

December 28, 1989

Albania: Resisting the Dominoes□□□

Citation:

"Albania: Resisting the Dominoes", December 28, 1989, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Approved for Release by the Central Intelligence Agency, October 29, 2019.
<https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/209520>

Summary:

An analysis of the Albanian leadership's efforts to stem an upheaval like that in Romania.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

0029

~~Top Secret~~

[Redacted]

6.2(d)

ALBANIA: Resisting the Dominoes

The regime in Albania, the last Stalinist state in Eastern Europe, appears to be trying to preempt an upheaval like that in Romania. Albanian media reported the events in Romania factually, including the Albanian Government's declaring "respect" for the Romanian peoples' right to establish complete freedom, independence, and sovereignty. Signs of antiregime sentiment among Albanian students are increasing, and the regime replaced the first secretary of the youth union this week. Earlier this month, the regime denied Yugoslav press reports of a demonstration in Shkoder, near the Yugoslav border.

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Comment: Like their Romanian neighbors, Albanians have long suffered dismal living standards and a repressive police state. There is no sign of an organized opposition movement, but visceral hatred for the current regime could make any confrontation escalate quickly into widespread violence. Because the population has access to Yugoslav and Italian broadcasts, the government probably felt compelled to report on events in Romania. Albanian exiles in France yesterday demanded that Paris "vigorously denounce" the Alia regime. The declaration of "respect" for the Romania people may embolden the few dissidents in Albania to increase agitation for political reform.

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~~Top Secret~~

TCS 3000/89

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