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Bosnia - London Meeting, 7/21/95

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LONDON MEETING ON BOSNIA

- We went to London convinced that the status quo in Bosnia was untenable and that only strong and decisive action would be sufficient to halt Serb aggression, restore UNPROFOR's effectiveness, and reestablish conditions that could lead to a political settlement.
- We were particularly determined that clear decisions be taken to prevent the Bosnian Serbs from attacking the last remaining safe area in eastern Bosnia, Gorazde, and that measures be adopted for relieving the Serbs' siege of Sarajevo.
- The London meeting achieved these objectives. The key now is to move quickly to translate these decisions into reality. Let me review the decisions and their significance:
- First, there was agreement that any Bosnian Serb attack on Gorazde would be met with a "substantial and decisive response." This means a strong and decisive response by NATO air power, going beyond the limited strikes conducted previously, if the Serbs defy our warning.
 - The U.S., UK and France agreed on a concept of operations that provides for broad-gauged strikes against military forces attacking Gorazde or concentrating for an attack, against supporting forces and command-and-control and, if necessary, against military targets elsewhere in Bosnia.
 - It would also modify the "dual key" in a significant way, taking UN political authorities out of the chain of command and placing authority to initiate the air campaign in the hands of the NATO air commander, Admiral Leighton Smith, and the UNPROFOR force commander on the ground, General Rupert Smith. This is consistent with normal military practice.
 - Moreover, once the air campaign is initiated, the NATO commander would have sole authority to continue the air strikes until the Serbs halt their attacks on Gorazde.
- This plan will be taken up by NATO's Military Committee over the weekend, with a view to a decision by the North Atlantic Council (NAC) on Monday to put the new approach into effect.
 - I should point out that existing authority for air strikes and close air support is still in effect should the Serbs move on Gorazde (or other safe areas) before the NAC has acted.
- We have agreed with the British and French that the new approach could be applied to the other safe areas if necessary. This would require only a decision by the NAC to do so.
- The second important decision in London was to take decisive action to ensure access to Sarajevo for delivery of humanitarian aid and resupply of UN forces, through early use of the Rapid Reaction Force. The British announced their decision to send a battalion to Sarajevo to further strengthen the effectiveness of UN capabilities there.

- The London meeting also reaffirmed the international community's commitment to achieving a political settlement, stressing the urgency of renewed negotiations among the Bosnian parties based on the Contact Group plan.
 - The participants voiced their support for the efforts of EU mediator Carl Bildt to secure recognition of Bosnia by Serbia-Montenegro and a sealing of Serbia's border with Bosnia.
 - Bildt briefed Contact Group Ministers on the package he has worked out with Milosevic, but that package was not approved; in fact, we see a number of issues that still need to be satisfactorily resolved, and we also need to consult with the Bosnian Government on whether the terms for mutual recognition are acceptable.
- The participants in the meeting also agreed to increase support for efforts to address Bosnia's humanitarian crisis, which was exacerbated by the Serb attacks on Srebrenica and Zepa and the new wave of brutal ethnic cleansing. The participants demanded the international community be given immediate access to all detainees still being held by the Bosnian Serbs.
- Underlying all these decisions is a reaffirmation that a strengthened and more effective UNPROFOR should remain in Bosnia.
 - We continue to believe that UNPROFOR's withdrawal would lead to a larger human tragedy in Bosnia and an increased danger of wider conflict in the Balkans.
 - Our allies made clear in London that action by the U.S. to lift the arms embargo unilaterally will force the withdrawal of UNPROFOR. It would also undermine the London meeting's renewed display of resolve for UNPROFOR to deal firmly with the Bosnian Serbs' outrageous behavior.
 - We should not be taking actions that drive UNPROFOR out at the very moment it has committed to take action to protect the Bosnian people in Gorazde and other safe areas.

Statement on Bosnia

WJC REACTION
(Gill's Nation)

Before I begin, I want to say a word about the meetings on Bosnia that have taken place in London.

All of us who are concerned about the future of Bosnia and have been outraged by the tragic events of recent weeks should welcome the statement of Foreign Secretary Rifkind that an attack by the Bosnian Serbs on the United Nations safe area of Gorazde will be met by "a substantial and decisive response." The conference also agreed that the United Nations mission should be strengthened and that ground corridor to Sarajevo should be strengthened by the Rapid Reaction Force.

Today's meeting marks an important step in the international community's determination to deal with this extremely difficult and destructive problem. There is more work to be done -- and the United States is determined to do everything it can not only to deal with the problems in Gorazde and Sarajevo but also to further peace in the former Yugoslavia.

CHRIS STMENT AT MTG

I know that each of our governments has its own opinion about the best way forward in the former Yugoslavia. But today, our imperative is to find common ground on a firm and rapid response. We must demonstrate to the world, and to the Bosnian Serbs, that we are united in our determination to answer their outrageous behavior -- not through words and empty threats, but through a collective plan of action.

President Clinton and the United States believe that such a plan of action must include the following elements:

First, we must reaffirm the importance of UNPROFOR's mission and our determination that it will be strengthened and will continue its mission in Bosnia. Despite the shortcomings of the international community's efforts, we are convinced that their collapse would only ensure a far greater tragedy.

Second, the situation in Sarajevo must be stabilized. UNPROFOR's presence in the city must be strengthened. The strangulation of Sarajevo must be brought to an end by using French and British contingents of the Rapid Reaction Force to secure humanitarian access routes.

Third, we must defend Gorazde from suffering the same fate as Srebrenica and Zepa. An unambiguous ultimatum must be delivered to the Bosnian Serb leaders that an attack on Gorazde will be met by a large-scale use of air power.

In addition, we must underscore our broader determination to carry out the UN mandate elsewhere in Bosnia, especially in Bihac and the other remaining safe areas.

Fourth, we must re-double our efforts to address the humanitarian crisis created by the latest fighting in eastern Bosnia. It is essential that we act to care for these victims of aggression before the winter. And we must demand immediate access to all those recently detained by the Bosnian Serb military.

Fifth, upon stabilization of the situation on the ground, we should urge the parties in Bosnia to agree to a country-wide ceasefire as a basis for resumption of negotiations on a political settlement. The United States has been and will be fully supportive of this process, including the efforts of Carl Bildt and Thorvalt Stoltenberg. But again, let me repeat: The escalation of Bosnian Serb aggression must be brought to an end before any political process can go forward.

Finally, we must recognize the risks of any new action and take immediate action to minimize them. As we have seen, any firm response on the part of the international community will be met by the taking of hostages. It is imperative that the UN act immediately to begin reducing the exposure of UN personnel to such action. But we must also resolve that the taking of hostages in the future cannot be allowed to deter us from fulfilling the commitments we take here today. And the Bosnian

Serbs must know that they will be held fully responsible for the UN personnel and innocent Bosnian civilians in their custody.

The time has come for real action by the international community. The world is watching. President Clinton and the United States are fully prepared to fulfill our responsibilities.

Bosnia is stabilized soon -- and unless the Bosnian Serbs halt their outrageous behavior -- any efforts to advance the political process are doomed to failure.