to beautiful phrases of NCFAs, or continue resisting and providing information requested by us. Prestige of our teams greatly damaged by this influx of propaganda from all sides and our own concentration on gathering intelligence, since many persons

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are spreading the rumor we are at odds with NCFA." Nevertheless, a fortnight later, following an extensive campaign by the security forces which took a heavy toll of the mountain resistance, he was able to report that "the population has steadfastly supported us during this search."

12. Indications of support for revolutionary action continued to be reported by the teams until the time of their exfiltration, and several resistance groups contacted them to ask for aid. Pursuant to instructions, the teams confined themselves to reporting on these groups. Their reports gave ~~no~~ evidence of an honest effort to report objectively; one group, for example, they reported to be penetrated by the security forces, while of another the team leader reported: "They live on nostalgia, though full of good will."

13. Concurrent with increased Yugoslav activity the teams reported a large-scale exodus of north Albanians to Yugoslavia. They stated that this exodus was accelerated by NCFA drops, which resulted in repressive action and arrests by the security forces.

14. In the summer of 1951, the teams themselves were forced to consider exfiltrating to Yugoslavia. Although their presence had long been well-known to the security forces, their departure <sup>was made necessary more by</sup> ~~the physical exhaustion of many of their members and the increasing difficulty of obtaining food than by the actions of Government troops.~~ The withdrawal of the two teams, completed in mid-August 1951, was carried out in an orderly manner after receipt of instructions from the base, ~~as to their conduct vis-a-vis the Yugoslavs.~~

15. Since the arrival of the teams in Yugoslavia, their

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members and the locally-recruited supporters who accompanied them have been treated with the greatest solicitude by the Yugoslavs in the hope of gaining their adherence to the Yugoslav-sponsored League of Albanian Refugees.

16. The final communication from the leader of Team Two in Yugoslavia gave the following estimate of the present potentialities for resistance within Albania:

"The Albanian people are extremely demoralized because of difficult living conditions, constant police persecution, imprisonment of popular figures and the indescribable sufferings of thousands of innocent persons...confined in the State's concentration camps. Nevertheless, their hope of rebirth is strong.... The best thing for morale would be the foundation of a true mass organization for the country's liberation.

"Such an organization could be founded even at this point, and would be especially effective in the northern regions where the population mass is homogeneous and where insuperable difficulties of ambition and political diversity do not exist. In the southern regions, dissensions do exist, and a large part of the population would approve stabilization of the present regime or even establishment of Greek hegemony over their territory.

"...Considerable possibility for penetration of the army and police by an anti-Communist organization exists, but such a step would be extremely dangerous.

"...Unfortunately, we missed an excellent opportunity to proceed along such lines. During the first days after our arrival in Albania, public opinion was completely in our

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favor and the population was willing to follow us in any undertaking.... We could not of course (organize such an undertaking) because of restrictions imposed upon us by you. Nevertheless, possibilities for action still exist...."

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