

Albanian Army C3 in the Postcommunist Era

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The Albanian army experienced a radical change in command, control, and communication after the fall of Communism as it sought to achieve its national objectives and advance significant and continuous change required by various Western organizations. Albania is a case study that can highlight lessons and competitive advantages for countries experiencing similar changes.

The Albanian army experienced significant changes in command, control, and communication (C3) to achieve political and military objectives as it adapted to the rapid and radical transformation required by various Western international organizations and nations. Albania provides a case study of lessons learned for countries experiencing similar massive shifts in society and governance.

Introduction

In the late 1980s, border walls and mental barriers were beginning to crumble throughout Eastern Europe, resulting in an era of divided territories, people, mindsets, ideologies, and much more. In Albania, the people overthrew the dictatorial regime that had ruled all aspects of the country—human, political-economic, military, and sociocultural—for 45 years. The historic 1989 unification of the two Germanys; the creation of new states from those established under the Soviet Union; the fall of Communism in Hungary; and the extraordinary student movement that took place in 1990 in the capital of Albania, Tirana, heralded the beginning of a new historical epoch.

This new chapter in European history had significant implications for every aspect of society. Albania and other eastern European countries were vigorously undertaking a new journey to develop and transform themselves under the umbrella of democracy. As for Albania, despite the strength of the character of the students and the revolt of the Albanian people against the dictatorial regime of Enver Hoxha, the nation was not prepared for what would be expected of it in the coming years. While it is true Albanians were prepared for revolt and revolution, they were not prepared for continuous development and progress. Albanian leadership at that time had no viable plan to establish the foundations of democracy; consequently, democratic governance was left to evolve on its own.

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As a result, many Albanians felt disappointed and neglected. Many emigrated to neighboring countries such as Italy or Greece to find a better life.¹ The brain drain, the state of transition for which Albania found itself unprepared, a weak leadership, a poor economy, a corrupt judiciary, and the persistent hatred that people nurtured for the totalitarian system were all factors that made the Albanian army take strong but not necessarily transformative actions to contend with the multifaceted development dimensions of the postcommunist era.

At that time, the negligent leadership failed to establish strong democratic pillars in the new state, resulting in chaos, injustice, ignorance, and a lack of focus on achieving objectives and inspiring change. The transformation of the mentality of the people that was necessary to keep pace with modernity did not occur.

This article examines the institutional integration of doctrinal, technological, human, political, internal, and external elements, all of which play a vital role in understanding the historical developments of this country. This article also analyzes the challenges facing military leaders who seek to improve current military architecture in its entirety. Military leaders of all levels—tactical, operational, and strategic—have the primary responsibility for the efficient and effective integration of doctrine, education and training, technology, information flow, and management. Achieving this integration will help the organization better achieve objectives, add values, improve management and cooperation, and create a new military reality.

Finally, the article presents next steps. Improvement is a continuous process; for the Albanian army, this improvement will eventually lead to the institution keeping pace with the most developed nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) alliance.

Albanian Army—Early 1990s

The Albanian army in the early 1990s found itself at a major crossroads without a proper direction due to communist-era institutional legacies. It was almost inevitable that every Eastern European country, not just Albania, would retain some of these communist structures in a postcommunist world. The elements Albania inherited inhibited the nation's struggle to find its new identity, but at the same time, these structures influenced and served the progress it made from 1999 to the present.

The legacy the Albanian army had established by the early 1990s can be classified into four main pillars: 1) an outdated military mentality; 2) Soviet-era doctrine, education and training, and organizational structure; 3) depreciated armaments; and 4) a lack of inter-institutional connections.

1. Nga Klareta Çumani, "30 vjet nga eksodi i madh i shqiptarëve (30 Years from the Great Exodus of Albanians)," *Albanian Post*, February 21, 2021, <https://albanianpost.com/>.

Outdated Military Mentality

The first obstacle that the Albanian army encountered immediately after the end of the dictatorial regime was the transition from an Eastern military mentality to an advanced Western one. The army was alone and had no direction as it faced radical changes in processes and procedures. The leadership at that time did not pay due attention to structural, doctrinal, technological, educational, training, legal, and financial changes and did not attempt to change the outdated mentality toward the military that prevailed in the wider population.

In that period, the country's leadership also did not try to manage the transition; it let change happen as it occurred, and consequently the Albanian army faced resistance. This is the initial reaction of people to transformative periods. Due to a lack of Western leadership models, the military and political leadership did not take into account the human capacity and fluid management of change.

In the first years of the fragile democracy in Albania, the government adhered to the principle of total defense, which held that practically all people were considered soldiers in defense of the homeland. The dictatorial state party ruled the country and stood above everything, and national defense issues relied entirely on "our efforts and forces."² Moreover, the structure of the Albanian army retained its strong Soviet-style foundations even after the 1990s, despite the fact that Albania left the Warsaw Pact in 1968. The concepts of defense, weapons technology, doctrine, organizational structure, and leadership were dependent on the Russian military style even after the fall of communism.³

It is worth noting that pre-1990s C3 was entirely centralized and enforced only by a few people. Its conjunctural structures served the totalitarian regime rather than an ideal based on continuous self-improvement. Policies and personnel could neither move, act, nor think outside the directives and policies of the state party.

Further, even after the 1990s, legacy perceptions about the military persisted. The population continued to believe that a total lack of communication between the military and the public was an organizational norm, and they also believed the civilian government used the military to achieve its political goals. The idea that the army would not be used by the new government to achieve its goals was not easily accepted at that time. "Nothing was ever reported to the public, not even those issues that normally did not require confidentiality. Marxism-Communism meant planning; planning meant control; control meant orders for the people to do what the party requested."⁴

As an example of the depth and reach of this Soviet-era military planning and how it was embedded in the daily life of the general population, hundreds of thousands of concrete

2. Pëllumb Qazimi, *Albania, the Military and the Foreign Influence (1912–1991)* (Vukovina, Croatia: Tipomat, 2012).

3. Qazimi, *Albania*.

4. John Hughes-Wilson, *A Brief History of the Cold War: The Hidden Truth about How Close We Came to a Nuclear Conflict* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2006), 18.

bunkers were built across the country with the expressed purpose of protecting Albania from its enemies. “600,000 bunkers spread throughout the land - from the mountains to the sea, based on paranoia, which lacked any military logic . . . becoming the center piece of an exotic scenario.”⁵ For Albanians in the early 1990s, while the bunkers remained, years of historical ideologies were destroyed in a few short hours of revolt and change.⁶

All this brought radical contradictions in the democratic period the Albanian army was entering in the early 1990s. Total detachment from the past, a lack of democratic mentality that continued to prevail in the military institutions, outdated defense principles, a lack of leadership and modern C3, lack of proper plans to manage change and military spending, a lack of civil-military cooperation, and other elements, combined with 45 years of no freedom for the general population, made a precarious pillar upon which the Albanian army had to rely to lay democratic foundations, particularly in an environment where no one wanted to stay.

Doctrine, Education and Training, and Organizational Structure

The Albanian army inherited another heavy stone to bear—an outdated, flawed, and backward doctrine based entirely on Soviet Union defense principles.

Doctrine

Although it seceded from the Warsaw Pact in 1968, Albania never learned how to manage society and its military differently. Instead of recovering the time lost during the cooperation with the Soviet Union, the country immediately decided to cooperate with communist China. The ideology, political principles, and the concept of defense were so strong that no institution could escape them without infecting themselves. The Albanian army continued to suffer the consequences of this outdated and backward doctrine even after the 1990s. The organization failed to establish strong and unwavering leadership based on modern Western military doctrine and instead continued to maintain and encourage a leadership with old doctrinal principles, yielding negative outcomes for the army after the 1990s.

Soviet-era doctrine was not easy to implement and follow, as everything was based on the state party. Yet, future military generations continued to refuse to take responsibility for changing this doctrine and failed to adopt strong and new democratic defense concepts such as centralized control and decentralized implementation.

Doctrine should be the first milestone as a military endeavors to use human and technological resources in the most efficient and effective way and execute operations strategically

5. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers and Bernd Jürgen Fischer, *Albanian Identities: Myth and History* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2002), 205.

6. “The Albanian Bunkers Built in the Midst of the Cold War,” BBC News, February 11, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/>.

in all domains. Planning, activities, actions, and strategy should all be rooted in doctrine. Additionally, to achieve the objectives of national interest at all levels, doctrine must be timely and simple to use. As US Air Force General Curtis E. LeMay once said, “Doctrine is of the mind, a network of faith and knowledge reinforced by experience which lays the pattern for the utilization of [Airmen], equipment, and tactics. It is the building material for strategy. It is fundamental to sound judgment.”⁷

Training/Education

Albania inherited an army that was unprepared, untrained, and uneducated for the period in which it found itself. Albania was immersed in Soviet defense principles; the education system of the Albanian soldiers was internal to the army and based on outdated Soviet doctrine. Moreover, for 45 years the Albanian army had not had any military training or exercises in any of the countries with which it had political-military relations. Albania never deployed its troops to train outside Albanian territory, even when it was part of the Warsaw Pact.⁸

Organizational Structure

In relation to the population size, geographic territory, and resources, the Albanian army inherited a significantly exaggerated organizational structure that required considerable expenses to maintain. For example, after Ukraine gained its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, it had “a total of 180,000 men . . . divided into thirteen divisional and five corps headquarters, whereas the US Army [same year], with its five hundred thousand members (three times bigger than the Ukrainian Army), [was] divided into only ten divisional and four corps headquarters.”⁹ In 1991, Albania had 21 infantry divisions and over 700,000 personnel. “The trend was to have large, heavy, non-efficient structures that were impossible to afford and extremely difficult to manage.”¹⁰ These structures were large and scattered—inefficient and ineffective in the modern world.

Deprecated Armaments

Centralized control in the hands of a few people resulted in an overload of Soviet and Chinese armaments. These weapons and equipment were outdated and could not be used for military training in country and with post-Soviet-era partners due to significant

7. Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education (LeMay Center), *The Air Force*, Air Force Doctrine Publication 1, (Maxwell AFB, AL: LeMay Center, March 10, 2021), 16, <https://www.dctrine.af.mil/>

8. Qazimi, *Albania*.

9. Anatoliy Grytsenko, “Ukraine’s Military Reform Efforts: Lessons Learned,” in *Post-Cold War Defense Reform: Lessons Learned in Europe and the United States*, ed. István Gyarmati and Theodor Winkler (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 96.

10. Qazimi, *Albania*, 211.

depreciation and overall poor condition. Further, this old technology was never adopted for Eastern military training, as Western technological standards were too advanced for these old and depreciated weapons. Indeed, between the late 1970s and early 1990s, Albania did not upgrade its weapons and technology or military infrastructure.

Lack of Inter-Institutional Connections

As if all of the above were not enough, Albania and the Albanian army in particular found itself facing a total lack of communication with the armies of Western countries— it was an army in search of a new national and international identity.

As mentioned, the only international connections the Albanian army had were at the doctrinal level (Soviet and Chinese according to historical periods). The army rarely engaged with other militaries in training, education, and exercises. Suffice it to say, Albania never moved its troops outside its geographical territory. This inherited situation caused an unprecedented decrease in morale in the ranks of the army, including uncertainty about the future, instability in the present, uncertainty regarding military life in the country, unfair financial practices, and changes to the rank structure.

Transformation of Albanian C3

Albania's postcommunist military legacy guaranteed a challenging and defining journey toward democratic institutionalization and membership in various international military organizations. The steps it took after 1992 were decisive for the future. The first considerable challenges to be properly addressed in terms of the concepts of defense and C3 included a new democratic system; the new defense reality that included Western doctrine, new relationships with other Balkan states, and transitioning away from Soviet legacy armaments; establishing inter-institutional links within and outside the country; the dynamic situation in the Western Balkans region; nationalist divisions; political, economic, and social problems; terrorism; and many other issues.

The first step toward the C3 transformation in the Albanian army was the adoption of a command and control concept based on the principle of centralized control and decentralized implementation and the implementation of Western standards of military communication. In order to realize the functionality of these new concepts, Albania's membership in various international organizations helped, which, in turn, initially helped the Albanian army raise the military institution to Western norms of C3.

Albania was one of the first countries to join the North Atlantic Cooperation Council in 1992 and the Partnership for Peace (PfP) program in 1994.¹¹ These initial steps helped the Albanian army gain a new existential map from which it was able to distinguish its

11. Republic of Albania Ministry of Defence, "History of NATO-Albania Relations," n.d., accessed May 10, 2022, <https://www.mod.gov.al/>.

path toward integration in the NATO alliance and subsequent military cooperation with Alliance partner countries.

For the first time in 45 years, the Albanian army saw a path toward military reform. The inclusion of the Albanian army in these programs and international organizations and councils dispelled the savage mentality that existed immediately following the end of the Cold War and gave the organization an opportunity to carry out the first military reforms.

The army considerably reduced its bloated structure and began to implement a more Western doctrine in keeping with the international organizations with which the country cooperated. Military infrastructure improved, thus giving the Albanian army the opportunity to achieve important priorities and objectives.

The transformation of C3 in the Albanian army must be seen in terms of postcommunist national interests. The Albanian army was navigating in a new political, social, military, regional, and European environment. In these conditions, Albania's national interests had to be refocused to enable the country to find its place in a new reality full of dynamics seen from a different perspective.

The vision of the political and military leadership of the time, the values to which they aspired to adhere, and the new purpose and objectives led the Albanian army to form a new military identity under the support and supervision of NATO and the United States, as Albania itself was redefining its national interests and objectives. "Vital security interests are no longer national interests, and national security interests are no longer vital."¹²

The Albanian army had to resize, and it had to establish itself on the domestic military scene and on the international scene. Western notions of separation of powers and civil-military cooperation improved command and control, thereby strengthening institutional relations. Forces were focused on a further institutional empowerment and beyond. This drastic change lifted a large burden from the shoulders of the Albanian army.

Involvement in Alliance Institutions

Undoubtedly, the activities that the Albanian army participated in during the 1990s in the framework of PfP or NATO assistance contributed the most to the transformation of Albanian army C3. These activities focused on the development of key democratic concepts, organizational reconstruction, and resolution of technical issues, changes in force structure, and changes in education and training.

The focus, importance, and commitment that NATO structures had were critical to the Albanian army's preparation for full-fledged membership in the preeminent political and military organization in the world. Albania was rightly seen as a case study for nations facing similar challenges.¹³ The transformation of Albanian army C3 took place under

12. Marco Carnovale, *Vital and National Security Interests after the End of the Cold War in European Security and International Institutions* (New York: Saint Martin's Press, 1991), 1.

13. G. Katsirdakis, "Albania: A Case Study in the Practical Implementation of Partnership for Peace," *NATO Review* 46, no. 2 (1998): 22–26.

the management and care of NATO. This assistance and oversight increased the effective operation of army forces so that they were capable and prepared to participate in joint exercises as equals, ready to work and meet the legal and moral expectations and responsibilities required by the Alliance.

Key Democratic Concepts

The implementation of Western doctrinal frameworks for C3 introduced the concept of centralized control and decentralized implementation. As detailed by US Air Force leaders, “Centralized command and control of airpower by an airman promotes effectiveness and preserves flexibility at the strategic and operational levels of war, while decentralized execution of air operations promotes effectiveness and preserves flexibility at the tactical level.”¹⁴

Organizational Reconstruction and Technical Issues

The reorganization of the Albanian army increased operational capability, effectiveness, efficiency, speed of action, interactions, and interoperability, further enhancing C3 and information systems. The army also resolved key technical issues related to the safety and inventory of armaments.

Force Structure

The army implemented force structure changes that included restructuring, reducing, and reallocating forces. The reduction of forces at this time was significant: 31,000 troops were reduced to 16,500 troops. The army reallocated and restructured forces by forming the rapid reaction brigade, with a battalion considered a task force, and by creating a commando regiment and other military structures that instituted new concepts, doctrine, and decision making.

Moreover, the army created entirely new elements to perform advanced military activities. The air force was equipped with a multipurpose squadron of helicopters covering not only the air force’s military activities but also providing practical assistance to the missions of the land and naval forces. Also, the newly created air defense brigade together with its own units was an organizational innovation in line with NATO principles and standards. As for the navy, it was organized on two naval bases and included a naval observation battalion.¹⁵

14. Clint Hinote, *Centralized Control and Decentralized Execution: A Catchphrase in Crises?* Air Force Research Institute (AFRI) Papers 2009-1 (Maxwell AFB, AL: AFRI, March 2009), 19, <https://media.defense.gov/>.

15. Igli Totozani, “Civilian and Military in Defense Planning: From National Security Concept to a Force Development Plan,” in *Defense and Security Sector Governance* (Geneva: Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces, 2004), 58–71.

Education and Training

The Albanian army's involvement in the training and education of its personnel and military infrastructure was essential to increasing the capacity of its human resources. The army made new, pro-Western methods of education, training, and exercising available to military members. As a member of the PfP program, the army participated in naval exercises in cooperation with NATO missions such as Operation Sharp Guardian, operations Safe Heaven and Deny Flight in Bosnia, Operation Seven Stars, Operation Dynamic Response, and the recent Operation Defender Europe.²¹

The Albanian military also engaged under the umbrella of the NATO International Security Assistance Force as part of the Turkish mission in Afghanistan. Later, the Albanian Armed Forces participated in missions in Mosul, Iraq under the operational care of the US Army 101st Division as part of the international coalition in the fight against terrorism. Today, the army continues missions in Kosovo, Lithuania, and many other countries where there is a need to be included as part of the Alliance with full rights and responsibilities.¹⁶

These beneficial experiences and extraordinary collaborations facilitated the Albanian army's transition from the four pillars of postcommunist operations and structures toward full participation in international interoperable cooperation. These irreplaceable experiences also increased the army's effectiveness, making it a key part of international coalitions and commitments.

The opening of the military university "Skënderbej," based on the US West Point Military Academy program, served as a critical milestone in the education and training of the next generations of officers and noncommissioned officers of the Albanian army. The cadets are involved in intensive parallel programs—one civil and the other military—and are required to graduate within four and a half years.

Importantly, the army also redefined the NCO academy, adopting western teaching methods and linking its staff to educational collaborations in partner countries. In order to prioritize the continuous education and training of the staff, members of the Albanian army participate in international programs including the US military's International Military Education and Training program. This commitment of the United States further bolsters the human resources of the Albanian army by increasing its military capacity and by contributing to the army's achievement of NATO standards.

NATO Membership

Another milestone in the transformation of Albanian army C3 took place on April 9, 2009, the date Albania was fully admitted to NATO. From this moment on, the four pillars mentioned above began to truly transform and greatly strengthened the support of

16. North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), "The Prague Summit and NATO's Transformation: A Reader's Guide," (Brussels: NATO, 2003), <https://www.nato.int/>.

the army among the broader Albanian population. Moreover, Albania's entry into NATO increased the Albanian army's morale, energy, positivity, and motivation.

Doctrine improved considerably in quantity and quality where it was redefined according to Alliance standards. New armaments began to arrive from the United States, various NATO countries, and other partner countries, significantly improving military infrastructure.

The army added new objectives related to national and Alliance security, including operationalizing the first Albanian control and reporting center (CRC), which improved the effectiveness of national training operations and those in cooperation with other countries. The achievement of these new defense objectives was instrumental in increasing communication capacities, intelligence and reconnaissance, information flow, and institutional interoperability.

The advent of new technologies such as a new radar system significantly advanced the national objective concerned with the conservation and management of the Albanian airspace. This technology made the flow of information faster, enabling intelligence and reconnaissance to act quickly and effectively resolve challenges.

Certainly the transformation of an army will never end, as technology, human resources, and capacity will always be in the process of transformation. What matters is accepting the challenges and turning those challenges into success. A modern and democratic army does this by implementing the principle of centralized control and decentralized implementation through command, control, and communication.

As such, C3 has been critical in the transformation of the Albanian army, as modern military operations require flexibility at the tactical and operational levels and control at the strategic level. "Successful mission command demands that subordinate leaders at all echelons exercise disciplined initiative, acting aggressively and independently to accomplish the mission within the commanders' intent."¹⁷

The Challenge—Leadership

Throughout history, leadership has been the primary challenge for humanity in general and even more so in a military setting. Leadership creates and improves the work environment and brings competitive advantages to produce winning operational strategies. Military leadership inspires others to represent the military institution through personal example, reflecting military values in any environment, and is key to improving the four postcommunist pillars discussed above.

Leadership, then, is the next challenge for the Albanian army. In leading by example, a leader must always be coherent, objective, and developmental, and in doing so, he or she will improve doctrine, the people, information technology, management, processes, and inter-institutional and internal relations. Such leadership will integrate a new winning

17. US Army, *Operations*, US Army Field Manual 3-0 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, February 2008), 3-6.

and motivating spirit to achieve any objective or goal, regardless of unexpected and critical situations. Moreover, this integration requires strong and intelligent leadership.

But leadership is challenging for a number of reasons. First, leaders have an institutionalized relationship with followers; in order for that relationship to be sustainable and strong, it must change with time. This change improves leadership and with it, improves doctrine, technology, and decision making, leading to increased situational awareness. Greater leeway in decision making, necessitated by the speed of information flow, increases the effectiveness and success of any mission or situation.

But change does not mean lowered expectations. Indeed, today's leaders must change the culture while *not* lowering expectations. The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines culture as the customs, beliefs, art, lifestyle, and social organization of a particular group or country.¹⁸ As organizations change, it is therefore necessary to review leadership culture to encourage behavior that prioritizes requirements that need to be standardized.

Second and related to the first, leadership must always look ahead and not risk returning to problematic situations in the past. This posed a challenge for the Albanian army leadership and for the Albanian government. Leonard Wong and Stephan J. Gerras argue that in order to move forward, we must first identify any individual or organizational problems that could lead an organization to repeat past mistakes; in the case of the Albanian army, these problems occurred in the 1990s.¹⁹

Third, leadership must focus on followers and human resources, which have tremendous effects on achieving objectives in a timely and effective manner. Strengthening morale and prioritizing human resources is a task and challenge for leadership. As former US Army General George S. Patton wrote in 1933, "Wars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men."²⁰ A key leadership challenge for the Albanian army has been changing followers' mindsets to enable the success of C3. The improvement of C3 in the Albanian army has aligned military mentality with Western doctrine, which is constantly changing and thus improves the army's C3 performance, followers, objectives, and mission.

Ultimately, leadership is power. Therefore, the challenge of leadership lies precisely in the display of power, respecting two themes—rule of law and freedom. Henry Kissinger has drawn three conclusions from Cardinal Richelieu's career that are applicable in a military setting: 1) a long-term strategy is necessary for a successful foreign policy; 2) leadership must have a coherent vision as it relates to the declared time frame—leadership needs to know where it is taking the vision and why; and 3) leadership must build bridges,

18. *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. "culture," accessed February 2, 2022, www.oed.com/.

19. Leonard Wong and J. Stephen Gerras, *Lying to Ourselves: Dishonesty in the Army Profession* (Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College Press, February 2015), <https://press.armywarcollege.edu/>.

20. George S. Patton Jr., "Mechanized Forces," repr. from *Cavalry Journal* (September–October 1933) in *Military Essays and Articles by George S. Patton Jr., General, U.S. Army 02605, 1885–1945*, ed. Charles M. Province (San Diego, CA: George S. Patton Jr. Historical Society, 2002), 128, <http://www.pattonhq.com>.

connecting experience and aspirations.²¹ As Martin Luther King Jr., said, “Power is the ability to achieve purpose; power is the ability to effect change, and we need power.”²²

Looking Ahead

The future of the Albanian army will depend on the decisions made today. In order for the army to achieve its objectives and goals, it must leverage personality, inspire enthusiasm, and remain vigilant.

The army must leverage personality through all its entities. Personalities that demonstrate a sense of timing, efficiency, and a devotion to successfully achieving the mission simultaneously improve leaders and followers. The army must also inspire enthusiasm. An army that equips its human resources with optimistic enthusiasm and calm will promote professional and individual productivity toward achieving its objectives. An environment characterized by followers with high levels of enthusiasm for the mission correlates directly and positively with national security.

Finally, the army must remain vigilant. It must be focused on and vigilant regarding all technological innovation—doctrinal, human, political, and social—by implementing any change in its organizational and doctrinal structure in a timely fashion, all the while maintaining high levels of productivity to respond to all the challenges that await. And in the case of the Albanian army, those challenges are multidomain operations and close air support.

Multidomain operations and close air support will increase effectiveness of the Albanian army’s C3, further assisting the transition from the four pillars but also aligning the country’s internal reality to global operational situations. Seen from this point of view and in the wider political-military environment in which military operations occur everywhere in the world, the Albanian army must be entirely resized.

Such a resizing begins with adopting a common C3 doctrine to respond to the global need for a military structure that allows all forces to respond simultaneously. This change would make the best use of the capacity, infrastructure, technology, facilities, and people in peacetime as well as in wartime.

The essence of multidomain operations is to think about military problem solving in a nonlinear way and to conduct operations focused on achieving objectives rather than on maintaining, distinct component lanes. . . . The complexity of current and future operations require breaking this pattern of thought in order to more seamlessly integrate the unique capabilities of each component to create the effects required to meet tactical, operational, and strategic objectives.²³

21. Henry Kissinger, *World Order* (New York: Penguin Press, 2014), 11.

22. Clayborne Carson, ed., *The Autobiography of Martin Luther King, Jr.* (New York: Warner Books, 2001), chap. 31, 372.

23. Clay Bartels, Tim Tormey, and Jon Hendrickson, “Multidomain Operations and Close Air Support: A Fresh Perspective,” *Military Review* (March–April 2017), 72, <https://www.armyupress.army.mil/>.

The world we live in today is changing drastically and with dizzying speed. Militaries are embracing more and more engineering and cyber programming as part of a new intelligent force, which must be implemented as soon as possible in Albanian army doctrine and technology. By investing in this direction, the Albanian army will be able to implement multidomain operations, the newest environment where war is oriented today. Perhaps Carl von Clausewitz understood this when he said, “Every age has its war roots, its limiting conditions, its prejudices. . . . Every age should have its own theory of war, even if it were to be decided at all times to be concretized, according to perfectly reasonable criteria.”²⁴

Conclusion

Albania presents an opportunity to study and to delve deeper into the analysis to discover lessons worth using in the future. Albania and the Albanian army represent an atypical case in terms of military history and events, situations, political cooperation, the concept of defense, and methods of communication. The agreements made in different periods are seemingly appropriate and influenced by time.

But what is most impressive is the rapid pace at which Albania decided to change its concept of the state, coping with quite difficult situations for a postcommunist nation. Practically overnight, it found itself in a democratic transition that ended up lasting longer than it did for any other postcommunist state. Albania was forced to do things without a proper plan, but it developed itself with the support of Western states. Indeed, without them it would have been quite difficult for the Albanian army to have found its identity.

Moreover, the Albanian army understood the importance of training, educating, and exercising. As a result, the military leaders at all levels today are much better integrated into the defense construct, and they ensure that their followers have a clear, articulated picture of their mission. Including the latest technology is a challenge in itself—this must remain a key objective. Finally, implementing and solidifying the use of all base defense assets under a joint command umbrella could be a new challenging and fascinating objective for the Albanian army.

This article underlines the importance of seeing the Albanian army in 360 degrees with its pros and cons as a motive to improve and learn at the same time. The army, with the leadership and oversight of the United States, the EU, and NATO, is finding the brilliance it had long lacked, and it will never give up on the future. ✈️

24. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, vol. 3, bk. 8, chap. 3, pt. B (Tirana, Albania: Shtëpia Botuese e Ushtrisë [Army Publishing House], 1996), 532.

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