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ACTION EUR-12

INFO	OCT-00	COPY-01	ADS-00	INR-10	SS-10	CIAE-00	DODE-00
	H-01	NSCE-00	NSAE-00	SSO-00	HA-08	L-03	PM-09
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 FM AMEMBASSY ROME
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E.O. 12356: DECL: OADR
 TAGS: PEPR, IT, AL
 SUBJECT: ALBANIAN DEVELOPMENTS: ITALIAN VIEWS

1. ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ ENTIRE TEXT.
2. SUMMARY:
 THE ITALIANS ARE FOLLOWING THE GROWING PURGES IN ALBANIA CLOSELY. GIVEN HOXHA'S RECONFIRMED PRE-EMINENCE, THEY DO NOT SEE THESE INTERNAL PERSONNEL CHANGES AS A PRELUDE TO NEW POLICY DIRECTIONS. END SUMMARY.
3. THE GROWING SCOPE OF THE PURGE OF PRO-SHEHU OFFICIALS IN ALBANIA IS BEING FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY THE ITALIAN MFA. THE REMOVAL OF PRESIDUM CHAIRMAN HAXHI LLESHI AND THE SUBSTITUTION OF TEN CABINET MINISTERS ANNOUNCED YESTERDAY (SOME OF THE SUBSTITUTIONS, SUCH AS THAT OF FOREIGN MINISTER NESTI NASE WERE PREVIOUSLY KNOWN) HAS CONVINCED KNOWLEDGEABLE OFFICIALS HERE THAT THE

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SHEHU-HOXHA STRUGGLE INVOLVED MAJOR POLICY CHOICES.

[REDACTED]
 [REDACTED] TELLS US THAT HE IS INCREASINGLY COMING TO ACCEPT THE HYPOTHESIS THAT SHEHU WAS KILLED BECAUSE HE WAS WORKING, OR BELIEVED BY HOXHA TO BE WORKING, TO MOVE ALBANIA CLOSER TO THE SOVIET UNION. (IT WILL BE

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RECALLED THAT INITIALLY THE ITALIANS SUSPECTED THE OPPOSITE REASON -- THAT SHEHU WAS TOO ZEALOUS IN OPENINGS TO THE WEST.) HE MENTIONED THAT ITALIAN EMBASSY REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON PRESENTS THIS AS THE PREVAILING THEORY IN THE US GOVERNMENT.

4. [] CONTINUED THAT THERE IS STILL NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ANY OF THE CONFLICTING THEORIES OF WHAT LAY BEHIND THE HOXHA-SHEHU SPLIT. HE WAS CONVINCED, HOWEVER, THAT THESE LATEST DEVELOPMENTS WERE NOT A PRELUDE TO A MAJOR POLICY SHIFT ON THE PART OF THE ALBANIANS. WITH RAMIZ ALIA ("HOXHA'S SUSLOV") CLEARLY EMERGING AS THE SECOND MOST POWERFUL FIGURE IN ALBANIA, [] SAW LITTLE PROSPECT FOR DEVIATIONS FROM THE MAIN LINES OF FOREIGN AND DOMESTIC POLICY LAID DOWN BY HOXHA.

5. WE WERE PLEASED TO HEAR FROM [] THAT THE ITALIANS AND YUGOSLAVS ARE CONSULTING REGULARLY ON THE ALBANIAN SITUATION. (THE MOST RECENT EXCHANGE OF VIEWS TOOK PLACE AT THE FARNESINA ON NOVEMBER 22). [] CHARACTERIZED THE YUGOSLAVS AS "JUST AS MUCH IN THE DARK AS WE ARE" ABOUT WHAT IS BEHIND RECENT POWER STRUGGLES IN ALBANIA.

6.. FINALLY, THE ITALIANS WERE MILDLY ENCOURAGED BY THE RELATIVELY FRIENDLY TONE OF HOXHA'S REFERENCE TO

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ITALY IN HIS NOVEMBER 10 PRE-ELECTORAL SPEECH. HOWEVER, THE MFA CONTINUES TO BE UNABLE TO GET THE TREASURY MINISTRY TO APPROVE THE FUNDS NECESSARY TO OPEN THE NEW FERRY SERVICE FOR WHICH THE ALBANIANS HAVE BEEN PRESSING. [] RECENTLY VENTED HIS FRUSTRATION TO THE DCM OVER THE SHORT-SIGHTEDNESS OF THOSE WHO WERE UNWILLING TO APPROVE A MINOR EXPENDITURE TO ACHIEVE A MAJOR POLITICAL OBJECTIVE. THE PRESENT GOVERNMENT CRISIS WILL PROBABLY FURTHER DELAY ANY FORWARD MOVEMENT ON THIS MATTER.

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