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Date Printed:  
25-Jul-2001

DOC\_NBR: 1994STATE304637

CHANNEL: n/a  
HANDLING: n/a

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RELEASED IN PART  
B6, B1, 1.5(D)

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ORIGIN EUR-01

INFO LOG-00 OASY-00 TEDE-00 ADS-00 ONY-00 SSO-00 /001R

DRAFTED BY: EUR/EE: CRHILL  
APPROVED BY: EUR/EE: CRHILL  
DESIRED DISTRIBUTION:  
EUR/EE - 3

-----87425D 102108Z /38

O 102108Z NOV 94  
FM SECSTATE WASHDC  
TO AMEMBASSY TIRANA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 304637

E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR  
TAGS: AMGT AL  
SUBJECT: OFFICIAL - INFORMAL NO. 85

11/10/94 O-I NO. 85

FOR AMBASSADOR/DCM ONLY FROM TOM UNDERWOOD

(U) AMBASSADOR'S SCHEDULE

1. AMBASSADOR'S HOTEL RESERVATION IS AT THE HOLIDAY INN  
ROSSLYN; 1850 N. FORT MEYER DRIVE; TELEPHONE  
703-522-0400; CONFIRMATION NUMBER 64186318; GOVERNMENT  
RATE 103/NIGHT PLUS TAX. (HOTEL CHOICES ONE AND TWO  
WERE NOT AVAILABLE.) THE BOOKING IS ON MY CREDIT CARD

[REDACTED]

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AGAIN. NEITHER THE RESERVATIONS COMPUTER NOR THE HOTEL  
ITSELF WOULD ACCEPT THE AMBASSADOR'S CREDIT CARD  
INFORMATION. THE HOTEL SAID IT WAS "NOT A VALID NUMBER,"  
NOT JUST A PROBLEM WITH 13 DIGITS.

2. AMBASSADOR FRASURE IS PLEASED THE AMBASSADOR CAN COME  
TO DINNER SATURDAY, 11/19. FRASURE DID NOT SPECIFY THE  
HOUR, BUT SAID EARLY IS FINE. I AM AWAITING A RESPONSE  
FROM THE LANGUAGE CLASS ON AMBASSADOR'S PROPOSALS.

(LOU) DEPARTMENT "STATEMENT" ON MINORITIES IN GREECE

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3. REPUBLIKA GOT IT (PRACTICALLY) RIGHT, AFTER ALL. CHRIS HILL SIGNED A RESPONSE TO A LETTER TO THE WHITE HOUSE FROM REV. IMAM VEHBI ISMAIL, CHAIRMAN OF THE COALITION OF THE ALBANIAN- AMERICAN RELIGIOUS, EDUCATIONAL, CULTURAL AND SOCIAL SOCIETIES. CHRIS'S OCTOBER 4 LETTER INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING PARAGRAPH:

"IT IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, THAT GREECE PROVIDE FAIR TREATMENT TO ALBANIAN AND OTHER GROUPS LIVING IN ITS TERRITORY, AND THAT THE GOVERNMENT OF GREECE PUBLICLY DISASSOCIATE ITSELF FROM ALL EXTREMIST GROUPS. WE AGREE WITH YOU THAT THE GREEK GOVERNMENT'S REFUSAL TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE EXISTENCE OF ALBANIAN OR SLAVIC MINORITIES WITHIN GREECE DOES NOT ENHANCE THE PROTECTION OF THE LEGITIMATE RIGHTS OF THE GREEK MINORITY OUTSIDE OF GREECE."

4. WE COULDN'T FIND THE LETTER RIGHT AWAY BECAUSE IT WAS



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DRAFTED BY BILHA BRYANT, WHO SINCE MOVED ON TO DRL AND ERASED SOME CORRESPONDENCE FILES, INCLUDING THIS ONE. EUR/SE APPARENTLY CLEARED IT TOO.

(C) INFO MEMO TO HOLBROOKE ON REFERENDUM  
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5. FRASURE ASKED ME TO WRITE A NOTE TO HOLBROOKE ABOUT THE FAILURE OF THE CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM AND WHAT IT MEANS. I SENT UP THE FOLLOWING LATE 11/09, BASED ON TIRANA 3244, OTHER REPORTS, AND TELCONS. (I DIDN'T WANT TO HOLD UP THE MEMO FOR YOUR MORE INCISIVE VIEWS, AND CHRIS IS TRAVELLING.) PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO SET THE RECORD STRAIGHT IF NECESSARY.

TO: EUR - RICHARD C. HOLBROOKE  
THROUGH: EUR - ROBERT C. FRASURE  
FROM: EUR/SCE - TOM UNDERWOOD  
SUBJECT: DEFEAT OF ALBANIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL REFERENDUM  
BRINGS UNCERTAINTY -- AND OPPORTUNITY

KEY POINTS

- 1. THE DEFEAT OF THE ALBANIA'S CONSTITUTIONAL

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REFERENDUM NOVEMBER 6 HOLDS SOME BENEFITS. IT AVERTED A  
NEW CRISIS WITH GREECE; IT PROVIDED INCENTIVES FOR  
PARTIES TO SEEK ACCOMODATION IN PARLIAMENT; THE

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CONSTITUTION MAY BE AMENDED FOR THE BETTER; AND IT MIGHT  
INCREASE GOA FLEXIBILITY IN OTHER AREAS.

2. THE RESULT WEAKENED PRESIDENT BERISHA AND THE  
RULING DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PD). STUNNED BY THE DEFEAT,  
PRESIDENT BERISHA INITIALLY CONSIDERED RESIGNING, AND  
SOME ADVISORS RECOMMENDED HOLDING IMMEDIATE ELECTIONS.  
MORE LIKELY, HOWEVER, BERISHA WILL FIGHT IT OUT, AND LOOK  
FOR A NEW STRATEGY FOR REDRAFTING AND ADOPTING A  
CONSTITUTION.

3. BERISHA WANTS THE CONSTITUTION -- ANY DECENT  
CONSTITUTION -- TO FULFILL A CENTRAL PD CAMPAIGN PLEDGE  
AND A CONDITION FOR ALBANIA'S ADMISSION TO THE COUNCIL OF  
EUROPE. THE DEFEAT OF THE REFERENDUM WAS NOT A REJECTION  
OF THE CONSTITUTION. IT REFLECTED ECONOMIC DISCONTENT,  
CONCERN OVER TENSIONS WITH GREECE, AND A FEELING THAT  
PARLIAMENT SHOULD DEBATE THE CONSTITUTION.

NEXT STEPS

THE PD HAS PRIVATELY CONCEDED DEFEAT IN THE REFERENDUM,

OFFICIAL RESULTS HAVE NOT RELEASED. PRESIDENT  
BERISHA HAS REPEATEDLY STRESSED HE WILL ABIDE BY THE WILL  
OF THE PEOPLE.

INITIALLY DEVASTATED BY THE DEFEAT, BERISHA HAS REGAINED  
HIS BALANCE AND IS NOT LIKELY TO ACCEPT EARLY ELECTIONS,

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MUCH LESS RESIGN. HE IS LOOKING FOR A NEW STRATEGY.

BERISHA IS CONVINCED OPPOSITION PARTIES WILL BLOCK  
APPROVAL OF THE DRAFT CONSTITUTION IF IT IS BROUGHT  
BEFORE PARLIAMENT, BUT ALTERNATIVE COURSES APPEAR EVEN  
MORE PROBLEMATIC. REJECTION OF THE REFERENDUM MEANS  
OPPOSITION GROUPS IN THE 140-MEMBER PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY  
WILL EXPECT MAJOR CONCESSIONS TO SUPPORT EVEN AN AMENDED

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VERSION OF THE CONSTITUTION.

[REDACTED] TOLD AMBASSADOR LAKE HE WOULD RECOMMEND HOLDING IMMEDIATE ELECTIONS, BUT THAT WOULD PROBABLY FURTHER ERODE THE PD'S STRENGTH, WITHOUT DIRECTLY ADVANCING A CONSTITUTION.

B6

BERISHA IS EXPLORING THE IDEA OF CONVENING A CONSTITUTIONAL ASSEMBLY, CROMPRISED OF THE PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLY PLUS A NUMBER OF SPECIALLY-ELECTED DELEGATES, CHARGED WITH DRAFTING A NEW CONSTITUTION. HOWEVER, THIS APPROACH WOULD CEDE CONTROL OF THE PROCESS TO A LARGE AND UNWIELDY BODY, AND ANY DOCUMENT IT PRODUCED WOULD PROBABLY BE PUT TO A NEW REFERENDUM.

NOTWITHSTANDING BERISHA'S CONVICTION THAT PARLIAMENT CANNOT AGREE ON A CONSTITUTION, THIS MAY BE THE BEST ROUTE FORWARD. IT WOULD FORCE THE PARTIES TO WORK TOGETHER, OR RISK BEING BLAMED FOR OBSTRUCTING A COMMON GOAL. IF BERISHA IS CORRECT IN PREDICTING THE SOCIALISTS WILL NOT COOPERATE, AT LEAST THAT PARTY WOULD BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE.

[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
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THE GOVERNMENT MUST DEMONSTRATE THAT ANY RENEWED EFFORT IS MOTIVATED BY THE NATIONAL INTEREST IN HAVING A CONSTITUTION, AND IS NOT INTENDED TO CIRCUMVENT PARLIAMENT OR THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE. THE GOA SHOULD THEREFORE BE RECEPTIVE TO INTERNATIONAL ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE IN MOVING THE PROCESS FORWARD. ANY CSCE, COE, OR USG PROPOSAL CAN EXPECT TO RECEIVE A CAREFUL HEARING.

TALBOTT

[REDACTED]  
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