

Translation

MEMORANDUM

I. On February 24, 1961, Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania Mehmet Shehu, upon the request of P. N. Pospelov, head of the CPSU delegation to the Fourth Congress of the Albanian Labor Party, received the representative of the Warsaw Treaty's Unified Command, Colonel General A. M. Andreev. At this meeting, Colonel General A. M. Andreev raised a number of questions about the state of relations between Albanian personnel and Soviet personnel at the Vlorë naval base which, according to him, has become an obstacle to the combat readiness of the base.

In this regard, on February 28, 1961, the Unified Command's representative sent a letter to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania with information "about the abnormal relations" between and Albanian and Soviet personnel at the aforementioned base.

The Chairman of the Council of Ministers has given special attention to these claims, expressed orally or in the information of February 28. It is appropriate to point out that the Albanian government, which duly understands the significance of the Vlorë Bay naval base for the common defense of the Warsaw Treaty member-countries and all socialist countries in general, has always treated everything pertaining to this base with great care and in the most serious way. Driven by these considerations, and so that there would be no lack of clarity that could bring about undesirable and harmful misunderstandings, the Chairman of the Council of Ministers dispatched an order that all necessary measures be taken for a comprehensive and reliable investigation of all the issues raised by Colonel General A. M. Andreev.

One cannot help mentioning that the aforementioned issues, given their significance and nature, could have been resolved on the spot by the respective commands at Vlorë base – as had been done in a number of other cases. Colonel General A.M. Andreev came to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers without bothering to have these issues resolved in a routine fashion through the appropriate channels at the Vlorë base. Moreover – and this fact is of special significance - he did not raise them with the Ministry of People's Defense of the People's Republic of Albania, and he did not contact Minister of Defense Colonel General Beqir Balluku even once. There can be no doubt that this method of handling the situation contradicts the usual practice and the

regular rules for such cases. It does not correspond to the spirit of fraternal relations, cooperation, and mutual understanding that should exist among our countries. In such circumstances, naturally, a question arises: Why was it necessary to act in such a way, why have all kinds of questions been gathered from all over the place – including the issue of children in the village of Dukat – and presented directly to the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the Peoples' Republic of Albania? It is crystal clear that this is not an acceptable way of resolving matters in the interests of strengthening cooperation and solidifying and enhancing the combat readiness of Vlorë naval base.

II. Despite all this, regardless of the way in which the issues were posed and that they had been gathered over a long time, they were examined - as I previously pointed out - with due attention. After an objective review and in light of the conclusive evidence obtained during the most accurate investigation possible, it turned out that the real substance of events had nothing in common with the narrative presented by the representative of the Unified Command. Specifically, the essence of these issues, which are grouped below based on their characteristics, boils down to the following:

1. Issues relating to cooperation and compliance with order and discipline.

Regarding the alert of the Fleet Staff and the garrison on Sazan Island on 23 January 1961, the Supreme Commander of the Navy of the People's Republic of Albania, Rear-Admiral Hito Chako, notified his advisor, Captain First Rank P. P. Kulik, in person 24 hours before the alert and reported on the purpose of the alert and the time when it would be issued. It is worth noting that, after the alert was issued and the whole island literally resounded with the alert, the advisor to the waterway area defense brigade, Captain First Rank A.A. Zagorodny, was absent from duty although all the Soviet ship advisors had already taken their posts,. Such behavior is completely inappropriate; it contradicts vigilance and military discipline. It also reflects an unacceptable disrespect for the Naval Command of the People's Republic of Albania.

It is true that on 23 January and 19 February 1961 foreign ships were observed near Otranto Channel. However, it is not true that the Soviet advisors had not been informed about it. In the first instance, Captains First Rank P. P. Kulik and V.Z. Chuikov participated in the maritime situational analysis. It was held in the operations officer's room with the Navy Supreme Commander of the People's Republic of Albania and the Navy Chief of Staff on the morning of 23 January. In the second instance, a group of foreign ships was discovered in the Otranto Channel exactly at midnight on January 19-20, and the Soviet advisors were notified the morning of 20 January. On the same day, as soon as army intelligence learned that these NATO ships were conducting a mine-warfare exercise in this area, Captains First Rank P. P. Kulik and V.Z. Chuikov received

immediate notification. In connection with this, Captain First Rank P. P. Kulik proposed sending a ship into neutral waters near the exercise in order to gather intelligence. The fleet commander's response was positive, and, indeed, one ship did carry out the mission.

It must be pointed out that prior to October 1960, Sevastopol regularly informed the navy of the People's Republic of Albania about the movement of such foreign ships during NATO military maneuvers through the staff of the Soviet submarine brigade at the Vlorë base and through the channels available to this staff. However, beginning with the time cited above, the Soviet side stopped supplying such data.

It is not quite clear how the training of Soviet advisors could be obstructed - as the information of 28 February stated - by the desire expressed by the commander of the Albanian submarine group and by the individual commanders of Albanian submarines to have an Albanian crew and a Soviet crew participate in all of the submarine sorties. What could possibly be bad about that? According to the agreement of 3 May 1959, the Soviet crews are present as advisors on the Albanian group's ships. It is understandable and commendable that the Albanian crews want to learn as much as possible from the Soviet advisors and acquire the relevant skills as soon as possible. If the Soviet side sends young sailors in their first year of service to Vlorë base (who are in need of training themselves), then it is clear that the Albanian side is not at fault. At the same time, sending untrained personnel is wrong; it contradicts current agreements and military law and order. Sailors with such a short period of service cannot have the appropriate skills to be authoritative advisors to Albanian personnel in their third and fourth years of service. Advisors must possess the appropriate capabilities. As long as the current abnormal situation persists, it will impede the technical improvement of the Albanian personnel and will not contribute to the good relations and effective collaboration that should exist between Albanian and Soviet crews.

An inspection of Submarine No. 270 did not confirm the assertion that on 8 February 1961, Lieutenant Aleko Poayni refused the request of the Soviet advisor to conduct an exercise and banned all other Soviet advisors from assuming their posts in the submarines.

Neither did the inspection confirm that the Albanian crew of Submarine No. 296 did not participate in exercises on 7 and 14 February 1961. It is appropriate to point out that neither the staff of the Albanian submarine group, nor the fleet staff of the People's Republic of Albania, had ever been notified of such incidents. On the contrary, there were multiple cases when, against all approved plans, Soviet advisors did not participate in the Albanian crews' exercises and did not help them; they claimed that they were acting in accordance with the plans of their own Soviet commanders.

The inspection did not confirm the assertion that there had been some violations on submarine No. 270 - that the torpedo tails had not been stopped. Soviet advisors had never informed the commanders of the Albanian submarine group about such violations.

It is true that on December 29, 1960, the deputy commander of sub hunter No. 500 contacted the Italian ship's crew in Russian through a loudspeaker since, prior to that, the Italian ship had not responded to any international signals of the Albanian sub hunter. However, there was no security violation here, since it is clear that, in order to communicate with a foreign crew, the Albanian officer had to resort to one of the known international languages – and Russian is one such language. It is also appropriate to note, since the document of 28 February mentions the incident described above in connection with concerns about the divulgence of a military secret – specifically, the divulgence of the presence of Soviet personnel at the Vlorë Naval Base –, one should consider the blatant violations carried out by Soviet sailors at this base. Contrary to the agreement between the two countries, they are wearing ribbons with Russian inscriptions on their sailor's hats: "Black Sea Navy" or "Baltic Sea Navy".

It is true that the commander of submarine No. 296 was late on 11 and 17 February. However, Soviet advisors were also tardy on a number of occasions. The commander of the Albanian submarine group had brought these shortcomings to the attention of the Albanian commanders and the Soviet advisors.

It is also true that there had been some violations during the demagnetization period on Albanian ships and that in some cases there had been technical deficiencies similar to the ones described in the information of 28 February. Such violations occurred on 30 December 1960 and 3 February 1961. The leadership of the Albanian People's Navy took appropriate measures to correct and criticize them.

However, it is worth pointing out that Soviet advisors had committed similar violations and had had similar technical problems. For example, Soviet engineer A. P. Varlamov was AWOL in Tirana for four days, thus impeding the demagnetization of the two very same vessels, No. 842 and No. 844, which are mentioned in the information of Colonel General A.M. Andreev of 28 February.

It is true that on 13 February 1961 the commander of submarine No. 270 did not permit a Soviet civilian repair crew to enter the submarine at night when its personnel were absent. However, this was done in full compliance with the current guidelines and rules, which prohibit repairs on submarines in the absence of their crew.

The incidents of smoking in prohibited areas on the Tomori mother ship did take place. Albanian and Soviet sailors were among the smokers. The leadership of the Albanian submarine group brought it to the attention of the mother ship's personnel and took appropriate measures regarding the smokers.

Soviet communications advisor G.A. Belov was notified about the inspection of observation and communication posts conducted by the fleet staff in early February, along with the problems identified in the course of that inspection. Had he wanted to, he could have personally participated in the inspection. It is true that advisor Belov did not attend the meeting of the observation and communication post commanders that was

convened to analyze the shortcomings identified during the inspection because the communications chief of the fleet staff did not tell him about that meeting. However, it should be pointed out that advisor G.A. Belov himself, in turn, did not display due interest in participating in the meeting (such meetings are typically conducted upon the conclusion of inspections). Despite the recent, impolite and condescending attitudes of the Soviet side toward Albanian personnel, the Albanian cadre still maintains close cooperation with their Soviet comrades, informing them about all problems, and seeking their advice. One can certainly say that no work-related meetings of command and staff have ever been conducted in the absence of Soviet advisors.

Our clarification of the aforementioned issues demonstrates that only some disciplinary incidents and order violations were true and that they involved both Albanian and Soviet personnel. Relevant measures were taken in response to some of the incidents. Such problems on both sides are not new. They were observed not only over the past few months, from December 1960 through January/February 1961, as the representative of the Unified Command incorrectly stated; they had occurred in previous years, just as they did in 1960. It is important to note that there were many such violations by Soviet personnel at the Vlorë naval base. In order to prove this, in addition to the aforementioned personnel problems of both countries, one could refer to the following specific examples:

On 5 January 1961, the Albanian duty officer found nine Soviet sailors smoking in non-smoking areas. He brought it to their attention, and they left.

On 2 February 1961, a Soviet crew dismantled the main engine's main fan on the mother ship TOMORI. It was placed on a gun turret. Against all technical guidelines, the Soviet sailors started hitting the fan with a crowbar, trying to take it apart. As a result, the fan's blades were broken.

On 28 January 1961, Soviet sailor Vladimir Popov, command advisor to the radio-engineering group, was seen drinking the alcohol that is used for cleaning the ship's engineering equipment. There were many violations involving Soviet advisors' drinking alcohol on board the ship. Drinking was observed even in the mother ship's engine compartment.

One could quote dozens of such discipline and engineering violations by the Soviet personnel at the Pashaliman Naval Base. The issue of such violations was reviewed by the leadership of the navy of the People's Republic of Albania and resolved with the respective Soviet commands and political staffs in the spirit of mutual understanding that should exist between the fraternal personnel of both countries. Violations similar to the ones mentioned above were committed by both Albanian and Soviet personnel in each unit, large and small. Given their nature, such issues could be resolved internally in the units or by the military commands – there was no need to raise them at the government level.

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Douglas Selvage, Principal Investigator.

2. Disagreements regarding coordination of activities and authorities based upon the existing order.

There were some problems in the mutual exchange of information between the operations service of the Albanian submarine group and the operations service of the Soviet team in the submarine brigade. However, violations were observed on both sides. The Commander of the Navy of the People's Republic of Albania, Rear-Admiral H. Chako, and Captain 1st Rank N. P. Kulik reprimanded the commander of the Albanian submarine group, Captain Third Rank Dashamir Ohri, and the Soviet commander of the submarine brigade, Captain First Rank L. F. Rybakov.

However, the claim included verbatim in the information of February 28 – that the operations service of the Albanian submarine group should have asked the Soviet operations command of the submarine brigade for permission to move ships in Pashaliman – is wrong. Based on the existing instructions for ships in the outer harbor that were developed jointly by the Fleet Staff of the People's Republic of Albania and the Soviet advisors, and in accordance with the agreements concluded between the government of the People's Republic of Albania and the government of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, responsibility for the organization and management of movements in the Pashaliman Bay is vested with the Albanian command.

With respect to the movement of submarine hunters through the training firing-ranges of the immersed submarines in the Bay of Pashaliman, the inspections that were conducted did not confirm any such cases. However, it should be stressed that all the ships' movements are performed in accordance with weekly and daily schedules that are fully agreed upon by the fleet staff of the People's Republic of Albania and the Soviet staff of the submarine brigade. Even if such incidents did occur, they would have been the responsibility of the Soviet Staff due to its non-compliance with the schedule for joint movements or its personnel's lack of awareness of the external movements at sea.

It is true that on 26 February 1961, while leaving Pier 1, a water-supply vessel slightly touched submarine No. 270, which was nearby. It happened due to poor maneuvering in poor meteorological conditions. Nevertheless, the movement of the water-supply vessel was based on a confirmed schedule. It was authorized by the operations officer on duty, who was in charge of ships in the outer harbor – i.e. by the operations officer from the Albanian submarine group. In terms of frictions between Lieutenant Aleko Poyani and Captain Second Rank A.D. Chernyshev, it should be pointed out with regard to this incident that the Soviet submarine team aspires to keep all movements in Pashaliman Bay under its authority. Thus – as happened in this particular case – it clashed with the authorities granted to the Albanian submarine group for ships in the outer harbor. Because the leadership of the Soviet submarine unit has been moving

ships without notifying the operations service of the Albanian Group, there have been many violations in Pashaliman Bay. One can give the following examples: 1) Submarines No. 276 and No. 282 performed unauthorized movements from Pier 2 on 19 and 23 January 1961; 2) On 23 January 1961, the Soviet transport SEIMA left Mother Ship 519 without permission. Thus, in January alone there were 12 such incidents. The ships used by the Soviet unit move in accordance with the direct orders of the Soviet operations officer on duty and do not respond to the signals of the Albanian operations officer on duty.

On the other hand, it is worth noting that there was another case in which Soviet crews were to blame for the collision of ships due to imprudent maneuvering, and those incidents were even more significant. For example, there was an incident with speedboat No. 146 which sank at the stern of Mother Ship Kotelnikov, and an incident with Submarine No. 374, which ran ashore on Sazan Island.

The problem attributed to Senior Lieutenant Petrit Muftiu has nothing to do with reality. In fact, on 2 February 1961, Tug-Boat Kozma Nushi was in jeopardy of sinking in the area of Shonyan, at which point it issued an S.O.S. signal. The Albanian operations officer on duty gave an order to the Albanian submarine operations officer on duty to do everything necessary to provide assistance to the aforementioned tugboat. Senior Lieutenant Petrit Myuftiu, who was on duty as the group's operations officer, told the officer on duty aboard the TOMORI to prepare a speed-boat in order to get to the sub hunter that was located in the proximity of Pier 2. That was necessary in order to dispatch the order to the sub hunter's commander to go and help Tug-Boat Kozma Nushi. After the speed-boat had already left, the deputy Soviet commander of the TOMORI ordered it to return. He said that the Soviet advisors do not answer to the Albanian commanders and that the boat could not start without an order from the Soviet commander of the submarine brigade. The intervention of the Soviet deputy commander represented a violation of the authorities of the submarine group's operations officer on duty, under whose command mother ship TOMORI laid. It also impeded the urgent assistance necessary to save the sinking tug-boat.

Already at the beginning of December, the Soviet commander of the submarine brigade, Captain First Rank L. F. Rybakov, acknowledged in the presence of the Supreme Commander of the Albanian Navy that the practice of issuing direct orders to the submarines belonging to the Albanian group was harmful. He promised that in the future his orders would be dispatched not through the advisors from the Soviet command, but through the command of the Albanian submarine group. However, in violation of that useful management principle, on 28 February 1961, he issued an order to move Submarine No. 290 from Pier 2 to the port side of TOMORI and to replace the submarine's battery elements. He dispatched the order through the commanding advisor of Submarine No. 290, Captain Second Rank Komarov. Under such circumstances, the

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Albanian commander of Submarine No. 290, Senior Lieutenant Petrit Myuftiu, performed the movement after notifying the Albanian submarine group's command. He did not cause any delays in carrying out the Soviet brigade commander's order.

It is not true that Submarine No. 296 was moved from the dock without informing the Soviet brigade's commander. Documentation confirms that it had the permission of the Soviet brigade's commander. Neither did the Albanian dock commander perform the immersion of the dock on 3 February 1961 in the absence of the submarine crew. He performed a checkup of the dock by having it filled with an adequate amount of water, and, in fact, it did not cause any accidents. Dock immersion in order to lift the submarine was carried out while the crew was in the submarine, and it was done in accordance with all the rules and in the presence of Soviet engineer Captain First Rank V. P. Ivanov.

The assertion that the Albanian commanding officers in charge of the navy of the People's Republic of Albania have interfered with the authorities of the Soviet commander of the submarine brigade or with the authorities of the advisor to the Albanian Navy is based on a single incident, which is described incorrectly in the information of 28 February 1961. It took place on 15 November 1960. On that day, Navy Supreme Commander Rear Admiral A. Mathi issued an order: Mother Ship TOMORI was to return to Pier 1 since it had already completed demagnetization. However, upon the order of the Soviet brigade commanders, Rear-Admiral Egorov and Rear-Admiral A. V. Zagrebin, and without the permission of the commander of the Albanian submarine group, which includes the Mother Ship TOMORI, it stopped at the outer anchorage.

According to the first section of the agreement of 3 August 1959 between the Government of the People's Republic of Albania and the Government of the USSR, Mother Ship TOMORI and all other ships comprising the submarine group are directly subordinate to the Albanian command. Given this provision, it is clear that it was not Rear-Admiral Mathi who interfered with the authorities of the Soviet submarine brigade commander. On the contrary, the brigade commanders, Rear-Admiral A. V. Zagrebin and Rear-Admiral S.G. Egorov, ignored Rear-Admiral Mathi's authority, as has happened in many other cases and thus violated the aforementioned agreement.

The persistent demands of Rear-Admiral A. Mathi to return the mother ship to pier were also justified because if it unreasonably failed to return, during the period of its absence, all the submarine crews quartered on board the TOMORI would have been deprived of training and a place to live. At the same time, the insistence of Rear-Admirals A. V. Zagrebin and S.G. Egorov to keep the mother ship in the outer harbor is not understandable. According to the weather forecast, good weather was expected (and it was, indeed, good). This incident was portrayed completely differently in the information of the Unified Command.

There were some problems with the information exchange on board the TOMORI regarding the exiting and entering of the ship by personnel from both countries. However, these problems existed both on the part of the Albanian crew and on the part of the commanding advisor of the mother ship. With respect to the event on 23 January 1961 at 22:30, the inspection that was conducted has shown that five naval officers from the People's Republic of Albania were on board the TOMORI to provide assistance and control that night – not twenty, as the information of 28 February 1961 states.

According to the actual words of the representative of the Unified Command quoted in this information, the Albanian personnel are present on the TOMORI only as apprentices – they do not have any responsibilities or any authority. Undoubtedly, such an approach contradicts the provisions of the relevant agreements that transferred ownership of all ships at the Vlorë naval base to the People's Republic of Albania. The actual transfer occurred already before the ships arrived in Pashaliman Bay. The approach of the Soviet side contradicts the spirit of fraternal relations and the mutual respect that should exist between the armed forces of our fraternal socialist countries. The provisions of the aforementioned agreement acknowledge that the Albanian base command possesses certain authorities. These provisions provided a basis for the development of the current guidelines for naval activity in the outer harbor.

Signs of a contemptuous and insulting attitude toward the Albanian command and the Albanian personnel at Vlorë naval base were a frequent occurrence among the Soviet personnel and the responsible Soviet officers at the base. The command of the Albanian submarine group has strictly adhered to orders in terms of their responsibilities toward the Soviet command of the submarine brigade. However, the personnel in the Soviet submarine [brigade] and on the mother ship do not recognize and do not comply with any subordination to the commander and the staff of the Albanian submarine group. The Soviet personnel receives orders directly from the Soviet commander and from the staff of the Soviet submarine team, it performs movements only upon the orders of the Soviet command; and it reports on combat readiness and combat training only to the Soviet commander and the Soviet staff – it thus ignores the staff of the Albanian group in which the Soviet personnel serve as advisors. There is no doubt that such downgrading of the authority of the Albanian submarine group staff and the obvious violations of the most basic military rules by the Soviet personnel temporarily included in the crews of the Albanian submarine group have made a bad impression and offended the Albanian officers. This trend of a contemptuous attitude toward the Albanian group's command and flagrant violations of the chain of command continues to this day among the Soviet personnel, although the Soviet advisor to the Navy Supreme Commander and the commander of the Soviet submarine brigade promised the Navy Supreme Commander at the end of November 1960 to put an end to this abnormal situation. Thus, for example, on 12 April 1960, the Soviet commander of Submarine No. 296, which belongs to the

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Albanian submarine group, told the group commander, Captain Third Rank Dashamir Ohri, the following: “Not only will I not move this submarine upon your order, but even if the Minister of the People’s Defense of the People’s Republic of Albania tells me to do so, I will obey only the orders of the commander of the Soviet submarine unit.” An incident involving Rear-Admiral S. G. Egorov provides another example in this regard. On 15 November 1960, while addressing the commander of the Albanian submarine group, he said with disdain: “These boats are not yours. The presence of the Albanian flag on them and their officially-documented transfer to the government of the People’s Republic of Albania upon their arrival at Vlorë naval base are only formal political acts on our part.” It would be excessive to emphasize that such expressions and such behavior, which clearly disregard the current agreements between both countries, are unacceptable both from the standpoint of military order and discipline and from the standpoint of the fraternal friendship that exists between our countries and between the people of the Soviet Union and the People’s Republic of Albania – especially, when such Soviet officers engage in such behavior. It does not contribute to our cooperation and improve combat readiness at Vlorë naval base – in fact, it causes serious damage.

Clarification of the aforementioned issues demonstrates that non-recognition of the authority and competence of the responsible Albanian officers at the base is the main cause of disagreements, and it causes damage to the operations at Vlorë naval base. Such non-recognition contradicts the current agreements between our countries and the spirit of fraternal relations and fraternal cooperation, which should be the guiding force behind the work of personnel from both parties at Vlorë naval base.

3. Attitude toward Soviet Crews

It is not quite clear why the question about the stationing of twenty Soviet sailors in cabins on board the TOMORI was raised, since it had been resolved a long time ago. Actually, the facts are as follows:

Due to the Albanian crew’s increased proficiency in using the equipment, after the fourth quarter of the last year, the number of Soviet advisors on the TOMORI decreased in accordance with the current agreement, which provides for the gradual withdrawal of Soviet crews from the ships that had been transferred to the People’s Republic of Albania. However, in December 1960, the number of Soviet personnel aboard the TOMORI mother ship unexpectedly rose again. This created difficulties in quartering the Soviet personnel on board the TOMORI. It is known that the vast majority of the Albanian crew serving on the mother ship is quartered on shore. Forty-eight Albanian personnel on the mother ship had to sleep on the deck. Only 20 Soviet crew members also had to sleep on the deck. Nevertheless, on 20 January 1960, the Supreme Commander, who always tries to create the best possible living conditions for the Soviet

personnel, decided to vacate 70 berths in the Albanian crews' cabins for the Soviet personnel sleeping on deck as soon as he learned about the situation. His advisor, Captain First Rank P.P. Kulik, agreed with the decision of the Supreme Commander and dispatched Lt. Colonel N. F. Savalei to report to the brigade commander about it. Thus, the issue of the quartering of the 20 sailors on board the TOMORI was considered resolved. Since then, the Soviet advisors and instructors have never raised this issue with the Supreme Commander or the fleet staff of the People's Republic of Albania. Therefore, it is not clear why the Office of the Unified Command's Representative in Tirana raised this issue that had been resolved long ago – particularly, why it was raised with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania.

With respect to the constant care and concern of the Albanian side regarding the living quarters of the Soviet personnel, it should be noted that the residential housing for Soviet advisors with families was built in Dukat and Vlorë. It is still vacant and has not been used by the Soviet side. All of this happened while many Albanian officers at Vlorë naval base, due to significant shortages of housing space, do not have a place to live. It is clear that, under such circumstances, the Albanian officers can only voice regret when the Soviet leadership at Vlorë base or at the Office of the Unified Command's Representative raises non-existent issues of residential housing.

The investigations that were conducted show that the Chief of Fleet Combat Training, Lt. Captain Muharem Lyulyaly, was not in Pashaliman on 3 January 1961. Therefore, the assertion that he allegedly voiced his criticism to Lt. Captain Olenovis, as described in the information of 28 February, is incorrect. Moreover, there was not a single case when the Chief of Fleet Combat Training made direct, critical remarks to the Soviet advisors regarding the general plans.

In response to the insult of Albanian Junior Sergeant Velishova by Soviet Sergeant Varlamov, who said that Velishova does not have any command abilities, the Albanian sergeant politely responded that he is the commander of space aboard the ship and is responsible to his command for fulfilling his duties. The assertion that Junior Sergeant Velishova told Varlamov to go back to the Soviet Union has not been confirmed.

The assertion that an Albanian electrician allegedly addressed his comrade, Sergeant Rogachev, with insulting words has not been confirmed either.

TOMORI electrician Vasil Trusha does not admit that he had allegedly been asking the Soviet sailors to sell clothes to him. However, it might have happened, because the Soviet sailors frequently engage in the sale of clothes not only in Pashaliman garrison, but also in the town of Vlorë. The Albanian command has informed the Soviet advisors and instructors about this on a number of occasions.

Regarding the excrement found near the quarters of Soviet advisors and instructors in Vlorë, Captain First Rank P. P. Kulik reported it to the Supreme

Commander. The Supreme Commander was told by the competent authorities whom he had contacted that this had been done by hooligans, that such occurrences happen not only near Soviet military housing but also near Albanian housing and that the authorities were searching for these hooligans.

There was not a single incident in which the Albanian side at Vlorë naval base did not raise flags or perform the national anthems of both countries during national holidays or fraternal meetings between Soviet and Albanian sailors. The information of 28 February phrases this question, in contrast to the other assertions, in an abstract form – without any specific information about when and where it occurred. The absence of specific information indicates that these assertions are ungrounded. We must regretfully state that this assertion represents an attempt to manipulate the feelings of the Albanian and Soviet sailors; such attempts are not aimed at strengthening relations between the Albanian and Soviet sailors, but, on the contrary, at poisoning them. Nevertheless, no force in the world, it should be pointed out, can break the eternal friendship between the Albanian and Soviet peoples, and people who try even slightly to impinge upon this pure friendship will definitely receive the response they deserve. We reject any such claims with indignation.

One can infer from what has been stated above that the majority of allegations regarding the attitude toward Soviet soldiers have no basis in reality and are generally so trivial that they should not be made into governmental issues. Moreover, they are devoid of any substance because even the most elementary logic shows that they do not reflect the attitudes toward the Soviet personnel at Vlorë naval base or the state of combat readiness at the base. It is very regrettable that the Representative of the Unified Command of the Warsaw Treaty has raised the issue of children in the village of Dukat (who allegedly insulted Soviet children) with the Government of the People's Republic of Albania. Such events are so minor that they have not even been investigated. One cannot take the words of a little boy from Dukat as a criterion for judging relations between Albanian and Soviet personnel at Vlorë Naval Base.

At the same time, it should be said that by raising the aforementioned issues, the Office of the Unified Command's Representative assumed a one-sided and subjective position, since similar shortcomings were present among dozens of the Soviet personnel, and they were actually more significant than the ones attributed to the Albanian personnel in the information of 28 February. One could mention in this regard the incident with a Soviet sailor on the TOMORI mother ship, who, on 26 October 1960, punched Albanian sailor Theodore Dimo, or the incident with Soviet sailor Victor Brichenko, who, on 16 December 1960, grabbed Senior Sergeant Beqir Kelmendi by the throat and pushed him while Kelmendi was on duty at his combat post. Here is another example: on 12 October 1960, Senior Radio Operator Dosi Gramo was on duty receiving radio telegrams from Vlorë. Soviet Senior Radio Operator Alexei Kontsevoi kept shouting from his chair

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where he was also on duty and thus obstructed Gramo's receipt of radiograms. This is why Gramo told Kontsevoi: "Let me receive the radiogram without interruptions." A. Kontsevoi suddenly flared up, got up from his chair, and rushed toward D. Gramo, shaking his fists at him. Senior sailor Gramo looked at Kontsevoi and did not respond right away. When Kontsevoi returned to his seat, Gramo said: "Only a fool can act like that." Senior sailor Kontsevoi got up from his chair again and said: "Your Albanian heads should be squashed with a hammer, since you don't have any material or technical resources: we give you everything – from work clothes to submarines, and still you don't obey us." Senior sailor Gramo said the following: "This is the business of our party and our government; therefore, I don't need to talk about it." Similar cases, especially of insults and a scornful attitude toward Albanian sailors, are numerous.

It should also be noted that some Soviet officers – and this is especially important – maintain contacts with people who were discharged from service or expelled from the Albanian Labor Party. Here is a specific example: on 17 January 1961, Captain Third Rank V.D. Smirnov invited former Captain Kastriot Bitry to dinner. Bitry was discharged as a man with poor morals and poor political behavior; he was also expelled from the party. Soviet officers who used to work with him know about this. The dinner was also attended by Soviet Captain First Rank Diftirenko. Naturally, such behavior by the Soviet officers is completely unseemly and can only create a bad impression on the Albanian personnel at Vlorë Base. It does not contribute to fraternal cooperation between the personnel of both countries. It is thus desirable that the Soviet command at Vlorë naval base take measures to prevent the repetition of such behavior.

The fleet command of the People's Republic of Albania and all Albanian personnel at Vlorë naval base have always maintained a fraternal attitude toward their Soviet comrades and have had feelings of sincere love for them. The Albanian side has always displayed politeness and patience despite the fact that, on a number of recent occasions, the Soviet officers at Pashaliman naval base have displayed a condescending and scornful attitude toward the Albanian officers and all the Albanian personnel and have ignored their competencies, as described above.

As detailed above, based on the investigations that have been conducted and the discussion of all the issues that were raised by the Representative of the Warsaw Treaty's Unified Command, it follows that the vast majority of incidents have been of a rather trivial nature. Such events can happen in any military unit, and the most important ones, which relate to cooperation between personnel of both sides and to their areas of responsibility, are the result of Soviet officers' non-compliance with previously-coordinated plans. They are also the result of a refusal to recognize the standing and competence of the Albanian side. It should be noted that over the last two months relations between the Albanian and Soviet personnel have improved, but constant efforts in this direction are still required.

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Regarding the issue of revising the current naval service guidelines for the outer harbor, the Supreme Commander of the Navy of the People's Republic of Albania, acting in a spirit of cooperation and mutual understanding, does not object to such a revision so that order can be restored at Pashaliman Bay. Nevertheless, it should be done while steadfastly adhering to the principles and provisions of the current agreements between our countries.

The clarifications of the various issues have also demonstrated that the Soviet side raised them unilaterally and with partiality, which is not a constructive approach and cannot serve the cause of cooperation and a strengthening of relations between the personnel of both countries.

Regarding the issue of combat readiness at Vlorë naval base, raised by the Representative of the Unified Command at the meeting with the Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the People's Republic of Albania on 24 February 1961, which is mentioned in the information of 28 February 1961, the Albanian government fully agrees with the opinion of the Unified Command's Representative regarding the gravity of the situation. The Albanian government has drawn the attention of the Soviet government to these issues on other occasions as well. The Albanian government deems the situation that has been created at Vlorë naval base - which is the only military base of the socialist camp in the Mediterranean - worthy of the attention of the Soviet Government and the Warsaw Treaty's Unified Command. However, it cannot agree with the opinion of the Representative of the Unified Command regarding the real substantive reasons for the decline in combat readiness at the base. It is actually surprised by how the Representative of the Unified Command, while touching upon the issue of combat readiness at Vlorë naval base, can so easily keep silent about the substantive reasons that are raising such obstacles.

Even if some of the deficiencies observed in the mutual relations between both sides' personnel at Vlorë naval base do have some significance and require certain actions in order to prevent their recurrence, these deficiencies are not the real cause of the current unsatisfactory situation at the base in terms of its combat readiness. We should look somewhere else for the real cause of this situation which, at the same time, is also the main source of the deficiencies in relations between the personnel of both sides at the base.

The grave situation at Vlorë naval base can be explained only by the new position that the Soviet side has adopted over the last few months regarding the implementation of certain agreements between our countries regarding the base.

It is a fact that beginning in the second half of last year, the Soviet side, in violation of all current agreements, suspended the technical transfer to Albanian crews of the ships that had been allocated to the People's Republic of Albania. The Soviet side also suspended the delivery of equipment, materiel, and fuel. Beginning in September of

last year, it suspended the delivery of engineering materials and construction equipment to the main sites at the base and thus caused a stoppage in the work at Volhov-Edinorog, a stoppage in the laying of underwater communications cable, a stoppage in the work at Sopka Complex, a stoppage in the deployment of the Karaburun coastal artillery battery and the rotary wing squadron at the Vlorë airport, a stoppage of the work at the torpedo storage facility, a stoppage in the installation of high-voltage lines, and a stoppage in the production of dismountable reinforced concrete elements at the test range.

Despite all these difficulties, the Albanian side performed all the preparatory and other tasks related to construction at the aforementioned sites at Vlorë naval base. Everything that was entrusted to the Albanian side was carried out on time and is ready.

The Ministry of People's Defense of the People's Republic of Albania has contacted the Soviet side regarding all the aforementioned issues, which are critical to the combat readiness of Vlorë naval base. It was done through its representatives in Albania, through the inspection groups that come from the Soviet Union for periodic inspections, and in the letter that the Minister of People's Defense of the People's Republic of Albania sent to the Soviet Minister of Defense on 6 July 1960. Until this very day, the steps taken by the Albanian side – despite all the promises – have remained fruitless.

Through its position adopted since September of last year regarding the envisaged supply of Vlorë naval base, the Soviet side has not only limited the sphere of cooperation between the Albanian personnel and the Soviet instructors and advisors, but has also created a serious situation in terms of the Vlorë base's combat readiness and, as a result, created a completely unsatisfactory atmosphere among the personnel at the base. The Albanian personnel at the base have been surprised by this stance of the Soviet side. Our people frequently confront Soviet instructors and advisors with the following questions: When will the spare parts for the vessels arrive? When will the fuel arrive? When will the materials designated for the construction sites arrive? They ask these questions because they don't know how to explain the delays on the part of the Soviet Union with respect to Vlorë naval base, which is located in a socialist country, the only socialist country on the Mediterranean. Moreover, it is known to them that the sailors of a capitalist country in the Mediterranean – the United Arab Emirates – have received ships of the same class from the Soviet Union, and in the course of eight months have learned how to operate the relevant equipment with the assistance of Soviet advisors. When faced with such questions, the Soviet instructors and advisors, who are unable to respond, feel embarrassed and just shrug their shoulders. The Albanian sailors are surprised to see tankers arriving from the Soviet Union with fuel for ships at sea that are operated by Soviet personnel, while the onshore fuel-storage facilities remain empty and without any reserve. It should be pointed out that the current, grave situation at Vlorë Naval Base must be of serious concern to the Command of the Soviet Armed Forces and to the Unified Command of the Warsaw Treaty.

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So, it is absolutely clear – and the most elementary logic demands acknowledgement of this fact – that the current situation at Vlorë naval base in terms of frictions and misunderstandings between the Soviet and Albanian personnel at the base and in terms of its combat readiness have been caused by the new stance of the Soviet side regarding compliance with current agreements and with its commitments to increase combat readiness at Vlorë naval base.

This grave situation is of particular significance in the current international situation, as American imperialism is constantly reinforcing its positions in the Mediterranean and is feverishly implementing its policy of war preparations. It is being done by consolidating the striking power of the Sixth Fleet, by expanding the networks of American bases along the shores of the Mediterranean and the Adriatic Seas, and by fully equipping them with weapons of mass destruction.

One must hope that this objective outline of comments pertaining to all the issues raised by the Representative of the Warsaw Treaty's Unified Command and of the real reasons for the current situation at Vlorë naval base will encourage the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Treaty's Unified Command to examine the status quo objectively – so that everything is clarified; so that harmful misconceptions can be avoided; so they can see what has created the deficiencies; and so they can take appropriate measures to improve Vlorë base to meet the tasks that have been dictated by the current operational and strategic environment, as well as the situation that may evolve in the Mediterranean in the event of war.

Hopefully, the explanations listed above will reach their target and will contribute to the strengthening of mutual understanding and fraternal cooperation between our two countries in the common interests of the countries of the socialist camp.

For its part, the Government of the People's Republic of Albania, in accordance with the current agreements regarding Vlorë naval base, will do everything in its power - as it has done in the past - to strengthen relations between the crews of both countries, so that these relations will become a powerful link in the chain of the future development of fraternal friendship between our armed forces. The Albanian government will continue to fulfill all of its commitments resulting from the current agreements and will make every effort to make Vlorë naval base into a real factor in the defense of the People's Republic of Albania and the socialist camp from the schemes of imperialism.

Tirana, 22 March 1961.

[Translation by Julia La Villa Nossova]