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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-00 ADS-00 INR-10 SS-10 CIAE-00 EA-10 NSAE-00  
PM-09 SP-02 /053 W  
-----242727 231238Z /22

P R 230935Z DEC 81  
FM AMEMBASSY BELGRADE  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3805  
INFO AMEMBASSY ATHENS  
AMEMBASSY BEIJING  
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST  
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 969  
AMEMBASSY ROME  
AMEMBASSY SOFIA  
AMEMBASSY VIENNA  
USMISSION USNATO  
USDOCOSOUTH NAPLES  
USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER  
CINCUSAFE RAMSTEIN AB GE  
USNMR SHAPE BE

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USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF, USCINCEUR AND CINCUSAFE FOR POLADS,  
USNMR SHAPE PASS STODDART SACEUR/SA

E.O. 12065 RDS-1 12/23/91 (DUNLOP, T.P.H.) OR-P  
TAGS: PINT, PINS, AL, YO  
SUBJ: VARIOUS OBSERVATIONS/SPECULATION IN BELGRADE ON SHEHU'S  
DEATH

1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY. TWO TOP YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS SPECULATE THAT SHEHU'S DEATH WAS NOT SIMPLE SUICIDE BUT THE RE-CONFIDENTIAL

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SULT OF SOME UNKNOWN BUT MAJOR POLICY DISPUTE WITH HOXHA. ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR HERE HAS TURNED DOWN CON-DOLENCE MESSAGES. END SUMMARY.

3. SHEHU'S DEATH--FSFA OFFICIAL SPECUALTES: ON DECEMBER 21 THE AMBASSADOR ASKED FSFA ASSISTANT SECRE-

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TARY FOR WESTERN EUROPE AND NORTH AMERICAN AFFAIRS  
MILOS MELOVSKI TO COMMENT ON THE RECENT ALLEGED SUICIDE  
OF ALBANIA'S SECOND HIGHEST OFFICIAL, PRIME MINISTER  
MEHMET SHEHU. MELOVSKI PREFACED HIS RESPONSE BY  
SAYING THE GOY HAS NOT COMPLETED ITS ANALYSIS BUT HE  
WOULD SHARE SOME "PERSONAL" OBSERVATIONS.

4. MELOVSKI RECALLED THAT HE HAD MET SHEHU AND ENVER  
HOXHA 30 YEARS AGO, . HE  
COMPARED SHEHU, A "COLD, RATIONAL CALCULATING" MAN,  
WITH HOXHA, A MUCH MORE "TEMPERAMENTAL LEADER." IN  
RECENT YEARS, MELOVSKI OBSERVED, SHEHU HAD BEEN IN  
CHARGE OF DAY-TO-DAY BUSINESS, AND, FACED WITH PRACTICAL  
PROBLEMS, WAS SURELY MORE ACCUSTOMED TO DEALING IN THE  
"REAL WORLD" THAN HOXHA WHOM MELOVSKI CHARACTERIZED AS  
"LIVING ON SOME OTHER PLANET." THIS COULD HAVE BROUGHT  
THEM INTO CONFLICT OVER POLICY ISSUES, HE SPECUALTED.

5. MELOVSKI CONCLUDED THAT SHEHU'S DEATH WAS QUITE  
POSSIBLY NOT AS DESCRIBED, "SUICIDE FOLLOWING A  
PERIOD OF NERVOUS CRISIS." HE POINTED OUT (AS THE  
ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE HAS ALSO REPORTEDLY DONE)  
THAT IN ALBANIAN CULTURE SUICIDE IS A "DISGRACE." THUS,  
EVEN IF SHEHU HAD KILLED HIMSELF, HAD BE BEEN IN GOOD  
POLITICAL ODOR AT THE TIME, IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE  
SIMPLE AND, IN THE TIRANA REGIME'S TERMS, THE PROPER  
COURSE TO HAVE DESCRIBED THE DEATH AS DUE TO AN UNIDENTIFIED

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ILLNESS.

6. FURTHERMORE, SHEHU'S DEATH WAS PASSING VIRTUALLY  
WITHOUT OFFICIAL NOTICE IN TIRANA. RTV TIRANA CONTINUED  
NORMAL PROGRAMMING; NO BOOK OF CONDOLENCES HAD BEEN  
OPENED; NO DAY OF NATIONAL MOURNING WAS DECLARED, AS  
WAS DONE IN THE CASE NOT LONG AGO IN THE DEATH OF A  
LOWER RANKING OFFICIAL, HUSNI KAPI; NO FLAGS AT HALF  
MAST, ETC. THE ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE HAS  
REPORTEDLY ACTIVELY DISCOURAGED CONDOLENCE MESSAGES.)

7. MELOVSKI ADDED THAT THE YUGOSLAV EMBASSY IN TIRANA  
HAS REPORTED THAT SHEHU APPARENTLY FOLLOWED A NORMAL  
BUSINESS SCHEDULE IN THE DAYS PRECEDING HIS DEATH,  
RECEIVING HIGH RANKING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS ON THE DAY  
BEFORE HE IS SUPPOSED TO HAVE COMMITTED SUICIDE AND  
TOP-RANKING GREEK OFFICIAL VISITORS THE DAY BEFORE THAT.  
(HE MAY HAVE MEANT ROMANIANS.) MELOVSKI ALSO NOTED  
THAT THE EMBASSY HAD OBSERVED MUCH ACTIVITY AT THE

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ALBANIAN WORKERS PARTY CENTRAL COMMITTEE BUILDING IN TIRANA THE NIGHT BEFORE SHEHU'S DEATH WAS ANNOUNCED. HE THOUGHT THAT A DISPUTE BETWEEN SHEHU AND HOXHA MIGHT POSSIBLY HAVE ERUPTED THEN.

8. REPEATING THAT HE COULD ONLY SPECULATE, MELOVSKI SAID HE PERSONALLY BELIEVED THE DISPUTE COULD HAVE BEEN BORNE OF SHEHU'S VIEW THAT ALBANIA COULD NO LONGER AFFORD TO PERSIST IN FANATIC ISOLATIONISM, BUT MUST LOOK OUTWARD TO A MORE NORMAL RELATIONSHIP WITH THE REST OF THE WORLD. FOR EXAMPLE, MELOVSKI WONDERED, MIGHT SHEHU NOT HAVE ARGUED--AND LOST--THAT ALBANIA SHOULD DROP ITS IDEOLOGICAL PREJUDICE AGAINST ACCEPTING FOREIGN CREDITS.

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USDOCOSOUTH FOR INTAF, USCINCEUR AND CINCUSAFE FOR POLADS,

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9. SHEHU'S DEATH--GRILICKOV'S VIEWS. IN A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR DECEMBER 22, TOP LCY OFFICIAL

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ALEKSANDAR GRILICKOV ALSO SAID HE DID NOT BELIEVE SHEHU COMMITTED SUICIDE, RATHER SPECULATED THAT "THERE WAS A GREAT PROBLEM ON THE ALBANIAN AGENDA, WE DO NOT KNOW WHAT, ABOUT WHICH SHEHU AND HOXHA HAD A DISAGREEMENT." HE ALSO ECHOED MELOVSKI'S VIEW THAT SHEHU WAS A MAN OF BROADER PERSPECTIVES THAN HOXHA, WHO HAD TO DEAL WITH "REAL RESPONSIBILITIES" AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE GOVERNMENT.

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GRILICKOV ALSO ASSERTED THAT A NUMBER OF IMPORTANT INTERNAL LAWS ARE BEFORE THE ALBANIAN PARLIAMENT ABOUT WHICH THERE MAY WELL HAVE BEEN FIERCE DISAGREEMENT. ONE, WHICH GRILICKOV THOUGH HAS ALREADY BEEN PROMULGATED, "WOULD TAKE THE LAST SHEEP FROM THE ALBANIAN PEASANT." ANOTHER SEVERELY RESTRICTS THE INTERNAL MOVEMENT OF ALBANIAN CITIZENS. SUCH DRACONIAN MEASURES COULD HAVE CAUSED CONFLICT, ACCORDING TO GRILICKOV.

10. AKSED BY THE AMBASSADOR WHEHTER THE YOUNGER GENERATION IN ALBANIA MIGHT BRING A MORE RATIONAL VIEWPOINT TO THE FORE, GRILICKOV WAS NOT SO OPTIMISTIC ABOUT THOSE WHO WILL SUCCEED HOXHA. FOR EXAMPLE, A COMER NAMED SALIHU (PHONETIC) IS DISTURBING: GRILICKOV SAID HE HAD BEEN A LENINGRAD STUDENT, "AND WE HAVE ALWAYS HAD WORSE EXPERIENCES WITH LENINGRAD STUDENTS THAN WITH MOSCOW STUDENTS."

11. NEVERTHELESS, GRILICKOV ADMITTED THAT CHANGE SEEMS INEVITABLE AFTER HOXHA LEAVES EVEN THOUGH HOXHA HAS "KOLLED OFF TEAMS, TWO PRO-YUGOSLAV AND ONE EACH PRO-SOVIET AND PRO-CHINESE," EACH GROUP HAS LEFT A TRACE IN ALBANIAN POLITICAL LIFE. SUBSTANTIAL CHANGE HAS OCCURRED SHORTLY AFTER THE DEPARTURE OF ALL CHARISMATIC LEADERS, GRILICKOV OBSERVED, NOTING MAO, STALIN, FRANCO, AND SADAT. YUGOSLAVIA MUST BE PREPARED FOR CHANGE IN ALBANIA; THE IMPORTANT POINT IS, IN WHOSE INTEREST WILL IT BE? GRILICKOV THOUGH PRO-HOXHA ALBANIA WOULD MOST PROBABLY TURN NEITHER TO THE EAST NOR THE WEST, BUT MORE LIKELY WOULD SEEK A NONALIGNED ROLE.

12. MEDIA COVERAGE: THE YUGOSLAV MEDIA IS ALSO AIRING DOUBTS ABOUT THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF SHEHU'S DEATH.

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FOR EXAMPLE, "POLITIKA" ON DECEMBER 22 FEATURES AN ARTICLE TITLES "SUSPICIONS ABOUT SUICIDE."

13. AN ALBANINA OFFICIAL VIEW: ALSO ON DECEMBER 21, THE TIRANA VIEW WAS PROVIDED TO THE NEW AUSTRIAN AMBASSADOR IN BELGRADE BY ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR PLAKA, WHO TOLD HIM TIRANA DID NOT WISH ANY MESSAGE OF CONDOLENCES FROM KREISKY. PLAKA SEEMED "DEFENSIVE" IN DISCUSSING THE SHEHU SUICIDE, STRESSING THAT IT WAS AN "ISOLATED INCIDENT" RESULTING FROM SHEHU'S BAD HEALTH AND RESULTING NERVOUS CONDITION. PLAKA TOLD THE AUSTRAIN SHEHU DIED BY HIS OWN HAND IN HIS HOUSE THE EVENING OF DECEMBER 18-19. IN SEEKING TO MINIMIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF THE EVENT, PLAKA SOUGHT TO REASSURE THE AUSTRAIN AMBASSADOR THAT "THERE S NO PRO-SOVIET ELEMENT IN TIRANA." PLAKA SAID TIRANA WANTS TO UPGRADE POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH AUSTRIA AND WILL CONTINUE TO EXPAND RELATIONS WITH OTHER "SUIT-ABLE" WE COUNTRIES. PLAKA ALSO PREDICTED THAT SHEHU'S SUCCESSOR AS PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE ANNOUNCED IN FEBRUARY AND THAT IT IS TO BE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER ADIL CARCANI. FINALLY PLAKA POINTED OUT AS HOXHA AND SHEHU ARE THE LAST OF THE "OLD GUARD," A YOUNGER GENERATION IS NOW COMING TO THE FORE.

14. COMMENT. AS USUAL IN MATTERS INVOLVING YUGOSLAVIA AND ALBANIA THERE IS ALWAYS IN BELGRADE AN AIR OF CONSPIRACY AND A READINESS TO GIVE THE GORIEST AND WORST POSSIBLE EXPLANATION TO EVENTS. HOWEVER, SHEHU'S DEATH IS BEING GIVEN PECULIAR TREATMENT BY THE ALBANIANS AND THERE MAY WELL BE SOME TRUTH IN MELOVSKI' AND FRLICKOV'S SPECUALTIONS.

15. SEPTEL REPORTS ADDITIONAL RECENT EXCHANGES BETWEEN THE AMBASSADOR AND YUGOSLAV OFFICIALS ON YUGOSLAV POLICY TOWARD ALBANINA. ANDERSON

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