

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
 CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
 SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 3B2B
 NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT 19 March 1953
 DATE 2007

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Briefing of Deputy Under Secretary of State Matthews on Possible Clandestine Action Against the Albanian Regime.

PARTICIPANTS: Messrs. H. Freeman Matthews, Walworth Barbour, Jack Jernigan, Walter Thurston and Outerbridge Horsey from the Department of State and Messrs. [redacted] and [redacted] of CIA.

1. On 17 March 1953, at the request of Mr. Horsey, Messrs. [redacted] conducted a briefing of Deputy Under Secretary of State H. Freeman Matthews, in the presence of the other State Department officials listed above, regarding possible clandestine activity against the present Albanian regime. This briefing was requested as a follow-up of the briefing given earlier by [redacted] and [redacted] to a recent Representatives' meeting, attended by Mr. Horsey, who reported it back to the State Department and subsequently asked to have it repeated for the benefit of Mr. Matthews and other senior State Department officials. Particular interest was shown in the question of the capabilities of CIA, and CIA's estimate of the Yugoslav intentions and capabilities.

2. After a general review of the history and background of the Agency's effort to build assets that could be brought to bear on the Albanian problem, the following conclusions and observations were presented as the Agency's opinion:

a. Under present circumstances, a completely clandestine overthrow of the Hoxha regime cannot be considered feasible nor can a completely internal one; any coup will require material support so extensive that supplying it would at best be semi-covert (comparable in nature, if not in extent, to that furnished the Greek guerrillas by Russia and the satellites);

b. Support of a coup in Albania is probably beyond the present, and presently foreseeable joint capabilities of the U. S. and British secret services;

c. A successful coup would require the full-scale operational cooperation of Yugoslavia, and a majority of the activities involved would have to be launched from Yugoslavia; limited operational activities can be mounted from Greece, but that country's role will be limited by the fact of its unresolved territorial claims on Albania, and by the

CLASSIFICATION REVIEW DIVISION

FOR DDO JAN 1990
 TOP SECRET

87601

relatively few

11 15 copies

relatively few able-bodied Albanian nationalists under Greek control; Yugoslavia's biggest asset, in addition to its long border with Albania, is a pool of 1,000 to 1,500 potential Albanian activists;

d. The present situation of Albania is not a malignant one except for the anti-regime Albanians; Albania is of no present real advantage, but rather an economic liability, to Russia or the Cominformist satellites, and in the event of war could be quickly over-run by Yugoslavia and Greece.

e. In view of presently strained relations between Yugoslavia and Italy, it is probable that the latter would adopt a position of exaggerated alarm in the event of an Albanian coup substantially sponsored by Yugoslavia, regardless of the true nature of Yugoslav intentions.

f. Over a period of four years in this field, the U. S. has built up a respectable store of assets in the form of tested agents, political influence, followers both within and outside the country, operational material and know-how. These factors, although not in themselves sufficient to bring about detachment of Albania from the orbit, have value in their present utilization, and could be employed to create a disturbed situation in the country that could serve as a pretext for U. S. intervention, if such a course appeared desirable.

3. On the basis of our recent re-analysis of the Yugoslav position, based in part upon our talks with the UDB, the following observations regarding Yugoslav intentions and capabilities were advanced:

a. The Yugoslav services share our opinion that a completely clandestine overthrow is not feasible. In their view, the Hoxha regime is the strongest Albania has ever had, and they believe that neither they nor any other clandestine service has the capability to upset it. While favoring the overthrow of the Hoxha regime, the Yugoslavs feel this should be attempted only when the international situation is ripe and internal conditions are favorable, neither of which they believe is the case today. Premature action, they feel, could be catastrophic not only in failing to accomplish the objective in Albania but also in rendering more difficult the accomplishment of similar objectives in Bulgaria and possibly other satellites.

b. The possibility of Soviet or satellite military reprisals or other counteraction against Yugoslavia resulting from any upset in Albania continues to concern the Yugoslavs, and appears to be a major factor in their conservative policy toward the Hoxha regime.

c. In suggesting that the best method to accomplish the overthrow of the Hoxha regime is to strengthen opposition elements inside Albania in order to create an organized force, the Yugoslavs stressed that there now exists no such organized force and gave no indication that they possessed any substantial assets of a Titoist or other nature inside the country. The Yugoslavs emphasized that the overthrow of the present

TOP SECRET

87601
Albanian regime
COPY 11 15 1953

Albanian regime must be brought about internally and that the primary targets for such an operation should be certain members of the Albanian Communist Party occupying key positions in the government and armed forces.

d. The Yugoslavs stated that it is essential to work with all forces, both internal and external, to supplant the present regime. They voiced no objection to collaboration between the NCPA and the Yugoslav-created Prizren Committee but felt that Albanian emigre groups must themselves find the way to get together. Although the Prizren Committee is not capable at this time of liberating Albania, nor of giving the proper development to the country, the Yugoslavs believe that it should serve as a broad popular front to wage the struggle for liberation from Soviet Russia and against any other foreign group which might seek to interfere in Albanian affairs.

e. While the Yugoslavs express confidence in the generally reasonable attitude of the Greeks toward Albania, and appear to feel that no real threat to the integrity of the smaller country is to be expected from that quarter, no such reliance on Italian policy exists. UDB representatives stressed the point that while Athens and Belgrade had expressed themselves as favoring a free and independent Albania, no such assurances had been forthcoming from Rome.

4. The conference was entirely for the purpose of briefing the State Department officers present, and no positive or negative recommendations were made.

[Acting Chief, SE]

Distribution:

DD/P - Copies #1 and #2
PFC - Copy #3
CPP - Copy #4
CFI - Copy #5
CPM - Copy #6
Mr. Harsey, via } Copy #7
C/SE - Copy #8
SE/ACPM - Copy #9
SE/CFI - Copy #10
SE/1 - Copy #11
SE/4 - Copy #12
SE/ACPP - Copies #13 and #14
TSCO - Copy #15

87601

~~TOP SECRET~~

COPY 11 OF 15