Evolution of National Security Concept in Albania

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Abstract

This paper explores the evolution of Albania's military thought from the declaration of independence in 1912 to the present day. The study examines the key periods of development in military thought, focusing on external influences and internal political, economic, and social transformations. It aims to reveal how Albania, as a small state in the Balkans, has adapted its military strategies in response to ongoing geopolitical challenges.

The methodology employs historical and comparative analysis, investigating major phases in Albania's military history. Key sources include historical literature, military documents, and strategic analyses of the independence period, World War II, the post-liberation era, and changes brought by the pluralistic system.

The central research question is: How has Albania's military thought evolved from a domestic defensive strategy to international cooperation and participation in peacekeeping operations? The study aims to analyze the dynamics that have shaped the country's military policy and their impact on Albania's integration into international security structures. Ultimately, this paper sheds light on the transformations in Albania's military thought and their influence on contemporary defense policies.

Introduction

*Issues in the Evolution of the Concept of Security
Following the Creation of the Albanian State*

The evolution of the concept of security in Albania, since the declaration of independence in 1912, reflects the complex transformation processes that the country has experienced in the political, economic, and social spheres. As a small state in the Balkans, Albania has continually faced challenges in preserving its sovereignty and territorial integrity, including the historical and geopolitical tensions of the region. Various scholars emphasize that "the development of the concept of security in Albania is influenced by the country's strategic position and regional circumstances" (Kaplan, 2015; Duka, 2012). In this context, the concept of security has evolved from territorial defense to a comprehensive approach that includes modern challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats.

The first steps toward building a national security strategy were undertaken under the leadership of Ismail Qemali and other figures of independence. These efforts focused on establishing a national army and safeguarding sovereignty within a chaotic regional environment. According to Frashëri (2007), the development of a stable security system was constrained by interventions from the great powers and a lack of national resources. Subsequent periods, particularly during World War II and the communist regime, brought significant changes to the concept of security, influenced by ideology and international alliances.

Kaplan (2015) argues that "communist ideology had a strong influence on Albanian security strategies, orienting them toward popular defense and guerrilla warfare." During the period of international isolation, Albania adopted a comprehensive defensive approach, mobilizing national resources to confront external threats. After the 1990s, political changes and efforts for Euro-Atlantic integration transformed the concept of security, steering it toward international cooperation and participation in peacekeeping operations (Duka, 2012).

This paper aims to analyze the evolution of the concept of security in Albania from the declaration of independence to the present day. By examining key historical periods, ideological influences, and contemporary challenges, it seeks to shed light on the factors that have shaped the concept of security and the ways in which Albania has adapted to address both national and international demands.

Chapter 1: The Concept of Security during the Independence Period (1912–1939)

The period of Albania's independence from 1912 up to the eve of World War II represents a critical stage in the formation of the Albanian state and the development of military thought. Efforts to establish a national army and formulate defense strategies were major challenges for a new and fragile state like Albania. These difficulties were intensified by external pressures from the Great Powers and by the country's internal problems, which included a lack of resources and unstable state structures (Puto, 2009). During this period, the development of military thought was dictated not only by the need to protect borders but also by efforts to consolidate the authority of the state throughout its territory.

1.1. The Formation of the National Army

After the declaration of independence on November 28, 1912, the creation of a national army to defend the newly gained sovereignty became a priority for Ismail Qemali's government. At that time, Albania faced the absence of a centralized military structure, since historically the territory had been organized into autonomous tribal units. Building a national army from this situation proved difficult due to the lack of financial resources, modern military technology, and experience in managing regular military structures (Fischer, 1999). Despite the government's efforts, it encountered significant challenges, including interference from the Great Powers and pressures from neighboring states, which capitalized on Albania's weaknesses. The lack of financial and material support hindered the establishment of a strong army, meaning many troops depended on local structures. As Frashëri (2005) points out, the involvement of local notables in the efforts to create a national army was vital, but these leaders often acted in their own interests, which clashed with national priorities. As a result, the Albanian army remained weak and mostly reactive, functioning more as a temporary defensive force rather than a well-organized body prepared to face major threats.

1.2. Defense Strategies and Early Period Constraints

Albanian military thought in the early years of independence relied on a pragmatic approach oriented toward border defense and internal stability. Due to the lack of a strong regular army, the government often relied on tribal ties and local forces to protect territories (Pollo, 2005). This approach was necessary for a fragmented society without strong state infrastructure.

However, Albanian military strategies during this period were rudimentary, and there was no well-formed military doctrine. According to Fischer (1999), "Albanians did not have a consolidated military tradition or a defined model for organizing the army." For this reason, the government sought models from other Balkan countries and from the Great Powers, especially Austria-Hungary, which played a significant role in organizing and training the Albanian army during this period (Fischer, 1999).

In the 1920s and 1930s, efforts to strengthen military structures continued, but financial problems and external interference significantly limited progress. Although there were attempts to create a regular army, reliance on foreign assistance for equipment and training remained high. Internal political tensions and a lack of institutional stability hindered the creation of a clear defense strategy. As Duka (2012) observes, "Albania, during this period, remained dependent on foreign powers, failing to build an independent defense model."

Despite these limitations, Albanian leaders sought to consolidate a national idea of defense based on the population and tribal ties. During the 1930s, the influence of autocratic regimes in the region began to be reflected in Albania, leading to a more centralized approach to military thought. According to Fischer (2009), "the autocratic ideology in the region influenced Albanian strategy, orienting it toward greater central control." This gradual transformation laid a foundation for organizing the army, but it remained fragile until the outbreak of World War II.

2. The Concept of Security during World War II and the Communist Period (1940–1990)

The period encompassing World War II and the communist regime in Albania represents one of the most significant and complex phases in the evolution of the concept of national security. As Albania transitioned from an occupied country during the war to an isolated and ideologically radical communist state, the concept of security underwent profound transformations. During this era, Albania was heavily influenced by the policies and ideologies of the great powers, especially the Soviet Union and China, developing a unique approach to national security that would have long-term effects on the country's defense policy and structure.

2.1. The Concept of Security during World War II (1940–1945)

During World War II, Albania became a stage for multiple invasions and conflicts among foreign powers. Italy's invasion of Albania on April 7, 1939, marked the beginning of the country's involvement in major international conflicts. King Ahmet Zogu and his government faced a politically and strategically unprepared situation to confront the Italian aggression, resulting in a rapid occupation and

capitulation of Albania within a matter of days (Fischer, 1999). Consequently, Albania became an Italian protectorate until 1943, when Italy withdrew following its capitulation to the Allies.

Meanwhile, resistance against the Italian occupiers began to organize through partisan groups led by the Albanian Communist Party, founded in November 1941. According to Fischer (1999), the security strategies followed by the partisan movement were primarily based on guerrilla warfare, a highly suitable approach given Albania's mountainous terrain. This guerrilla strategy included small, swift, and unpredictable attacks on occupation forces, avoiding direct confrontation with the better-equipped enemy troops.

Following Germany's invasion of Albania in 1943, the partisans' guerrilla warfare intensified and received substantial support from the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom. This military and ideological support helped Albanian partisans consolidate their position and liberate the country by the end of 1944. According to Dritëroi (2008), "the guerrilla warfare employed by the partisans introduced a new concept of national security, emphasizing the mobilization of the civilian population and the engagement of everyone in defense efforts." This security model became the foundation for the communist period, during which national security was regarded as a comprehensive project of state mobilization and control. The evolution of the concept of security in this era reflected not only the demands of the time but also the country's ideological orientation, laying the groundwork for a defensive approach that would serve as a reference point for the subsequent decades.

2.2. The Influence of the Soviet Union and China on the Concept of Security during the Communist Regime (1946–1961)

Following World War II and the establishment of the communist regime under Enver Hoxha's leadership, Albania adopted a model of national security heavily influenced by communist ideology and its close partnership with the Soviet Union. Between 1946 and 1961, Albania was positioned as an ally of the Soviet Union and received considerable military and technical assistance, which directly impacted the development of its concept of national security (Pollo, 2005). The Soviet Union helped establish a centralized security system in Albania, providing training and advanced technology. During this period, the concept of national security involved the participation of the entire population in the defense of the homeland, with a focus on preparing for potential conflicts through guerrilla warfare tactics. According to Fischer (1999), "Albania's security strategy was built on the full mobilization of the population and the preparedness to confront foreign aggression by any means necessary."

Soviet influence extended beyond physical security structures to include ideological components, emphasizing international solidarity with socialist countries and readiness to defend the communist system against Western capitalism and imperialism. Kaplan (2015) notes that "the Albanian concept of security during this period was a complete reflection of communist ideology and of the strategic relationship with the Soviet Union." With the breakdown of relations between Albania and the Soviet Union in 1961, Albania shifted its strategic orientation by forging close ties with China. Under Mao Zedong's leadership, China provided substantial military and economic support, further strengthening Albania's self-defense capabilities. According to Fischer (1999), "China's influence reinforced the radical elements of Albania's security concept, emphasizing guerrilla warfare strategy and resistance against any foreign aggression."

2.3. The Concept of Security during the Period of National Isolation (1960–1990)

The years 1960–1990 marked the culmination of a unique national security approach in Albania, in which every aspect of civilian life was interconnected with preparations for national defense. The regime of Enver Hoxha, including the period after the split with China in the 1970s, stressed the need for self-reliance and a defense strategy rooted in popular engagement. Large-scale investments in fortifications, bunkers, and shelters were central to this strategy, creating a security infrastructure oriented toward a people's war (Duka, 2012). This security system involved not only military structures but also civilian components, mobilizing the population at every level. According to Duka (2012), "the idea of a people's defense meant that every citizen was an element of national security, prepared to confront external aggression through collective resistance."

Albania's political isolation and severance from all international alliances made its concept of national security more focused on self-defense and maintaining an independent system. This concept had a strong ideological foundation, justifying extensive state control measures and continual preparation for a potential war against "external enemies." Fischer (1999) observes that "the Albanian approach to national security during the communist regime was a unique combination of extreme isolation and centralized popular defense."

2.4. The Impact of the Security Concept in the Post-Communist Period

With the fall of the communist regime in 1991, Albania began a long and challenging process of political and strategic transformation. The national security concept built during the communist era—based on isolation and a people's defense—became increasingly unsuitable for modern challenges. In the post-communist

period, Albania sought integration into international structures, including NATO, and undertook reforms of its security system to meet contemporary global security demands (Duka, 2012). However, the legacy of the communist period, including outdated infrastructure and a strategic approach focused on self-defense, continued to influence the challenges Albania faced in addressing new threats. Efforts to reform the security concept are reflected in increased international cooperation and adaptation to challenges such as terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats, representing a clear break from the isolation of the past.

Chapter 3: The Concept of Security after the Fall of Communism and the Path toward NATO Membership (1991 onward)

After the fall of the communist regime in 1991, Albania entered a period of profound political, economic, and military transformation. The military doctrine that had dominated for decades—based on isolation and a people's defense— began to fade as the country moved toward international integration and the democratization of its institutions. Albania's path toward military reforms and membership in international organizations, especially NATO, represents a significant period of reorganization of its defense structures and strategies. This chapter examines the transformations in Albania's military doctrine following the collapse of communism, including the challenges of the transition period, the process of reforming the Armed Forces, and the country's integration into international security structures.

3.1. The Transition of the Armed Forces and Military Doctrine in the Post-Communist Period (1991–2000)

With the collapse of communism and the dismantling of the centralized political system, Albania experienced a difficult transition period. The people's defense doctrine that had dominated for over four decades was abandoned, while the country faced a profound institutional and economic crisis. The lack of financial resources and the decline of public order significantly affected the functioning of the Albanian Armed Forces (Duka, 2012). Military structures that had been based on an isolated, self-reliant system were no longer suitable for confronting the new realities of national and international security.

During this period, the Albanian military struggled with pronounced capacity shortages, both in terms of human resources and material support. Military reform became one of the main priorities of the new democratic government, which began a long and complex process of modernizing military structures and adapting them to the needs of a democratic state. According to Fischer (1999),

"Albania's political and economic transition was closely intertwined with the reform of the military—a process requiring considerable time and effort to build modern defense capacities."

One of the main challenges of this period was restoring public trust in the Armed Forces, which during the communist regime had played a significant role in maintaining the regime's power. As Albania moved toward democratization, the new government faced the need to create a professional and reliable army operating within a democratic system and prepared for new responsibilities, including protecting public order and maintaining national security. According to Pollo (2005), "restructuring the Albanian military required not only changes in technical and organizational capacities but also a fundamental shift in its culture and its relationship with the citizens."

3.2. The Reform Process and Preparations for NATO Membership (2000–2009)

In the early 2000s, Albania accelerated the reform of its Armed Forces, focusing on preparations for NATO membership. This process involved extensive changes to the country's military structures and strategies, aimed at meeting the Alliance's criteria and standards. As Fischer (2009) notes, "NATO membership became one of Albania's primary foreign and security policy objectives, placing the country on a path of modernization and international integration." One of the core aspects of these reforms was the professionalization of the Armed Forces and the transformation from a large, underprepared army to a smaller, well-trained force equipped according to international standards. Albania began receiving substantial assistance from Western countries to reorganize its military and improve its technical capacities. This process included modernizing military infrastructure, improving technology and weaponry, and involving Albania in joint exercises and operations with NATO member states (Duka, 2012).

A significant shift in Albania's military doctrine during this period was the transition from a strategy of popular defense and isolation to a multilateral approach grounded in international cooperation. Albania started participating in peacekeeping missions and international operations under the umbrella of NATO and other international organizations, actively engaging in efforts to contribute to global stability (Pollo, 2005). This represented a major change in Albania's security and defense philosophy, moving away from a strictly defensive, self-reliant approach to a more active role in international security operations.

In 2009, Albania reached a historic milestone by officially joining NATO. This marked the culmination of a long period of military reforms and the country's commitment to building an army capable of fulfilling its duties within the Alliance. NATO membership not only provided Albania with greater security in its national

defense but also positioned the country on a stronger footing in the international security arena (Kaplan, 2015).

3.3. Albania's Security Concept after NATO Membership (2009 onward)

Following NATO membership, Albania's security concept has evolved in the direction of modernization and active engagement in international security. This transformation is based on the principles of international cooperation, Euro-Atlantic integration, and participation in peacekeeping missions and global security operations (Duka, 2012). Albania aims to position itself as a reliable partner within NATO, contributing to international peace and stability. A key pillar of Albania's security concept during this period is the enhancement of technological and professional capacities in defense institutions. Albania has invested in modernizing its defense infrastructure and improving the operational capabilities of its Armed Forces, creating capacities to adapt to contemporary security challenges (Fischer, 2009). Furthermore, participation in international missions—such as those in Afghanistan and other destabilized regions—has demonstrated Albania's commitment to contributing to global security efforts.

Addressing new security threats, including international terrorism, organized crime, and cyber threats, represents another essential component of the national security concept. Albania has intensified cooperation with international partners in intelligence and security, pursuing an integrated approach to tackling the challenges of the 21st century (Kaplan, 2015). Its involvement in global efforts against violent extremism and the strengthening of cyber defense capabilities have become priorities for Albanian institutions.

3.4. Regional Integration and Future Perspectives of Albania's Security Concept

An important dimension of Albania's security concept is its role in ensuring regional stability in the Balkans. As a NATO member, Albania has supported efforts to enhance regional security through military cooperation with other Balkan states. These efforts include organizing joint exercises and participating in initiatives to strengthen regional defense capacities (Duka, 2012). Through this engagement, Albania has demonstrated its commitment to collective security and to building a stable security environment in the region. Looking ahead, Albania intends to continue modernizing its security infrastructure and adapting to new global challenges. Priorities include advancing technological capabilities, increasing participation in international missions, and strengthening strategic partnerships (Kaplan, 2015). As a small country with limited resources, Albania will continue to rely on international partnerships to ensure national security and

contribute to global peace and stability. This process reflects not only Albania's commitment to addressing modern security challenges but also its efforts to build a sustainable national security concept that harmonizes its domestic needs with its role in the international security architecture.

Chapter 4: Albania's Security Concept in the 21st Century: Future Perspectives

In the 21st century, Albania faces a shifting international and regional security landscape that requires further developments and adaptations to its national security concept. Albania's successful integration into NATO in 2009 has fundamentally changed the country's role within the international security architecture, bringing new responsibilities to participate in peacekeeping operations and other global security engagements. This chapter focuses on the challenges and prospects for the future of Albania's security concept, including the modernization of defense capabilities, addressing new threats, and Albania's role in regional and global security**.**

4.1. Security Challenges in the 21st Century

A principal challenge for Albania's security concept is adapting to a constantly evolving security environment. Traditional threats of conventional conflict are being replaced by more complex challenges, including international terrorism, organized crime, cyber security, and humanitarian emergencies (Kaplan, 2015). As a country with limited resources, Albania faces the challenge of developing capacities to respond to these dispersed and intricate threats.

Albania's security concept has expanded to address not only traditional threats but also those that are domestic and transnational. Organized crime remains a continual threat in the Balkans, and Albania has intensified efforts to combat this issue through cooperation with international organizations and joint operations with neighboring countries (Duka, 2012). This approach reflects the need for a comprehensive strategy that tackles the complex challenges of regional security.

4.2. Cyber Security and Technology

Cyber security is a critical component of modern security. With the growing reliance on technology, cyber threats have become a serious challenge for Albania, including attacks on critical infrastructure and the leakage of sensitive data. To counter these challenges, Albania has begun to invest in building cyber capacities and creating specialized structures for monitoring and defending against cyber threats (Kaplan, 2015; Fischer, 2009).

In cooperation with NATO and other international partners, Albania has developed mechanisms to strengthen cyber defense and enhance its capabilities to respond to cyber incidents. These efforts include improving technological capacities and training specialists to address the rising challenges of the digital space.

4.3. Albania's Role in Regional and Global Security

As a NATO member, Albania has played an important role in promoting regional stability and building collective security in the Balkans. Through cooperation with neighboring countries and participation in joint military exercises, Albania has helped strengthen regional security capacities and establish mechanisms for conflict resolution (Duka, 2012).

Globally, Albania has contributed to peacekeeping missions and international security operations, demonstrating its commitment to international peace and stability. Moreover, Albania aims to strengthen its role as a reliable partner both in its region and beyond, by improving its defense capacities and bolstering its strategic relationships. Another key element of Albania's 21st-century military doctrine is its role in fostering stability in the Western Balkans. As a NATO member and one of the politically more stable countries in the region, Albania has significantly contributed to regional security and defense cooperation (Duka, 2012). This includes encouraging dialogue and military cooperation with neighboring countries—such as North Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, and Serbia—and actively participating in regional initiatives for maintaining peace and stability.

Because the Western Balkans remains vulnerable to potential tensions and conflicts, Albania has been involved in efforts to reinforce stability and prevent escalation in the region. By participating in regional security organizations and forums, Albania has helped strengthen ties among Balkan countries and promoted dialogue as a means for conflict resolution and improving inter-state relations (Kaplan, 2015). Going forward, Albania will continue to play an important role in regional security, working to bolster stability and promote cooperation among Balkan states. This entails participating in joint exercises and operations, sharing intelligence, and working to enhance the defense capacities of its neighbors.

In summary, in the 21st century, Albania's military doctrine faces a range of new challenges but has shown a high capacity to adapt to the demands of a changing world. Through modernizing the Armed Forces, engaging in international operations, and collaborating with regional and international partners, Albania has managed to build a modern army capable of facing the challenges of the 21st century. Confronting new security threats and improving technological and professional capabilities will remain key priorities for the future, while Albania continues to play an important role in regional and international security.

4.4. Future Perspectives

Looking ahead, Albania aims to continue developing a sustainable and comprehensive security concept that addresses both traditional challenges and contemporary threats. Priorities include:

- Modernizing defense capabilities, investing in advanced technology and improving critical infrastructure.
- Expanding participation in international missions, contributing to global peace and stability.
- Strengthening regional and international cooperation, building a security architecture that tackles the complex challenges of the 21st century.

Although it is a small country with limited resources, Albania intends to rely on international partnerships to ensure its national stability and to contribute to global efforts for peace and security. Through consistent and innovative engagement, Albania's security concept will continue to evolve to meet the demands of the times and to ensure a stable and secure future. Enhancing technological capacities remains one of the most significant successes in modernizing the Armed Forces. This includes developing new technologies for cyber defense, improving infrastructure for training and operations, and creating a more robust platform for addressing non-conventional threats. These efforts seek to ensure that Albania maintains a strong position within NATO and actively contributes to global stability.

4.5. Participation in International Operations

In the 21st century, Albania has demonstrated a strong commitment to participating in international security operations as part of its strategy to become a reliable partner within NATO and to contribute to global stability. By taking part in peacekeeping missions and operations supported by NATO and the United Nations, Albania has strengthened its international standing and enhanced its operational capabilities. According to Kaplan (2015), "Albania has played a significant role in international peace missions, contributing troops and resources to major operations in Afghanistan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and elsewhere."

One of the most notable examples of Albania's engagement in international missions is its participation in operations in Afghanistan, where the Albanian Armed Forces have made significant contributions to stabilization and reconstruction efforts. The experience gained from these missions has helped improve the professional capacities of the Albanian military and raised its

operational standards in line with those of NATO (Fischer, 2009). In the future, Albania will continue to contribute to international operations by focusing on enhancing its capacities to address global security challenges and supporting efforts to preserve peace and stability both in its region and beyond. This includes not only engagement in military missions but also efforts aimed at humanitarian aid and post-conflict reconstruction in destabilized countries.

4.6. Information Security in the Context of National Security

Information security has gained strategic importance in the modern era, becoming a crucial pillar of national security. In an increasingly technology-dependent global environment, protecting the integrity, confidentiality, and accessibility of information is a vital priority for safeguarding national interests. For Albania, given its distinctive history of military thought and security challenges since the establishment of its state, integrating information security into its national strategy reflects the need to meet the new demands of the digital age (Kaplan, 2015; Duka, 2012).

Information Security as a Component of National Security. Information security is directly connected to protecting critical infrastructure, crisis management, and defense against cyber threats. At a time when cyber attacks and data misuse are on the rise, states—including Albania—face new challenges that require technological investments and the development of human capacities (Fischer, 2009). Institutions such as the State Intelligence Service (SHISH) and the Ministry of Defense, as well as the Authority for Classified Information Security (DSIK), are examples of agencies that have incorporated information security into their strategic plans for national defense. Moreover, the development of clear policies for information management and cyber protection has had a direct impact on Albania's ability to address modern threats.

The Strategic Importance of Information Security for Albania. In Albania's case, the major transformations in the concept of security since the declaration of independence (1912) up to the present day reflect a shift from traditional approaches toward a greater integration of technology and information (Duka, 2012). For example, during the communist regime, control over information and its use for internal security was central to the national strategy (Kaplan, 2015). In the modern era, information has become a strategic resource for every state.

In the post-communist period, Albania has invested in upgrading its cyber capabilities and integrating technology into its defense policies. NATO membership has played a key role in this regard, helping align Albania with international cyber security standards (NATO, 2021). Ensuring the security of information is critical

for safeguarding national interests and political and social stability. DSIK, as the national authority responsible for protecting classified information, has a broad mandate to ensure that sensitive data are handled and protected according to international standards.

The Impact of Information Security on the National Security Concept. The evolution of Albanian military thought reflects a changing approach to information security. In the early periods, Albanian military strategies were focused on using traditional resources for territorial defense. However, the political and social changes after the 1990s highlighted the need for a restructuring of strategic thinking to include technology and information as key components (Fischer, 2009). The creation of the National Cyber Security Center is a clear example of efforts to enhance national capabilities in this area. As Duka (2012) points out, the growth of cyber capacities and their inclusion in security doctrines have laid a new foundation for national defense.

Challenges and Opportunities for Information Security in Albania. Albania still faces significant challenges in information security. Its technological infrastructure remains imperfect, and there is a pronounced shortage of trained human resources to manage cyber threats. Additionally, coordination between national institutions and international partners often remains a challenge. On the other hand, Albania has numerous opportunities for improvement. Cooperation with NATO and the EU to develop joint information security strategies can help strengthen national capacities (NATO, 2021). Continuous training and investments in modern technology are also essential for tackling evolving threats. Information security is a key component of national security, one that has taken on particular importance in the digital age. In Albania's case, integrating this element into military thought and national strategy represents a necessary evolution to address the requirements of the 21st century. By investing in technology and cooperating with international partners, Albania has opportunities to enhance its national defense and contribute to regional stability.

Conclusions

The evolution of Albania's security concept clearly reflects the historical, political, and military dynamics that have shaped the country's national defense and role within the international system for more than a century. From the early period of independence, when the primary focus was the preservation of national sovereignty, to the major transformations following the collapse of communism and accession to NATO, Albania has undergone critical phases that have defined

its strategies and approaches to security. During the communist period, the national security concept was largely based on an isolated defensive approach, which involved widespread popular mobilization and the construction of extensive defense infrastructure. Although this approach mirrored the threats and self-reliance prevalent at that time, the political and social changes after the 1990s required a complete reorientation toward a strategy rooted in international cooperation and the modernization of capacities.

Albania's accession to NATO in 2009 marked a turning point for its national security concept. This achievement not only transformed the country's strategic outlook—emphasizing the commitment to collective security—but also positioned Albania as an active contributor to international peace and stability operations. Participation in global and regional missions has solidified Albania's reputation as an engaged actor in international security. In the 21st century, Albania faces complex challenges, including terrorism, cyber security, and organized crime. To address these threats, Albania has undertaken significant steps to enhance technological capacities, establish specialized structures, and strengthen cooperation with international partners. Nevertheless, challenges persist, and the need for continuous modernization, personnel training, and investment in critical defense infrastructure remains essential to ensure a sustainable and effective security system.

The future of Albania's security concept will depend on its ability to adapt its strategies to modern threats and maintain a strong commitment to international cooperation. Future research could benefit from a detailed examination of Albania's role in the regional security architecture and its impact as a stabilizing factor in the Western Balkans. Additionally, deeper analysis of technological capacities and strategies for managing hybrid threats would further aid the development of Albania's national security strategies. In conclusion, the importance of the national security concept for Albania's future lies in its capacity to meet contemporary security demands and to contribute to international peace and stability. With a continued focus on innovation, modernization, and partnerships, Albania has the potential to reinforce its position as a reliable actor in the international system and to foster a stable and inclusive security environment.

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