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SECOND INTERIM REPORT

OF THE

UNITED NATIONS SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON THE BALKANS

ADOPTED BY THE SPECIAL COMMITTEE
ON 10 JANUARY 1948

/LETTER

LETTER DATED 10 JANUARY 1948 FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE BALKANS TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Salonika, 10 January 1948

I have the honour to enclose the second interim report of the United Nations Special Committee on the Balkans. This report was unanimously adopted.

The report includes the following documents:

1. Interim report;
2. Annex A: Report of Military Advisers on visit to Ioannina-Konitsa area;
3. Annex B: Sketch map of Ioannina-Konitsa area;
4. Annex C: Reply of the People's Republic of Albania regarding the resolution of the Special Committee of 27 November 1947 establishing observation groups.

(Signed) Alan G. KIRK

Chairman,

United Nations Special Committee on the
Balkans

/SECOND

SECOND INTERIM REPORT OF THE UNITED NATIONS
SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON THE BALKANS

(Adopted by the Committee on 10 January 1948)*

1. The Special Committee, on 31 December 1947, conveyed a first interim report** on its activities to the Members of the General Assembly. The Committee stated in paragraph 7 of that report that it considered one phase of its task required continuous observation of the general circumstances prevailing in the frontier areas.
2. The Special Committee has recently studied with care the report of its Military Advisers on their observation trip to the IOANNINA-KONITSA area (29 December 1947 - 2 January 1948), and has reached the conclusion that aid in the form of logistical support is being furnished from Albania to guerrillas operating on Greek territory.

The Special Committee considers this fact to be contrary to the spirit of the resolution of the General Assembly of 21 October 1947.

3. The Committee also feels that the telegram from the Peoples Republic of Albania transmitted through the Secretary-General (Annex C) in reply to the request of the Special Committee that the Secretary-General obtain the consent of that Government to the establishment of observation groups on Albanian territory, is a further proof of non-compliance with the recommendations of the General Assembly.
4. The radio speech of Mr. Dimitrov, Prime Minister of Bulgaria, to the Bulgarian people on 31 December 1947 offers clear evidence of the absence of good-neighbourly relations between Bulgaria and Greece and of non-compliance with the General Assembly's recommendations.
5. The Special Committee deems the above facts to be of important political significance in the present period of tension along the northern frontiers of Greece.
6. The Special Committee has therefore decided to forward to the Secretary-General, for transmission to the Members of the General Assembly, this second interim report together with the report of the Special Committee's Military Advisers and the text of the reply of the People's Republic of Albania.

* First issued as document A/AC.16/71.

** Issued as document A/521.

- Annex A: Report of Military Advisers on visit to Ioannina-Konitsa area.
- Annex B: Sketch map of Ioannina-Konitsa area.
- Annex C: Reply of the People's Republic of Albania regarding the resolution of the Special Committee of 27 November 1947 establishing observation groups.

ANNEX A

REPORT OF MILITARY ADVISERS ON VISIT TO IOANNINA-KONITSA AREA
FROM 29 DECEMBER 1947 to 2 JANUARY 1948*

I. Instructions Received by Military Advisers

The Military Advisers were instructed to gain a general impression of conditions in the zone of operations between IOANNINA and KONITSA (R-98/93), and to report that impression and give their opinions as to whether or not the guerrillas were receiving aid from foreign sources. The Military Advisers were not required to carry out detailed investigations or produce the testimony of witnesses.

II. Outline of work done

1. The possible foreign aid to the guerrillas was considered under the two main categories:

Operational planning and control, which would include moves through Albania; and

Administrative or logistical aid, which includes the supply of ammunition, clothing and equipment and the evacuation of wounded;

2. The Military Advisers, in the time available, were unable to form any definite conclusions regarding operational support, but are certain that logistical support is being given;

3. The following programme was followed:

29 December: Arrived IOANNINA and visited advanced Headquarters, "B" Corps, G.N.A., where Corps Commander and Brigadier, General Staff, explained the situation.

30 December: Visited the forward area in the region of ANO RAVENIA (R-84/82) - KALPAKI (R-85/76).

31 December to 1 January: Spent in IOANNINA awaiting an opportunity to visit KONITSA. Two guerrillas and two refugees were interviewed thoroughly, and notes of their statements were taken. Wounded and unwounded guerrillas were also spoken to, and a brief summary of their remarks was noted.

2 January: Military Advisers returned to SALONIKA.

III. Findings of the Military Advisers

1. Operational support. The Greek Commanders and staff maintained that the autumn and winter operations in EPIRUS indicated a high degree of planning and control on the part of the enemy, and they asserted that no ordinary guerrilla leaders would be capable of providing this. In general

terms, the Military Advisers would not accept this view without qualification. The various wider tactical moves referred to were in no way beyond the understanding of any intelligent man who knew the topography of Greece and had been fighting in the mountains. As regards the minor tactical aspect, the actual Christmas Day 1947 KONITSA and KALPAKI attack obviously aimed at securing the town of KONITSA, possibly with a political object, and preventing the relieving Greek National Forces from advancing along the one available road from IOANNINA. The Guerrillas' plan was a simple one, and in outline it was sound though not subtle. Neither the nature of the operations nor the various statements made by the Greek officers, guerrillas and refugees gave any direct evidence that foreign officers were working with the guerrillas.

2. On the other hand, the guerrilla forces, which are organized into battalions, infantry brigades or higher formations, were moving in an area approximately forty (40) kilometres east to west and thirty (30) kilometres north to south. They had concentrated into this area, particularly the hills north of KONITSA, immediately before the attack, some units coming from long distances. The operation under review must have been carefully planned and controlled by a central authority, and for this purpose it is considered that radio must have been used. One ex-guerrilla witness stated that this was the case. The nature of the fighting, particularly the concerted attack on KONITSA and the vital communications at KALPAKI and the stiff resistance to the relieving Greek national land and air forces, did not in any way resemble guerrilla fighting. The operations were more on the pattern of warfare between armies, conducted with a political object and with the intention to secure and hold ground. The Military Advisers, therefore, formed the impression that the guerrillas had some backing beyond the ordinary leadership of their capitanos, but no evidence of the nature of such backing was available.

3. The two or three batteries of enemy artillery which were reported to be shelling KONITSA were said to be located near the frontier. The Greek General Staff believed that one of them was inside Albania, but the Military Advisers could secure no direct evidence on this point. The future observation group must try to clear that matter up. If, from unexploded shells and fragments, those guns are found to be ordinary field pieces, they are unlikely to have come from the Greek mountain territory north of KONITSA, and the conclusion might be reached that they were brought from the motor roads south and southeast of LESKOVIK (Albania). If, however, they appear to have been mountain guns, their origin should be investigated.

4. The broken nature of the country and the wide dispersion of the small
/forces

forces engaged render it impossible to state definitely that the guerrillas are now moving through Albanian territory, although witnesses stated that that had occurred prior to the KONITSA attack. United Nations observers must investigate in detail on the ground, where testimony of witnesses can be taken and the scenes of present operations can be visited after the KONITSA-BOURAZANI bridge area has been cleared of guerrillas. Observers should, therefore, be sent to IOANNINA immediately to enter KONITSA as soon as it is open, with a view to detailed examination of witnesses on the ground over which the guerrillas have passed.* The main evidence will be written testimony. If fighting is still going on, the observers themselves might be able to witness border crossings. This, however, must depend to a large extent upon chance.

5. Logistics. The Greek senior officers believed that ammunition was reaching the guerrillas from Albania, and the Military Advisers formed the same impression. Witnesses' statements show that during the period immediately before the Christmas Day attack, ammunition and personnel crossed the border in quantity. Only a few small detachments of guerrillas appear to have crossed after 25 December. Liaison between guerrilla leaders and Albanian authorities was stated to have taken place either at Albanian frontier posts or near the frontier. In connection with the KONITSA attack, supply on a much larger scale appears to have taken place towards the end of December, but as yet only circumstantial evidence is available. It is believed that considerable direct evidence will be available in the near future. The number of empty ammunition cases seen by the Military Advisers on an objective captured by the Greek national forces from the guerrillas and the prolonged resistance offered by the guerrillas led the Advisers to conclude, without any doubt, that the guerrillas were supplied with ammunition from across the frontier. For the guerrillas themselves to have transported shells, mortars, grenades, mines and small arms ammunition in the quantities used during their long approach marches and in all the tactical phases of the battle would have been impossible. It is concluded, therefore, that a constant supply of ammunition was arriving from Albania.

6. The witnesses' reports that heavily wounded guerrillas were collected in villages near the frontier before being taken into Albania were supported by the observation of the Advisers, who noted that very few wounded prisoners were taken and there was no evidence of wounded guerrillas having been found elsewhere in the mountains.

* After the return of the Military Advisers, Temporary Observation Group No. 1 was constituted and despatched to the EPIRUS area on 6 January 1948.

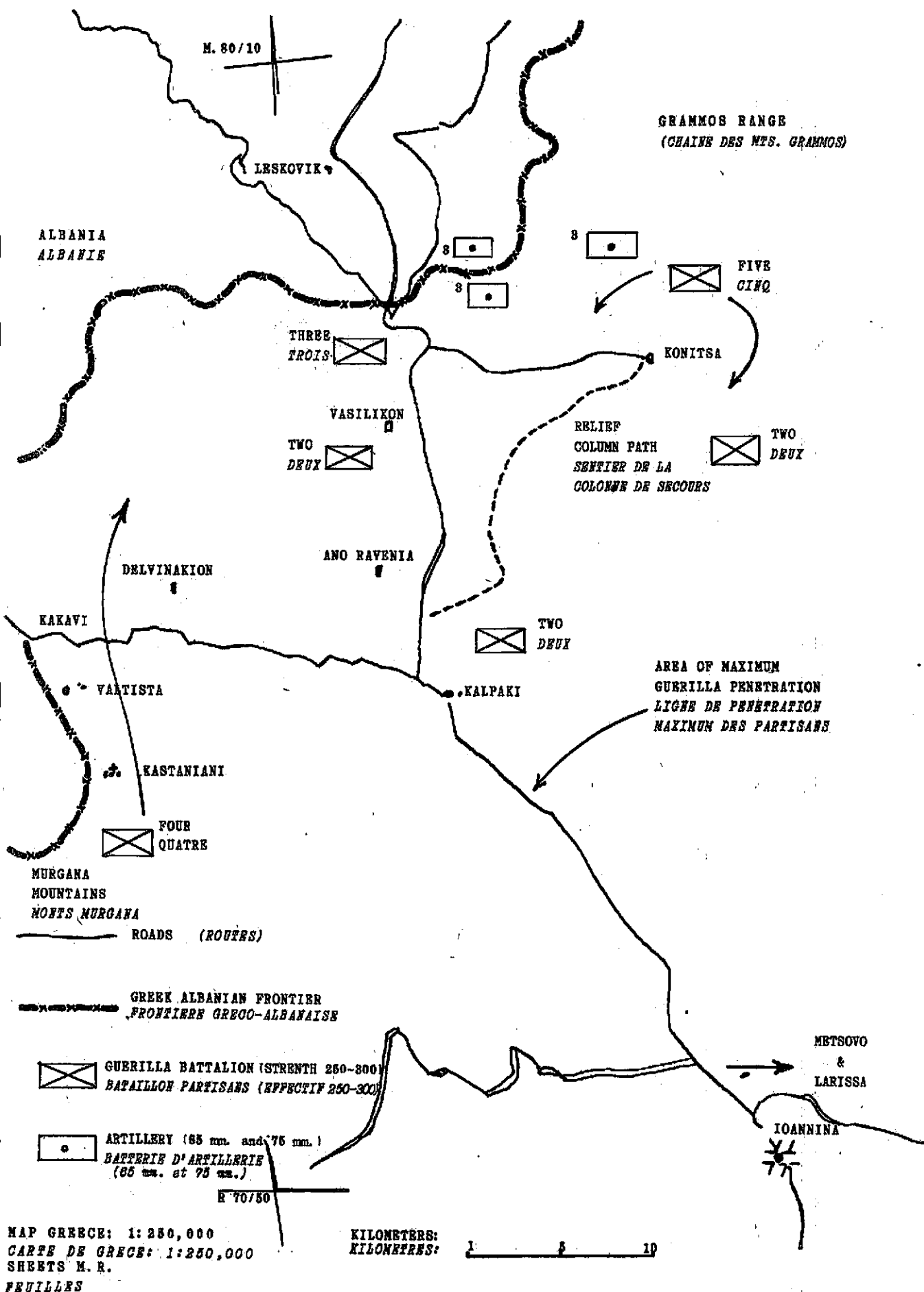
7. The Advisers are of the opinion that no food is at present being provided for the guerrillas from across the frontier, as they live entirely by looting Greek villages. Although there are definite indications that small quantities of guerrilla clothing had been furnished from north of the Greek frontier, the Advisers are not convinced that large quantities have, in fact, been furnished from this source.

ANNEX B

REPORTED GUERRILLA INFANTRY BATTALION AND ARTILLERY
POSITIONS IN KONITSA INCIDENT AREA

ANNEXE B

POSITIONS DES BATAILLONS D'INFANTERIE ET BATTERIES
DE PARTISANS DANS LA REGION DE L'INCIDENT DE KONITSA



ANNEX C*

TELEGRAM FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TRANSMITTING THE REPLY OF THE
ALBANIAN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE RESOLUTION OF THE
SPECIAL COMMITTEE OF 27 NOVEMBER 1947**

For information Committee following telegram received from Albanian Government in reply Secretary-General's communication regarding establishment UNSCOB observation groups: The Government of the Peoples' Republic of Albania considers the request of the Committee on the Balkans transmitted in your telegram of 29 November 1947 inadmissible for the following reasons: The Albanian Government considers that the establishment of that Committee and the tasks assigned to it are a violation of the United Nations Charter and of the principle of unanimity of the five great Powers. It sees in it proof that certain countries are trying to use the United Nations to impose humiliating decisions on our people and the other democratic Balkan countries and thus to create artificially a grave and acute conflict in the Balkans. The Albanian Government considers that the establishment of that Committee and the tasks assigned to it are far removed from the equitable solution of the Greek problem and the examination of the real cause of the situation, namely, the interference of Great Britain and the United States of America in the internal affairs of Greece, and the Albanian Government could not recognize that Committee as having any rights because its establishment and the Powers conferred upon it by the Resolution of the United Nations General Assembly of 21 October 1947 are incompatible with the sovereignty of the Albanian State. In consequence, the Government of the Peoples' Republic of Albania declares that it cannot co-operate in any way with the said Committee or with the observation groups, that it also cannot permit the entry into Albanian territory of the Committee or of its observation groups and that it considers that Committee to be illegal and non existent. - SOBOLEV

* Document A/AC.16/71, 10 January 1948

** Document A/521, Annex 2.