

TOP SECRET

Policy towards Albania

INDEXED

The dispute which broke out last summer between Tito and the Cominform was accompanied by a parallel breach between the Governments of Yugoslavia and Albania. From that moment Albania, which occupies a position geographically exposed towards the West, became cut off by land from the Soviet bloc to which the Government of Enver Hoxha still adheres. That Government is however riding an uneasy saddle and there appears to be great discontent in the country, and perhaps open revolt in certain areas. All these factors have tempted the Americans and ourselves independently to consider whether, by some clandestine operations on a relatively small scale, Enver Hoxha could not be overthrown and Albania wrested from the Soviet grip. Even if it were not possible to achieve as much as this, the elimination of Albanian aid for the Greek rebels would be a very valuable first objective.

With these ends in view the question has been tentatively examined with Mr. Hayter's Friends and it has been agreed that an essential first step would be to build up an intelligence system which would confirm whether conditions were favourable for further operations and, if these were embarked upon, provide the requisite flow of information. In his letter at Flag C however 'C' considers that it is not worth incurring the effort and possible loss of life entailed by such preliminary moves unless we are prepared to follow them through. The whole proposal, as at present envisaged, is accordingly now submitted to the Secretary of State.

Recommendations:

1. That in the first place arrangements should be made by 'C's' organisation to set up an intelligence system in Southern Albania, preferably based (with Greek connivance) on Corfu. Owing to the nature of the country and people of

Albania/

Albania our agents, who would be Albanian or Albanian-speaking W/T operators (but, for political reasons, <sup>would</sup> not including Greeks) infiltrated by sea or air, would have to supplement their purely intelligence functions by some direct methods of probing and by testing local preparedness for action <sup>on</sup> with the smallest possible scale.

2. That if the outcome of the above is encouraging, instructors in modern guerrilla warfare would also be infiltrated, who would recruit, arm, feed, clothe and train anti-Communist supporters for the limited objective of purely military operations and sabotage directed against the Greek rebel bases and lines of communication. These operations would all take place inside Southern Albania and not be carried out across the Greek frontier.

3. That the practicability of extending operations to Northern Albania and to insurrectionary purposes should be left over for subsequent examination in the light of the progress achieved on the lines suggested above.

4. That 'C' should inform his American contacts of what it is proposed to do and invite them to join in if they wish.

Considerations:

Although there is some risk of our activities being discovered and of the Soviet bloc attempting to make political capital out of exposing them before the United Nations or otherwise, it is felt that we should be able to brush aside such charges without great difficulty as the general temper of the United Nations would be on our side. Any suspicions directed at us would, it is hoped, be far less substantial than the factual evidence against the Soviet satellites made

available/

available by U.N.S.C.O.B.

2. The advantages, according to 'C', of having an intelligence base on Corfu would appear to outweigh the disadvantages of approaching the small number of Greeks who would have to be let into the secret in the initial stages.

3. Similarly the further security risk involved in telling the Americans would appear inevitable as the State Department have taken up with us the question of action in Albania and asked for our views, and it would be inconsistent with our relations with them if we were now to go ahead without telling them. There is moreover a danger that if the Americans were not informed, 'C's' people might find themselves treading on the toes of some parallel American scheme.

4. It is realised that in the present state of our relations with Tito, a forward movement by ourselves in Albania might make him suspicious of our intentions and even perhaps drive him back in the Cominform direction. It is interesting in this connection however that M. Bebler suggested to the Minister of State on March 14th that Western agents should use Koci Xoxe, who is disgraced in prison in Albania, as a rival to overthrow Hoxha, and he said that Yugoslavia would not intervene. It is doubtful how far M. Bebler's views should be held to represent those of his Government but it is in any case felt that as long as operations were limited to Southern Albania the Yugoslavs would not take umbrage.

5. It is assumed that the Soviet Government as soon as they were aware of what we were up to, would counter attack as best they could, but it is not thought likely that they would intervene openly or by war-like means.

6. To sum up, the whole project is admittedly a

venturesome/

+ Koci Xoxe was a former  
Minister of Interior. He is a communist  
but paralysed with Hoxha

MB

venturesome one, but it is submitted that the present situation is particularly favourable for action and that the prizes to be won are worth the risk involved.

*Jalbot de Malahide*  
Foreign Office  
21st March, 1949

Seen by Mr. Bateman.

Secretary of State

I understand that you wished us to consider what ~~best~~ clandestine action we could take in Albania to shake up the Government there, and to help the Greeks.

The foregoing is the best plan we can think of, in present circumstances.

W. Triang  
21/3

I will give this  
NOTE thought EB  
✓ Limit this memo  
Chrymi-  
PO

The S. of S. would like  
a copy to go to the P. 2.

Per 23/3