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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. cable	re: Security Council Adopts Resolution 970. (10 pages)	01/13/1995	P1/b(1)
002. draft	Congressional Testimony. (7 pages)	01/10/1995	P1/b(1)
003. talking points	Points for Bosnia Briefing. (9 pages)	01/10/1995	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
European Affairs (Alexander Vershbow)
OA/Box Number: 850

FOLDER TITLE:

Bosnia - January 1995 [8]

2013-0687-F

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RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

- P1** National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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UNILATERAL LIFTING OF THE ARMS EMBARGO ON BOSNIA: THE PATH TO AN AMERICANIZED FOURTH BALKAN WAR

When the history of the tragic conflict in the former Yugoslavia is written, it will be clear that the arms embargo on Bosnia -- imposed in 1991 -- was a mistake. It has been discriminatory in depriving B-H of the means of self-defense against the Bosnian Serbs' superiority in tanks and artillery drawn from Tito's old arsenals and from some fresh supplies from outside, notably supporters in Serbia itself. An international agreement to lift the arms embargo multilaterally and deal collectively with the consequences would be both wise and just -- and has been supported by the Administration.

Some Americans, however, reacting with understandable frustration, are demanding the U.S. ignore UN resolutions and act unilaterally to lift the arms embargo. They claim unilateral lift would ensure that Bosnian government forces receive the arms and training they need to "level the field" and defend themselves. And they claim such a step would do this without drawing the U.S. into the Balkan fighting.

But a realistic look at the facts on the ground and the likely consequences of unilateral U.S. action demonstrate that taking such a seemingly fair, direct, and simple action would be a grave mistake, for both U.S. interests and the people of Bosnia. Among the consequences -- ignored or denied by proponents of unilateral lift -- would be these:

- Unilateral lift would undermine the most successful diplomatic initiative in many months -- the Cessation of Hostilities agreement, negotiated with the help of former President Carter -- which was just signed by all the warring parties, and is now coming into effect. An American decision now to end the arms embargo would end that Cessation of Hostilities agreement -- and end also the hope of renewed negotiations toward a permanent peace settlement that would preserve Bosnia-Herzegovina as a single state, consistent with the Contact Group proposal.
- The Bosnian Serbs would have every incentive launch pre-emptive attacks, designed to exploit their advantages before the American arms supplies reached Bosnia. While the Serbs probably could not totally defeat government forces, it is virtually certain they would occupy the eastern enclaves and renew military pressure on Sarajevo and elsewhere, especially on relief supply routes.
- Current UNPROFOR operations would end as European and many other contributing countries withdraw from Bosnia, seizing on U.S. action as an excuse to end a commitment that has been costly for them in lives, treasure, and involvement.
- UN and most other outside relief efforts would stop, at the very time humanitarian requirements would increase dramatically, both because of the increased fighting and the withdrawal of Serb cooperation. Most Americans are unaware that a high percentage of the food reaching the enclaves comes through Belgrade and Bosnian-Serb controlled territory. All airfields and most land routes are within range of Bosnian Serb artillery. Whatever else

they did, the Serbs could easily cut off these relief supplies.

The cumulative effect of these consequences would be strong pressure for direct American combat involvement -- something President Clinton, like President Bush before him has consistently ruled out. The U.S. would have precipitated the increased fighting and the end of international relief and peacekeeping efforts. Moral responsibility for the resulting military and humanitarian situation in Bosnia would shift the U.S.

In short, unilaterally ending the arms embargo is not an alternative to U.S. military intervention. It is a way of accomplishing such intervention.

The implications of taking on this responsibility are many and grave. To begin with, the U.S. would have to take over relief efforts, or accept responsibility for the large-scale starvation and refugee flows that would result from the lack of food.

Similarly, unless we were prepared to watch as pre-emptive Serb attacks further battered Bosnian cities and defensive positions, U.S. airstrikes would be required to defend government forces. However the necessary European bases and other NATO support on which our current, much smaller air efforts depend, might not be available in the aftermath of a major break with our allies. In any case, airstrikes alone, even with the added planes needed, would probably not halt Serb ground attacks, given the difficult weather and terrain conditions.

Furthermore, contrary to the claims of unilateral lift backers, the "playing field" in Bosnia is not self-leveling. Simply authorizing U.S. manufacturers to sell arms to Bosnia would not get any arms to Bosnia. For lifting the embargo to have its intended effect of allowing the Bosnians to defend themselves, the U.S. would have to undertake a major military assistance program to provide arms -- without the cooperation of our major allies and, potentially, in the face of their active opposition.

The financial costs, though substantial, would be the least of the problems in carrying out such an effort. Upgrading Bosnia's light infantry to confront Bosnian Serb heavy weapons successfully is not a simple task -- as earlier U.S. efforts to equip local forces in other countries from Vietnam to El Salvador have shown. Most important, sophisticated arms -- which the Bosnians would need to overcome Bosnian Serb advantages in heavy weapons -- are ineffective without trained soldiers to use them and a continuing stream of support. U.S. trainers, advisers and logistics support personnel on the ground would be necessary to assist the Bosnian Government in using the arms effectively.

A U.S. decision to lift the arms embargo unilaterally would undermine the most important U.S. national security objectives for the region. The primary U.S. objective has been to avoid a wider war in the Balkans. Among the most serious potential consequences of unilateral U.S. action would, however, be strong pressures to widen the conflict beyond Bosnia. There are painfully many scenarios for such wider fighting:

- Escalation of fighting would likely draw in the Serbs from Krajina (as it did in Bihac), thus extending the actual fighting to Croatia.
- The Belgrade Serbs, though very sympathetic to the Bosnian Serbs, are now under strong international pressure, cutting off supplies to the Bosnian Serbs and pressing them to settle on terms the government of Bosnia Herzegovina has accepted. With the U.S. acting unilaterally, over the objections of our allies and the Russians, it would be difficult if not impossible to convince the Belgrade Serbs to hold back from intervening in support of their Bosnian Serb compatriots -- unless we were prepared to threaten Belgrade militarily.
- U.S. military confrontation with Serbia could precipitate a sharp crackdown by Belgrade in Serbia's principal Muslim province, Kosovo, a development which would have the potential to destabilize the entire southern Balkan region, and which the U.S. has pledged to meet with force.
- Broader conflict could draw Albania, Macedonia, Greece, and Turkey into the conflict.

Multilateral lift would not pose the same risks. Our Contact Group partners have agreed that lifting the arms embargo multilaterally could become unavoidable as a last resort if negotiations collapse and UNPROFOR must be withdrawn. If the arms embargo were lifted multilaterally by the UN the dangers to the Western alliance and the U.S.-Russian relationship would be avoided, the United States would not assume sole responsibility for the defense of the Bosnian government, and the unity among the Contact Group members and permanent members

of the UN Security Council would provide a powerful incentive for the Serbs to negotiate rather than attack in response to multilateral lift.

With NATO's cooperation, airstrikes would be more effective; the allies might assist in arming the Bosnian government; and with Russia's help or acquiescence, Serbia may be kept out of the war -- a critical factor in whether a lift and strike strategy would succeed. For these reasons, the Administration continues to believe that multilateral lift remains an option, although one not without risks and adverse consequences.

Neither our horror at the destruction brought by this long and brutal war and at the atrocities of Serbian ethnic cleansing nor our frustration with the irrationality of Balkan rivalries and the difficulty of international peacekeeping should be allowed to cause us to forget that much has been accomplished by international action even as the war has continued. The European role, and our cooperation with Europe, has been central to what has been achieved to moderate the suffering in Bosnia and prevent a wider war. The UN for all its limitations, has saved thousands of lives by its military and civilian efforts. UNPROFOR, for all its problems, has been the necessary element for the large scale delivery of food, and for support of the Sarajevo and Gorazde exclusion zones. NATO cooperation has been essential for enforcement of the "No Fly Zone," the heavy weapons exclusion zones, and the economic sanctions against Serbia. The Contact Group, which includes Russia, as well as key European allies, has been the principal instrument for seeking a negotiated solution.

Maintaining that cooperation and avoiding a fundamental break with our NATO allies over the Bosnian issue is, of course, also essential to our broader national interests in European and international security. Virtually every European nation opposes lifting the arms embargo at this time. Thus U.S. unilateral action would be undertaken in the face of vehement opposition of most NATO allies. The resulting rift would undermine consensus underlying NATO's unified military command and deeply damage the alliance and the U.S. ability to lead it.

Additionally, hopes of a cooperative relationship with Russia on European security would be seriously jeopardized by actions that Russians of all political stripes would see as U.S. intervention not just against the Bosnian Serbs, but against the Belgrade Serbs as well. Russia would likely counter U.S. action by arming the Serbs, thereby raising the ante and reviving U.S.-Russian confrontation.

Finally, while it is fashionable in some circles these days to ridicule the UN and all its works, the U.S. has an important interest in nations not taking unilateral action in contravention of UN resolutions. Such actions not only undermines both international law and internationally sanctioned peacekeeping operations. It also undercuts the U.S. interest in international sanctions being observed. One of the main pressures on the Serbs is the UN embargo on their trade. If the U.S. unilaterally dropped the part of the UN sanctions it finds objectionable, the front line states -- Serbia and the Bosnian Serbs which they claim has cost them billions of dollars already.

Nor would the effects on sanctions regimes we support be confined to the Balkans. If the U.S. acted alone in this matter, other nations would claim the right to ignore UN embargo resolutions that we strongly favor such as those that pertain to Iraq and other pariah states.

In sum, Congressional action mandating unilateral U.S. action to lift the arms embargo on Bosnia would be a tragic and short-sighted mistake. It would mean the Americanization of the war, for unilateral action entails unilateral responsibility for the consequences of that action. We should be under no illusion that the U.S. could responsibly simply lift the arms embargo and walk away. Nor should we do the only thing that would really produce the Bosnian victory many lift proponents understandably think the only just and fair outcome -- commit U.S. ground forces to solve the problems of Bosnia.

What we must do instead, therefore, is continue to work within the international community to limit the scale of fighting, provide humanitarian relief, prevent a wider war, and seek to achieve an early agreed settlement to this tragic war. That settlement will not be ideal. But it will be far better than the consequences of expanded war, division from our allies, and likely U.S. combat involvement that unilateral lifting of the arms embargo would bring.

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SESCE 453

TAKNOFF

I. INTRODUCTION

o Good Morning. It is my privilege to appear here this morning at this joint meeting of the House Committee on International Relations and the House Committee on National Security.

o Along with my colleagues from the Department of Defense and the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I would like to brief you this morning on the Administration's policy regarding Bosnia and the former Yugoslavia.

-- We will address our diplomatic efforts to contain the Bosnian conflict and bring about a resolution. We will brief you on the role of UNPROFOR in bringing relief to the victims of the war, efforts to strengthen its capabilities, and contingency plans for the unlikely event of the UNPROFOR from Bosnia and planning for the enforcement of a peace agreement if our diplomatic efforts are successful.

U.S INTERESTS

o Any discussion of our foreign policy must begin with attention to our interests. U.S interests in Bosnia are:

-- preventing the spread of fighting into a broader European war that could threaten both Allies and the stability of newly democratic states in Central and Eastern Europe, and lead to serious rifts with Russia;

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-- stemming the destabilizing flow of refugees and helping to stop the slaughter of innocents; and

-- maintaining a leadership role in European affairs and international institutions by building a coalition of states to work for peace.

- o We believe the best path to achieving these interests lies in a negotiated settlement. Let me describe the current diplomatic situation and our prospects for success.

THE DIPLOMATIC SITUATION

- o As you know we have been working with the parties through the Contact Group (US, Russian, European, and UN representatives) we established in March 1994 to find a negotiated settlement.
- o We brokered and actively support the Federation agreement between the Bosnian government and members of the Bosnian Croat minority, which has improved the prospects for an overall settlement, helped end the fighting in central Bosnia, and reopened humanitarian convoy routes.
- o Working with and through the UNSC, we have maintained one of the most thorough sanctions regimes in history on Serbia.

- o We are committed to seeing that those responsible for ethnic cleansing and other war crimes are brought to justice. We pressed to establish the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, and are providing it with personnel and \$6 million worth of goods and services.

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CURRENT EFFORTS

- o Our goal is to bring to an end the war in Bosnia in 1995 in a manner consistent with the Contact Group plan. Over the last month, starting with the December 2 CG Ministerial in Brussels, we developed a three-stage, sequenced approach to reach this goal: ceasefire, formal cessation of hostilities, and a political negotiation centered on the CG plan.
- o With the first two stages now accomplished, our current task is to succeed in the third phase -- the difficult negotiation to find a political settlement. Three aspects are crucial:
 - The process for renewing peace negotiations;
 - The substance of the peace process;
 - The support of Congress for this approach.

o The four-month cessation of hostilities is going to be fragile and frequently violated, but it does create a new political environment more conducive to peace negotiations. 4

-- More work needs to be done to implement the cessation of hostilities, particularly in Bihac and around Mount Igman.

-- We have been urging all parties to work closely and constructively with the U.N. in order to resolve these remaining difficulties. We hope that this can be done by the end of the week in the case of the Sarajevo area and Mount Igman. In that regard, we note with interest the statement from Karadzic's office that the Serbs are prepared to open up all of the routes in and out of Sarajevo notwithstanding their concern about the Igman region.

o We have reengaged with our Contact Group partners to seize the momentum created by the cessation agreement.

-- Assistant Secretary Holbrooke was in Sarajevo on Sunday and Monday to discuss the situation with the Bosnian government and to reaffirm our support for the Contact Group Plan in the run-up to the Paris meeting.

- On Tuesday the Contact Group Political directors met in Paris, at a session notable for its unity and a shared sense of purpose. The Group agreed that the Contact Group map and plan should be the basis for any future negotiations.
- They agreed to send the Contact Group experts to the region to establish a format for negotiations with the parties.
- We have agreed to approach Karadzic, but only to get Pale's "acceptance" of the plan. No other topics will be raised in the first CG contact with Pale.
- Our aim is to launch a reinvigorated diplomatic process by mid-January under CG auspices.
- We prefer that this take the form of shuttle diplomacy, which allows the CG to put direct pressure on the decision makers, and is less susceptible to media manipulation than a conference or proximity talks.
- o We all recognize that any negotiation will be very difficult. The United States must make it very clear that we are sticking to the 51/49 although "land swaps" can be arranged with the consent of both parties.

- o We will also need to show full support to the Bosnian Government in their efforts to maintain their state as an international entity within its present boundaries.

SANCTIONS

- o In this connection, I want to mention our decision to agree to another 100 days of limited sanctions relief for the FRY -- a position which all the Contact Group representatives in the UN Security Council, including Russia, will support.
- In doing so, I want to stress that this relief is indeed very limited, covering only passenger air service to Belgrade, passenger ferry service to Bar, and sporting and cultural contacts. All other sanctions remain in force.
- We will consider additional sanctions relief measures ONLY if connected to substantial progress toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Bosnia.
- o The UN Resolution granting sanctions relief set the standard in terms of effective closure of the border with international verification. A verification mechanism was established under the auspices of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia (ICFY), which reports to the mission, which consists of about 180 monitors, including forty Americans. We have also applied our own intelligence resources to monitor the border.

On the whole, looking across the 100-day period, we believe it legitimate to say that the border has been effectively closed in the sense⁷ that it has become steadily less porous as loopholes were identified and sealed.

The process of closing loopholes accelerated in recent weeks as a direct result of U.S. demarches to Belgrade, the UN, and ICFY identifying key problem areas and calling for corrective action. Joint ICFY/FRY monitoring has largely eliminated the danger of diversion from trains; better access has allowed ICFY to monitor more effectively.

-- Recently, ICFY has reported sharply improved cooperation including physical barriers at 29 crossings, actions against organized "ant trade" (smuggling by private vehicles) and termination of fuel transit to the Serb-occupied areas of Croatia.

- o We want to ensure that the level^{of} border closure achieved as a result of recent improvements in FRY performance becomes the standard for future performance, and we will continue to push for constant improvement. We are insisting at the UN on an extension only for another 100 days, with another positive vote needed to extend again and a termination of sanctions if Serbian performance deteriorates.

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o We believe that extension of sanctions relief will help overall prospects for peace. While the Bosnian Serbs have not yet accepted the Contact Group plan, we have seen progress in the peace process with the cease-fire and cessation of hostilities agreement.

-- Even though we do not believe Milosevic's border closure alone made this progress possible, we do believe it contributed to a heightened sense of Bosnian Serb isolation which contributed to the progress we have seen.

o Let me also say a word about Croatia.

-- Throughout this process we will need to pay special attention to Zagreb. If Tudjman comes to believe that we are heading toward a Bosnia-only solution -- with the Krajina problem pushed aside, Cyprus-style -- Zagreb will abort a deal, possibly by disrupting the Federation. Tudjman has already informed us that he would like to end, or greatly scale down, the UN presence in his country.

-- We have been working closely with ~~the~~ Russia and the European Union in the so-called "Zagreb-Four" Process to reach a negotiated solution to problem of Serb-occupied Croatia. We continue to believe that a settlement in the Krajina is an essential aspect for peace in the region.

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- We believe a good foundation for such a solution has been established with the accord on opening the Zagreb-Belgrade highway.
- We will use the visit to Washington this week of Croatian Intelligence Chief Miroslav Tudjman and Ambassador Miomir Zuzul to drive home these points, and to emphasize that UNPROFOR should stay in Croatia.

CONCLUSION

Let me make a few concluding points.

- o We are at a very delicate stage in the diplomatic process. All wars come to an end sooner or later. But it is not at all clear that this war will come to an end in the months ahead. We could have renewed warfare, indeed on a far wider scale, when the snows melt.
- o But we believe we should pursue our present course as the best way to secure peace. If we are to use the cessation of hostilities and renewed negotiations to best effect, we will need the support of Congress and the American people. Only with this support can we use this window of opportunity to work for a negotiated settlement.
- o In this connection I want to make a final comment on the Dole/Lieberman Bill.

- (10)
- o Our views on unilateral lift are well known and I need not reiterate them in any detail. However, it is important to state that my greatest concern is that if unilateral lift were to be implemented--however well-intentioned--it would likely lead to a wider and bloodier war that would quite possibly turn into an American war.
 - o For that reason, and given some positive movement in the peace process, we hope this bill will not be pushed in the coming weeks. If it is, we will have to oppose it.
 - o It may be that, as we have constantly maintained, a multilateral lifting of the arms embargo will be required. We know that such a time may come and we are ready to consult closely with the Congress on how to approach that issue.
 - o And now, Mr. Chairman, I would like to turn to my colleagues, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy, Walter Slocombe; and from the Joint Staff, the Director for Strategic Plans and Policy, Lieutenant General Wesley Clark.