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1. Introduction

Gentlemen, I have come before you today to describe a projected OPC operation against Albania. This operation is not a large one by modern standards and even with complete success it will not be decisive in the cold war. Nevertheless, I believe it deserves your attention at this time for three reasons. In the first place it will be the first balanced and complex effort made by OPC involving a considerable number of techniques. Secondly, the operation has obvious military implications. In the third place, we hope it will develop typically and will demonstrate the wisdom of the National Security Council in placing all United States clandestine operations in OPC under centralized control and with policy guidance stemming as appropriate from the State Department and the National Military Establishment. You will recall that this concept is embodied in NSC 10/2.

2. Genesis of the Albanian Project.

As the political cleavage between Tito of Yugoslavia and the Kremlin deepened last year, it became apparent that Albania was physically isolated from the orthodox communist states.

In consequence the State Department perceived that disturbances in Albania could ease the pressure on Greece exerted by the

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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

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Albanian-based guerrillas and that the overthrow of the communist government would inevitably have far-reaching effects behind the iron curtain. [It was also evident that the Soviet Union has no effective counter against covert operations directed at Albania.] On these premises OPC planning began in midwinter and has now reached the stage where operations can commence about 1 July.

3. The situation in Albania.

As you may see from the map, Albania is roughly a quadrilateral bounded by the Adriatic, Yugoslavia and Greece. Its area is 10,629 square miles, about that of Maryland, and its population numbers something more than a million. The country's terrain characteristics are: (1) a rather narrow coastal plain rising up eastward through rugged hills to (2) a central north-south mountain range. East of the range lies (3) a heavily accidented valley which rises again to (4) the mountains, which form the Yugoslav frontier. The Albanian Alps rise to from 6500 to 8000 feet. Only one railway exists from Durazzo to the east of Tirana. Except for the coastal plain, roads are practically non-existent. Airfield sites are restricted to the plain. The principal cities are the capital, Tirana, and the ports of Durazzo and Valona. Clandestine ingress is easy over the shoreline and across the Greek border.

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The Albanians are a turbulent people, always willing to fight for hire or for loot. As a race they are only on the threshold of nationalism. Their social unit is the clan; therefore they resent fiercely the close controls implicit in communism. The country as a whole is reported to be permeated with unrest and among one large grouping, the Ghegs of the northeast, several hundred anti-government guerrillas are reported to be in the field.

Albania is a peasant country but is not self-sustaining in terms of food production. Industry is practically non-existent. The country produces some minerals, including a limited amount of petroleum. Export of these minerals in exchange for food has been barely sufficient in the past to provide for a subsistence economy. In the past, Yugoslavia has been Albania's traditional customer and the Tito schism has deranged the trade pattern and produced an endemic crisis. To date Russian attempts to fill this economic vacuum have failed. The crisis is blamed on the government and on the communists by the Albanians and adds to the popular unrest.

The armed forces number about 65,000. They are poorly equipped and trained and are not regarded as reliable. The Security Police are a considerable force and are technically more proficient than the Army, but they, too, have seditious elements.

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The existing government of Albania is orthodox communist under the leadership of Enver Hoxha. He came to power in 1945 by the now-standard channel of so-called "Peoples' Democracy". Originally the entire machinery of government was dominated by Yugoslavia. For instance, Yugoslav currency circulated freely in Albania. With the Tito schism, Hoxha adhered stoutly to Moscow and has been singled out by the Soviet Government for distinguished treatment. Nevertheless, he has had to deal with his own deviationists and there is evidence of some residual factionalism among the Albanian communists.

The foregoing can be summarized as indicating that internally Albania is ripe for revolt. All that is necessary is leadership, subsidy money and eventually some arms. In the field of external politics, however, the situation has certain delicate features.

There are about 1,500 Albanians in exile. None are of high attainments and the exiles are riddled with factionalism. Of the many groups three are important. The legitimists rally behind ex-King Zog, expelled by the Italians in 1939 to the great relief of many of his fellow countrymen. The Balli Kombetar, which is the strongest group, under the leadership of Midhat Frasherri is composed of liberal republicans. The National Independence Bloc is monarchist and conservative.

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These antagonistic entities must be impelled to a semblance of cooperation if any successful popular movement is to be sustained against communism in Albania.

Another problem arises in connection with the Greeks who lay claim to northern Epirus, theoretically because of an Orthodox minority in that region but practically from strategic reasons. With the Greek Government embittered against Albania because of the latter's support of the Greek guerrillas, it is a most inopportune time to ~~put~~^{force} them to renounce their claim. Nevertheless, their position must be moderated to forestall accusations that any Albanian revolt is the forerunner of partition.

In yet another direction we must take cognizance of the influence on Albania and the Albanians, of the concept of an independent Macedonia advocated by the Cominform. Danger from this quarter is not yet pressing, but may develop.

There is also the question of direct Russian intervention in Albania. Unquestionably there are Russians in residence there now. Some reports place their number as high as 3,000. Personally, I doubt this figure; it probably should be hundreds rather than thousands. Nevertheless, we must face the possibility that, if the operation drags, the Soviets may seek to stiffen the security forces by importing significant reliable cadres. This will be difficult for them, in view of possible Yugoslav reaction, but it is a matter to which we must be alive.

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Finally, there is the problem of Tito. Albania is a thorn in his side. He could eliminate it easily by military force but is debarred therefrom by the delicate multiple tensions now operative in the Balkans. Tito has apparently tried his own hand at subversive guerrilla action in the Lake Ochrid region, but since he could only oppose one brand of communism by another, he has thus far achieved no sensational results. However, his subversion continues. One of the obstacles to his overt intervention has been fear of the accusation that he was doing an imperialistic - capitalistic job. It must be admitted that a free Albania would be more vulnerable to Yugoslav attacks than is the existing regime. Nevertheless, we feel in company with the State Department that sufficient political leverage can be exerted to hold Tito in line. That, of course, will be a State Department commitment.

4. Collaboration with the British.

While we ^{were} ~~are~~ engaged in accumulating the data and making the judgments described above, we found that Albania was the target for other secret operations. I have already referred to the unsuccessful Yugoslav effort. Only recently, we learned that the British were on the verge of starting an operation in Albania. Their concept was more limited than ours: it involved small scale reconnaissance and guerrilla operations in Epirus with the object of disrupting the Greek guerrilla base in southern Albania. For some reason

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- possibly the gaining of credit with the Greeks was a consideration - they were not particularly worried about disclaiming their connection with the operation once it was in progress. As we studied these matters we rediscovered one of the axioms of secret operations. Whereas, in secret intelligence it is always possible and often desirable to insulate your activities from those of third parties, in the case of secret operations such a procedure is impossible. You have to take account of the actions of your colleagues, competitors or opponents, for they inevitably affect your own. In the present instance we have recently concluded conferences with the British and we have agreed to pool our efforts. We shall have joint policy direction from Washington and shall share training facilities and bases. Our physical operations, however, will be under separate national commanders whose cooperation will be coordinated from the joint headquarters. Consideration of tactical communications will be the subject of further discussions. At our instance the British have agreed to place their operations under the cover of an Albanian National Committee. We have agreed that each party will operate under its own policy clearances, which means that the British are not obligated to undertake more than their original reconnaissance and guerrilla commitments, although the door is open to them for larger participation if they so desire.

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5. Operational Plan.

Our Plan as evolved, recognizes the considerations that I have just finished describing. Essentially, it falls into four phases: political, propaganda, direct action, and exploitation.

In the political phase our first essential is the setting up of an Albanian body to assume responsibility for the operations and nominal direction thereof. This is essential because the United States cannot be placed in the position of directly and overtly fomenting rebellion in Albania. It would be particularly embarrassing if such a charge was leveled against us in the United Nations. Accordingly, we have set about the formation of an Albanian National Committee which will represent all shades of exile Albanian opinion, exclusive of fascists and communists. Our representatives have already been in touch with the principal Albanian emigre groups and have secured a large measure of agreement to the effect that they will sink their differences and cooperate in the expulsion of the Hoxha regime. The committee will take overt form about July 1st under the leadership of Frasheri of the Balli Kombetar. In actual fact, the Committee will be our agent. It will be able to operate only through facilities which we control. The words said over the radio will be prepared by us and the people sent into Albania will be selected and trained by us.

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A secondary political problem will be that of influencing the Greek official attitude toward Albania. We are very hopeful that we can get the Greeks by semi-overt diplomatic action to take a stand in which, without foregoing their claims in southern Albania, they will agree publicly not to pursue these claims by force but rather, after the restoration of order in Greece, lay them before the United Nations for adjudication.

About two weeks after the proclamation of the Committee, say about 15 July, we plan to inaugurate, in the name of the Committee, a strong propaganda campaign directed against the regime in Albania. This campaign will use semi-overt and clandestine means and all suitable media, including radio, printed material, and rumors. We feel sure that this campaign will produce perceptible ^{effects} ~~effects~~ on the stability of the Hoxha regime.

Effective about July 1st, we shall start the training of a group of about fifty agents for operations in Albania. These agents will be Albanians and they will be so trained that they will not be able to state that they have received instructions from either Americans or British. We are having some trouble in finding a properly secured area for this training and may have to compromise on Malta.

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Simultaneously with the training, we shall establish with the British an advanced base on the Island of Corfu. By September 1st we plan to have infiltrated these agents, in small teams equipped with radio communications, throughout Albania. Entry will be made over the coast or across the Greek border. The mission of these teams will be to make contact with opposition elements throughout Albania, to organize them, to demonstrate that the time is ripe for guerrilla operations and to ascertain their needs in terms of money and weapons. We believe that this fighting reconnaissance will give us sufficient data by November 1st to determine whether or not armed revolt is feasible.

If our reports are favorable, we would expect to be in a position by next spring to stage an effective revolt. This revolt might have to be stiffened by a small force drawn from the Albanian emigres but we will not be in a position to make a decision in this matter until the autumn. Therefore, we envisage a time period from nine to eighteen months before success is achieved.

We are considering two contingent operations in this connection. In the first instance, it may be advantageous for us to depress the Albanian economy by flooding the country with counterfeit currency. This will be a fairly easy task after we have once penetrated the country physically.

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Decision will not be necessary until late fall of 1949. In the second case, we have some information which is fairly credible that the principal military logistic support of Albania by the Russians is executed by using Polish ships sailing from the Baltic to the Adriatic. At some future time, again not imminent, it may be necessary to interrupt this traffic.

We have selected our Field Commander for this Albanian operation and he is now on his way to the Mediterranean.

The cost of this operation cannot be assessed precisely at this time. It should run anywhere from \$200,000 to \$1,000,000. The principal variables are the time length of the operation and the amount of subsidy money we shall have to spend. I submit, however, that the elimination of the Albanian base for the Greek guerrillas would alone be cheap at a cost of \$1,000,000.

Our field representative has been charged to maintain close liaison with the Chief U. S. Governmental representatives, civilian and military, in Greece. We realize that it is vital that we operate smoothly and in close cooperation with the executants of U.S. overt policy.

In this operation we have not considered employing directly any of the resources of the National Military Establishment. As events progress we may, however, have to ask for a limited amount of air support or naval assistance. We shall not do

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so unless we are convinced that no chance of compromise exists and all such proposals will be cleared in Washington.

6. Conclusion.

As I view this operation as a whole, I would like to stress again two of its salient characteristics - ^{action} ~~safety~~ and flexibility. In undertaking it we have nothing to lose except our immediate investments in time, personnel, and money. It is so conceived that it can be interrupted at any time if we think we have reached a point of diminishing returns or that success is compromised. As a minimum we should secure some disruption of the Albanian base of the Greek guerrillas. It is ~~eminently~~ possible that we shall completely paralyze that base. If we have great success we shall have eliminated a pocket of communist imperialism and dealt the Soviet Empire a blow that will resound behind the iron curtain in a manner comparable to the news of the disclosure of the Tito heresy and the lifting of the Berlin blockade.

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