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MEMORANDUM

TO: Assistant Director for Special Operations

FROM: Chief, Foreign Division F

SUBJECT: Conference with [] on 16 and 17 September 1949
 re Albanian Operation

The following memorandum is based on notes taken by [] and [] in the course of a conference with [] at the Hotel Statler on the morning and afternoon of 16 September and the morning of 17 September 1949. Those attending this conference included [] Angleton [] For your assistance in reading this memorandum, we are attaching a copy of the questionnaire which served as a basis for discussion.

1. In reply to the question as to what had been told the Greeks with regard to the Albanian operation, [] stated that Ambassador Grady had advised Foreign Minister Tsaldaris in general terms of the formation of the Albanian Committee, and that Mr. Burton Y. Berry and Mr. Robert G. Miner had also informed Permanent Under-Secretary of Foreign Affairs Pipinelis. So far as [] knew, this was the only official word which had been given to the Greeks. Unofficially [] knew of no information which had been passed to them, and he himself had had no contacts with any Greeks on this subject. He was uncertain as to what [] might or might not have indicated to Greek contacts. [] had himself advised General Van Fleet and General Jenkins of the operation, and General Van Fleet planned to brief his new G-2, whose arrival was expected shortly, and his Chief of Staff. General Van Fleet had no contact with the Greeks in re.

2. [] does not believe that the British diplomats in Athens told the Greeks anything more specific about this operation. After Ambassador Grady had briefed Tsaldaris, the British Ambassador, Sir Clifford Norton, also spoke with Tsaldaris along the same lines. [] ([] opposite number) and [] (a sort of Assistant ASO from London and chief of the operation for the British) arranged to set up a British base on Corfu; this matter was cleared by [] with General Alexander Papagos and the Governor of Corfu. So far as [] knew, there had been no other British discussion of the Operation with the Greeks.

3. [] stated that he had never approached any Italian officials and said that he believed the British hadn't either. He commented that the British were always reluctant to ask the Italians for anything and left it to

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the United States to do everything in Italy, in contrast to their attitude in France, where they handled everything themselves. However, in the end they made the same sort of approach to Leppi in the Italian Foreign Office as made by the American representatives. In the American Embassy in Rome, both [] and [] had seen Leppi and discussed with him the formation of the Committee, an entry visa for Abas Ermeni, the release of Abas Ermeni from prison, and permits for members of the Committee to re-enter Italy. On [] request, a member of [] obtained a penal certificate for Sajt Kryeziu about the beginning of August; he did this, however, only through a safe cut-out and did not go himself to the Questura.

4. [] said that Midhat Frasherri had maintained contact with the Italian Foreign Office for some time and might reasonably be presumed to be still in contact with it. As for Zef Pali, Vasil Andoni and Halil Maci, [] believed that they did not go near the Italians because of their dislike for and opposition to them.

5. As a possible explanation of certain Greek actions in Italy which might appear to indicate considerable knowledge of the operation, [] pointed out that a recommendation had been made to the Greeks to issue a statement that, on the condition of the existence of a free and democratic Albania, they would renounce any claims against Albania except through UN or other legal channels and by peaceful means. The proposed text of this statement was submitted to the Greek Foreign Office two or three weeks before the announcement of the formation of the Albanian Committee was made. Greek Minister Capalidis in Rome may then have acted on his own in approaching B.K.I. leaders and Marka Gjoni and urging support of an organization for a free Albania.

6. It was decided that a joint American-British approach would be made to the French Government, on the service level, to permit the members of the Committee to enter France in order that the announcement of the formation of the Committee might be made in Paris. [] said that he had twice seen []. He said that Ribiere's office apparently obtained visas for the members of the Committee without advising the others, got in a "flap" as a result of obtaining the wrong kind of visas, and then went to the British. Mr. Matthews, a Britisher, took care of this matter. Since [] was worried lest the Committee be a source of embarrassment to the French Government, [] was prevailed upon to see [] and brief him on questions which were expected to be put to the Committee. [] met [] in the British Embassy, at which time [] brought up the question of Gani Kryeziu who, he said, had arrived in Rome that Tuesday afternoon. [] expressed great surprise and said he did not think Tito would permit Gani Kryeziu to leave the country. [] said that he had Kryeziu's address in Rome and inquired about the connection of the Committee with Yugoslavia. It later appeared that [] had been in touch with certain royal Yugoslavs, who apparently had expressed their views or fears to him. Two days later [] asked to see the Committee and

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volunteered to take them to an apartment, an offer which [] promptly declined. Inasmuch as [] had to go to Rome, he asked [] for the address of Gani Kryeziu there; [] was embarrassed and was unable (or unwilling) to give him the address. [] also said that King Peter wished to issue a statement of support of the Albanian Committee, an offer which [] hastily declined with thanks.

7. [] tried hard to pump [] on the relationship of [] to Leon H. Sherman, inquiring if [] was handling the matter as a representative of the State Department or as a CIA representative. [] protested his ignorance of this question and told [] that he would undoubtedly be able to have this question answered by Sherman himself. [] said that he either should have liaison in the Quai d'Orsay or that he should establish a new branch of his service which would correspond to the one handling the Albanian operation.

8. With regard to the question of security of recruiting and training of Albanians intended for operations inside the country, [] stated that, so far as he knew, no British officers had gone to IRO camps. He said that Halil Maci and Vasil Andoni had done the recruiting in the camps. In order to cover the departure of Albanian agents from Italy the British had chartered a plane for Cyprus. The Albanians were off-loaded at Malta clandestinely and the plane continued on to Cyprus, where the ship's passenger manifest was checked in such a way as to indicate that the Albanians had actually arrived and been discharged at Cyprus. In the event that, after their arrival in Albania, any of these Albanians should be picked up and interrogated, the British Government would say that they had been taken to Cyprus for training for jobs in Mauritius but had been found unsatisfactory and discharged, and that it did not know what had become of them after that. The first group of Albanians from Malta entered Albania about 15 September 1949.

9. In connection with the above Mr. Angleton commented that the British had betrayed their operational plans by asking the Greeks for forty Albanian identity cards. [] agreed that this did compromise the operational plan, to a degree.

10. With reference to British Major Herbert, [] said that his father was a wealthy man, not connected with the BIE, who had served in Albania during the Balkan wars, and who was subsequently scheduled to be made King of Albania. In fact he became British Minister to Albania, and had estates there. Major Herbert and his mother have been prominent in an Anglo-Albanian society and have maintained close contact with Albania, partly through entertaining Albanian contacts in the villa of Major Herbert's mother at Genoa, Italy. For the past 18 to 24 months Major Herbert has been active in efforts to persuade the Albanians to organize. However, [] stated that the British were unwilling to use Herbert in any way in this operation.

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11. In late April and early May 1949 Fitzroy Maclean saw Tito in Belgrade and, in the course of conversation with him, raised the question of Albania. Tito said that he would not oppose a change in the government, but that any new government would have to be acceptable to him and that Bog would not be acceptable. This meeting took place before [] came to Washington.

12. The only other thing which [] knew about Yugoslav aspects of the question was that the British Ambassador to Belgrade was in Trieste about 22 - 24 August 1949, at the same time that [] arrived there and then disappeared; [] suggested that [] might have gone to Trieste to brief the British Ambassador on the situation. [] knew of no other case when the British had discussed the matter.

13. To the best of [] knowledge, there had been no contact by any of the Committee members with Albanians in Yugoslavia. He said that Sajd Kryesiu has received a couple of letters from his sister-in-law, the wife of Gani Kryesiu, saying that she had never been able to verify the fact of Gani's release from prison. Indirectly Sajd Kryesiu also received word from Ambassador Cannon to the effect that there had been reports of Gani's release, but no proof. Sajd swears that he has had no contact with his brother. [] expressed the view that the British would never trust the Committee members to do anything without the knowledge of the Americans. He added that those Albanian leaders reported to have met with Yugoslav representatives in Trieste under British auspices had not been absent long enough from Rome during [] absence to go to Trieste for such a meeting, and that the persons alleged to have gone to Trieste had not been away from Rome at the same time.

14. [] stated that he knew of no Major Wilkerson or Wilkinson, nor of any Brigadier Forrest Walker. He stated that [] was active in this operation and described him as a big, tall, husky fellow. He said that [] of the Life Guards, was in charge at Malta. No British Brigadier has anything to do with the British base on Corfu, which is being set up as an RAF weather station. The operational boat is the MARIA ANGELO, the former cigarette-smuggling activities of which are being used as cover; it is run by former Squadron Leader [] who on one occasion took the boat to Sicily, possibly Palermo, for repairs. Other Britishers prominent in this operation are [] [] [] and []. [] is not involved, or at least he has never been mentioned, and no approach has ever been made to Albanians in Syria. [] had no knowledge of Strangways in Athens; he described him as "I" chief of 21 Army Group during the war. Parenthetically [] mentioned Charlie Lanias, a free-lance writer married to a Turkish girl but with no known means of support, since little or nothing of his work appears to be published; [] suggests that he may be in the employ of the BIS in Greece.

15. [] stated that, on 17 July 1949, he had read a report dated 18 July, from an Italian intelligence service, on United States and British activities in connection with Albania. Later he saw another report along the

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same lines. In addition to these two reports, which were made available to him by the British, he also received from the British information on Pienga, which he passed on to OPC. From the British he also obtained overlays of Albanian coastal defenses and up-to-date airfield information. In this connection [] stated that the British gave him considerably more information than he received from our people.

16. [] said that Verlaci himself had never been invited to participate in the Committee for Free Albania. With regard to the meeting at which Ndue Marka Gjoni had been invited to join the Committee as an individual, he said that Ndue knew that [] was present and must have known his nationality in view of [] references to [] as "My British colleague"; he said that he also used such expressions as "We Americans and British", etc., so that Ndue Marka Gjoni must have known that the Americans as well as the British were interested in supporting the Committee. According to [] the idea of a Committee originated with the United States, since the British had previously been working only with the Balli Kombetar. [] believed that the British did not think in terms of a Committee until 4 or 5 June or (according to Mr. Angleton) until 27 May, when [] advised London that a Committee was in the wind. Mr. Berry and Mr. Miner had twice discussed the idea in Rome and once in Cairo (with Zog) before this date, suggesting Frasheri as chairman of an eventual committee. Zog agreed on a committee in principle but felt that it should be under his control and aimed at his restoration. When the Committee was announced, he was disappointed over its composition. [] suggested that Zog might be behind the rumors of a deal between the Western Allies and Yugoslavia over the disposition of Albania.

17. [] said that Kose Muka was working for ex-King Zog, who, he said, was putting out feelers to all. He thought that Abas Kupi probably was not working with the Greeks, although Muka might be. [] had never heard of Eaku Gogo nor of Hedo Metaj. According to [] Ismajl Sefa was operating entirely on his own. He said that the Committee would not authorize an approach to the Italians (and felt that the Balli Kombetar probably would not authorize such an approach) in view of the relations of the Committee with the Italians at the present time, as for example, the arrest of Abas Ermeni and the anti-Italian position of the Balli Kombetar.

18. [] had no knowledge of any discussion with Randis regarding the partitioning of Albania. He stated, however, that some Britishers favor partition, as for example, Godfrey Hobbs, who has his office next door to Greek Commander-in-Chief Papagos.

19. Abas Kupi, according to [] is certainly under British control, since he owes his life to [] and [] however, he is also aware of the power of the United States. Sajt Kryesiu, because of the financial help which he has received from the British, may also be considered to be under British control but to a lesser extent than Kupi. Frasheri, [] said, has no loyalty but to himself, and has no funds; he had been denounced by BBC as a collaborator. [] feels that he probably has as much influence with

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Frasheri as the British. He said that Frasheri was delighted to learn that the seat of the Committee would be in New York. Zef Pali has no British influence and no British contacts. Nuci Kotta [] considers to be definitely pro-American; he has an uncle in California who is a banker.

20. In [] view, the General Committee is not important. He commented that Abas Ermeni, like Zef Pali, is a young and tough idealist and not pro-British; it was the Americans who obtained his visa for him, provided him transportation, and got him out of jail, and consequently American prestige is probably higher with him.

21. The British denied giving any mandate to the Greeks to recruit, and [] heard nothing from the Albanians to support any such claim. [] said that each party represented on the Committee recruits for its own area.

22. Muharrem Bairaktari, according to [] is grateful to the British and the Greeks for their attitudes towards him; he is an opportunist and a megalomaniac.

23. Zog mistreated Kupa at Cairo, and Kupa showed clearly that he would leave Zog if we undertook to back him, but we advised against. Kupa may have understood that he had clearance to approach the BKI people on 7 July, although the Balli Kombetar would have no talk of the BKI. [] believed that Salim Demani so translated instructions that Kupa was misled into making the contact with the BKI people and that Demani probably had Zog's orders to get the BKI leaders in.

24. Abas Ermeni flatly refused to join as military leader if the BKI or Marka Gjoni were included because the BKI was too tainted as traitors and collaborators to put on the Committee. [] stated there has never been any intention of bringing any Kosovar into the Committee. According to [] Marka Gjoni was in favor of including Khafer Deva and the Kosovo group in the Committee, contrary to a report which we received.

25. When Ermeni went to Trieste he was sent up from Rome by the British in an Embassy car to the border, crossed over on his own, and then was taken in a car again within Trieste to a British safe-house. This was done to avoid his arrest since the Italians were describing him (in circulars which they distributed) as "a dangerous British agent". Ermeni's arrest while he was in Italy on valid Greek documents, [] said, was a police mistake. [] and [] were sent to Trieste about the 4th of August to reassure Ermeni; they stayed quite openly with General Airey.

26. Mehdi Frasheri is not in the picture. The two top people are Midhat Frasheri and Abas Kupa, while Abas Ermeni is third in importance.

27. Stavro Skendi is a teacher at Columbia and, in [] view, is probably the outstanding Albanian in the United States. He speaks English

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fluently. He refused to join the General Committee because he was not consulted. He is not a politician and does not have a strong following inside Albania.

28. Hasan Desti has been in America 4 months. A founder of the Balli Kombetar, he carries weight inside Albania; however, he would not be accepted by the Committee because to do so would upset the political balance in favor of the Balli Kombetar. Frasherri opposes him for reasons of personal prestige.

29. Colonel Qugu, who was on Zog's general staff and a graduate of St. Cyr but during the occupation did little fighting, has been in evidence lately. Said Kryeziu knows him well and thinks him competent. He has tried to contact OPC, probably through the State Department.

30. Zef Pali, Frasherri and Halil Maci gave information about an OSO operation with Italian Navy people. They said they had a man on the team and had arranged a code with him so that they could get information from him. Just before the man left, however, something went wrong in the arrangements for giving him the code, and he failed by 20 minutes to get it. [] does not believe that the Albanians mentioned this in order to get a reaction from the Britishers present but thinks it may have been an inadvertence. Pali mentioned it but then stopped to check with Frasherri; however, Hare caught a few words and came right over and, in effect, asked for a repetition of the story. The British are aware, according to [], that we are running operations with Verlaci and the Italians.

31. [] stated that he had no reason to think that Greeks, Italians or French have their controls on the Committee but considered it quite possible.

32. [] said there were many signs of Greek and Italian opposition to the Committee. Kyrkos is one source of rumors designed to discredit the Committee by linking it with the Yugoslavs, and reports to the Greek Government as a paid agent. He is very close to Verlaci, who was trying to sabotage the Committee. The Italians will be increasingly difficult about our recruiting in Italy, [] observed, and said that it was not in the Greek interest for the Committee to succeed. If we tried to run the Albanian show alone, the British would also be against us.

33. The British operations going into southern Albania are not straight intelligence operations, but they can run separate intelligence operations, just as we. All British intelligence produced is given to the ASO for his use in connection with the operation. The Rome Valuable man gets all the secret intelligence that Rome has to help him in his operations.

34. The British in Italy are being very careful not to antagonize the Italians. They have, however, come up with CE reports which look like the production of a penetration. The British postal intercept service in Italy and Greece (sic) is very good. Incidentally, [] told [] that if he gave names to the Americans and they checked with the Italians, the latter would know immediately of American interest in the operation.

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35. In Greece, the British worked closely with Godfrey Hobbs, who is very close to Papagos and thus a good intelligence channel. On the SI side, the British have apparently maintained from their pre-war service people who have been working for them for more than 25 years. OPC worked through a Gonatas, apparently an old-time British agent, in an effort to acquire a Norwegian-type cutter of 8 knots' speed; Gonatas was proposed by the British as a safe cut-out.

36. The following Britishers were mentioned by [] in the course of the discussion:

- a. [] now with this operation on Malta or Corfu, was in Albania during the war.
- b. [] in London, is in charge of Middle East production.
- c. [] is No. 2 man to []
- d. [] on Malta, was for a time with SIS, Cairo.
- e. [] on Malta.
- f. [] is on Malta.
- g. [] replaced [] as head of S.I.S. for Middle East in the field.
- h. [] is apparently the [] *psd.*
- i. [] was [] opposite number, so to speak. [] worked with [] who was responsible to [] but was lent by [] to []
- j. [] the top [] accompanied [] to Baldwin's office.
- k. [] appears to be the top man [] had to contact [] was not sure of this name) apparently is his assistant; he was in Paris recently.
- l. [] is the contact man for Valuable in Rome.

37. Finally, [] spoke to the following effect: "All interested persons are aware that something is cooking and what's cooking is more than propaganda. This is evident from the concern exhibited and the statements made by Vaudreuil and Nikolopoulos. Security is not possible in an absolute sense on a thing like this. However, security can be maintained, and, in my estimation, has been closely maintained on the important factors of how, when and where. It amounts to the same thing as our knowing that the Russians have been behind the Greek business, but not having the real evidence to prove it."

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QUESTIONNAIRE ON ALBANIAN OPERATION

1. What have the British told the Greeks, in view of their understanding and support of the Albanian Committee? (On 11 June Capsalis, Greek Minister in Rome, told BKI leaders that the Greeks regarded a united Albanian political committee as very important, repeated many of the views of Major Herbert, and stressed the desire of the Greeks that Mihalq Frasheri be included on the committee in view of his strong support from the British Foreign Office - [] IN-95104.)
On 4 July we were advised that Bari Greek Consul Nikas, claiming his visit had full British approval, asked a number of Albanians in the IRO Transit Camp at Bari to return to Greece, where they would be well treated and have an opportunity to serve their country in special operations - [] IN-36721. About 26 August 1949 Capsalis visited Marka Gjoni and asked him to support the Free Albania Committee - [] IN-42377.)
2. To what extent have the Italians been taken in on this operation? (On 27 August Ismajl Sefa, a Ballist, approached an Italian official and said that he was ordered by the Balli Kombetar leadership to approach Italian authorities and to investigate the possibility of cooperating with the Italians in para-military operations against Albania; Sefa, without so stating, conveyed the impression that he had received his orders from persons now on the Albanian Liberation Committee - [] IN-41972.)
3. To what extent have the French been advised of the Albanian operation?
4. Has [] had any contacts with representatives of Italian, Greek, or French intelligence services?
5. Have there been any deals (or discussions) with Tito or his representatives by Americans, Britishers or Albanians? (This question is asked in view of repeated reports of meetings between Albanian leaders and representatives of Tito.)
6. Have there been any negotiations with Gani Kryeziu? Do plans as now envisaged call for the cooperation of Gani Kryeziu at any time?
7. What is the present status of operations? How many Albanians have been recruited to date? Where are they located? Who is training and equipping them? When are they to be sent in? Where? What will be their assigned tasks? What is the division between the British and OPC as regards operations? Does OPC have, or plan, any operations independent of the British?

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8. What are plans for future recruitment of Albanians? How many will be recruited? Where? Will all recruiting be done by the British? What measures are contemplated to make recruiting more secure? } why?
9. Is the North African training base still planned? When will it be in operation? Will it be restricted to OPC personnel and agents, or will it be operated jointly with the British? } why?
10. Is the propaganda broadcast ship still planned? When will it begin operating? Where? } why?
11. With what Britishers does [] work? What are the roles of [] Herbert, [] [] [] [] [] }
12. What is the basis for the report that, about 4 August 1949, [] and Herbert met in Trieste with Midhat Frasherri, Abas Kupi, Sajd Kryeziu and Abas Ermeni from Italy and Geni Kryeziu, Kol Gjeloah and two representatives of Tito to discuss plans for the overthrow of the Albanian regime? (See [] IN-40217)
13. What knowledge does [] have of any plans for Koco Muka, Abas Kupi or Raku Gogo to go to Athens to confer with the Greek Government in connection with a proposed Greek-Albanian confederation? (See [] IN-41008)
14. Does [] have any knowledge of a visit by a "significant British personality" to Greek Minister of Public Order Rendis on 19 August at which the Britisher stated that the best solution for the Allies is cooperation with Tito on condition that Albania be divided into three parts, the northern part to go to Tito, the southern part to the Greeks, and the central part to be left to the Albanians? (See [] IN-40608)
15. What British or combined operations are planned from Corfu? Who is in charge? What is the cover for these operations? What have the Greeks been told? (See [] IN-40521, Part B, Para. 10, and [] IN-39068, Para. 4)
16. What are the real reasons for Zog's repudiation of the Albanian Liberation Committee? How generally is his repudiation known? Are there any prospects of obtaining his support of the committee?
17. What does Abas Kupi now represent, after Zog has withdrawn his accreditation? Does Kupi have any personal following in the Legaliteti Party? Was the approach of Abas Kupi to BKI leaders on 7 July on instructions from the British or OPC, or did he act independently? (See [] IN-36632)

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18. In view of Kog's repudiation of the committee, what importance is now attached to obtaining the participation or support of the BKI? Are any further steps planned to insure the participation of BKI representatives in the committee? If so, what representatives would be acceptable to the other members of the committee?
19. Is there any intention of enlarging the committee to include active Kosevar participation?
20. What evidence does [] have of Italian opposition to the Albanian committee or plans for carrying out the Albanian operation?
21. Are there any indications of Greek opposition to the committee or to the operation? Are any Greek operations in Albania likely to complicate the plan drawn up by OPG and the British?
22. Which Albanian leaders, in or out of the committee, are considered of most importance, and why?
23. Are all dealings with Midhat Frasher, or does Mehdi Frasher also enter the picture?
24. What dealings have there been with Prince Marka Gjoni, and what dealings with his son Ndue? What are the reasons for dealing with the son, and not exclusively with the father?
25. Which members of the committee does [] consider as being British-controlled?
26. Has the arrest of Abas Ermeni caused any great embarrassment, or is it likely to affect adversely the work of the committee?
27. Does [] know of any contact between Albanians in Italy or Greece and Gani Kryeziu, Lufti Spahiu, or other Albanians in Yugoslavia?
28. Is any serious consideration being given to the partition of Albania between Yugoslavia and Greece, or otherwise? Is there any discussion of plans for a political and/or customs union between Albania and either of her two neighboring states?
29. Who were the two persons who invited Ndue Marka Gjoni to join the Albanian committee as an individual? (See [], IN-39751)
30. To what American officials in Italy, Trieste and Greece is [] identity known?
31. Has [] sent any reconnaissance agents into Albania? How soon does he plan to? How many will there be, and in what areas will they operate? (See [], IN-38579)

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32. Has [] had any indications from his British colleagues that Tito may be hastening alleged plans to overthrow Hoxha and to impose his own rule on Albania?
33. Are there any indications that Muharrem Bajraktari would, given the opportunity, go to Yugoslavia to work with his brother Bajram? (See [], IN-36931, Part II, J)
34. To what extent do Albanians "in the know" believe the Albanian Liberation Committee is British sponsored and controlled, or that it is a joint Anglo-American creation?
35. Who were the members of the Balli Kombetar who informed Alderdice, in the presence of his British colleague, on 29 July of the visit in early June of Italian Naval intelligence officers to an Albanian refugee camp near Padua and of the revelation by the latter of operations allegedly being conducted in Albania? Does [] recall the names of any of the Italian Naval intelligence officers in question?
36. What objections do the British have to including representatives of the EKI on the Albanian committee? What objections do other members of the committee have?
37. Does [] have any information regarding a report that Umberto Klinger was sent to Italy at the end of May 1949 as an emissary of ex-King Zog to make contact with General Alberto Pariani to discuss a possible Italian/Zogist operation to liberate Albania?
38. Does [] have any knowledge of any present activity on the part of Hoxha Metaj?

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