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August 3, 1995

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR
FROM AMBASSADOR ALBRIGHT

At our meeting on August 1 you asked for each Principal's views on our endgame strategy for Bosnia. I would be largely comfortable with your original paper that envisions a modified lift and strike if UNPROFOR were to collapse.

But I have thought for some time that we must put Bosnia in a larger political context and re-examine our fundamental assumption that the Europeans have a greater stake in resolving Bosnia than we do. In so doing, we may conclude that extending the life of UNPROFOR is no longer in our interest. (Why should we wait for the day when London and Paris tell us that they are leaving?)

The following paper is designed to examine how to shift from a European-led plan to an American-led plan.

Why America Must Take the Lead

Our commitment to use American ground forces to extract UNPROFOR on the one hand or implement a peace plan on the other means that this conflict will be "Americanized" sooner or later. Our previous strategy -- give primary responsibility to the Europeans, help the Bosnians rhetorically and hope the parties will choose peace -- is no longer sustainable. With a stronger Bosnian army unwilling to wait for peace at the negotiating table, and in the aftermath of Srebrenica and Zepa, the Bosnian side and international opinion will simply not allow us to return to the relative success of 1994. Muddle through is no longer an option.

Meanwhile, I strongly believe that the issue has become bigger than Bosnia. Although we may have been correct to limit our role in the past -- on the grounds that the former Yugoslavia was primarily a European responsibility -- the circumstances and our interests have now changed. Our interest in resolving this conflict has broadened.

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- 2 -

In much the same way that our failure to solve the Haiti problem last year threatened to overshadow all of our other accomplishments, I fear Bosnia will overshadow our entire first term.

The failure of our European allies to resolve the Bosnia crisis has not only exposed the bankruptcy of their policy, but it has also caused serious erosion in the credibility of the NATO alliance and the United Nations. Worse, our continued reluctance to lead an effort to resolve a military crisis in the heart of Europe has placed at risk our leadership of the post Cold War world. President Chirac's comment -- however self-serving -- that "there is no leader of the Atlantic Alliance" has been chilling my bones for weeks.

We have also failed to take into account the damage Bosnia has done to our leadership outside Europe. Moreover, our failure to act in support of Bosnia threatens to undermine moderate Islamic ties to the United States. By contrast, American leadership in support of Bosnia will redound to our advantage throughout the Muslim world for a long time to come and could help shore up key relationships.

For these reasons, I believe we must stop thinking of Bosnia as a "tar baby." Instead, we should recognize that -- notwithstanding our successes in trade, Russia, and the Middle East and despite general agreement regarding Bosnia's complexity -- our Administration's stewardship of foreign policy will be measured -- fairly or unfairly -- by our response to this issue. That is why we must take the lead in devising a diplomatic and military plan to achieve a durable peace. If we agree that American troops will be in Bosnia sooner or later, why not do it on our terms and on our timetable?

The Requirement for Military Pressure

The essence of any new strategy for Bosnia must recognize the one truth of this sad story: our only successes have come when the Bosnian Serbs faced a credible threat of military force. Hence, we must base our plan on using military pressure to compel the Pale Serbs to negotiate a suitable peace settlement. If despite our best efforts, UNPROFOR becomes unsustainable, then a modified form of lift and strike remains the best way to promote an acceptable peace over the long term.

This approach entails significant responsibilities for the United States. It means using our military forces, primarily through the air, to help the Bosnians by changing the balance of power. After a suitable transition period to improve

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- 3 -

Bosnian military capabilities, we can and should disengage. In the absence of this support from us to improve the Bosnian military position, the history of this conflict demonstrates that the Pale Serbs will never feel enough military pressure to negotiate a durable peace settlement.

The Current Diplomatic Track

We should actively pursue a peace settlement now. Recent actions by NATO, as well as the military credibility inherent in the rapid reaction force have given UNPROFOR a small window of credibility. In conjunction with the ascendant threat from Croatia, UNPROFOR's short-lived, new credibility may be sufficient to convince Pale to negotiate seriously.

The steps we are now taking in the Contact Group (i.e., the revised Bildt option) will test this proposition. My strong suspicion, however, is that the Serbs will not be prepared to negotiate on the basis of the Contact Group map, or if they do, their proposals will be so one-sided as to create a stalemate.

Even in 1994, perhaps our best year in Bosnia, a more effective UNPROFOR and improved Bosnian-Croat military cooperation did not bring the Serbs to the table in a serious way. Unless the Bosnian Serbs are convinced that failure at the peace table will mean not only stalemate on the battlefield but worse some roll-back of their military gains, I do not believe they are likely to make the concessions necessary for a durable peace.

In the event a new diplomatic track fails to produce a settlement, the next few months will see a reinvigorated UNPROFOR help reduce fighting, Federation forces poking at Serb defenses around the country, and the Serbs continuing to pick off as many innocent and helpless persons as international opinion will allow. Eventually, all sides will settle in for the winter.

But this pattern will not last. UNPROFOR's window of credibility will begin to shut as the Europeans lose their stomach for military action. (The pattern of strong political will to act followed by erosion of allied support will continue. Just as the allies' commitment to the Sarajevo ultimatum of 1994 eroded one year later, so will their support for NATO's recent decisions soften over time.) And as UNPROFOR weakens, the Serbs motivation to negotiate will wane. Hostilities will increase by spring, and the threat of UNPROFOR's departure will emerge again -- stronger than ever. We could well face the prospect of U.S. forces on the ground in the spring and summer of 1996.

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- 4 -

In addition to the obvious political risks for the Administration, an UNPROFOR withdrawal next year will enable the parties to exploit campaign developments, as they play the candidates off.

New Military Strategy Meets New Diplomatic Strategy

If the foregoing analysis is correct, we should consider taking control of the situation now. We should develop a plan that sets a deadline for the Bildt-plus diplomatic track, after which we would promote the collapse of UNPROFOR and begin the inevitable process of handing off military responsibility for Bosnia to the Bosnians through a modified lift and strike option.

This initiative has two essential advantages over our current policy. First, it ensures that we are not held hostage to the timetable of London, Paris or the Bosnian government. We decide when our commitment to extract UNPROFOR would be operative. Second, by setting a deadline after which the Serbs would face the possibility of a reversal on the battlefield, we would create a powerful incentive for the Serbs to make their concessions now. (For example, once we think Bildt has run its course, we could send an American envoy to Belgrade with a message that the military track will be immediately implemented unless we see some marked change in the Serb position.)

Military Support for Bosnia after UNPROFOR

The objective is handing-off to the Bosnians the responsibility for self-defense and military pressure on the Serbs. This requires lifting the arms embargo and military support, through air strikes and ground-based training, until the Bosnians can act themselves. The sooner we start preparing Federation forces, the sooner they can act on their own. As the NSC paper indicates, a transition period should be some six months to one year.

The Role of Air Power. The linchpin of international assistance will be a credible commitment to the decisive use of air power against the Serbs to prevent a collapse of Sarajevo and other Federation territory before new arms can be integrated into the Bosnian army. This means implementing the type of air strikes NATO has just promised but without the risk of hostages. No fly zone implementation would also continue. (The NSC paper has an effective description of how these missions can be handled.)

The New Ground Force. The post-UNPROFOR multinational force on the ground will also be important, both to sustain momentum in Bosniac-Croat reconciliation and to train Federation forces (as well as target acquisition for any

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- 5 -

possible air campaign). In order to show our bona fides to our allies and maximize our influence with the Bosnians, we should offer a small ground contingent, whose primary mission would be training the Bosnian forces. In the light of Congressional support for lift, military trainers should be politically sustainable, especially if limits on their numbers and length of deployment are spelled out from the start.

In response to the obvious charge of "slippery slope," we should point to Haiti, where we set a timetable for deployment and met the deadline. It is simply wrong to argue that a multinational force with a U.S. component spells an open-ended American commitment. Indeed, a U.S. role in the training of the Federation forces would ensure that it could be completed quickly. A side benefit would be the fact that an American contribution of this kind could serve as a magnet for European participation, thus avoiding the possible all-Muslim army scenario many fear.

With U.S.-led air power and training for the Bosnians, this transition can be accomplished with a minimum exposure for the United States. The effect would be a new balance of power that provides the only real chance of concessions by the Bosnian Serbs as well as new leverage for us to play a decisive diplomatic role with all sides.

What Is the End-state?

I would obviously prefer to see the Bosnians achieve a settlement in accordance with the Contact Group principles, that is, a majority of Bosnia's territory and a union established between the Federation and a Serb entity, thus preserving the Republic of Bosnia's territorial borders.

But two significant alterations suggest themselves. And I would condition our support for this modified lift and strike with approval in advance from the Bosnian government for these two modifications.

First, the settlement could be more forward-leaning on the Serbs right to secede peacefully from Bosnia and join a potential "Greater Serbia."

Second, it may be necessary to consider proposals to trade Federation territory for Serb-held territory, especially if the Federation agrees and if the exchange makes the Federation more durable. This means population transfers that we have previously been unwilling to countenance. (In the context of an American leadership role to put military pressure on the Serbs, such transfers are politically and morally defensible).

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- 6 -

The principle would be quality not quantity. Population transfers that increase the viability of both parties could now be safely proposed. For example, Gorazde or Federation territory around the Posavina corridor might be exchanged for territory around Sarajevo and in Central Bosnia. Again, the threat to use decisive force may be dispositive. Exchanges beneficial to the Federation would probably require that the Serbs concede land they assert was Serb-majority. This will require confronting the Serbs with a credible threat of force.

In the context of new engagement by Washington, a serious discussion with Sarajevo should yield these concessions. But even more important, the Bosnian Government must be told bluntly that our support for this initiative is contingent upon its commitment not to seek military gains beyond the Contact Group plan and its guarantee to limit severely the influence of radical Islamic regimes in Bosnia. In summary, we must ensure that all the parties can achieve reasonable objectives and thus their conflict can be contained over the long-term.

How Long a Deadline?

We should set a deadline for the Bildt-plus phase sometime this fall. In as much as withdrawal has become easier and some may choose to stay in a follow-on force in Central Bosnia, our previous timetable under 40104 should be significantly shorter. If diplomacy falls in the near-term, the new variants of 40104 may allow us to begin a withdrawal mid-fall and end it before winter sets in.

What About the Russians?

Some persuading of Britain and France will obviously be necessary, but the prime diplomatic obstacle would be Russia. We should not underestimate the high-level diplomatic effort that will be necessary to avoid a Russian veto in the Security Council and minimize Russian support for Serbia. We will have to make clear that a solution to Bosnia has become America's top priority, and we intend to calibrate our relationship accordingly.

As far as lift is concerned, I would expect they would not want to isolate themselves and veto such a resolution if Britain and France went along and key Muslim Countries were induced to weigh in. Legally, they could accept that withdrawal of UNPROFOR will materially change the circumstances in which the arms embargo was established, leaving it -- unlike other embargoes -- without a rationale. (As the NSC paper points out, we may need some parallel lifting of sanctions on Serbia.)

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- 7 -

How To Deter Serbia and a Third Balkan War?

The NSC paper treats these subjects adequately. Suffice it to say, the entire climate for containment of a wider war and deterrence against Milosevic would be changed if Washington were to engage fully and NATO were to remain united.

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STRATEGY FOR THE BALKAN CONFLICT

Introduction: As we seek to manage the immediate crises in Bosnia and Croatia, we must develop a strategy that can lead to a resolution of the Balkan Conflict, one that is consistent with vital U.S. interests: maintaining our strategic relationship with key Allies and protecting the credibility of NATO; avoiding a conflict with Russia that could undermine efforts to promote reform and international cooperation; preventing the spread of the Bosnian conflict into a wider Balkan war that could destabilize southeastern Europe and draw in U.S. allies; and ensuring that the forcible changing of borders and acts of genocide do not become legitimate forms of behavior in post-Cold War Europe.

Our basic goal should be the preservation of viable Bosnia-Herzegovina along lines that are broadly consistent with the principles and goals of the Contact Group plan -- i.e., preserving Bosnia as a single state and providing roughly half the territory to the Bosniac-Croat Federation and half to the Bosnian Serbs. While the geographic division will need to be on a more realistic basis than the Contact Group map, reflecting the new realities on the ground, any significant retreat from the 50/50 principle would be tantamount to ratifying aggression and undermine U.S. leadership. It would, in any case, be futile to attempt to impose a solution based on the status quo on the Bosnian Government, since it would lead to an unenforceable settlement and a revanchist Bosnian state.

There are two ways in which we can achieve this goal:

- To achieve a political settlement in Bosnia this year, based on new territorial trade-offs within the framework of the Contact Group plan; or
- To put in place a strategy that can carry us through the next 18 months, including the likely withdrawal of UNPROFOR, and lay the basis for the Bosnians to reestablish a balance of power on the ground, one that could lead ultimately to a durable political settlement consistent with U.S. interests.

Our present course provides little assurance of achieving either of these results. Even if our current efforts to strengthen UNPROFOR and reassert NATO air power are successful, they will provide at best a temporary respite. By next spring, if not sooner, we are likely to see a renewed escalation of hostilities and renewed pressure to withdraw UNPROFOR just as the U.S. election campaign moves into high gear. The increased likelihood of a new war in the Krajina only adds to the precariousness of the current situation and the dangers of a wider conflict.

Therefore, in the coming weeks, we should make an all-out effort to obtain a realistic diplomatic settlement, capitalizing on the new leverage provided by the London decisions and the parties' (and the Allies') new anxieties about developments on the battlefield. If this effort fails, we should let UNPROFOR collapse this year, face up to our extraction obligations now and move to help the Bosnians obtain the capabilities needed to establish a balance of power on the ground and to gain control of the main territories allotted to them under the Contact Group proposal. This would be underpinned during a post-withdrawal transition period by enforcement of the no-fly zone and air strikes to protect Sarajevo and the other safe areas, possibly reinforced by a non-U.S. UNPROFOR successor force or paramilitary volunteers.

We would make clear up front, as a quid pro quo, to the Bosnians that our willingness to stay engaged and support them in this fashion would be dependent on their showing demonstrable flexibility and realism during the negotiating effort. At the same time, we would make known to the

Bosnian Serbs what they will face following UNPROFOR withdrawal in order to encourage them to make the concessions needed to achieve a settlement.

PRESSING FOR A POLITICAL SETTLEMENT THIS YEAR

The loss of Srebrenica and Zepa may open the way to Bosnian Government acceptance of more realistic territorial solutions and constitutional arrangements, ones that modify the Contact Group plan while preserving its core principles (single state; territorial solution close, but not strictly limited, to 51/49; and sufficient autonomy for the Serb and Muslim/Croat entities, as well as links to neighboring states, that enable them to co-exist peacefully and avoid a slide back to war). The Bosnian Serbs may want to negotiate before their military position erodes and have put out signals suggesting a willingness to compromise on terms compatible with the Contact Group framework. (See Annex I for a more detailed description of the elements of a modified Contact Group plan.)

Getting to Negotiations: The Intelligence Community has judged it unlikely that either the Bosnian Government or the Bosnian Serbs are genuinely interested in negotiating a peace settlement in the near term. Developments over the past two weeks, however, may have altered the parties' calculations: the Bosnian Serbs may have been sobered by the RRF, the NATO air strike decisions, and, above all, by the Croats' successful intervention in the Livno valley, which has exposed how thinly spread their forces are; Milosevic has to be worried about the impending new war in Krajina and the risk that intensified fighting could destroy his chances of obtaining sanctions relief before another winter sets in; even the Bosnian Government -- while emboldened by these recent developments -- has doubts about the staying power of NATO's new resolve and is uncertain about its prospects on the battlefield (as well as managing the humanitarian consequences) if UNPROFOR leaves and the arms embargo is finally lifted.

To succeed, the new diplomatic effort will require that the U.S. reassume leadership of the process as we did in early 1994 when we brokered the Federation agreement and put together the Contact Group map. Getting the parties to the table will require finessing the issue of Bosnian Serb "acceptance" of the Contact Group plan "as the starting point" and breaking our self-imposed ban on contacts with Pale. We should pursue several tracks to achieve an early resumption of negotiations:

- Begin with **consultations with key Allies and the Russians** in which we signal a willingness to work on a modified Contact Group plan and to reopen contacts with Pale. The Allies will be enthusiastic about this proposal, and it will also take the sting out of our less-than-ringing endorsement of the current Bildt package on mutual recognition and sanctions relief. (Bildt is only too willing to see the Americans step back into the breach.)
- Continue to explore whether we can **broaden the negotiations with Milosevic** (both through Carl Bildt and renewed U.S. engagement) to secure early Bosnian Serb agreement to a cessation of hostilities and initiation of negotiations using the Contact Group plan as basis or starting point.
- Begin a **discreet bilateral dialogue with the Bosnian Government** to encourage new flexibility on the map, the constitutional issues and the semantics of Serb "acceptance" in the run-up to negotiations, making clear that our willingness to support a robust post-UNPROFOR-withdrawal strategy will be dependent on such flexibility.
- Send a **secret envoy for talks with Pale leaders** (e.g., Chuck Redman, Bob Frasure or Bill Richardson, with talks taking place in Belgrade on the margins of U.S. talks with Milosevic) -- preferably with the Bosnians' approval or acquiescence -- to find a formula for negotiations that

finesses the issue of "acceptance," and to explore territorial trade-offs and constitutional arrangements that would gain their agreement to the Contact Group framework.

Negotiating the terms of a settlement: U.S. mediation and behind-the-scenes diplomacy with the two sides will remain key once formal negotiations begin, even though we will need to maintain some role for our Contact Group partners. Shuttle diplomacy between Pale and Sarajevo will probably be the best approach, with a Summit or international conference at the end of the process.

Shoring up the Croatian flank: In light of recent events, we will need to take the initiative to contain the danger that war in Croatia will escalate to a region-wide conflict that could derail any new diplomatic effort in Bosnia. Our aim should be to cut short Tudjman's assault on the Krajina at the best moment. To that end, we should capitalize on the Croatians' new military leverage by pressing the Krajina Serbs to agree to immediate implementation of confidence-building measures and negotiations aimed at full political integration in Croatia on the basis of autonomy for Serb-majority areas. The CBMs could include secure rail access to the Dalmatian coast, opening of the Adriatic pipeline and removal of artillery and missiles from within range of Zagreb and the coast. We would offer to play a leading role in mediating the settlement as part of the Z-4 process (the Z-4 plan will have to be discarded since Tudjman, in his new position of strength, will not agree to the "state within a state" for the Krajina that it would establish).

SUPPORTING BOSNIA'S SURVIVAL POST-UNPROFOR

If the last-ditch effort to establish a viable Bosnian state through negotiations fails and/or we fail to restabilize the situation on the ground, we should seek UNPROFOR's withdrawal and implement a post-withdrawal strategy aimed at ensuring Bosnia's survival by establishing a balance of power on the ground. (It is our judgment that it would be better to deal with the challenge of implementing OPLAN 40104 this year, rather than having to carry out a messy and protracted NATO withdrawal operation in the middle of the election campaign, when the parties will have an even greater incentive to embarrass us or try to draw us into the conflict.) Implementation of our new strategy would, as noted above, be contingent on the Bosnian Government having shown flexibility in the negotiations.

Leveling the playing field: Our post-withdrawal strategy should have as its goal providing the Bosnians with sufficient military capability to survive the immediate Serb onslaught, to consolidate their authority over Sarajevo and Central Bosnia and, within a short period of time, to have the potential to regain most of the territory allotted to them under the Contact Group proposal. We would make clear that our support would end if they set more ambitious war aims (e.g., if they sought to retake territory that would jeopardize achieving a settlement consistent with our modified Contact Group proposal). This would make the ultimate resolution of the conflict the result of a balance of power on the ground rather than dependent on the actions of the international community.

- **Our preferred approach would be to lift the arms embargo multilaterally through passage of a UNSC resolution**, perhaps making it part of the same resolution that terminates UNPROFOR's mandate and authorizes withdrawal. Some of our allies have indicated they will go along with lift after UNPROFOR withdrawal. To secure a Russian abstention, we would, at a minimum, need to make lift applicable to all republics of the former Yugoslavia (including Serbia-Montenegro), and we might need to accept more sanctions relief for Belgrade as well.
- **If the Russians threatened to veto, we would undertake covert provision of arms to the Bosnians**, either directly or through third countries, without formally asserting the right to arm them in violation of UNSC resolutions -- thereby minimizing the damage to UNSC sanctions

regimes against Iraq, Libya and other pariah states. (An alternative would be to seek Allied agreement to a joint declaration that, with the termination of the UN's role in Bosnia, we were no longer bound by the arms embargo; this "NATO unilateral lift," however, could provoke a serious rift with Moscow and undermine other sanctions regimes.)

Additional Support during the Transition: Although the Bosnians are stronger now than when we first pushed lift-and-strike in 1993, until they acquire and assimilate new arms, they will still need additional support to survive the Serbs' preemptive offensives. At a minimum, we will need to help the Bosnians ensure the survival of Sarajevo as the linchpin of a future Bosnian state. Therefore, for a transition period of roughly one year, we would:

- Press our NATO Allies to **continue enforcing the no-fly zone**, to deprive the Serbs of air superiority (this would, of course, require preemptive SEAD); as a fallback, we would enforce the NFZ unilaterally or through a coalition of the willing; and
- After proper warning, **conduct aggressive air strikes against a broad range of Bosnian Serb military targets to protect Sarajevo (and possibly the other remaining safe areas) against Serb artillery attacks.** This would preferably be done through NATO or if our allies refused to renew the NATO mandate post-UNPROFOR, through a U.S.-led coalition of the willing. The air strikes would be based on new UNSC authority (since existing authority under 836 and 844 is tied to UNPROFOR) or as a fallback, on a Bosnian Government request for collective self-defense. Forward air controllers would be provided by countries prepared to deploy forces in Bosnia after UNPROFOR withdrawal (e.g., Turkey, Jordan or Egypt), since we would want to avoid assigning this function to the Bosnian Government. We would limit the commitment to Sarajevo and possibly the other safe areas to avoid becoming full-scale combatants; in any case, Bosnian ground forces, with HVO cooperation, can hold their own in Central Bosnia.
- Encourage members of UNPROFOR to remain, and other countries to volunteer, as members of a **successor force to UNPROFOR**, although we would not formally organize or lead a coalition of the willing. The mission of the force (which would most likely be comprised of moderate Islamic states) would be to help protect Sarajevo and the other safe areas and/or to continue to promote stability in Federation-controlled areas of Central Bosnia. One essential function, as noted above, would be to serve as forward air controllers. The force might be deployed openly under a Chapter VII UN mandate with the explicit mission of supporting Bosnia against Serb aggression; alternatively, it could deploy at the request of the Bosnian Government, invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter; a third option would be for the volunteer forces to deploy semi-covertly. The Bosnians would need to agree, however, as a condition for our military support, that pariah states like Iran and Libya not be permitted to deploy troops on the ground. (The humiliating prospect of Islamic countries taking the place of European countries in solving a European problem could prompt some of our Allies to stay and participate in a successor force or to perform the specific function of forward air controllers.)

We would set a **limit on the NFZ and air strike commitments** (e.g., one year -- until the end of 1996 -- or some event-driven deadline), making clear to the Bosnians that once we have made a reasonable effort to level the playing field, they are on their own. In addition to providing arms and training to reinforce the Bosnians' ground force capabilities, we would ensure they obtained effective air defenses to counter Serb air capabilities when the NFZ lapsed. Whether our own assistance were overt or covert, we would mobilize a multinational effort to arm and train the Bosnians, so as to spread the burden and reduce the overall U.S. role.

Keeping Belgrade Out: Leveling the playing field becomes a much more formidable challenge if Belgrade intervenes on a large scale in support the Bosnian Serbs. We would offer **substantial sanctions relief to induce Milosevic to stay out, fully seal the border and accept a much larger international monitoring force.** We would at the same time **warn Milosevic that if we detect significant Serbian military support, we will use air power** against Serbian forces operating inside Bosnia and against the Drina bridges and other supply routes and that we do **not rule out strikes against military targets inside Serbia.**

Regional containment strategy: As we moved to arm the Bosnians, we would need to take a range of steps to prevent a widening of the conflict to other parts of the region, to include:

- Reinforcing UNPREDEP in Macedonia to deter Serbian border encroachments and a new crackdown in Kosovo, together with a reaffirmation of our warnings to Milosevic regarding air strikes against Serbia in the event he provokes armed conflict in Kosovo;
- Pressing to bring an early end to the Croatian assault on the Krajina and to negotiate the peaceful reintegration of Serb areas under Croatian sovereignty; and
- Possibly deploying preventive peacekeeping forces along Hungary's and Albania's borders with the FRY.

We would, at the same time, intensify our efforts to **sustain the Federation and Bosnian-Croat military cooperation.** And we would make clear that we stand ready to **broker a political settlement and assist in its implementation,** although at this stage we might would jettison the Contact Group approach and devise a new basis for the negotiations.

Getting from Here to There: We should begin intense private discussions with our key Allies *now* on our post-withdrawal strategy in order to bolster their resolve to strengthen UNPROFOR in the short term, to force them to face up to their responsibility to help support Bosnia's survival if withdrawal must occur and, if possible, to gain their cooperation. This will also be essential to determining whether we will be able to carry out the air operation through NATO (using Italian bases) or whether we will need to make alternative arrangements (e.g., upgrade bases in Croatia or other neighboring countries). We should also lay out our strategy for the Bosnians to gain their flexibility in the negotiations, as noted above, and to encourage them to rein in their supporters on Capitol Hill. We would emphasize that a strong post-UNPROFOR commitment will give us leverage to pursue a settlement.

Although it would be desirable to use the withdrawal period to begin laying the groundwork for post-UNPROFOR support, our overriding consideration must be the safety of U.S., NATO and UN troops. Therefore, we would have to abide by the NATO OPLAN's principle of neutrality during withdrawal, using force primarily in self-defense and refraining from seeking to enhance the Bosnians' military position. We would, however, seek to shorten the duration of the withdrawal operation in order to minimize the exposure of our troops to Serb attacks. Moreover, we would seek Allied agreement to continue to enforce UNSC resolutions and NATO mandates during the withdrawal, in order to reduce the Serbs' ability to threaten the safe areas and permit the use of close air support against Serb forces interfering with the withdrawal. (We might even use implementation of 40104 to establish more secure control over Sarajevo for the Bosnians after NATO leaves.) The Bosnian Government's awareness of the support we intend to provide after withdrawal should help minimize the chances that government troops or Bosnian civilians would impede UNPROFOR's departure.

Attachment: Modified Contact Group Plan

Outline of a Modified Contact Group Plan

- In renewed peace talks or exploratory contacts with the parties, we would float **possible modifications to the Contact Group map**. These would preserve the 51:49 ratio but provide for a more compact and cohesive territory for the Federation (e.g., trading Srebrenica, Zepa and Gorazde, plus a widening of the Posavina corridor for full Federation control over Sarajevo and additional territory in central Bosnia). Consistent with a Silajdzic proposal to Juppé, we could state that up to 10 percent of the Contact Group map was subject to renegotiation. Ultimately, we should be prepared to **encourage the Bosnians to consider accepting somewhat less than 51%** if they can obtain higher-quality territory and more defensible Federation frontiers in Central Bosnia.
- We would, similarly, **develop the Contact Group's proposed constitutional principles** to show the Serbs the amount of autonomy their republic would have within the Union and the scope of the "parallel special relationship" with Serbia.
- A more controversial proposal would be to encourage the Bosnians to agree that the Serbs can conduct a **referendum on secession after 2-3 years**. The Bosnians agreed to this in the 1993 *Invincible* package but subsequently backed away; endorsing a secession right could be viewed as accepting the eventual establishment of a Greater Serbia. Nevertheless, the case could be made that if the Bosnians cannot, after 2-3 years, persuade the Serb population that their best future lies in reintegration, there is no point in blocking the *peaceful* separation of the Union along the lines of the Czechoslovak model.
- We would propose to the Allies and Russians mutual participation in funding a **post-settlement "mini-Marshall Plan" for the Balkans, including the prospect of EU association agreements**. This would serve to encourage reconstruction and reestablishment of economic ties within the new Bosnian Union, foster regional economic cooperation that satisfy Bosnian Serb desires for links to Serbia and thereby give all parties a stake in peace.
- We could promote the development of **Balkan economic union or confederation** uniting all the interested states of the former Yugoslavia in a customs union or single market, with the possibility of establishing regional political bodies further down the road. This would offer an additional means for promoting regional economic cooperation and dampening Serb nationalists' insistence that all Serbs must live in one state.

In tandem with these steps, we and our Contact Group partners would tell Milosevic that:

- We will terminate the current sanctions relief if he has not recognized Bosnia and taken visible action to terminate military support for Pale (and Knin) and to secure concrete action to de-escalate Bosnian Serb attacks on the safe areas;
- Moreover, if sanctions relief is terminated and the ICFY mission departs, any resumption of large-scale support for Pale will be met not only by a tightening of economic sanctions against the FRY but by U.S. or NATO air strikes against the Drina bridges and key supply routes.
- At the same time, in conjunction with the threat of terminating sanctions relief for non-compliance, we would **increase the rewards offered to Milosevic for initial positive steps**, such as suspending all non-strategic trade sanctions if he recognizes Bosnia, really seals the border and delivers Bosnian Serb de-escalation actions or perhaps lifting vice suspending a few of the phase-one sanctions.

Endgame Strategy: A Sustainable Defense of a Viable Bosnia after UNPROFOR Withdrawal

Summary: If UNPROFOR withdraws, there is a serious risk that, left on its own, the Bosnian government will be unable to defend the territory it currently holds. A limited package of US assistance, sufficient to ensure the Bosnian government's survival as a viable entity, would serve important US interests. This support would consist of a military assistance package limited in quantity and types of weapons to material needed for defending existing Bosnian held territory, training outside Bosnia, and limited air strikes in the event of Serb air or heavy weapon attacks on Bosnian territory that threaten the Bosnians' ability to ensure their own defense. It would also include an economic package of assistance to help the Bosnian government rebuild and ensure the viability of the Bosnian state.

To improve Bosnia's long-term prospects, and to reduce the requirements for US assistance, we would continue to foster closer links between Bosnia and Croatia through the Federation and Confederation. Because this approach is likely to be acceptable to at least some US allies (as well as some Islamic nations that support Bosnia) US assistance is likely to be supplemented by others.

Rationale: In the immediate aftermath of UNPROFOR's withdrawal, the Bosnian government is likely to find itself at a serious military disadvantage. The long-term impact of the arms embargo and the Serbs' advantage in heavy weaponry and aircraft create a risk that the Bosnian Serbs could make quick military gains, jeopardizing the government's survival. Simply lifting the embargo, without more active US assistance, is unlikely to remedy this situation for several reasons: 1) weapons may not arrive in time to halt devastating Serb offensives; 2) a period of training will be required for some of the needed weaponry; and 3) lifting the embargo could bring Belgrade more actively into the war on the Bosnian Serb side before the weapons reach Sarajevo, further jeopardizing the survival of the Bosnian government in the short-run. Failure of the United States to provide at least limited assistance would require the Bosnian government to depend almost exclusively on Islamic states, especially radical states such as Iran and Libya, increasing their influence in the region and polarizing the conflict. Lack of US involvement would also limit our ability to influence the parties in favor of a political settlement.

Actions required: At the time of the decision to withdraw UNPROFOR, the US would announce its intention to provide

limited assistance to the Bosnian government to ensure their defense, and seek agreement among the P-5 to lift the embargo following completion of UNPROFOR's withdrawal (this may require concessions to Russia on lifting the embargo and sanctions against Serbia). If agreement cannot be reached to repeal the embargo, the US would provide assistance directly using an Article 51 rationale (either overtly or covertly). An arms package focused on remedying defensive deficiencies (e.g. anti-tank and counter-artillery, air defense, perhaps C2 and intelligence) would be developed in conjunction with the Bosnia government; we would help assemble the package with contributions from as broad as possible group of contributors. Any training required by US personnel would take place outside Bosnia; arrangements would be made for transportation of weapons to Bosnia through Croatia. We would also seek NATO agreement for limited airstrikes pursuant to Article 51 of the Charter in the event that Serb offensives threatened to overrun Bosnian defenses (this could also be done pursuant to a UNSC Chapter VII resolution, but the dual key issues make this undesirable.)

Assuring the survival of the Bosnian government serves important US interests: Allowing the Serbs to defeat the Bosnian government is contrary a number of important US interests, including our commitment to resist aggression against sovereign states, the humanitarian and human rights consequences of a total Serb victory, the erosion of US credibility, the impact on US relations with the Islamic world, and the consequences for the region (e.g. the Krajina, Kosovo, Macedonia) of the consolidation of greater Serbia.

Need to limit scope of US assistance: Nonetheless, an open-ended commitment has substantial costs. Limiting the scope of US assistance will help serve important additional US interests that would be jeopardized if our aid extended to helping the Bosnian government recover (through combat) all or part of the territory now held by Serbs.

- Limiting our assistance to defensive operations is more likely to gain the support of our allies (who would face important domestic and international costs if Bosnia were overrun entirely), permitting a multilateral approach to lifting the arms embargo and military assistance. Multilateral lift would protect our interest in maintaining the integrity of UN Security Council Resolutions, avoid Americanizing the conflict, and avoid serious inter-Alliance rifts that could further jeopardize NATO. US support for Bosnian offensive operations would be opposed by our allies.

- Similarly, a limited approach is more likely to be acceptable to Russia, thus avoiding a confrontation with Russia during a delicate period of our relations, and reducing the prospect that Russia would come to the aid of the Serbs to counterbalance our efforts
- A limited approach would place smaller financial burdens on the United States, and reduce (though not eliminate) the risk of US casualties. Defining the objective as defense of current territory improves the prospect for an early hand-off to the Bosnian government following an initial period of assistance. This should improve the prospects for Congressional support.
- Limited assistance is less likely to provoke a wider Balkan war.
- Limited assistance is less likely to intensify the fighting, therefore reducing the humanitarian consequences.

Diplomatic Strategy

In the wake of the Serb attacks on the eastern enclaves and the Croatian offensive, there is an urgent need to expand the thrust of the current negotiations with Milosevic in two dimensions:

- speed up the linkage between Plan B (relief for Milosevic in return for border closure and recognition) and Plan A (cease-fire and negotiations between Sarajevo and Pale) and
- resolve the Krajina situation

A "Bosnia only" strategy is increasingly difficult to execute given the growing connections between the Bosnian and Croatia government through the Federation and Confederation, and the likelihood that the most likely successful long-term outcome will involve close political links between Bosnia and Croatia. As the negotiation becomes more complex, deeper US involvement in the negotiating track is essential, since only the United States has adequate clout with all the parties.

The elements of the approach are as follows:

1. A sanctions suspension package is agreed "in principle" with Milosevic and a Security Council Resolution is introduced, but implementation through final Security Council action is withheld pending progress on the ground and movement toward a negotiated settlement (elements 2-4, below).
2. Izetbegovic meets with Milosevic to confirm recognition agreement, border closure provisions and reiterate support for Contact Group plan. They agree on principles to govern a political settlement in Bosnia, which could include two autonomous entities within a single state in existing borders, respect for Bosnia's sovereignty, protection of minority rights, etc.
3. Sarajevo offers to negotiate with Pale based on the principles announced with Milosevic and the Contact Group plan, with some modification of the "accept the Contact Group plan as a starting point" formula. The parties would also agree to a cessation of hostilities and disengagement of forces in conjunction with the beginning of the bilateral negotiations.
4. Pale and Sarajevo begin negotiations and ceasefire begins.

5. The Security Council adopts the sanctions suspension package

6. Izetbegovic, Milosevic and Tudjman meet to announce agreement on recognition and "principles" governing political settlement in Croatia, including political and human rights, some political provisions governing Krajina, perhaps a deferral of Sector East as "final status" issue to be negotiated later. Croatia would be "recognized" subject to the limitations with respect to Sector East. Meeting could be hosted by EU or Contact Group.

6. Ceasefire and draw back implemented and Bilateral negotiations begin.

Possible Variant

This approach may pose an important difficulty for Bosnia, since the government has now said that any "recognition for sanctions suspension" deal with Milosevic must also include Croatia. The approach is also likely to meet objections from Milosevic because it does not allow implementation of the sanctions suspension package until the Pale-Sarajevo negotiations begin. These two problems could be solved by accelerating the "three Presidents" meeting and implementing sanctions suspension before the bilateral Sarajevo-Pale negotiations begin. The sequence would be:

1. Sanctions suspension package agreed (as above).
2. Izetbegovic, Tudjman and Milosevic meet, agree on mutual recognition (with provision as above to defer Sector East), and establish principles for settlement of both bilateral conflicts (Sarajevo-Pale; Croatia-Croatian Serbs). They invite the relevant parties (Sarajevo/Pale and Croatia/RSK) to negotiate on the basis of (acceptance of) these principles.
3. Security Council implements sanctions relief package

Other provisions as above:

The principal difficulty with this variant is that Milosevic has adamantly resisted recognizing Croatia, and the current fighting could make this even more difficult in the short run. Since we have always been prepared to give Milosevic additional sanctions relief in conjunction with progress on Croatia, it is possible that his resistance could be overcome by sweetening the initial sanctions suspension package with sanctions lift. Moving to this approach would be a significant departure from the proposal we gave Bildt, so probably could not be deployed unless the first approach failed to get off the ground.

How would this initiative be launched?

1. (already accomplished) Carl Bildt meets with Milosevic, outlining US concerns over the current package of sanctions relief, and the need to improve the "situation on the ground" in Bosnia before any sanctions suspension can be implemented. Bildt suggests that a senior US official meet with Milosevic to discuss US concerns. Milosevic agrees.
2. (in approximately 7-10 days, depending on events in Croatia) A senior level official (e.g. Assistant Secretary Holbrooke) goes to first to Sarajevo to lay out overall strategy and gain the Bosnians' cooperation. This is followed by a visit to Belgrade to discuss our approach.
3. Belgrade and Sarajevo foreign ministers meet privately to work out details (they are already talking about meeting).
4. Milosevic and Izetbegovic meet (with or without "host").
5. Cease-fire and disengagement implemented as bilateral talks between Sarajevo and Pale begin, either face-to-face or through mediator. (US? Contact Group?)
6. Three presidents meet under aegis of EU or Contact Group.
7. Bilateral talks between Croatian parties begin.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
August 5, 1995

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8-7-95

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INFORMATION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: ANTHONY LAKE

SUBJECT: Balkan Strategy: Options for Discussion at Foreign Policy Group Meeting, August 7, 1995

Principals have taken forward the review you requested of long-term strategy for resolving the Balkan conflict. We asked agencies to reflect on where we want to be in 12-18 months -- the "end state" that would best serve U.S. interests -- and then determine how to get there. Agencies have written papers reflecting alternative approaches, which are attached. I thought you might want to review them before Monday's meeting.

The policy review has revealed a great deal of common ground:

- Everyone agrees we should make a determined effort to reach a political settlement in the coming weeks, taking advantage of the window of opportunity provided by NATO's and UNPROFOR's renewed resolve, as well as by Serb (and Allied) anxieties about the shifting strategic balance in the wake of Croatia's military action.
 - The settlement would adhere to the central principles of the Contact Group plan but with a more realistic map, maximum autonomy for the two entities and, possibly, an option for the Serbs to secede peacefully after 2-3 years.
 - It would require that the U.S. reassume a leadership role in the negotiations and break the freeze on contacts with Pale. (The NSC paper provides a detailed description of a modified Contact Group plan and how to achieve it; all agencies agree with this basic approach, although State has reservations about certain aspects.)
- All agree that, if a settlement cannot be reached and/or if UNPROFOR's credibility continues to erode, then we should pull the plug, fulfill our commitment to help UNPROFOR withdraw, lift the arms embargo and move to a post-withdrawal strategy. Muddling through is no longer an option.
- All agree as well that we cannot walk away after UNPROFOR leaves and that we need to provide some degree of support (arms, training, air strikes, economic aid) to help ensure the survival of a Bosnian state for the Muslims and Croats.

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cc: Vice President
Chief of Staff

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- All agree that our continued engagement should be conditioned on prior understandings with the Bosnian government.

While all agree on the need to support a viable Bosnian state, the major difference among Principals is over its dimensions:

- Madeleine Albright and I believe that we should continue to support the preservation of a Bosnia-Herzegovina along lines broadly consistent with the principles and goals of the Contact Group plan (i.e., a single state, with the Muslims and Croats controlling roughly half of the territory, give or take 5%).
 - We feel anything less would be tantamount to ratifying aggression and would, in any case, be rejected by Sarajevo -- leading to continued instability and a revanchist Bosnian state.
 - Madeleine makes the additional point that failure to support a viable Bosnia would undermine U.S. leadership in NATO and the Islamic world and overshadow all the Administration's other accomplishments.
- State and Defense argue for a more limited commitment: that we should only help the Bosnians consolidate control over the territory they now possess, with some modest adjustments for viability (particularly around Sarajevo). They believe that the costs of supporting Bosnian efforts to recover territory would be too great, the prospects too uncertain, and that it would risk serious strains in relations with our Allies and with Russia.

While the choice between these two end-states is a political one, it will affect the nature and scope of the military support that we would need to provide. (All agree, however, that we should draw the line at ground forces, although Madeleine argues we should deploy U.S. military trainers to symbolize our leadership.)

There are also differences over whether there should be conditions attached to our support following UNPROFOR withdrawal.

- NSC, DOD and Madeleine Albright argue that whatever the scope of our assistance, it should be linked to Bosnian agreement not to seek more ambitious territorial aims on the battlefield:
 - Under the NSC approach, Bosnia would need to refrain from seeking territory that would jeopardize achieving a settlement consistent with our modified Contact Group proposal.
 - Under the DOD approach, they would need to accept the territorial status quo, with the exception of being allowed to establish more secure control over Sarajevo.
- State argues that our support should be limited to defensive weapons and air support enabling the Bosnians to hold existing

territory but that we should accept the fact they would obtain offensive weapons from other sources with which to retake additional territory. In this way, we would not be responsible for their success or failure beyond defense of their current holdings.

- Everyone agrees, however, that we should tell the Bosnians now that any U.S. military support following UNPROFOR withdrawal will be contingent on their showing flexibility in the diplomatic negotiations we will pursue in the short term.

Principals identified a number of areas where further work will be needed before we can make a final decision on these issues.

- The structure of a modified Contact Group map, reflecting new trade-offs (e.g., Muslims cede Gorazde for territory around Sarajevo), under both the more limited and more expansive objectives.
- An up-to-date analysis of the military balance, and how the Bosnians will fare when UNPROFOR leaves.
- An analysis of the military requirements (arms, training) for the Bosnians: (a) to consolidate control over the 30 percent of the territory they now control; or (b) to play on a more level field.
- The scope of the air support we would need to provide to help the Bosnians survive early Serb attacks and ways to provide that support if we were unable to act through NATO or use Italian bases or had no forward air controllers on the ground.
- The elements of an economic assistance program that we would develop with the EU to support the Bosnian Federation and, in the event of a settlement, to underpin regional reconstruction and cooperation.
- The requirements for enforcement, preferably through NATO, of an ultimate peace agreement.

Questions for Discussion

- What kind of Bosnia should be our ultimate objective?
- What will it take for a new diplomatic initiative to succeed?
- Should we take the initiative and collapse UNPROFOR this year if diplomacy fails? If UNPROFOR credibility erodes further?
- What are the impediments to "leveling the playing field" as suggested in the NSC and Albright papers?
- Could we convince the Bosnians to settle for the status quo?
- When and how should we engage our Allies in longer-range planning?

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Attachments

- Tab A Memorandum from Ambassador Albright
- Tab B NSC Paper: Strategy for the Balkan Conflict
- Tab C OSD/JCS Paper: Bosnia Endgame/What Kind of Bosnian State?
- Tab D State Paper: A Sustainable Defense of a Viable Bosnia
after UNPROFOR Withdrawal

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