

THE ROLE OF ALBANIAN MILITARY IN COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME:
A STEP TOWARD EUROPEAN UNION

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General Studies

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ABSTRACT

THE ROLE OF ALBANIAN MILITARY IN COMBATING ORGANIZED CRIME: A STEP TOWARD EUROPEAN UNION, by Major Beqir Shima, 99 pages.

During the last three decades, the threats in the Balkan region have significantly increased. In order to join the European Union, Albania has to meet specific requirements to include combating organized crime. Even though the requirements seem to be simple in context, they require considerable effort to be accomplished. The Albanian Government has demonstrated its dedication and assured EU countries in fulfilling the requirements as soon as possible so that EU can finally accept and open the negotiation phase with Albania. On the other hand, Albania has demonstrated its full commitment to get the greatest performance from all its institutions to include the Armed Forces. Based on the EU requirements, all national institutions should have close cooperation, coordination, and synchronization among them. Information sharing along with maximum utilization of available capacities and capabilities are necessary. This raises questions: Are we getting the best from our institutions? How to transform the Albanian military capabilities to confront the complexities of present and future challenges? This study analyzed the current challenges against organized crime in Albania. Additionally, the study will be beneficial to other countries efforts in addressing similar issues.

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ACRONYMS

AAF	Albanian Armed Forces
AID	Anti-mafia Investigative Directorate
BoA	Bank of Albania
CoM	Council of Ministers
DISA	Defense Intelligence Security Agency
EC	European Commission
ECtHR	European Court of Human Rights
EEC	European Economic Community
EU	European Union
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
GDSP	General Directorate of State Police
GdF	<i>Guardia di Finanza</i> (Guard of Finance)
HR	Human Resources
IMF	International Monetary Fund
IMET	International Military Education and Training
IMOC	Inter-institutional Maritime Operational Center
MoAFCP	Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoEF	Ministry of Economy and Finance
MEFA	Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs
MoEFWA	Ministry of Environment Forestry and Water Administration

MoH	Ministry of Health
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoPWTT	Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication
MP	Military Police
MS	Military Strategy
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NCO	Non-Commissioned Officer
NSS	National Security Strategy
OSCE	Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe
SAA	Stabilization and Association Agreement
SIS	State Intelligence Service
SNMG2	Standing NATO Maritime Group 2
SOCTA	Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
WB	Western Balkans

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Albania has experienced many changes since the fall of the communist regime. The former regime isolated Albania from rest of the world for nearly five decades. During that period, there were few cases when Albania had relations with other countries such as former Yugoslavia, Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and China. This small country remained unknown to the region and beyond. The economic situation was severe. The country depended only on its own resources and struggled to become a self-sustained country. In that time, lacking basic products to include food would be considered “normal.” It was very hard to produce and provide everything you need with the quantity desired. One may conclude that the Albanian population destiny was suffer. In 1990, the communist regime came to an end. The student demonstrations that took place in Tirana ignited the citizens to raise up and ask for change as well as a different better way of life. Finally, communism fell and the democracy began to bloom. A new era began.

The newly elected government seemed to have brought hope to people. But, as a new democracy, Albania faced significant challenges, including organized crime, corruption, and poor economy. The country’s geographical location favored illicit trafficking, especially drugs, which soon turned Albania into an important transit country for smugglers whose destination was Western European countries. After a prolonged period of isolation, the government institutions were unable to handle this situation. The government continued to increase its efforts in combating the organized crime beginning

with the legal framework adapted from the western European countries, developing capabilities, and enforcing regional cooperation.

The degraded political and economic situation in 1997, caused by the collapse of the pyramid schemes, contributed in deterioration of the government's ability to provide security and essential services, thus influencing the growth of criminal groups. The pyramid negatively affected Albania's economy and society while empowering the criminal elements or groups with weapons and a fertile terrain to expand their criminal activities. In order to have a better understanding of the effects pyramid schemes had on Albania, one should know what the implications that led to the deterioration of the situation as well as how the government managed the situation and mitigated the risks.

Whenever and wherever pyramid schemes have sprouted, they have deeply affected governments, societies, and even damaged incomes. These schemes bloomed in many countries throughout Europe, Asia, Africa, United States and also Australia. Pyramid frauds can be very devastating to countries especially those with weak economies. Poverty, lack of information, mistrust and government indifference have influenced the rise of pyramid schemes.¹

Chaos began in June 1996 when opposing parties impeached government leaders for stealing votes. The opposition parties didn't acknowledge the results of the elections and attempted to turn people against the government to include the President. Soon after the elections, many pyramid schemes known as operators or firms failed to make timely

¹ James Walsh, *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man: How Ponzi Schemes, Pyramid Frauds Work and Why They're More Common than Ever* (Aberdeen, WA: Silver Lake Publishing, 1998), 11.

payments due to the lack of revenues. The reason behind the failure to make payments was the schemes had no real investments and no savings.² Most of them were not businesses at all. The firms depended only on the money people would deposit in order to make a profit out of these deposits.³ This explains the fact that schemes operated by paying first clients the money that the following ones would deposit funds into these so called schemes. After this tense situation, the country descended into complete anarchy. The Albanian pyramid schemes created a perfect environment for money laundering and bankruptcy, leading to the deterioration of the army, loss of life and property, instability and an urgent demand for international assistance.

The majority of the population had no idea about what was happening and continued depositing their money into those firms. However, the individuals with a background in finance knew that, someday, due to lack of revenues, these pyramid schemes would surely collapse. Consequently, schemes finally began to fall since there were not any new investors to pay the monthly interests.

In January 1997, the first two organizations participating in the schemes forced to declare bankruptcy were Sude and Gjallica, but, they were not alone.⁴ After the aforementioned bankruptcy, the Bank of Albania (BoA) uncovered there was a huge

² Management Study Guide, "The Albanian Revolution and Pyramid Schemes," accessed October 19, 2017, <https://www.managementstudyguide.com/albanian-revolution-and-pyramid-schemes.htm>.

³ Walsh, *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*, 11.

⁴ Christopher Jarva, "The Rise and Fall of Albania's Pyramid Schemes," International Monetary Fund (IMF), 1999, accessed November 22, 2017, <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/fandd/2000/03/jarvis.htm>.

amount of money due to the schemes. Leaders of the firms attempted to withdraw the money from the banks and to flee the country, toppling the economy and shredding the lives of thousands of innocent victims.

Foreign experts sounded the alarm causing chaos across the country. They warned the government, yet nothing happened. And if this were not enough, the President of the Republic of Albania, Mr. Sali Berisha, defended the schemes. After two grueling months the situation rapidly intensified and the country collapsed. The economy was a serious disaster. All other firms incapable of paying interests declared bankruptcy. As a result, people who lost their properties and entire savings were scared, disappointed, and rushed to get their money back. Many citizens who were assisted from the opposition parties joined protests.

Demonstrations became very violent all over the country. Protesters looted all of the shops along the streets.⁵ They accused the government of not taking action and for being fully responsible for the chaos that ensued. Most of the streets were blocked with burned cars and tires. Broken bottles, stones, and banners were thrown everywhere making it exceptionally dangerous to travel, especially for school children. To avoid death or injury, the government closed universities, schools, and kindergartens indefinitely. The center of Tirana, capital of Albania, looked like a western movie but with modern conveniences. People were firing weapons on the streets or on the top of the

⁵ Stacy Sullivan and Altin Rraxhimi, "A Case of Alarming Anarchy," April 7, 1997, accessed December 22, 2017, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=12&sid=7d5591fc-2f2b-4978-9524-f856276a55a3%40sessionmgr4010&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtG12ZQ%3d%3d#AN=9703182206&db=aph>.

cars. The facades of buildings looked like dotted dresses made from bullet holes. Bullets hit not only buildings, but also innocent men, women, and children. There were reported cases, almost every day, of people killed or wounded.

The government used military tanks and water cannon cars to disperse the angry crowds, but this action just added fuel to the fire. Now the protesters not only wanted their money back, but also demanded the resignation of the President. There were rumors that the president had connections with some of the schemes. Under the pressure of national and international media, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and protesters, the President Berisha asked the government to undertake actions. First, the government froze all accounts for all of the schemes. After that, the BoA stopped schemes from emptying their deposits by limiting daily withdrawals. Finally, a thorough investigation of all activities related to the pyramid schemes was demanded. This was easy to say but very difficult to accomplish.

For this reason, in July 1997, the parliament of Albania approved a law to allow the IMF to send and assign administrators to each operator. The administrators had the authority to fire personnel or hire experts, sell the assets, lead the companies, and pay debts. A few months after the administrators completed the investigations, the people's hope had been restored in a limited capacity. Depending on the amount of money frozen in the firm's account, people could finally recover a small percentage of their money. But unfortunately, there was still something unpleasant coming next.

Following the demonstrations in 1997, the deterioration of the army turned Albania into Europe's most unsafe country. Every day people went out on the streets and continued to demonstrate in front of the firms and government institutions to get their

money back. The police forces fought against many gangs but with little success. The gangs had already taken over the main cities. In Vlore and Fier some rebels took advantage of the chaos and blocked the main routes leading to the northern part of the country. In Tirana, demonstrations against the government degenerated into violent revolts. The police, armed forces, and some of the most important institutions were incapable of restoring order. Hundreds of irritated people headed to military armories and began to threaten the security personnel to open the gates.⁶ Weapons were fired at the security guards who could not fire back because they could easily recognize their relatives in the crowd. Thus, some security guards even abandoned their positions.⁷ The military gates were finally opened. Almost everything from the army's armories was now in the hands of ordinary people. In these circumstances, the President was forced to declare a state of emergency.⁸

The Albanian government no longer had control over the country and hardly any democratic institutions. In a few days, the situation escalated dramatically. The prisons

⁶ Denny Lane, "Albania, March 1997: The Disintegration of the Albanian Army," *Mediterranean Quarterly* 9, no. 2: (April 1998): 16, accessed October 02, 2017, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/viewarticle/render?data=dGJyMPPp44rp2%2fdV0%2bnjisfk5Ie46bNKsaexTrSk63nn5Kx95uXxjL6urUqtqK5Jtpa1UrGuuEmzlr9lpOrweezp33vy3%2b2G59q7Rbaqs0m2rbVIspszqeezdu33snOJ6u9fugKTq33%2b7t8w%2b3%2bS7UbGqtEmzrqR%2b7ejrefKz7nzkvPOE6srjkPIA&vid=2&sid=402373ce-4f80-4d21-8442-4b85bde6cdb5@sessionmgr4007>.

⁷ Management Study Guide, "The Albanian Revolution and Pyramid Schemes."

⁸ Kevin Whitelaw and Carey W. English, "A swindle breeds rebellion, then anarchy," *U.S. News & World Report* 122, no. 10 (17 March 1997): 44, accessed October 02, 2017, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=7&sid=7d5591fc-2f2b-4978-9524-f856276a55a3%40sessionmgr4010&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=9703122116&db=aph>.

were opened and all the prisoners managed to escape.⁹ Some prisoners who got weapons joined the rebels and some others entered even into politics.¹⁰ It was obvious that the government alone couldn't resolve all of the country's problems.

Finally, the help from outside was closer than ever. The international community decided to intervene and provide support to Albania. Almost 75 percent of the weapons were in the hands of ordinary people.¹¹ So, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mandated a Multinational Security Forces (MSF) with the mission to build a secure environment for the upcoming elections, assist the government regain control over the country, and assist in delivering humanitarian aid. The MSF was fully supported by the Albanians. Since Italy had the largest amount of personnel involved (3,800), it led the MSF operation named "Operation ALBA." There were eleven troop contributing countries with a total of approximately 7,000 troops.

Apparently, the aftermath of the pyramid schemes in Albania was chaos, anarchy, social crises, poverty, and destruction of all governmental agencies. The schemes caused

⁹ U.S. Department of State, *Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997, 1998*, accessed January 22, 2018, <https://reliefweb.int/report/albania/albania-country-report-human-rights-practices-1997>.

¹⁰ Sullivan and Rraxhimi, "A Case of Alarming Anarchy."

¹¹ Brent Sadler, "French, Italian Troops Lead Mission to Albania," *CNN*, April 15, 1997, accessed December 25, 2017, <http://www.cnn.com/WORLD/9704/15/albania/index.html>.

the loss of more than 2,000 people's lives,¹² the loss of more than \$2,7 million,¹³ and the loss of homes and other properties.

The collapse of the pyramid schemes had a tremendous negative impact on the society and affected on the strengthening of local gangs who could easily spread their criminal activities all over the country. From that time until today, Albania still appears to be having severe symptoms. This is perhaps the reason why fighting organized crime and corruption remains a top priority for each successive government. During their electoral campaigns the political parties don't forget to include these issues in their agenda. In the Albanian National Security Strategy (NSS) 2014, it is clearly indicated that the country's security depends on internal and external risks which threaten the rule of law. Organized crime, in particular, is not only hampering the development of the economy and the national institutions, but also stopping the country's integration process in the dreamed European family. Due to these threats, the country pays special attention to the importance of strengthening bilateral and multilateral cooperation in the region. In addition, NSS states that the rule of law will be achieved through developing and implementing strategies to combat corruption and organized crime, enforce the rule of law, and develop the country's economy.

¹² Erin Skarda, "Schemes and Swindler: Albanian Pyramid Schemes," *Time*, March 7, 2012, accessed November 28, 2017, http://content.time.com/time/specials/packages/article/0,28804,2104982_2104983_2104998,00.html.

¹³ Stacy Sullivan, "A Nation in Chaos," *Maclean's* 110, no. 11 (March 17, 1997): 20, accessed October 24, 2017, <http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/detail/detail?vid=20&sid=7d5591fc-2f2b-4978-9524-f856276a55a3%40sessionmgr4010&bdata=JnNpdGU9ZWhvc3QtbGl2ZQ%3d%3d#AN=9703182142&db=aph>.

The Albanian Military Strategy (MS) 2015 estimates that even though the region remains a hot spot for illegal immigrants, narcotics, weapons, ammunition and explosives, and criminal groups, most of Balkan countries are increasing their efforts on the path of European and Euro-Atlantic integration. MS continues pointing out the potential regional threat coming from organized crime and corruption.¹⁴

In August 2008, for the first time, the government of Albania published a specific document called “Cross-cutting strategy against organized crime, trafficking and terrorism. The strategy clearly defined the roles and functions of the Albanian institutions in this process. Also, the strategy displayed its short-term, mid-term, and long-term strategic objectives. The Ministry of Interior (MOI) was responsible in taking the necessary measures to provide support and coordinate the work with other institutions.”¹⁵

Since the effort to defend a country’s interests is continuous, it exhibits some rather unique characteristics. An important concern that is inherent to this effort is the role of the Armed Forces in fighting organized crime in particular. This will invariably impact the level of training, organizational structure, and equipment. Such factors also influence the types of units organized and the ability to maintain readiness of the force.

¹⁴ Albanian Ministry of Defense, *Ligj Nr.72/2015, datë 09.07.2015 Për miratimin e Strategjisë Ushtarake të Republikës së Shqipërisë* (Law No.72/2015, dated July 09, 2015, *Approval of the Military Strategy of the Republic of Albania*), accessed October 30, 2017, <http://www.mod.gov.al/index.php/politikat-e-sigurise-2/dokumente-strategjike/1275-strategjia-ushtarake>, 11.

¹⁵ Albanian Ministry of Defense, *Ligj Nr.103/2014, datë 31.07.2014 Për miratimin e Strategjisë së Sigurisë Kombëtare të Republikës së Shqipërisë* (Law No.103/2014, dated July 31, 2014 *Approval of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Albania*), accessed September 23, 2017, <http://www.mod.gov.al/index.php/politikat-e-sigurise-2/dokumente-strategjike/54-strategjia-kombetare-e-sigurise>, 27.

The question of role comes into consideration when a “capability” is identified. This capability is classified as “minimum level necessary to protect national interests and continue to play a significant role in combating internal and external threats.” This may seem at first an ambiguous answer to a very important question.

Countries pay special attention to the internal and external threats, especially to those which have serious impact on its security, economy, and development of the government institutions. In Europe, post-communist countries tend to be more fragile against these threats. Albania, as a post-communist country, has been suffering severe symptoms from the fall of the autocratic regime. After 1990, when the country borders were opened, Albania felt more than ever the drastic fall of the economy due to the closing of existing factories. The quality of goods coming from the imports dominated the domestic markets.¹⁶ This eventually brought the immediate increase of unemployment and poverty. Thus, people had to look for other options. At the beginning of July 1990, many Albanians poured in the doors of foreign embassies in Tirana. Together with their families, they were ready to flee the country and seek new opportunities, mostly in western European countries.

Years later, in 1997, Albania experienced the collapse of the pyramid schemes when many lost their money (approximately \$2,7 million), homes and other properties. Following that, the military armories and state prisons were opened. The escaped prisoners and weapons in the hands of ordinary people (about 550,000)¹⁷ caused the

¹⁶ Ilir Gjoni, “Organized Crime and National Security: The Albanian Case” (Thesis, Naval Post Graduate School, Monterey, CA, March 4, 2004), 2.

¹⁷ Ibid., 32.

deaths of more than 2,000 people.¹⁸ The Albanian government failed to manage the situation which was nothing less than total chaos. Law enforcement institutions were unable to restore stability and security. The economy was getting worse day by day. And, when the country's economy decreases, the organized crime rises.

Albania offers good terrain for criminal activities. Due to its geographical position, Albania has served for many years as a Mediterranean crossroad from the Balkans to the Western European countries. This crossroad was not only used for commercial purposes but also for illicit trafficking. The WB countries, together with their neighboring countries, constitute the famous route known as "The Balkan Route."¹⁹ The Balkan Route is used by organized crime groups/elements for the following activities: drug trafficking (mostly coming from Afghanistan), human trafficking, weaponry trafficking, smuggling of immigrants and refugees. Also, criminal elements and groups have taken advantage of the situation and have spread their illegal activities across border. Geographical position is not the only reason why the criminal activities have become so common in Albania and have seriously threatened security, the economy, and the stability of the country. If we take a deeper look, we may realize there are also other factors that have contributed to this issue. Fabian Zhilla and Besfort Ramallari, in one of their comprehensive studies called "*Organized crime: Estimating the risk in Albania*",

¹⁸ Sullivan. "A Nation in Chaos," 20.

¹⁹ United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Drug Money: The Illicit Proceeds of Opiates Trafficked on the Balkan Route*, UNODC Research, 2015, accessed November 14, 2017, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjY1e2jq87cAhXSwAIHHcrMD2UQFjAAegQIARAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unodc.org%2Fdocuments%2Fdata-and-analysis%2FStudies%2FFIFF_report_2015_final_web.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1qgdgkHchkDBn7t3QY-OWG1, 18.

have listed the factors which have constantly stimulated the rise and the development of organized crime in Albania from the fall of dictatorial regime from 1990 until 2015, the years in which they completed the study. The factors are as follows:

- The transition of the governing systems (from communism to democracy)
- The collapse of pyramid schemes followed by the looting of military armories and prison opening
- Lack of independent institutions
- Globalism effects
- Migration
- Fragile economy (unemployment and low income)
- Regional conflicts (for instance: Kosovo war)
- Corruption
- Advancement in technology.²⁰

These factors have negatively affected Albanian society and most of the time have left them with a narrow scope of options. Soon after the fall of communism some people chose to flee Albania and seek a better life in Greece, Italy, and other European countries. After the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997, for instance, there were more than 15,000 who left the country and headed to Italy.²¹ Those who stayed and had no sufficient education either faced the merciless cutthroat of poverty in every aspect of their

²⁰ Fabian Zhilla and Besfort Lamallari, "Albanian Criminal Groups," *Fondacioni Shoqëria e Hapur për Shqipërinë*, October 19, 2015, accessed September 15, 2017, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288667716_Albanian_criminal_groups, 7.

²¹ U.S. Department of State, *Albania Country Report on Human Rights Practices for 1997*.

life, or joined local gangs. Years later, some of the individuals who joined those local gangs became very rich.

It looks like the situation is hopeless and no one is willing to do something about it. Fortunately, the Albanian government has never given up fighting against these challenges. On the contrary, the country has always seen itself standing alongside countries aspiring to become part of the EU. After joining NATO in April 2009, the Albanian Government's primary goal was to become part of the European family. The accession into the EU depends on the fulfillment of the five EU key priorities. For this, Albania has to prove to the EU countries noticeable progress to intensify the fight against organized crime, corruption, while strengthening the public administration, supporting an independent judiciary and reinforcing human rights. Hence, Albanian Government is dedicated to get the best from all of its institutions, including the military.

Problem Statement

The thesis question concerns the required capabilities of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in combating organized crime. This question focuses on the maximization and the effective use of AAF in combating organized crime which can eventually contribute in the government's effort to join the EU. The thesis question is, what are the capabilities needed by the Albanian military to combat organized crime?

This research is significant in relation to the capabilities of AAF in combating organized crime; the capability gaps and the current needs to accomplish their mission. This assistance will include the type of forces, doctrine, equipment, training and institutional sustainment. Understanding the impact of the Albanian polity on the role of the military will also enable future leaders to better articulate needs and requirements of

the Albanian military. Additionally, the thesis will highlight the capabilities available and several circumstances when the Armed Forces' contributed to combating organized crime.

The research on this subject is limited to the capabilities of the military from the fall of the communist regime until present (2018). This thesis will cover a majority of the years during this time period.

Primary Research Question

What are the capabilities needed by the Albanian military to combat organized crime?

Secondary Research Questions

1. How can the Albanian military be best utilized to satisfy EU requirements?
2. What is the current contribution of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in fighting organized crime?
3. What is the role of the Italian Carabinieri Corps relating to organized crime and how effective is the organization in this area?

Assumptions

This study assumes that the Albanian MoD will continue its current transformation process with the intend of providing a modernized, professional, and effective force capable of achieving its objectives, accomplishing its mission as well as continuing to strengthen its status in NATO.

The researcher assumes that the U.S. Government (to include the security cooperation program) and NATO will continue to support Albanian institutions in

building the required capabilities to combat organized crime reinforcing its democratic institutions.

Additionally, the researcher assumes that organized crime will continue to challenge the Balkan Peninsula, and especially countries which are still struggling to join the EU. Also, this paper is written with the assumption that Albania will continue to increase its efforts in fulfilling the twelve EU recommendations and maintain a national desire to continue to join the EU family. The assumptions will consider that Albanian Government/MoD will provide a complementary legal framework that will facilitate all necessary changes in the structures of Armed Forces.

Definitions

Capability is an ability to make or perform something in a certain way. From a military perspective, capability is a professional skill, competence, knowledge or ability which allows a person or unit to successfully execute an order, task or operation under particular conditions.²²

The European Commission (EC) is the executive body of the EU. It is the organization which represents and supports the interests of the EU member countries. It implements EU policies, manages the budget, and is responsible for preparing drafts proposals for new European laws.²³

²² U.S. Department of Defense, Joint Publication 1-02, *DOD Dictionary of Military and Associated Terms* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, April 2018), 2.

²³ See European Commission, accessed February 19, 2018, http://ec.europa.eu/index_en.htm.

The Carabinieri Corps is an Italian military organization under the authority of both the MoD and MoI. As a police force, the Carabinieri Corps contribute in protecting the lives of the citizens and assist to maintain public order. As an Armed Force, they perform MP duties. Also, they may deploy in other countries as part of Armed Forces.²⁴

The Guardia di Finanza (GdF) or the Financial Guard is an Italian law enforcement agency under the authority of the Minister of Economy and Finance. The GdF is responsible for dealing with financial crime and smuggling; it contributes in maintaining public order and security. Also, GdF serves as an economic and financial police at sea.²⁵

The Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA) is a Europol strategic analysis document that comes as the *fruit of the work* of some of EU law enforcement agencies. This document provides relevant information concerning threats related to organized crime in Europe. Also, it gives significant advice to EU member countries and constitutes the basis for their future planning priorities for countering threats.²⁶

²⁴ See Italian Ministry of Defense, “The Ancient Corps of the Royal Carabinieri,” accessed December 23, 2017, http://www.carabinieri.it/multilingua/en/the-ancient-corps-of-the-royal-carabinieri-_898e145c18314ef1bcd033c6dde57744.

²⁵ See *Italian Guardia di Finanza* (Financial Guard), accessed November 20, 2017, <http://www.gdf.gov.it/chi-siamo/organizzazione/compiti-istituzionali>.

²⁶ Serious and Organised Crime Threat Assessment (SOCTA), *The EU Serious and Organized Crime Threat Assessment: Crime in the Age of Technology*, EUROPOL, 2017, accessed April 30, 2018, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjbsfOppM7cAhUIjqQKHR8oCTYQFjAAegQIChAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.europol.europa.eu%2Fnewsroom%2Fnews%2Fcrime-in-age-of-technology-%25E2%2580%2593-europol%25E2%2580%>

The Western Balkans (WB) is an essential part of Europe located in its Southeastern region. WB includes six countries: Albania, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.²⁷

Limitations

This study will not cover all missions and tasks of the Italian Carabinieri Corps. In order to accommodate the time required to research and analyze, this study focuses on the duties and successes related to countering organized crime. The information in the paper is concentrated on core missions which are relevant to the Albanian military. Also, the author of this study will not try to explain in detail the organization of the Carabinieri Corps. The study is limited to illustrating the challenges related to combating organized crime as part of five EU key priorities and the increase of the use and effectiveness of the military in this aspect.

Delimitations

This study will limit its focus to materials published in English, Albanian or Italian language, by national and collective entities. The researcher will focus on identifying critical gaps in military capability that need to be addressed in order to retain

2599s-serious-and-organised-crime-threat-assessment-2017&usg=AOvVaw1qdBtuYj2tDUJnFJV9vleq, 7.

²⁷ Nina Skočajič Juvan and Anton Grizold, *The Complex of Security in the Western Balkans: Processes and Issues*, Teorija In Praksa, February 2017, accessed January 19, 2018, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwji9JTDo87cAhWMMewKHXYkAj8QFjAAegQIAhAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.fdv.uni-lj.si%2Fdocs%2Fdefault-source%2Ftip%2Ftip_02_2017_skocajic_grizold.pdf%3Fsfvrsn%3D2&usg=AOvVaw1-RVVMYlqVv4tsFgt3bnfl, 6.

the initiative for the present and the future. The researcher will present solutions to current challenges by providing a starting point for future detailed research.

Purpose

The purpose of the research paper stands on the importance of combating organized crime not only as a necessity to minimize the crime's negative effects on the Albanian society and economy but also to satisfy EU demands and continue the road toward full membership in the EU family. The outcome of this process will eventually bring peace and stability in the Balkan region and beyond. Combating organized crime in Albania requires strong will, determination of all government institutions, and the coordination of information sharing to maximize the outcome from all resources available.

Significance

The geographical position, political instability, and poor economy has always presented Albania as a favorable place where internal and external interests have come into conflict. Together with other western Balkan countries, Albania has to demonstrate significant progress in fulfilling EU key priorities. This requires full engagement and appropriate utilization of all government's institutions to include the MoD with its military capabilities. The Albanian military possesses assets, systems and trained personnel that can be utilized to meet EU demands. The inclusion of these countries into the EU is the only option for the region to find peace.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In his chapter, a summary of some of the written existing literature related to organized crime in Albania will be presented. First, information on the types of organized crime alongside definitions will be provided to assist the readers in comprehension. Then, a brief overview on the background information of organized crime and its threats in western Balkans; the connection of criminal elements/groups with politics and how it effects a country's economy through corruption. This chapter will include facts related to the contribution of the Albanian military to organized crime. Also, it will include statements from national foreign officials on the issue.

In order to understand organized crime as a phenomenon, it is imperative to understand its characteristics, forms, types; understand the ways it develops; understand the method it operates, and lastly to finally define it.

Organized crime nowadays comes in a variety of forms and types. From the term "organized" one should understand that it is something related to a plan with designated intentions to benefit from something or somebody. This plan requires close coordination among senior leaders of criminal groups which sometimes involves political officials as well. The term "crime" connects the planning with the illegal activity. In Albania organized crime can be classified into three broad categories: local bands, international crime groups, and politically connected networks.²⁸ These illegal groups have spread

²⁸ Gjoni, "Organized Crime and National Security: The Albanian Case," 4.

their criminal activities not only within a specific country but also internationally. They have taken advantage from both the weakness of the law enforcing institutions as well as connections with the influential individuals in police forces and/or politics. Through the use of corruption methods, criminal elements have attracted high officials and have expanded their roots so deep that it is very difficult to identify or remove them.

Local bands in Albania mainly flourish in areas where the influence of the police is low or negligible. These gangs facilitate robberies. These robberies include, but are not limited to, cars, banks, jewelry, and other business stores. Recently murder, drug trafficking, human trafficking, smuggling of migrants, coercion, and hired guns have become more frequent.²⁹

In his articles titled “Transnational organized crime in the Western Balkans,” Bojan Dobovšek stresses the importance for these countries to exchange intelligence information. He posited this exchange of intelligence is the only way to manage the crime. Managing and controlling crime, contends Dobovšek, will reduce the potential threat on the population. As a result, the focus must be shifted to the leaders of these criminal groups and their connections with other national or transnational groups. Organized crime poses serious danger to the security of the state and its economy. It is for this reason why foreign companies hesitate to invest in these countries, to include Albania, where their capital might be at risk.³⁰ Albanian criminal groups also operate in

²⁹ Fabian Zhilla and Besfort Lamallari, “*Krimi i Organizuar: Vlerësimi i Riskut në Shqipëri*” (“Organized Crime: Estimating Risk in Albania”), *Fondacioni Shoqëria e Hapur për Shqipërinë*, 2015, accessed March 10, 2018, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/288667716_Albanian_criminal_groups, 8.

³⁰ Bojan Dobovšek, *Transnational Organized Crime in the Western Balkans*. Human Security (HUMSEC), November 25, 2006, accessed April 16, 2018,

other countries such as Italy, Greece, Germany, Austria, Switzerland, etc. Sometimes, criminal groups dominate particular drug market. For example, in Switzerland criminal groups control 80 percent of the drug market.³¹

Organized Crime and Politics

Organized crime in Albania is often found to be connected to politics. The year 1997 reveals an example on how bad the situation can deteriorate when politics is intertwined with crime. A more recent example is when former members of the parliament Mark Frroku, Arben Ndoka, and the mayor of Kavaja city Elvis Roshi, left their positions as a result of justice reports from some foreign countries where these individuals had been arrested for drug trafficking, murder, money laundering, and prostitution.³² Mark Frroku, for instance, is still in prison since his arrest in April, 2015.³³

https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwiWjZKTz83cAhVHzaQKHTK5Ab0QFjAAegQIABAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.humsec.eu%2Fcms%2Ffileadmin%2Fuser_upload%2Fhumsec%2FWorkin_Paper_Series%2FWorking_Paper_Dobovsek.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1-Qn080zejmOmLjRITz6Ox, 2.

³¹ Dejan Anastasijevic, *Organized Crime in the Western Balkans*, Human Security (HUMSEC), August 29, 2010, accessed February 4, 2018, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwjHuJ-mzs3cAhWHDuwKHUHICg0QFjAAegQIABAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.humsec.eu%2Fcms%2Ffileadmin%2Fuser_upload%2Fhumsec%2FWorkin_Paper_Series%2FWorking_Paper_Anastasijevic.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1AeZBq2TqC1bH8Vv3EQlvm, 4.

³² *Shqiptarja*, “Kush janë 4 politikanët e lidhur me krimin, sipas Donald Lu/Emrat” (“Who are 4 Politicians Connected to Crime according to Donald Lu/Names”), November 7, 2017, accessed February 28, 2018, <http://old.shqiptarja.com/news.php?IDNotizia=451167>.

³³ *Panorama Newspaper*, “Vrasja në Belgjikë/Mark Frroku mbetet në burg, pse e rrëzoi gjykata” (“Murder in Belgium/Mark Frroku Remains in Jail, Why did Court

When defining organized crime and criminal groups, it is important to know the key components that form these groups such as: composition, ways and where they operate, intentions, links, and organizational structure. Many prestigious international institutions have developed definitions for organized crime. The Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) states organized crime is:

Self-perpetuating associations of individuals who operate, wholly or in part, by illegal means and irrespective of geography. They constantly seek to obtain power, influence, and monetary gains. There is no single structure under which organized criminal groups function - they vary from hierarchies to clans, networks, and cells, and may evolve into other structures. These groups are typically insular and protect their activities through corruption, violence, international commerce, complex communication mechanisms, and an organizational structure exploiting national boundaries.³⁴

In the United Kingdom, the National Crime Agency states “Organized crime can be defined as serious crime planned, coordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain.”³⁵

United Nations define organized criminal group as “A structured group of three or more persons, existing for a period of time and acting in concert with the aim of committing one or more serious crimes or offences established in accordance with this

Refuse”), January 20, 2017, accessed December 22, 2017, <http://www.panorama.com.al/vrasja-ne-belgjike-mark-froku-mbetet-ne-burg-pse-e-rrezoi-gjykata>.

³⁴ See Federal Bureau of Investigation, “Transnational Organized Crime,” accessed September 27, 2017, <https://www.fbi.gov/investigate/organized-crime>.

³⁵ See National Crime Agency, “Organised Crime Groups,” 2018, accessed February 19, 2018, <http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/organised-crime-groups>.

Convention, in order to obtain, directly or indirectly, a financial or other material benefit.”³⁶

As we have a clear definition on the organized crime phenomenon, one should understand the impact of organized crime in Albania through examining the factors which contributed to the growth and development from the fall of the dictatorial regime. The phenomenon of organized crime in Albania must be examined from the rise of the democracy. After the fall of the communist regime in 1991, organized crime has spread into every sector of society. The individuals a part of the criminal elements managed to reach high positions and paved the way for the criminal groups operating throughout country. Due to the lack of sufficient capabilities and capacities, the law enforcement institutions were weak and not ready to address the illegal activities of criminal groups or elements.³⁷

The fragility of the justice system and other law enforcement institutions, grasped by corruption and political connections, has resulted in the impunity of the organized crime elements while offering chances for the interaction and involvement in politics.³⁸ Organized crime and corruption in relation to politics has been and continues to be the

³⁶ United Nations, *United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Protocols Thereto*, 2004, accessed October 20, 2017, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi4pM3xqs7cAhXRCewKHYYhYCIUQFjAAegQICRAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.unodc.org%2Fdocuments%2Fmiddleeastandnorthafrica%2Forganised-crime%2FUNITED_NATIONS_CONVENTION_AGAINST_TRANSNATIONAL_ORGANIZED_CRIME_AND_THE_PROTOCOLS_THERETO.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1bW9LU4YaGQoTYLgX69HS42004, Article 2, 5.

³⁷ Gjoni, “Organized Crime and National Security: The Albanian Case,” 18.

³⁸ Zhilla and Lamallari, “Organized Crime: Estimating Risk in Albania.”

center of various discussions among analysts, experts, foreign ambassadors in Albania, and the opposition parties.

In a press conference during his visit to the Albanian School of Magistrates at the beginning of October 2017, U.S. Ambassador to Albania, Donald Lu, declared, “The biggest and most difficult challenge remains ahead of Albania – the war against organized crime. Until the big fish are arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to jail, the cannabis will return, judges will be bribed, and government officials will be corrupted.” Mr. Lu pointed out the activities of criminal groups operating in Albania.³⁹ In his strong declaration, Ambassador Lu mentioned the urgent need to put behind bars those whom he called “the big fish.” Those individuals he referred to as “the big fish” are people who are controlling, supervising, or leading the criminal activities in Albania.

Many Albanian analysts and journalists have commented by giving their opinions regarding the connection of crime with politics. Mr. Artan Hoxha, a famous analyst on criminality and security issues in Albania, commented on the declaration of the U.S. Ambassador in Tirana which he claimed to be “appropriate.” Also, he mentioned the necessity of the international community to support, incite, and encourage government on its road toward EU membership. Lastly, Mr. Hoxha mentioned individuals working within the police and justice systems feel oppressed by the crime and corruption surrounding politics thus they fail to capture criminals. Even when criminals are captured they are not sentenced appropriately or, in many cases, they get released.

³⁹ U.S. Embassy in Tirana, “Remarks by Ambassador Donald Lu at the School of Magistrates Twentieth Anniversary,” 2017, accessed October 25, 2017, <https://al.usembassy.gov/remarks-ambassador-donald-lu-school-magistrates-twentieth-anniversary>.

In December 2016, the prison director in the city of Durrës released one of the most wanted criminals who was accused of running the Durrësi criminal group. This criminal group had committed a series of crimes including murder and other forms of violence causing bodily harm. The case was highly debated and contested in the media. It ended up with an “imprisonment” security measure released from the local court for the former prison director.⁴⁰ Such cases have always hindered the Albanian EU integration progress and have been one of the reasons why the Council of Europe (CoE) is not recommending the opening of the negotiations phase between the EU and Albania.

Based on the five EU key priorities, Albania has to demonstrate to the EU member countries tangible progress and assure them of its full national desire to intensify the fight against organized crime, corruption, and drug trafficking. This must be done through strengthening and supporting the justice independent institutions. Reinforcing human rights should continue to remain a government priority. On the other hand, the EU has made it clear that the opening of the accession negotiations with Albania is not in EU hands, but it is contingent upon the progress made in the five priority areas. The European Union will be closely monitoring the step by step process. The EU Ambassador

⁴⁰ *Gazeta Shqip* (Shqip Newspaper), “*Lirimi i Lul Berishës, ish-drejtori i burgut ia hedh përgjegjësinë juristit*” (“The Former Prison Director Accuses Lawyer of Wrongful Release of Lul Berisha”), December 23, 2016, accessed December 25, 2017, <http://gazeta-shqip.com/lajme/2016/12/23/lirimi-i-lul-berishes-ish-drejtori-i-burgut-ia-hedh-pergjegjesine-juristit>.

to Albania, Ms. Romana Vlahutin, reaffirmed the importance of progress toward accomplishing the EU priorities.⁴¹ Ms. Vlahutin stated:

You know that we never speak about a precise timeline, but about what should be done for Albania has been explained in the decision of the European Commission. The recommendation for the opening of the negotiations depends on credible and tangible progress in the implementation of the judicial reform, especially the vetting of the judges as well as the five key priorities: the battle against corruption, organized crime, the empowerment of the judiciary, public administration, and the protection of human rights, including the Roma and anti-discrimination policies, as well as the implementation of property rights.

Organized Crime and Corruption

Fulfillment of the EU's criteria is necessary for the EU integration process of Albania because they form the strong foundation for a modern and stable state. Albania has to increase its efforts in combating organized crime and identify every criminal cell, link, or means of support they have. In Albania, criminal elements and their organizations have been using various means to protect their activities through favoring, violence, threat, and corruption.⁴² The use of corruption, in particular, is seen as the common, short and easy "solution" support the illegal activities facilitated by individuals working within a criminal organization. Organized crime is normally found to be connected with corruption. Addressing corruption is one of the five EU requirements. As a result, Albania finds itself listed alongside countries with a relatively high level of corruption. An effective tool for measuring the progress on fighting corruption is provided by Transparency International. Its annual report called "Corruption Perceptions Index"

⁴¹ Exit.al, "Vlahutin Surrenders, Confirms the Five Key Priorities," July 1, 2017, accessed October 19, 2017, <https://exit.al/en/2017/07/01/vlahutin-surrenders-confirms-the-five-key-priorities>.

⁴² See Federal Bureau of Investigation, "Transnational Organized Crime."

shows the perception of corruption around the world. The index is a product of assessments and surveys from many institutions. To appear in the Corruption Perceptions Index, a country is assessed from at least three of these institutions.⁴³

If we take a deeper look, we realize Albanian results have been slightly improving year by year. In 2015, Transparency International ranked Albania 88th out of 168 countries,⁴⁴ and a year later, Albania improved to 83rd place out of 176 countries.⁴⁵ The progress achieved didn't last for long because in 2017 Albania lost eight places.⁴⁶ Figure 1 shows the corruption index for Albania from 2010 until December 2017.

⁴³ Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index, 2016: Albania," 2016, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016?gclid=Cj0KCQjwjN7YBRCOARIsAFCb935ykwSSYQGRb6Vm8vZ4fnow9o2mhZAZhBOZWPrJuimdTzDlnwk2Y3IaAutZEALw_wcB.

⁴⁴ Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index, 2015: Albania," 2015, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2015?gclid=Cj0KCQjwjN7YBRCOARIsAFCb935ykwSSYQGRb6Vm8vZ4fnow9o2mhZAZhBOZWPrJuimdTzDlnwk2Y3IaAutZEALw_wcB.

⁴⁵ Ibid.

⁴⁶ Transparency International, "Corruption Perceptions Index, 2017: Albania," 2017, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017?gclid=Cj0KCQjwjN7YBRCOARIsAFCb935ykwSSYQGRb6Vm8vZ4fnow9o2mhZAZhBOZWPrJuimdTzDlnwk2Y3IaAutZEALw_wcB.

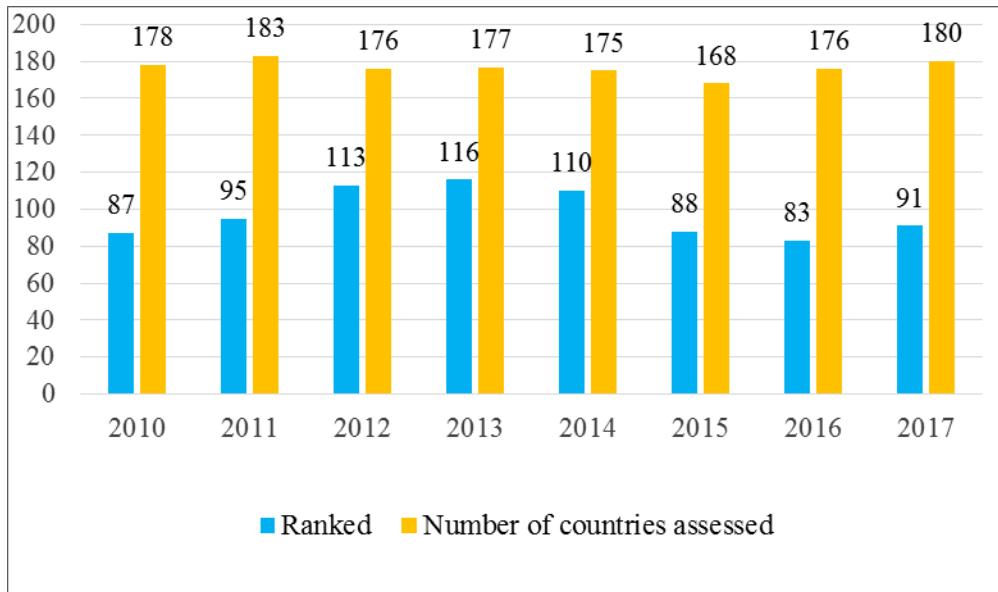


Figure 1. Albanian Corruption Perception Index for 2010-2017

Source: Created by author using information from Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index, 2016: Albania,” 2016, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2016?gclid=Cj0KCQjwjN7YBRCOARIsAFcb935ykwSSYQGRb6Vm8vZ4fnow9o2mhZAZhBOZWP rJuimdTzDlnwk2Y3IaAutZEALw_wcB; Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index, 2015: Albania,” 2015, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2015?gclid=Cj0KCQjwjN7YBRCOARIsAFcb935ykwSSYQGRb6Vm8vZ4fnow9o2mhZAZhBOZWP rJuimdTzDlnwk2Y3IaAutZEALw_wcB; Transparency International, “Corruption Perceptions Index, 2017: Albania,” 2017, accessed November 21, 2017, https://www.transparency.org/news/feature/corruption_perceptions_index_2017?gclid=Cj0KCQjwjN7YBRCOARIsAFcb935ykwSSYQGRb6Vm8vZ4fnow9o2mhZAZhBOZWP rJuimdTzDlnwk2Y3IaAutZEALw_wcB.

Despite the progress achieved in the last few years, Albania still suffers from severe corruption symptoms. A corrupt police force, for example, smooths the path for the blooming of the drug trafficking. In an article published in December 2016, BBC News revealed an example of cannabis cultivation in an area close to Tirana. A twenty-year-old male who seems to be part of a larger network, explains how cannabis is

cultivated, transported, and sold. He also talks openly about the security of the entire process, in which the police seem to be truly involved. “I pay the police 20 percent. Everybody has to pay. If you don’t pay, they will take you to jail.”⁴⁷

Notwithstanding current challenges regarding the level of corruption and organized crime, Albania should not slow down the integration process, otherwise it will miss the chance for admission into the EU. In these circumstances, fighting corruption, enforcing the rule of law, and improving overall performance will enhance the effectiveness of the police. This is a very delicate, difficult, and long process which will result in postponing the negotiation period for Albania. So, it is imperative for the Albanian government to employ other means to accomplish the five EU priorities. Thus, the Armed Forces can be an appropriate tool to combat organized crime. Several factors support this argument such as: resources available (personnel, equipment, and systems) as well as the trust and support from the population resulting from their detachment from corruptive acts. The utilization of the military in combating organized crime would accelerate the integration process and enhances Albania’s chances for joining the EU. This process has been very long and arduous while sometimes seemingly impossible. Logically, the question arises: How long was the process?

The EU Integration Process of Albania

Immediately after the rise of democracy, Albania expressed its desire to join the EU. Albania made the first bid in 1991 when relations with the Albanian-European

⁴⁷ Gamespot, “Marijuana Accounts for 50% of Albania’s GDP,” December 19, 2016, accessed January 21, 2018, <https://www.gamespot.com/forums/offtopic-discussion-314159273/marijuana-accounts-for-50-of-albanias-gdp-33370521>.

Economic Community (EEC) were established. A year later, a free trade agreement was signed. The long road toward EU membership started twelve years ago, in 2006, when Albania signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU. The aim of the SAA agreement was for implementing essential reforms including the limitation of corruption and organized crime.⁴⁸ The SAA entered into force on April 2009.⁴⁹ On December 2006, the Interim Agreement enters into force.⁵⁰ This agreement between Albania and the European Community officially removed the barriers and established relations on trade matters.⁵¹ Two years later, in January 2008, EU-Albania visa facilitation agreement entered into force.⁵² In April 2009, Albania applied for EU membership. In December 2010, the visa regime for the Schengen area was removed.⁵³ This action was well received by the Albanian citizens who could finally travel freely within Schengen area. October 2012, EC recommends granting candidate status and, in

⁴⁸ U.S. Department of State, “U.S Relations with Albania,” 2017, accessed October 27, 2017, <https://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3235.htm>.

⁴⁹ European Commission, “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Albania,” accessed 29 October 2017, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/countries/detailed-country-information/albania_en.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ European Union, *Interim Agreement on Trade and Trade-related Matters between the European Community, of the One Part, and the Republic of Albania, of the Other Part*, 2006, accessed March 08, 2018, <https://wits.worldbank.org/GPTAD/PDF/archive/Albania-EC.pdf> European Union, Article 3, Title II, 8.

⁵² European Commission, “European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Albania.”

⁵³ Ibid.

June 2014, Albania earned the status of candidate as a potential future EU member.⁵⁴ The status doesn't necessarily mean the membership will be attained easily or quickly, but it provides hope for future membership of the country. On April 17, 2018, the European Commission recommended the opening of the accession negotiations with Albania and Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia following the annual progress report. The High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Ms.

Federica Mogherini, congratulated both countries and stated:

Today the Commission recommends that the Council decides to open accession negotiations with Albania and with the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. I have to say that over the last three years we have seen results that were clearly considered impossible to be achieved when we started our mandate. We are also working towards an opinion on Bosnia and Herzegovina's application, and with the Kosovo authorities, we are working towards further progress on the basis of the stabilization and association agreement we have. The Western Balkans are Europe, and will be part of the European Union's future.⁵⁵

The opening of accession negotiations between the EU and Albania will be the next step, which depends on the implementation of justice reform and vetting of the results. The full membership, on the other hand, depends on the level of progress made towards meeting the five priorities:

1. Establishing of a professional and depoliticized administration;
2. Enhancing the impartiality of the judiciary;
3. Strengthening the fight against organized crime;

⁵⁴ European Commission, "European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations: Albania."

⁵⁵ Jon Stone, "European Commission Plans to Open Talks with Albania and Macedonia about Joining the EU," *Independent*, April 17, 2018, accessed April 19, 2018, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/eu-albania-macedonia-join-new-members-european-commission-enlargement-talks-a8308916.html>.

4. Strengthening the fight against corruption;
5. Reinforcing protection of human rights.⁵⁶

In addition to the five requirements and priorities, the European Commission has made twelve recommendations which would be helpful for focusing efforts on reaching compliance in the areas to:

1. Ensure the effective work of the parliament
2. Adopt pending laws requiring a reinforced majority in parliament
3. Appoint the Ombudsman and ensure an orderly hearing and voting process in Parliament for constitutional and high court appointments
4. Modify the legislative framework for elections according to OSCE/ODIHR recommendations
5. Ensure elections are free according to EU standards
6. Public administration reform. Increase the proficiency, develop appointments and promotions based on transparency and merit to including changes
7. Adopt and implement a strategy for the judiciary, ensuring the independence, efficiency and accountability of its institutions
8. Effectively implement the Government's anti-corruption strategy and action plan. Remove obstacles on investigation, in particular of judges, ministers and members of Parliament

⁵⁶ European Commission, *Analytical Report: Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council Commission Opinion on Albania's Application for Membership of the European Union*, 2010, accessed December 11, 2017, https://www.parlament.al/wp-content/.../al_analytical_report_2010_en_23390_1.pdf, 15-34.

9. Intensify fight against organized crime; increase cooperation with regional partners and EU
10. Prepare, adopt and implement a national strategy and action plan on property rights following the consultation and taking European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR) case law into account
11. Enforce the protection of human rights, notably for women, children and Roma and to effectively apply anti-discrimination plans
12. Improve the treatment of detainees⁵⁷

From a closer perspective, the EU recommendations are interrelated. Corruption, in particular, is related to enforcement of judiciary system reform, war against organized crime, human rights, and public administration reform. Some of the EU recommendations emphasize a need for cooperation between the government and the opposition to pass laws with 3/5 votes.⁵⁸

As the EU key priorities are reviewed, a picture is created of how severe the situation is and how long the Albanian road toward EU membership will be. This gives the impression that there is not a light at the end of the tunnel. But, is Albania the only country facing these problems? The answer is simple. Albania is not the only country in the region or in the world experiencing such issues. Other countries such as Macedonia,

⁵⁷ Eli Gateva, *European Union Enlargement Conditionality*, Palgrave Studies in European Union Politics. England: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. *European Union enlargement Conditionality*. 2016, 129.

⁵⁸ Arta Tozaj and Ernest Bunguri, “12 kushtet e BE-së për Shqipërinë” (“12 EU Requirements for Albania”), Shqipëri, 2011, accessed November 30, 2017, <https://www.shqiperia.com/12-kushtet-e-BE-se-per-Shqiperine.15240>.

Montenegro, Bosnia and Hercegovina, Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia, Italy, Greece, etc. face similar issues. Since it threatens the stability and security of each country, organized crime also threatens financial systems and foreign relations.⁵⁹ In Albania, money laundering, tax evasion, and unemployment are a consistent threat to the economy and Albanian society. National security as well as the security of the region are affected by criminal activities.

In spite of being a good place for smugglers and drug dealers, Albania has made progress in combating organized crime and illicit trafficking - for example irradiating cannabis plantations. But, the police and prosecutors have failed in detecting and seizing the elements behind drug cultivation and illicit trafficking. One of the reasons for this issue is the lack of access to several databases which could provide these institutions with necessary information to conduct investigations.⁶⁰ There have been only a few cases where individuals have been arrested. Also, it is imperative to track their former and current illegal activities, their connections to politics and financial assets. Every year, after a thorough examination of the situations regarding organized crime, EU experts came up with some recommendations:

1. Enhance investigations; confiscate/seize criminal assets
2. Align legal framework and procedures with EU standards

⁵⁹ Stojarová, Věra. *Organized Crime in the Western Balkans*. Institute for Comparative Political Research, 2007, 3.

⁶⁰ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Albania Report, 2016*, accessed January 16, 2018, https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood.../sites/.../2016/20161109_report_albania.pdf, 17, 18.

3. Provide proper funds; execute an effective HR strategy.⁶¹

The question is, are police and prosecution the only institutions that should deal with combating organized crime? The answer is no. To be effective, a whole of government approach should be utilized. Institutions such as: The Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Ministry of Economy and Finance (MoEF), the Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA), the MoD, the State Intelligence Service (SIS), the Courts, General Prosecution and many others, can provide significant efforts. Together they complete the whole picture of national instruments of power.

The Contribution of the Albanian Military in Combating Organized Crime

It is expected each successive government improve in accomplishing the tasks necessary to fulfill the five priorities. The MoD and the Armed Forces, in particular, have increased the role in combating organized crime in the recent years, but, since this is not their primary task, the AAF has always been a secondary effort. Police forces, which are under the Ministry of Interior (MoI), have been the lead in this process.

Air Force

In 2015, the Council of Ministers (CoM) decided that all helicopters belonging to the MoI and the MoH, together with the equipment and personnel, became part of the

⁶¹ European Commission, *Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: Albania Report*, 19-20.

MoD.⁶² From that time forward, the Air Force played a significant role in the militaries combating organized crime. This means that in any operation where helicopters were needed, the Air Force is there. The Air Force has assisted police forces with air transportation to track criminal elements, detect cannabis plantations, monitor air space traffic and exchange information.

In an anti-cannabis operation that took place in Dukagjin (located in the northeastern part of the country) in the summer of 2014, the Albanian Air Force supported the operation with three helicopters, one of which was shot twice by unidentified persons.⁶³ Air force assets were also used during the intervention in Lazarat in 2015. Lazarat, a small village in Gjirokastrë, is known for cannabis cultivation and used to be a contested zone for the police for many years.

Navy

The Air Force is not the only example of military support. The Albanian Navy has given and still continues to provide substantial contributions in combating organized crime and illicit trafficking. With its assets and personnel, the Albanian Navy continues to offer its capabilities while patrolling at sea, conducting naval boarding operations, and providing traffic visibility through their integrated radar systems. In cooperation with

⁶² Albanian Council of Ministers, *Vendim nr. 964, datë 2.12.2015 për kalimin e helikopterëve e të pajisjeve të tyre, nga Ministria e Punëve të Brendshme dhe Ministria e Shëndetësisë te Ministria e Mbrojtjes*, 2015.

⁶³ Pëllumb Sulo, “*Helikopteri i ushtrisë qëllohet me armë zjarri*” (“Military Helicopter gets Shot with Firearms”), Voice of America, August 22, 2014, accessed November 19, 2017, <https://www.zeriamerikes.com/a/goditet-helikopteri-antidroge/2424957.html>.

border police and other maritime institutions, the Navy has substantially reduced drug trafficking, human trafficking, and other illicit trafficking using sea routes. In November 2016, the Albanian Navy deployed its first ship into the Aegean Sea as part of Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 (SNMG2).⁶⁴ The Albanian ship P132-Oriku had a crew of about 20 people.

The SNMG2 is a multinational force composed of vessels and crews from different countries such as: Germany, Turkey, Bulgaria, Albania, and Greece. It establishes NATO presence in the Aegean Sea and provides maritime capability.⁶⁵ SNMG2 assists in reducing the illegal immigration coming mostly from Syria and Afghanistan. The Albanian contingent, in eighteen months, has saved the lives of more than 600 illegal immigrants including women and children trying to use the Aegean Sea as a passageway to southern Europe with the aim of reaching western European countries.⁶⁶

On the other side, the Albanian navy, in cooperation with the Italian Financial Guard or Guardia di Finanza (GdF), continues to substantial contribution in monitoring, controlling, and conducting a wide-range of operations to accomplish its mission. The tasks of the navy include, but are not limited to, the following: monitor and control the

⁶⁴ Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe, “Albania Joins Standing NATO Maritime Group 2 in the Aegean Sea,” North Atlantic Treaty Organization, November 24, 2016, accessed December 18, 2017, <https://shape.nato.int/2016/albania-joins-standing-nato-maritime-group-2-in-the-aegean-sea>.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ *Ora News*, “Anija ‘Oriku’ shpëton anijen me 53 emigrantë sirianë në Egje,” October 14, 2017, accessed October 30, 2017, <http://www.oranews.tv/article/anija-oriku-shpeton-anijen-me-53-emigrante-siriane-ne-egje>.

sea traffic within the territorial sea of the Republic of Albania; and participate in handling the asymmetric risks of terrorism, organized crime in cooperation and coordination with state bodies specialized in this field of expertise.⁶⁷

Inter-Institutional Maritime Operational Center

The Inter-Institutional Maritime Operational Center (IMOC) is another contribution of the AAF against illegal activities at sea. The center operates under the authority of the MoD while hosting representatives from the MoI, the Ministry of Finance (MoF), the Ministry of Environment Forestry and Water Administration (MoEFWA), the Ministry of Public Works, Transport and Telecommunication (MoPWTT) and the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Consumer Protection (MoAFCP). The IMOC is responsible for monitoring traffic flow at sea, providing observation through the integrated radar systems, managing operations and controlling sea space in coordination with other maritime institutions.⁶⁸

Joint Operational Center

Joint Operational Center (JOC) is also a military contributor against organized crime. The JOC directly reports to Chef of Defense for the matters of daily activities of the Armed Forces to include the activities of those forces which are deployed abroad in

⁶⁷ Albanian Armed Forces, “Mission and Tasks of the Albanian Navy,” accessed December 6, 2017, <https://aaf.mil.al/komanda-e-fd/133-misioni-dhe-detyrat/178-misioni-dhe-detyrat>.

⁶⁸ See Albanian Ministry of Defense, “*Qendra Nderinstitutionale Operacionale Detare*,” accessed 21 January 2018, <http://www.mod.gov.al/index.php/ministria/strukturat-vartese/61-qendra-nderinstitutionale-operacionale-detare>.

missions or joint trainings. To accomplish its mission, the center coordinates and synchronizes activities and operations, communicates orders, receives and delivers reports, and maintains continuous communication with other national law enforcing agencies. Through JOC the military units, personnel and assets are sent to provide support not only to national institutions/agencies such as: police, port authorities, but also to the international agencies such as the Italian GdF.

Based on its personnel, equipment, and training capabilities, the Albanian military is able to contribute with more resources in the fight against organized crime, because its capabilities haven't been fully employed. But, there is still room for additional improvement in some aspects. The transformation of an institution fully depends on the allocated funds. In this aspect, the Albanian military faces the same constraint like many other foreign militaries. The military has been subjected to several politicized reforms.⁶⁹ One may think that these reforms have slightly transformed the armed forces into a small professional military force.

Modernization, for instance, remains a challenge towards meeting NATO standards. The Albanian Ministry of Defense (MoD) has manifested some efforts in providing its forces with the latest equipment, systems, and armaments to create military capabilities aligned with NATO member countries. This would ensure interoperability

⁶⁹ Elvin Gjevori. *Crises, Interests and Elite Behavior: Military Reform on Albania*, Southeast European and Black Sea Studies, European University of Tirana Taylor & Francis Online, April 1, 2015, accessed December 28, 2017, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewjEw8eOo87cAhXIMewKHWjjAwEQFjAAegQIAhAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.tandfonline.com%2Fdoi%2Fabs%2F10.1080%2F14683857.2015.1026547&usg=AOvVaw0wJbd0mY_n56NwDxsSDDGr.

and to develop operational capabilities. This ongoing process began with the modernization of priority units. However, embracing the latest military technology through modernizing equipment and systems for the subordinate units and intensifying training of the military and civilian personnel leaves room for additional reforms regarding its capabilities.

Conclusion

A number of authors have written about the threats coming from organized criminal groups operating not only in Albania, but also in the larger Balkan Peninsula. There are gaps that can still be addressed regarding the improvement in its efficiency and effectiveness in combating these threats. This explains why military involvement is necessary. The present study explores only military gaps in addressing ways of improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Albanian military against organized crime. The author uses a methodological approach highlighted in Chapter 3.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter will cover the design methodology utilized to conduct this study. The research methodology used in this thesis is a qualitative case study of the Italian Carabinieri Corps. The researcher has made an examination of the literature available. This will allow a comprehensive interpretation of the facts concerning the thesis. This research will focus on capabilities available related to combating organized crime of this foreign military unit. The findings will emphasize recommendations for the refinement of the Albanian military as a better organized, trained, and equipped force to address the contemporary security threats in the twenty-first-century. One disadvantage to this method is the research is restricted to the data that already exists.

Methodology

The qualitative methods allows the researcher to analyze data from the macro to the micro level without risking analytical integrity by comparing the proverbial ‘apples to oranges’.⁷⁰ This method begins with a general overview of the possible use of theoretical lenses and framing of the research questions. The research relies mostly on secondary data to undertake the case study on Italian Carabinieri Corps. The focus in this study is to look at some of the capabilities and achievements of these units in its respective country.

⁷⁰ Anne-Marie Ambert, Patricia A. Adler, Peter Adler, and Daniel F. Detzner. “Understanding and Evaluating Qualitative Research,” *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 57, no. 4 (November 1995): 879-893.

Particular attention is paid to those capabilities which can be suitable and affordable for adaptation in the Albanian military.

The Italian Carabinieri Corps case study is selected due to the focus on a military unit that contributes in the fight against organized crime. Since the primary research question of the thesis is comprised of the identification of the capability needs in combatting organized crime with the focus on the Albanian military, it will be beneficial to analyze the possible ways the AAF can be transformed into a better force able to satisfy EU requirements. The aim of case study is to gain a deeper understanding of successful foreign military forces (from EU member countries) used in combating criminal activities and to justify possible changes in AAF to create, improve, and develop necessary capabilities to support government's unity of effort toward accomplishing the five EU priorities.

Step 1. Identification and Framing the Problem

This methodology begins with analyzing the security environment and identifying the threats related to organized crime, thus framing the problem. This will provide background information on the causes which resulted in the rise and development of the criminal groups/individuals in Albania.

Step 2. Review of Relevant Data

Reviewing the relevant data will assist in determining the capabilities available of the AAF in combating organized crime. This will be achieved based on the contribution of the military against organized crime with equipment, personnel, and systems. Also,

information about other successful military units in contribution against organized crime will be included.

Step 3. Collection and Classification of Data

In this step, the methodology is to collect, classify, and analyze data available from another country, Italy, in order to identify the gaps in the AAF. This does not necessarily mean to supply information in detail about foreign military capabilities. The aim is to identify a suitable approach which is feasible, suitable, and acceptable to the Albanian case without exceeding NATO recommendations for the maximum authorized number of personnel in the AAF.⁷¹

Step 4. Data Analysis

Based on the data collected, the qualitative methodology will present relevant facts which would later serve as recommendations for the future change. Some of these facts may include the reorganization, training, equipment of the military unit, and recommendations for necessary changes and adaptation of Albanian military unit. The recommendations for changes and adaptation will eventually lead to the essential increase of the MoD budget.

⁷¹ According to the *Strategic Defence Review of the Republic of Albania*, the maximum authorized number of personnel within the AAF should not exceed 8500 by December 2015. This number (which includes both military and civilian personnel) is not expected to change until 2020. Albanian Ministry of Defense, *Strategic Defence Review of the Republic of Albania*, March 2013, accessed December 29, 2017, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&ved=2ahUKEwisqYSFrcneAhUxhaYKHanRCAsQFjAAegQICBAC&url=http%3A%2F%2FCaution-www.mod.gov.al%2Fqksm%2Fenglish%2Fstrategicreview.pdf&usg=AOvVaw3YG8ZuSSIvAO9FoRSsX998>.

This research methodology should present a complete view of the factors affecting the capabilities of the Albanian military in combating organized crime. The thesis statement requires a complete and thorough search of published historical data in order for a complete analysis to occur. The analysis should provide aspects that are based on historical examples. The analysis will be made through the lens of the present and future requirements of the Albanian military to maximize its effectiveness against organized crime and to increase its contribution towards fulfilling EU requirements and priorities. These examples could provide insights into factors that will continue to impact the capabilities of the Albanian military and their role in combating organized crime.

Step 5. Conclusions and Recommendations

After having a thorough process of identifying and framing the problem, collecting, classifying and analyzing data available on the case study (Italian Carabinieri Corps), the researcher will be able to point out the reasons that make this military unit successful. This process will provide suggestions on some areas where the Albanian military should focus its efforts. The suggestions, which will come in form of recommendations for the Albanian military, will be covered in Chapter 5.

Summary

The methodology the author uses in his research will address the capabilities of the Italian Carabinieri Corps in combating organized crime in their respective countries. At the same time, it will provide information on the available and utilized capabilities of the AAF to fight organized crime. In addition, the qualitative methodology will help identifying the capability gaps of the Albanian military related to the thesis topic. Chapter

4 will examine Italian Carabinieri Corps and reveal the conclusions. Ultimately, these conclusions will be useful to transform the Albanian military into a better force able to satisfy not only NATO but also EU demands.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

The analysis of the thesis on the capabilities needed from AAF to combat organized crime will be presented in this chapter. The analysis includes a case study on one military organization from an EU member country; respectively the Italian Carabinieri Corps. The assessment will present and elaborate on written documents relating its current capabilities and the contribution that this military institution has in Italy additionally, the tasks, mission, and operations to include combating organized crime will be evaluated. The analysis will contain relevant information and statistics of the organized crime from the fall of the communist regime until mid-2018. Included, will be the growth and the expansion of the organized crime in Albania, as well as the threats it poses to the community. Lastly, the capabilities required to accomplish EU recommendations will be discussed. Since corruption is used to set relations and protection, it will be generally covered in this chapter.

The thesis topic analyzed is how Albanian Armed Forces can be a better contributor in combating organized crime and how it can increase its role in order to improve and accelerate the country's EU integration process. In this study there are examples which represent the current AAF role against organized crime, contribution, challenges, and future objectives to meet NATO and EU standards in order to successfully accomplish their overall mission.

This review begins by understanding organized crime as a phenomenon as well as the efforts of the Albanian institutions to include the Armed Forces. It will continue with

some general political, economic, and social analysis of the current situation in Albania; the criminal groups and elements operating in country; the Government's effort to fulfill EU priorities; achievements and failures. Through the use of the case study mentioned in the previous chapter, the thesis will define the future role of the Albanian Armed Forces in combating organized crime, as one of the five requirements the EU member countries have set for Albania. At the end, the thesis will reveal some recommendations for future improvement.

The Development of Organized Crime in Albania since 1990

The democratic government established in Albania after the fall of the autocratic regime in 1990 failed to manage the social and economic situation. The open market strategy allowed foreign companies to bring their products into Albania. On one hand, this was a good thing because it provided the opportunity to have a variety of products domestic factories were not able to produce for the last five decades. But on the other hand, these products were much better in quality and cheaper in price compared to the 'made in Albania' products. For the past 70 years, Albania has mostly been identified as an agriculture-based economy country. Therefore, when many factories and agricultural cooperatives were closed in 1991, the unemployment rate increased drastically while exports eventually dropped down.

According to World Bank report published in 2006, agriculture was the main source of employment in Albania scoring 58.5 percent in 2004.⁷² This severe situation,

⁷² World Bank, *Albania: Labor Market Assessment*, Human Development Sector Unit, May 1, 2006, accessed January 26, 2018, [https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi8IMC97encAhVS3qQKHRQWDI8QFjAAegQIABAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdocuments.worldbank.org%](https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwi8IMC97encAhVS3qQKHRQWDI8QFjAAegQIABAB&url=http%3A%2F%2Fdocuments.worldbank.org%2F)

together with some other factor such as geographic location, political instability, lack of free institutions, migration, corruption, the collapse of pyramid schemes in 1997, etc. have contributed to the rise of the first criminal groups in Albania.⁷³ First, the Albanian criminal groups came on the scene as small armed gangs who dealt with human trafficking⁷⁴ for prostitution purposes, mainly in Italy, Germany, France, and other European countries. Soon after, Albania turned into a transit point for women trafficked from Eastern Europe. Eventually, the gangs expanded both their territory and the range of their activity, thereupon weapon trafficking, drug trafficking, murder, robbery, and extortion became more common.⁷⁵

After the collapse of the pyramid schemes in 1997, the situation deteriorated with the opening of prisons and military depots. Therefore, country entered into total chaos. At the same time, the situation favored criminal groups for whom it turned out to be great opportunity to expand their operation. Lack of police control “granted” gangs freedom of movement. These groups, which were relatively small in size (five to six persons),⁷⁶ were spread all over the country. As Ilir Gjoni stated in his research called “*Organized Crime*

2Fcurated%2Fen%2F621251468004249960%2FAlbania-Labor-market-assessment&usg=AOvVaw3_HJ9GACFyIb8DpM2K1Tzw, 12.

⁷³ Zhilla and Lamallari. “Organized Crime: Estimating Risk in Albania,” 7.

⁷⁴ Ibid., 23.

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Ibid., 24.

and National Security: The Albanian Case” in 2004, active criminal groups counted up to 60 in total.⁷⁷

One of the interesting thing that characterizes the members of Albanian criminal groups is name of the group. The name may refer to the area the group comes from such as: gang of Durres, gang of Lushnje, gang of Vlore, gang of Lazarat, gang of Cerriku, groups of Shijaku etc. It may also refer to the name of the group leader such as: Dedja, Kola, Kateshi, Muca, Gaxhai, and many others.⁷⁸

Another characteristic of the Albanian criminal groups is their working relationships. Each group is comprised of individuals who have either a family or a friendship relationship. For both cases, there is one explanation - trust. Strong groups are built among the individuals within a group who have known each other for a long time and have had an opportunity to build trust in their relationships. These types of relationships represent a challenge for investigations. Another characteristic of these groups is the way they operate; for the most part, these criminal groups operate independently.

With everything addressed so far, one would have difficulty thinking Albania will ever be able to change and provide support and security to its own people. Regardless of that, Albania has shown determination and self-confidence in meeting EU criteria. Therefore, on 12th June 2006 Albania signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) with the EU and agreed to implement reforms, including the limitation of

⁷⁷ Gjoni, “Organized Crime and National Security: The Albanian Case,” 21.

⁷⁸ Zhilla and Lamallari, “Evolution of Organized Criminal Structures in Albania,” 8-42.

corruption and organized crime.⁷⁹ Eight years later, in June 2014, Albania officially earned the status of candidate. During this period of time, there has been multiple meetings between Albanian and EU representatives concerning the EU integration process for Albania. This confirms the perseverance of the Albanian government to fulfill the EU requirements. From the other side, the EU is doing their part while continuously monitoring the progress and providing advice and recommendations⁸⁰ on how to meet the established criteria.

Albania has to prove real progress by going through the long and important integration process with the aim of fulfilling all requirements and by being able to open the discussion phase with the EU. This progress requires significant effort from all government agencies and institutions. To this extent, it is imperative for Albania to take best practices from other European countries, especially from those which are already full members of the EU. Therefore, Albanian government has to observe how other countries deal with the issue of corruption and organized crime; how they enforce the judicial system; how they deal with the violation of human rights etc. After analyzing other countries successes and failures, it will be the time to implement a plan. This plan should involve the main government institutions in the process and will include objectives and timelines. At the end, each institution has to come up with its own detailed plan

⁷⁹ U.S. Department of State, “U.S Relations with Albania.”

⁸⁰ There are twelve EU recommendations that will assist the Albanian government to focus its efforts. The recommendation will serve as guidance to identify the tasks for Albanian law enforcement agencies and other institutions.

identifying specific tasks and explain how those tasks link to the fulfillment of the five key priorities.

Next, the author presents analysis from the case study of The Italian Carabinieri Corps. This case study will provide sufficient information on, for instance, the contribution of Italian Carabinieri Corps in combating complex crime. Also, the author discusses some of the important factors that contribute to the success of this foreign military organization such as its operational capabilities, training, organization etc.

The Italian Carabinieri Corps

If we take a look at some foreign military forces, we realize that countries like Italy, Spain, Portugal, France, Netherlands, Austria, etc., are comprised of forces that perform both military and policing tasks. Such forces provide considerable capabilities to their respective countries. The Italian Armed Forces, for example, in addition to the Army, Navy and Air Force, have among them also a fourth branch called “The Carabinieri Corps” or simply *Carabinieri*. This unit plays a dual function for both the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of Interior (MoI). Due to their large number of personnel, the Italian Carabinieri may be found all over the country, even in the furthest rural areas. They conduct their daily operations serving the community and performing police related duties. For these matters, Carabinieri execute orders from the MoI. On the other hand, for matters such as defending the country, its institutions and resources, participating in military operations, functioning as a combat force, or as an MP

force, the Carabinieri execute orders from the MoD. The head of the Carabinieri force is always a military general officer.⁸¹

The Carabinieri Corps is an Italian law enforcement agency founded by Vittorio Emanuele I, who was the ruler of Sardinia Island. The Carabinieri Armed Service dates back to the beginning of the nineteenth century (13 July, 1814). This was a crucial period in time when Italy was facing an emergent need to fight both external and internal threats. The Carabinieri was create as a military force with a responsibility not only to protect the country, but also to maintain public order and provide security. The Carabinieri offered a great opportunity for Italy to conduct operations throughout the country. Hence, the reputation of the Corps began to grow gradually and significantly. From the privileges earned and the influence gained, the Corps transformed itself into a very powerful force able to conduct military or policing operations at any corner of Italy.⁸²

Since 1994, Italian Carabinieri is part of the FIEP (France, Italy, España and Portugal) agreement. The central idea of this agreement was to improve cooperation among like types of forces while sharing experience, information and training practices,

⁸¹ Italian Republic, Legislative Decree no. 66, dated March 15, 2010, accessed April 26, 2017, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwjcm-uoo87cAhUK16QKHZS9DKgQFjAAegQIAXAC&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.difesa.it%2FGiustizia_Militare%2FDocuments%2FRASPARENZA%2FDECRETO_LEGISLATIVO_15_03_2010_66_REGOLAMENTO.pdf&usg=AOvVaw1HEH8oMz3FwsDD7IHXRzfP.

⁸² Nicola Conforti, *The Italian Carabinieri Corps: Old Traditions for a Modern Version*, Gendarmeries and the Security Challenges of the 21st Century, FIEP Seminar, Royal Marechaussee, 2011, 229.

establishing contacts. Their primary task was to assure internal security in coordination with the police.⁸³

Mission

Most of the Carabinieri Corps' tasks are military related. But, this does not necessarily mean that they are less likely to perform police related tasks. Today, their primary mission is to fight organized crime and illicit trafficking.⁸⁴ Also, the Corps of Carabinieri are employed in controlling customs at the borders as well as conducting activities against drug and human trafficking similar to the duties of other law enforcing agencies that have a military status (gendarmeries).⁸⁵ Carabinieri perform a wide range of duties and tasks in country and abroad. All the duties and tasks are regulated with a suitable legal framework so their responsibilities do not overlap or, in the worst case, institutions do not interfere in each other's business. The mission of the Carabinieri Corps is clearly defined in the chapter V (articles 156 and 159) of the law no. 66, dated 15 March, 2010. The assigned missions normally appear in the form of tasks which represent the responsibilities of the Carabinieri and their overall role as a security force. Both articles define the functions of the Carabinieri corps as a MP force and as a police force. Below are some examples of the functions stated in article 156:

- a. contributes to the mobilization of the Armed Forces personnel,

⁸³ Conforti, *The Italian Carabinieri Corps: Old Traditions for a Modern Version*, 104.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 103.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, 188.

- b. contributes to the integrated defense of the national territory,
- c. participates in military operations abroad,
- d. participates in operations for the maintenance and restoration of peace and international security,
- e. ensures the national contribution to the activities promoted by the international community,
- f. acts as MP force in the areas where the Armed Forces are present,
- g. provides security of the personnel of the armed forces.⁸⁶

The functions stated in the article 159 are similar to the functions performed by the national police. Hence, the Carabinieri are required to:

- a. ensure and maintain public order;
- b. provide safety of the citizens,
- c. protect the property,
- d. perform functions of the operational structure of the national civil protection service.⁸⁷

Aside from the abovementioned tasks and functions, the Carabinieri also perform additional tasks which are required by internal national legislation such as combating organized crime. This is the reason why the Commanding General of the Carabinieri is a member of the General Council for Combating Organized Crime. This council is led by

⁸⁶ See Italian Republic, Legislative Decree no. 66, dated March 15, 2010, Article 156, 51.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 51-52.

the Minister of Interior.⁸⁸ For the purposes of investigating and/or fighting organized crime, for instance, the Carabinieri forces coordinate their actions with Anti-mafia Investigative Directorate (AID) in the Ministry of Interior (MoI). The AID is responsible for the utilization of the Guardia di Finanza (GdF), Carabinieri and national police forces.⁸⁹ For these type of tasks, Carabinieri Corps employs its Special Operations Group (SOG) which has developed suitable capabilities against terrorism and organized crime.

Organization

After analyzing the Carabinieri/Gendarmerie like forces in Europe, by comparison the Italian Corps of Carabinieri is a huge military organization. This force has been growing significantly during the last two decades of the twentieth century and remaining quite stable for the last 18 years. With a total personnel strength of about 111,800 employees⁹⁰ the Carabinieri are definitely able to cover any area in Italy and provide great service to the society in guaranteeing internal order. With its regional commands and stations well dispersed around the country, Carabinieri are more accessible to the community. The communication and trust they have built and maintained with the local community is the key to their success.

⁸⁸ Italian Republic, *Legislative Decree no. 159, dated 6 Sep 2011, "Code of the anti-mafia laws and of the measures for prevention, as well as new provisions on anti-mafia documentation,"* accessed October 30, 2017, https://www.asaps.it/34592-_decreto_legislativo_6_settembre_2011_n_159_codice_delle_leggi_antimafia_e_delle.html, Article 107.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, Article 108.

⁹⁰ David T. Armitage, Jr., and Anne M. Moisan, *Constabulary Forces and Postconflict Transition: The Euro-Atlantic Dimension*, No. 205 (Washington, DC: Institute for National Strategic Studies, National Defense University, November 2005), 4.

There are four major components that comprise the Italian Carabinieri Corps: Central Component, Training Component, Territorial Component, and the Mobile and Special Component. Each of the components has its defined responsibility which directly affects the success to the overall force. The Central Component is the Carabinieri headquarters which does the orchestration, coordination and synchronization of the force operations.⁹¹ Orders come directly from either the Minister of Interior or the Minister of Defense to the Commanding General of the Corps and his staff. From there, orders are delivered to components depending on the nature of the operations.

The Training Component of the Carabinieri Corps serves as a support component. This component is responsible for providing all of the types of training that the force needs. With the proper expertise and facilities, the Carabinieri Training Component is able to run different individual or collective trainings at various levels.⁹²

The Territorial Component is one of the largest components of the Carabinieri Corps. It is comprised of many regional commands, group commands, sub-commands, departments, and stations. Each of these commands are responsible for a particular area. This type of organization allows the Carabinieri to be present and ready to act wherever and whenever needed.⁹³

The Mobile and Special Component is quite different from the other components. From its name, it is obvious that it is composed of mobile units or battalions and special

⁹¹ Conforti, *The Italian Carabinieri Corps: Old Traditions for a Modern Version*, 230.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Ibid., 231.

units. The mobile battalions are responsible for providing and maintaining internal order in the area where they are assigned. The Corps of Carabinieri has been utilizing these battalions for border protection purposes against conventional threats and deploying in different operations and missions abroad. Aside from mobile battalions, the component is responsible and has developed capabilities for specific purposes such as healthcare, environmental protection, etc.⁹⁴ In addition, a very important capability to this component and the overall Carabinieri corps, which is related to the thesis, is the Special Operations Group (SOG) also known as Raggruppamento Operativo Speciale (ROS).⁹⁵ The role of this unit has been increasing significantly in the last fifteen years. In coordination with other territorial units, SOG has developed adequate capabilities against different types of crime such as: terrorism and organized crime.⁹⁶ The SOG units operate all over the territory, independently or in coordination with other security agencies. The SOG is the only unit within Carabinieri Corps with particular tasks gains organized crime and terrorism. Its troops are trained and specialized to conduct investigations and

⁹⁴ Conforti, *The Italian Carabinieri Corps: Old Traditions for a Modern Version*, 231.

⁹⁵ ROS is used as an abbreviation for Raggruppamento Operativo Speciale which stands for Special Operations Group.

⁹⁶ See Carabinieri, “*Risultati Della Ricerca*,” *Ministero della Difesa* (Minister of Defense), accessed February 12, 2018, [http://www.carabinieri.it/risultati-della-ricerca?indexCatalogue=default&searchQuery=raggruppamento%20operativo%20speciale%20\(ros\)](http://www.carabinieri.it/risultati-della-ricerca?indexCatalogue=default&searchQuery=raggruppamento%20operativo%20speciale%20(ros)).

operations for many forms of organized crime such as: weapons trafficking, drug trafficking, money laundering, and kidnapping.⁹⁷

Capabilities

As a law enforcement unit and as a security organization, the Carabinieri corps are both, a military and a police force. Based on their role, the Carabinieri is a priority unit when it comes to allocating resources. This is the reason why this unit has a variety of modernized equipment including small aircrafts and helicopters. Armored vehicles and patrol boats are also part of their inventory. For their daily tasks the Carabinieri forces are equipped with patrol vehicles and they carry small weapons.⁹⁸ All the aforementioned equipment allows the Carabinieri corps to operate independently 24 hours a day, on time and without the need for external support.

The funds allocated for the Corps of Carabinieri come from both MoD and MoI. These funds are planned based on the nature of the activity. For instance, the Italian MoD plans and allocates funds for the following activities: training, education, equipment, activities for military purposes, and deployment abroad in the conflict areas as part of any alliance or coalition forces. On the other hand, the Italian MoI plans and allocates funds for similar activities related to policing. Both ministries are in close coordination with each other and make sure sufficient funds are available to support the accomplishment of the mission assigned to the Carabinieri Corps.

⁹⁷ ConcorsiCarabinieri, “*Tutti i reparti speciali dell’Arma dei Carabinieri*” (“All Special Units of the Carabinieri”), 2017, accessed April 23, 2018, <https://www.concorsicarabinieri.com/reparti-speciali-arma-dei-carabinieri/>.

⁹⁸ Ibid.

Training is another aspect that portrays Carabinieri as a skillful organization. They have increased the quality of training based on the country's need to conquer threats. Both individual and collective training of the personnel is provided. Troops train on how to use all of the types of weapons and communications equipment they have. They are also trained on how to gather, process, and analyze information. They practice interrogation methods and develop negotiating skills. As a result of the gaining extensive experience while being deployed in different missions abroad, Carabinieri have expanded their knowledge of foreign languages, values, customs, and beliefs has become the focus of the training.⁹⁹

The Corps of Carabinieri also participate in training with other national and international law enforcing agencies and organizations. At the national level, Carabinieri train with the police forces, Guardia di Finanza (GdF) or the Financial Guard, the military units of the Italian Armed Forces, etc. At the international level, the Carabinieri force participates in different collective trainings with foreign police forces, sister services from FIEP agreement (French National Gendarmerie, Spanish Civil Guard and Portuguese Republican National Guard), and other Carabinieri/gendarmerie like forces around the world.¹⁰⁰ The aim of the training is to improve the ability of the force to respond to the challenges of the current and future complex security environment.

⁹⁹ Armitage Moisan, *Constabulary Forces and Postconflict Transition: The Euro-Atlantic Dimension*, 3.

¹⁰⁰ See Carabinieri, "Over the Past Ten Years the Traffic of Organized Crime..." *Ministero della Difesa* (Minister of Defense), accessed February 16, 2018, http://www.carabinieri.it/multilingua/en/over-the-past-ten-years-the-traffic-of-organized-crime-_d675dd4325cf45d385597078993d7054.

The high number of employees, together with their extensive professional experience contributes to the admirable success of the Carabinieri Corps. As the fourth branch of the Italian Armed Forces, Carabinieri are large enough to be available to the community everyday of their life. They support the society while conducting their daily operations. Building relations and establishing communication with the local community is part of the Carabinieri's job. This is what allows them to earn the trust of the population. In return, the Carabinieri personnel provide security to the populace, maintain public order, and provide support whenever and wherever needed. Today, the Carabinieri forces are easily accessible to the society. Within few minutes of being notified, Carabinieri forces will be on site ready to act, ready to deal with any situation. Ultimately, this explains their motto "*Faithful through the Centuries.*"¹⁰¹

In addition, the professional expertise of the Carabinieri units, is for sure a capability earned over time. Diligent work combined with experience and determination has resulted in developing an excellent capability which affirms the position of the Carabinieri Corps as the top list of the best law enforcement agencies in Europe and also around the world.

The resources available, high number of personnel, professional expertise, experience, and specialized units have contributed to the development of strong, solid, and durable capabilities of the Carabinieri Corps. These capabilities include: the ability to cover and be present all over Italian territory; ability to fight organized crime, corruption and any type of illegal trafficking; ability to conduct investigations; ability to contribute

¹⁰¹ See Carabinieri, "The History," *Ministero della Difesa* (Minister of Defense), accessed February 16, 2018, <http://www.carabinieri.it/multilingua/en/english/the-history>.

in maintaining public order; ability to conduct concurrent operations to prevent crime, neutralize and arrest criminal elements; ability to defend the country, participate in humanitarian operations, and missions abroad; ability to maintain loyalty with national institution and agencies such as Italian Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Interior; ability to earn and maintain trust; and the ability to cooperate with other national and international law enforcing and security organizations for training, operations and mission purposes. Another capability of the Carabinieri Corps retains on its ability to attract new recruits through the utilization of their internal methods such as: high monthly salary, promotion opportunities, medals, and social care including (health service, family support, housing, schooling and retirement.

All of the aforementioned benefits and rewards allow the Carabinieri Corps to select among most qualified recruits to join the unit. Finally, the most precious reward for the Carabinieri is the trust of the citizens.¹⁰²

Contribution

It is difficult to mention in detail all of the contributions the Carabinieri Corps provides to the society. But, it is worth it to emphasize with a few words the importance of this organization in terms of security, public order, and the reduction of crime in Italy. Carabinieri troops have conducted various internal operations where they have

¹⁰² General Command of the Carabinieri Corps, *La qualità dei servizi resi al Cittadino dall'Arma dei Anno 2016 Carabinieri* ("The Quality of Services Rendered to the Citizen by Carabinieri for the Year 2016"), accessed November 16, 2017, https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=1&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKewj74oHqos7cAhWL66QKHTYoDq0QFjAAegQIABAC&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.carabinieri.it%2Fdocs%2Fdefault-source%2Fcittadino_doc%2Furp%2Fc-s-2015-2016.pdf%3Fsfvrsn%3D0&usg=AOvVaw1ILS-tPjBCMGpaYjdrGZtg, 6.

successfully destroyed criminal groups alone and/or in coordination with other national agencies. Maintaining public order as well as ensuring the safety of the population and property is what Carabinieri do in their daily business. Also, Carabinieri forces are able to conduct investigations, assist in accidents, regulate traffic flow, patrol all over the territory, pay particular attention to road safety, and support society in case of natural disaster.¹⁰³

Additionally, the Carabinieri Corps has participated in numerous missions abroad. They have been a part of many United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) led missions in countries such as: Cyprus, Lebanon, Somalia, Mali, Libya, Djibouti, Cambodia, Mozambique, Guatemala, El Salvador, Eastern Timor, Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, Bosna and Hercegovina, Albania, and Kosovo.¹⁰⁴ Their contribution to the international security environment has been significantly increasing. With the experience gained so far, the Carabinieri can be identified among the best law enforcement and security organizations in the world. Nowadays, there are Carabinieri forces present in the areas where the Italian military forces are deployed.

As it is mentioned above, the Carabinieri forces have always been a successful law enforcements organization with great contribution in the security of the country. The

¹⁰³ See Carabinieri, “*Riepilogo dell’Attività Operativa dell’Arma nel 2013*,” Ministero della Difesa (Minister of Defense), accessed February 18, 2018, <http://www.carabinieri.it/arma/oggi/statistica>.

¹⁰⁴ See Carabinieri, “*Il Contributo dell’Arma alle Operazioni Militari all’estero*,” Ministero della Difesa (Minister of Defense), accessed February 18, 2018, <http://www.carabinieri.it/arma/oggi/missioni-all'estero>.

history, experience, strength, professionalism, training, and readiness allows this force to earn the trust of the Italian society which allows the Carabinieri to maintain stability all over the territory. The Carabinieri Corps deals with both internal and external threats. Alongside the other twenty-eight countries, Albania enjoys the opportunities and benefits of being a NATO member. One of these benefits is collective defense (NATO article 5) which reduces to some level the chances of a military attack against a NATO member country. But on the other hand, internal threats are still persistent and present. They have grasped the development of the country's economy, and have affected the deterioration of living conditions, security, and stability in the country. Crime and corruption in particular, have seized and slowed down the EU integration process while significantly worsening the Albanian image around the world.

It is for this reason why the Albanian national security and law enforcing agencies must increase their capacities and capabilities and unify their efforts against organized crime and corruption. This necessitates the need for having a force capable of coping with such issues. It is the duty of the Albanian government to prioritize and allocate sufficient funds and resources to facilitate the creation of this force that, in the near future, will influence the full accession of Albania into the European family. Utilizing the current capabilities of the armed forces, adapting, modernizing, training of which would help in the reduction of crime and corruption in the country. Therefore, it is imperative for Albania to inherit best practices from other European countries, especially from those which are already full members of the EU. The Italian Carabinieri Corps or other gendarmerie-like forces of the European countries are great examples on how a military

force can be best utilized for both military purposes and policing purposes dealing with security, stability, maintain public order and crime.

Through strengthening the national security instruments of power, Albanian society potentially find peace and stability. This strengthening will also help Albanians see themselves much closer to the EU and having a safer future for their families. Considering the current and future security environment, the Albanian government through the MoD should build, support, and maintain a unit able to deal with both internal and external threats, contribute in the defense of the country, fight complex crime, and provide security to the population. A potential alternative for this case is having a national Carabinieri/Gendarmerie-like force.¹⁰⁵ Such unit would be able to employ forces all over the Albanian territory, conduct investigations alone or in coordination with other agencies, prevent and/or fight crime, and arrest criminals. Their policing activity should be in close coordination and synchronization with national police, prosecution, State Intelligence Service (SIS), and other Albanian military units able to provide support. Information exchange will be key to success.

Albanian Gendarmerie as an Instrument of Internal Security

Nowadays, when citizens' discussions are focused on the history of the Albanian Gendarmerie, unintentionally faces change and smiles freeze. Their memories are focused on the improper behavior of the Albanian gendarmes against the civilian

¹⁰⁵ Karina Paulina Marczuk, *A Contemporary Internal Security Concept and its Implications for Gendarmerie-Type Forces*, Gendarmeries and the Security Challenges of the 21st Century, FIEP Seminar, Royal Marechaussee, 2011, 70.

population. There were several reasons for this behavior but the main reasons were: the lack of education, training, discipline, and experience.

At the beginning of World War II, the new Albanian state government was struggling to strengthen its institutions. At that time, there was an urgent need to maintain public order, fight crime, and provide security to society. This presented the need for having a security force which required experienced, trained, and educated personnel who were able to provide security and public order. But, what were the options on the table for the newly formed government of Albania? Unfortunately, the options were not promising. Albania was badly devastated following a long period of nearly 500 years under the occupation of the Ottoman Empire. After the declaration of independence in 28 November, 1912, police and gendarmerie forces were created, but the Albanian government found itself incapable of forming suitable security forces that could control every corner of the Albanian territory. The main issue was manning. In order to man the gendarmerie, the government was forced to start recruiting from ordinary people regardless of their qualifications. This was a great opportunity for many unemployed Albanians to serve their country in uniform. But, the education level of the Albanian society at the beginning of World War I was very low. Most Albanians at that time attended only few years at school or had no education at all. Therefore, the Ministry of War, nowadays the Ministry of Defense, had very limited chances to establish the Albanian gendarmerie with educated personnel.

The new Albanian state was economically poor. The funds allocated for each ministry were insufficient to cover all of the expenses. The funding of the Albanian

gendarmerie, for example, would not be complete without the assistance from Italy.¹⁰⁶ Soon after the occupation in 1914, the Italian troops started to form in Albania a force similar to Italian Corps of Carabinieri. This force lacked trained and educated personnel. After that, some schools were opened in the country but with limited capacity. This situation lasted approximately ten years. In 1925, King Zog¹⁰⁷ used his personal acquaintances and made it possible to bring specialists from England. These specialists came with a lot of expertise and training. They were able to turn the Albanian gendarmerie into a modern force.¹⁰⁸ It was the time when the Albanian gendarmerie was able to gain control of the territory. In conjunction with the police, Albanian gendarmerie was finally able to fight crime especially in the rural areas and contribute to national security.

Soon after Italy occupied Albania in April 1939, the Albanian gendarmerie started to change. The Italians, and later Germans, took advantage of the situation and used the gendarmes based on their interests. This lasted until the end of World War II (WWII)¹⁰⁹ at which time the term “Albanian gendarmerie” began to vanish. The Albanian

¹⁰⁶ Dilaver Goxhaj. “*A ka ardhur koha e xhandarëve?*” (“Is it Time for Gendarmes?”), *Dita Newspaper*, 2013, accessed February 24, 2018, <http://www.gazetadita.al/a-ka-ardhur-koha-e-xhandareve>.

¹⁰⁷ Ahmet Muhtar Zogolli, known as Ahmet Zogu or King Zog I had a long political life and was ruler of Albania for nearly 20 years. He started his career as governor of Mat and Shkoder districts and then as the minister of interior. In 1922, he served as Prime Minister of Albania. After that, in 1924 he became the first President of Albania. Two years later, he became the King of Albania, a position he held until the Italian occupation in April 7, 1939.

¹⁰⁸ Goxhaj. “Is it Time for Gendarmes?”

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

gendarmerie started as a military unit under the command of the General Staff (an integral part of Ministry of War) and ended up as a part of the police forces in 1945. In the beginning, this force was close to a brigade sized element with nearly 3,000 men.¹¹⁰ The gendarmes mainly operated in the rural areas where police had limited or no control. The gendarme forces were responsible to fight against crime and maintain public order in the area where they were assigned. At the end of WWII, when gendarme forces merged with police, all their duties and tasks shifted to police forces, an action that brought about the end of the Albanian Gendarmerie.

Summary

From the analysis of the case study, it is evident the continuous success of the Carabinieri Corps stands on some key factors such as: the size of the unit, expertise, training, experience, and funding. One of the most important key factors is the size of the Corps. As the fourth branch of the Italian Armed Forces, the Carabinieri represent a very large unit composed of nearly 112,000 troops. The personnel strength allows the Carabinieri to be present all over the Italian territory, from big cities to small towns and villages, from overcrowded to less crowded areas. Their presence in each area is based on the numbers of the population as well as the size of the area or the density of the issues present. There are sufficient troops in every area always ready to assist the population with any problem they have, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. In addition, the unit size also allows them to have a variety of specialized troops who are able to conduct operations alone or in coordination with other units. Having troops deployed in many countries

¹¹⁰ Goxhaj. "Is it Time for Gendarmes?"

around the world without risking the required level of readiness is an indicator of how big and powerful this organization is.

Another indicator of the success of the Carabinieri is the type and level of expertise gained through training and experience. Continuous and effective training has resulted in an increase in the level of individual expertise while maintaining a high level of unit readiness. As a military organization, the Carabinieri Corps also conducts tasks related to policing. Hence, the Carabinieri personnel are trained to perform military related tasks, as well as provide support to the population, maintain public order, and fight crime at any time and at any place. With the capabilities available, Carabinieri personnel may shift from one function to another one based on the requirement for support. The exchange of experience and training with other national and international organizations has made Carabinieri Corps in what they are today.

Lastly, an important factor for success is the funding. Allocating sufficient funds in support of their daily business activities allows Carabinieri to have very little or no constraints to accomplish their mission. If we take a look over the distribution of funds the year of 2016, we realize the Italian government allocated 1.19 percent of its GDP (Gross Domestic Product) for the Ministry of Defense. This amount equals to 19.86 billion euros or 23.17 billion U.S. dollars. From this amount, 6.09 billion euros (7.11 billion U.S. dollars) or 30.6 percent of Italian MoD budget went for Carabinieri Corps.¹¹¹

¹¹¹ *Analizi Difeza* (Italian Defense Analysis), “*L’Italia aumenta le spese militari: lo dice la Nato*” (“Italy Increases Military Spending: NATO Says”), March 14, 2017, accessed May 14, 2018, <http://www.analisdifesa.it/2017/03/litalia-aumenta-le-spese-militari-lo-dice-la-nato>.

Since Carabinieri is a dual hatted organization, its funds come from two different sources, MoD and MoI which leads to additional funds. The allocated funds of the Carabinieri Corps enable proper support of its troops, development of training, operations, deployment and equipping its units with modern vehicles, weapons, systems and other equipment necessary to support the day-to-day activities. With an organization like this, it is easy to support military troops inside the country or when they deploy abroad. At the same time this organization provides significant efforts against organized crime and corruption while performing police tasks all over the territory oftentimes in locations the police have limited to no access. Close coordination, synchronization, and information sharing with other national and international law enforcement agencies has proven to be very effective and has significantly increased the efficiency of the Carabinieri's work.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter will present the findings from the analysis conducted in the previous chapter. The author will discuss the findings and will stress the importance of implementing them as recommendations for changes within the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF). It is imperative to mention that not every aspect of the Italian Carabinieri corps is applicable to the Albanian case. Therefore, the findings and the recommendations focus only on those aspects which would improve the capabilities of the AAF to better fight and/or prevent organized crime activities within the Albanian territory. These recommendations will not tend to exceed the limit in resources allocated for the Albanian Ministry of Defense or any limitation stated in the Strategic Defense Review (SDR) of the Republic of Albania, 2013.¹¹²

The aim of the research was to understand the capabilities needed from AAF to combat organized crime. The identification of the capability gaps and the efforts towards closing those gaps, will help to maximize the role of military in combating organized crime as part of the overall integration process for Albania.

This chapter will cover some of the implications of the research in AAF concerning the allocation of funds, reorganization, and the adaptation of necessary legal framework. All recommendations for change, transformations, and adaptations will be

¹¹² Maximum personnel strength recommended not to exceed a total of 8500 men by December 2015. Albanian Ministry of Defense, *Strategic Defence Review of the Republic of Albania*, 21.

covered in this chapter. Also, this chapter includes aspects which are not covered in this research but the author finds them relevant for further research.

Restatement of the Research Questions

Regarding the continuous threats of organized crime in Albania and its effects in the EU integration process, this paper considered research questions to assess the role of the Albanian military in combating organized crime. The primary research question is: What are the capabilities needed by the Albanian military to combat organized crime? The secondary research questions are:

1. How can the Albanian military be best utilized to satisfy EU requirements?
2. What is the current contribution of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in fighting organized crime?
3. What is the role of the Italian Carabinieri Corps relating to organized crime and how effective is the organization in this area?

Findings

As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, the Italian Carabinieri Corps provides considerable efforts in the country's security environment. This force has been successful over the years in performing military tasks in Italy and abroad. In addition, the Carabinieri Corps has given remarkable contribution in the fight against crime, illegal trafficking, and corruption. It serves as a great example on the utilization of a military organization in conducting policing tasks. Based on the case study, the author has identified the capabilities needed from the AAF to combat organized crime. The

Albanian military should create/adapt a unit with specific capabilities similar to the Carabinieri Corps. Therefore, this unit should be able to:

1. Provide coverage of the entire Albanian territory in the areas where police has limited or no control
2. Fight organized crime, corruption and illegal trafficking
3. Conduct operations (either alone or in cooperation) to prevent, neutralize and arrest criminal elements
4. Cooperate with other national and international law enforcing and security agencies in order to increase the interaction and professionalism
5. Conduct investigations, maintain public order, and carry out other police duties to support the community
6. Significantly increase the contribution of AAF in the fight against organized crime and to serve as a catalyst for Albania's EU membership process.

Implication of the Research for the Albanian Armed Forces

In this research, current integration issues facing Albania are discussed as well addressing the military gaps to establish control and assist in handling those issues. Since the study covers the capabilities of the Albanian Armed Forces (AAF) in combating organized crime, it would be beneficial to implement the recommendations based on the findings of this study. The application of these recommendations will maximize the utilization of AAF in preventing criminal activities, neutralizing and arresting criminal elements. At the same time, it will increase the role of the armed forces as an additional tool against organized crime. The outcome of this process would contribute to the security environment and would accelerate the full integration of the country in the EU.

Conclusions

After receiving full membership in NATO in April 2009, the next goal for Albania is to become an EU member. Therefore, the government of Albania is committed to the EU accession process and shows its dedication by providing tangible progress from all its institutions and agencies including armed forces. Even though the Albanian military does not own sufficient capabilities to fight organized crime, some of its capabilities are still not fully employed. The Albanian military is able to provide sufficient troops to support national police operations in the furthest rural areas; deploy quickly in small or large teams; offer professional expertise to conduct investigations and maintain public order; and conduct in land, sea, and air operations. The national laws have placed the military as a supporting agency in the fight against organized crime.

The applied reforms, strategies, and progress attained towards meeting the EU demands has proven to be a positive indicator that the country is getting closer and closer to EU membership. But, there is still room for improvement. Fighting corruption, organized crime, and reinforcing the judicial system, seems to be slowing down Albania's EU integration process. The European Commission (EC) has continuously stressed the importance to work on these issues through its yearly progress reports. The report also reveals the system's weaknesses, lack of coordination between national agencies (prosecution and police), corruption, suppressed judicial system, and other factors that contribute to the development of organized crime activities in Albania.

Recommendations to the Albanian Armed Forces

This study lists some aspects related to the current contribution of the Albanian military in the fight against organized crime. As it is mentioned in the previous chapters,

combating organized crime is one of the five priorities for Albania to join the EU. Hence, in order to achieve unity of effort, it is imperative to increase institutions' capabilities and improve their overall effectiveness. The following recommendations are therefore needed to make the Albanian military more effective and relevant in addressing contemporary challenges of the twenty-first century:

1. Transforming the Albanian Military Police (MP) battalion into a small Carabinieri/Gendarmerie like force. The Albanian Military Police (MP) battalion which runs under the authority of the Albanian Chief of Defense, is a military unit that conducts similar but not exactly the same duties as police forces and the Italian Carabinieri Corps. The MP battalion, based on the mission and tasks, is more suitable to perform tasks related to the fight against organized crime. In addition, many officers and NCOs from the MP battalion are trained abroad. A portion of MP battalion personnel, together with some police officers from MoI, have been deployed to Afghanistan serving as mentors for the Afghan National Police. Taking into account the best practices from western European countries (Italy, France, Spain, Portugal), it would be very useful to transform the MP battalion into a more operational force. This force would later perform its duties under the authority of both the ministries, MoD and MoI. It is difficult to say for sure if this organization will be fully successful as a stand-alone unit. Coordination and synchronization with other national law enforcement and security agencies is necessary. Information sharing would be a challenge until the new organization becomes fully capable to perform its tasks.

The MP battalion personnel is not trained to conduct policing tasks. Hence, in order to increase performance, it is important the new structure acquires sections from General Directorate of State Police (GDSP). This will not only help personnel exchange experience but will also assist in developing new capabilities and skills against crime, corruption, and terrorism. The same thing applies to the sections extracted from State Intelligence Service (SIS), Defense Intelligence and Security Agency (DISA), and General Prosecution. Enlarging particular sectors in the MP battalion is considered very important. The size and the organization of the new structure will depend on the government's decision and its perspective for the future of this unit which would serve as a governmental tool to provide support in the areas where police have limited or no control.

2. Developing the required capabilities through training and education of the personnel. Training should be programmed and executed from both ministries based on the area of expertise. Training should focus on specific areas such as: Developing professional skills (negotiation, weapons and systems usage, communication, language, and tactics), developing investigation expertise in particular areas (organized crime, terrorism, corruption), intensifying collaboration and coordination with other national agencies to facilitate data sharing, and identifying operational weaknesses/needs.¹¹³

¹¹³ Conforti. *The Italian Carabinieri Corps: Old Traditions for a Modern Version*, 235.

A great opportunity for the Albanian military is to take advantage of U.S. security cooperation programs.¹¹⁴ Through the International Military Education and Training (IMET) program, the United States government offers training for military and civilian individuals from allied and partner countries around the world. These trainings are mostly conducted in the United States and Germany. In addition, Mobile Education Teams (MET) and Mobile Training Teams (MTT) offer training in country which allows participation in the training for a larger number of individuals. Such trainings, would contribute to the development professional skills for the personnel in different areas.

3. Increasing cooperation with the neighboring countries. The geographical location of Albania, the security environment, and the capabilities available to combat crime necessitates having close regional cooperation. This cooperation will allow Albania and other countries to have a shared understanding on the threats related to organized crime, especially transnational organized crime. Information sharing for an effective regional cooperation is vital. In addition, participation in regional training for example with the Italian Guardia di Finanza (GdF) and Carabinieri will assist Albanian military in gaining sufficient expertise in the required areas. Since Albania is a small country and has a weak economy, it is important to respond in group with other countries which share similar issues.
4. Increase cooperation with other national institutions and agencies. It is imperative that Albanian military coordinates, collaborates and synchronizes actions with

¹¹⁴ Visit Defense Security Cooperation Agency, *Security Assistance Management Manual* (Arlington, VA: Department of Defense, August 2018), accessed May 8, 2018, <http://www.samm.dsca.mil/chapter/chapter-1#C1.1>.

national police, General Prosecution, Ministry of Justice (MoJ), Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEFA), State Intelligence Service (SIS), the Courts, and all other national agencies involved in the fight against organized crime. Only a close and productive cooperation between independent institutions would enable a full governmental approach against crime, corruption and illegal trafficking

In order to improve stability and security in Albania, a three pillar governmental approach should be applied. This thesis has focused on the military who are the executing organization comprising the operational pillar. In addition to this, there are two other important pillars to be considered which are comprised of executive branch and judicial branch. When these pillars work in concert, they serve to uphold the nation's laws and provide security for the Albanian citizens. A breakdown in communication among these entities undermines the effectiveness placing the citizens at risk while reducing the likelihood gaining entrance into the EU. Joining the EU is the primary strategic goal of the Albanian government. In order to accomplish this, a whole of government approach must be utilized. Because of the scale and complexity of attaining this goal, all facets of the government must be contributing towards unity of effort.

5. Increasing defense expenditures. According to the United States European Command (EUCOM) Posture Statement 2018, fifteen allied countries are anticipated to allocate a minimum of two percent of their GDP for defense budget, twenty percent of which should be dedicated for equipment.¹¹⁵ Meeting this

¹¹⁵ Ken Chamberlain, "How Much do NATO Member Nations Spend on Defense?" *Defense News*, 2018, accessed March 15, 2018, <https://www.defensenews.com/global/europe/2018/03/10/how-much-do-nato-member-nations-spend-on-defense>.

expectation will allow the Albanian military to allocate sufficient resources for the modernization of the new unit. It is important that this unit, named ‘Gendarmerie’ or something similar, remains in a priority list until it is fully equipped and able to conduct operations all over the Albanian territory. In order to attract the most qualified recruits willing to serve in the new unit, the Albanian government should follow the Carabinieri example. Offering high monthly salaries, promotion opportunities, health service, family support, housing, schooling and retirement pension would impact the quality of the recruitment and the overall effectiveness of the unit in combating crime in Albania.

6. Reducing the total number of civilian personnel within AAF while increasing the number of personnel in uniform. Civilian personnel in the AAF has often been subject to replacement for political reasons after having only few years in service. By reducing this number, the Albanian military will minimize the risks of losing qualified and experienced personnel after changing the governments.
7. Adapting legal framework. The article 168 of the Constitution of the Republic of Albania clarifies the composition of Armed Forces from three main components: Land Force (Army), Naval Force (Navy) and Air Force. This article is subject to change and will serve as the initial legal act that legitimizes the ‘Gendarmerie’ as the fourth branch of the Albanian Armed Forces. Anything else related to this article (laws, regulations, standard operating procedures, missions and tasks) should be changed in order to allow a smooth entrance, adaptation, and transformation of this unit into the Armed Forces.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research has been focused on the issue of organized crime in Albania while only slightly touching on the corruption phenomenon because these two issues are found to be connected to each other. An aspect which could be relevant for future research is the rights of Roma and Egyptian minorities living in Albania. Even though a number of programs have been initiated either from government or other organizations operating in country, these communities still seem to be far from having minimal living standards, education, or health care.¹¹⁶

Another aspect that requires further analysis is the judicial reform process and its effects in the country's security. The result of this process will have a significant impact on the progress of Albania towards meeting the EU criteria. Only a fair and impartial process would influence the security environment and reduce the level of threats which are delaying the integration of the country into the European family.

Remarks

Different countries have different approaches against their internal and external security threats. Based on this perspective, countries define the role of the internal institutions and agencies, the coordination among them while prioritizing funds available, and facilitating the whole process with a proper legal framework. Therefore, the decision

¹¹⁶ Amnesty International, *Amnesty International Report 2016/17: The State of the World's Human Rights*, 2018, accessed March 28, 2018, <https://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=2&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=2ahUKEwiot9yvzc3cAhWH16QKHR7IDCYQFjABegQIBxAB&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.amnesty.org%2Fen%2Flatest%2Fresearch%2F2017%2F02%2Famnesty-international-annual-report-201617%2F&usq=A0vVaw2soguH16kfqPkcrTVwL1HZ,62>.

on what instrument of power needs to be used, in what circumstances, and what level of support with resources is required belongs to the national government.

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