



Bosnia UPDATE

A Summary of Developments Affecting the Balkans and the Deployment of U.S. Armed Forces Prepared by the Chairman of the Committee on National Security.

Lloyd Spence, Chairman

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Quotes of the Week:

"The siege of Sarajevo is officially over."
-- *Bosnian Interior Minister Avdo Hebib, 3/1/96*

"We have caused the guns to fall silent. We have caused the armies to withdraw. There are large numbers of IFOR troops in and around Sarajevo and the suburbs. What we cannot guarantee is individual safety to every Serb living in Sarajevo."

-- *General Michael Walker, IFOR ground troops commander, 3/9/96*

"One cannot believe that this tribunal is impartial. Raising charges is a process directed against the Serb people."

-- *Milan Martić, indicted Croatian Serb leader, 3/8/96*

"There is an escalation of terror and intimidation.... It's a very ugly game."

-- *Kris Janowski, U.N. spokesman, commenting on the transfer of Sarajevo suburbs to Bosnian government control, 3/8/96*

"This would be absolutely stupid — to go to train soldiers in Iran when we have more than a half - billion [dollar] program to train our soldiers with the most sophisticated equipment in the United States and other countries that will participate."

-- *Hasan Muratović, Bosnian Prime Minister, 3/6/96*

"The Dayton accord of course calls for all foreign troops to be out of the country. We will hold the Bosnian government to that. This is an accord which they signed and agreed to. We will hold them to that agreement."

-- *Secretary of Defense Perry, 3/7/96*

In Bosnia and the Balkans:

Bosnian Serbs continue to flee from the Sarajevo suburbs of Ilidza and Hadzici, destroying homes and vehicles as they leave. Dozens of fires are set and buildings are burned to the ground. Bosnian Federation police take control of the suburbs. More than 50,000 Serbs are reported to have left the Sarajevo area. A NATO spokesman says IFOR will increase its presence in the areas to help deter additional destruction.

Bosnian government officials confirm that Bosnian troops have been sent to Iran for training. A European military officer expresses concern about "the indoctrination of Islamic ideology that is also part of any training program." Iran denies it is training any Bosnian troops. Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratović denies that Bosnian forces are receiving training in Iran. He dismisses U.S. concerns over Iranian terrorist links to Bosnian forces as "paranoia."

The U.N. reports that Bosnian Serb gangs are beating, robbing, and threatening the remaining Serb, Muslim, and Croat residents of Grbavica, a Sarajevo suburb, prior to its transfer to Muslim control. The U.N. and NATO

concede that they are virtually powerless to stop the violence. Only 41 policemen from the U.N. international police force are in Grbavica. The U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees is setting up "safe houses" for residents who refuse to leave the city.

NATO troops are called on to fight fires started by groups of arsonists in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza. NATO agrees to provide escort and protection to Bosnian Federation firefighters. A NATO spokesman says NATO "is doing all it can to support the civilian agencies trying to restore calm, as well as law and order."

Disagreements reportedly surface between the United States and NATO allies over what will happen after U.S. participation in IFOR ends. Options for deployment of a follow-on force, without participation of U.S. ground troops, are reportedly being discussed by NATO officials.

A U.S. soldier is shot and wounded by an intruder at a base near Tuzla. Another U.S. soldier is allegedly raped by two Czech soldiers in the British-controlled sector of Bosnia. The Czech Defense Ministry says an investigation has cleared the two suspects.

Admiral Leighton Smith praises the participation of Russian forces in IFOR, as U.S. and Russian troops

begin joint patrols on the ground in Bosnia.

Bosnian Croats withdraw from an agreement reached with Bosnian Muslims to govern Sarajevo jointly. Increasing strains between Muslims and Croats raise concerns over the durability of the Bosnian Federation.

Bosnian Serb, Muslim, and Croat military officers hold a joint meeting with General Nash, commander of U.S. forces in Bosnia, to discuss compliance with upcoming deadlines. General Nash says he is "very pleased" with the meeting, which "demonstrated the commitment of these soldiers to the peace process."

Thousands of Muslim refugee women stage another protest in Tuzla, blocking roads and destroying vehicles to protest the disappearance of male relatives from Srebrenica after its capture by the Serbs in July 1995.

Bosnian President Izetbegovic leaves the hospital after being admitted last month for heart problems.

In New York:

Incoming War Crimes Tribunal prosecutor Louise Arbour says the parties to the Dayton agreement are responsible for arresting those indicted for war crimes, not IFOR.

In Washington:

Defense Secretary Perry tells Congress that Iranian troops remain in Bosnia in violation of the peace agreement. He says the arm-and-train program will not proceed until the Bosnian government complies with the agreement.

U.S. officials express concern that delays in implementing the arm-and-train program and civilian rebuilding activities will jeopardize the willingness of other countries to help finance the Bosnia reconstruction effort.

The Senate approves an Administration request for \$200 million in civilian aid to Bosnia with a condition that the funds may not be spent until the Bosnian government severs its military and intelligence relationship with Iran.

In Ankara:

Officials from more than 20 countries convene to discuss contributing money and materiel to the international arm-and-train effort.

In Belgrade:

Serbian lawyers responsible for defending indicted Bosnian Serb officers at the War Crimes Tribunal say they will work to see that their clients do not cooperate with the Tribunal.

In Brussels:

The United States tells NATO that it supports new guidelines that will allow IFOR to participate in the implementation of some civilian aspects of the peace agreement.

In The Hague:

The War Crimes Tribunal asks Serbia to extradite Drazen Erdemovic, a suspected Bosnian Serb war criminal, who was arrested after admitting in an interview that he participated in the massacre of Muslims in Srebrenica last summer. The Tribunal also indicts General Djordje Djukic, a senior deputy to Bosnian Serb military leader Ratko Mladic, and Milan Martic, a Croatian Serb leader.

Compliance Watch:

The Sarajevo suburbs of Hadzici and Ilidza are transferred to Bosnian government control in accordance with the terms of the peace agreement. Grbavici remains the only suburb still under Serb control, which is due to end on March 19.

Several Bosnian Serb military units refuse to participate in scheduled meetings with IFOR. Bosnian Serb officials threaten to sever ties to IFOR in retaliation for the indictment of a Bosnian Serb military official by the War Crimes Tribunal.

Approximately 20 men in Croatian police uniforms enter a police station in the Sarajevo suburb of Hadzici prior to the agreed upon transfer of the suburb to government control. The men leave after NATO threatens to use force to expel them. A NATO spokesman condemns the incident, calling it a "direct challenge to the peace agreement [that] appears to have been authorized by a minister from the Federation government."

Western and Bosnian officials say about 150 Islamic "freedom fighters" are operating training camps within Bosnia and are helping Bosnian President Izetbegovic to establish a secretive security organization in contravention of the peace accord. As a precondition for assistance under the "arm-and-train" program, the United States has insisted on the disbanding of the security agency, known as the Agency for Investigation and Documentation, which has been linked to Iran. The agency's head calls U.S. efforts to remove Iranian influence from Bosnia "very silly" and says the raid last month on a house used by the organization as a training facility was "in bad taste."

Bosnian Federation police exchange gunfire with Bosnian Serb police near the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza. Four Serbs hurl a grenade out the window of a speeding car in the vicinity of French IFOR troops. No injuries are reported.

Previous issues and additional background information on any of the items in this UPDATE may be obtained from Tom Donnelly (x65372) or David Trachtenberg (x60532) on the staff of the House National Security Committee.