

NOTES ON COUNTER GUERRILLA ACTION
IN ALBANIA

Albania
INDEXED

I OBJECTIVES

1. To relieve the pressure on Greece
 - (a) by guerilla operations directly aimed at MARKOS's bases and lines of communication in southern Albania;
 - (b) to foment insurrection in other areas of the country, thereby weakening the position of the Albanian Communist Government and reducing their willingness and ability to support operations directed against Greece.
2. To endeavour to undermine the Communist position in the weakest of the orbit countries. Any success in this aim may produce repercussions in the satellite bloc which could in turn be followed up and exploited. *with a view to detaching info from bloc*

II ADVANTAGES OF ALBANIA AS A TARGET:

3. Effective action there would at the very least have a stimulating effect on the declining morale of the Greek forces and populace. At best, it might alter the whole basis of the campaign in N. Greece, and present an answer to the at present insoluble problem confronting the Greek National Army.
4. Owing to the TITO-COMINFORM dispute Albania is in a relatively exposed and isolated position.
5. Insurrection is endemic. Such little information as has recently come out of the country indicates that though tribal revolt is at present unco-ordinated and on a small scale, it is still continuing.
6. *are not in def relations with* (We do not recognise the Albanian Government). Further, any protest they may make, if it cannot be countered by denial, can be met by a simple tu quoque based on the recent ineffectual U.N.O. findings.

III PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS:

7. Experience has shown that in present circumstances it

/is almost impossible

is almost impossible for individual agents to cross the Greek frontier through the guerilla area into Albania. Our operations will therefore have to be conducted by the following methods:-

- (i) Armed bands or fighting patrols crossing the frontier. These would, of course, have to operate with the full knowledge and consent of the local Greek authorities. *security?*
- (ii) Sea landings by caique or, on occasions, possibly by submarine. It is not to be expected that any high degree of security will be maintained on the caique crews engaged on such operations.
- (iii) Parachute drops from Italy or Greece. These will be the most secure, though, even in this case, if operations are conducted on any appreciable scale it will be impossible to conceal for long the fact that the British authorities are implicated. *what way?*

In practice, the emphasis will probably be on frontier crossing and possibly sea operations in the south; parachute drops and possibly sea operations further north.

8. It would be uneconomical to launch these operations without being fully prepared to develop them actively, energetically and on a wide scale. It would involve us in considerable effort, the probable loss of life and the provision of (for once) factual ammunition for Communist propaganda and protest, without holding out the prospect of any comparable advantage being reaped from success. If we do not attempt at least severely to handicap MARKOS's operations, the undertaking does not appear to be worthwhile.
9. We cannot undertake operations on an adequate scale from Greece without the assistance of the Greeks themselves. It will in fact be for them to provide much of the training and other facilities which will be needed, receiving advice and assistance from us.
10. Two great powers cannot operate independently in small countries such as Greece and Albania. To avoid extensive confusion and waste of effort, our plans will have to be co-ordinated with any which the Americans may be making. We would therefore propose to keep the Americans informed of what we were doing, and to co-operate with them in so far as this is necessary.
11. It will not be practicable to develop large scale operations from Italy, though certain agents may be despatched from there. This will necessitate a degree of connivance by the Italian authorities, which can in all probability be obtained.

12. Owing to weather conditions and difficulties of movement within the country - as well as the time needed for our preparations - it will not be practicable for us to launch operations before the spring. To achieve the maximum effect, these operations should be undertaken simultaneously on as wide a scale as possible and, in the south, co-ordinated with any action by the Greek National Army.
13. It is probable that in the initial stages potential resistance groups in the interior of the country will have enough weapons locally available for their needs. If the campaign develops, supply operations will become necessary, probably by air drops from Greek airfields.

IV OPERATIONAL PLAN:

14. It is probable that sufficient recruits for operations can be found among the Albanian refugee groups. These groups are, however, divided into many political factions squabbling and intriguing among themselves. We feel that for a start we should concentrate on using members of the centre party, the BALLI KOMBETAR, whose main strength is in the south, and certain small Parties or groups of individuals who are on reasonably good terms with it, and who have influence in the centre and north east of the country. With tactful handling, it should be possible to maintain some degree of collaboration between these people if operations develop successfully.
15. The main effort to achieve our primary objective above will, of course, have to be made in the south. We consider that it should be carried out on as wide a basis as possible, and that the operations should be planned as a series of tactical moves to strike against MARKOS's rear and bases.
16. As stated above, to do this on a scale which would produce worthwhile results would necessitate active collaboration with the Greeks. It will, in fact, be for them to take the initiative, using in particular the Grecophone elements in southern Albania. In this we should give them such assistance and technical advice as we can. Parallel with their activities, we should also ourselves handle similar operations using the supporters of the BALLI KOMBETAR Party, or others who for reasons of politics and racial antipathy might be prepared to work with us, but not directly with the Greeks.

17. In addition to these counter-guerilla operations aimed directly against MARKOS in the south, we should also undertake operations in the centre and north east. These should be regarded, on the short term, as diversionary action to support the campaign in the south. If they go well, however, they may provide the basis of the wider insurrection envisaged above as our second objective (para 2).
18. We would propose for a start launching two such operations, probably based on Italy. The parties would consist of a W/T operator and one or possibly two guerilla leaders with personal influence amongst the local tribes. One operation would go into the centre of Albania, and one into the north east.
19. We would not in the initial stage propose putting an operation into the north west. Though excellent guerilla country, the refugee leaders with influence there are mainly compromised for collaboration with the Italians in the past. Their use would give the Albanian Government a popular rallying cry in propaganda against us, and might also antagonise the BALLI KOMBETAR and other moderate refugee groups with whom we hope to work.

V PROPOSED ACTION:

20. If the above proposals are agreed in principle, we should at once take steps:-
 - (a) To recruit and train suitable agents to operate in north east and central Albania. These will probably be found in Italy.
 - (b) To approach the Greek authorities and BALLI KOMBETAR leaders in Athens, prepare plans and begin training for operations in the south.

Unless we make a start immediately, we will not be in a position to act in time to exert any influence on the course of fighting in the spring.