



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:

"My main worry is that the forces of ethnic separation still are far stronger than the forces of ethnic reintegration.... What we have been seeing during the last few weeks has clearly been a setback, to put it mildly."

-- Carl Bildt, U.N. High Representative for Bosnia, 3/18/96.

"If anyone thinks this is a success, that would be rather silly.... We're seeing a multi-ethnic Bosnia being flushed down the toilet here."

-- Kris Janowski, U.N. spokesman, 3/20/96

"The partition of Bosnia is the only solution left."

-- Dragan Bozanic, Bosnian Serb official, 3/19/96

"A Bosnia divided along ethnic lines will endanger peace in the region and Europe.... In my opinion, this small Muslim statelet will be doomed."

-- Haris Silajdzic, former Bosnian Prime Minister, 3/19/96

"[IFOR's] self-imposed impotence in the face of Serb pillaging of Sarajevo suburbs is an outrage."

--Sven Alkalaj, Bosnian Ambassaaorto the U.S., 3/20/96

"All this is propaganda. Those in the secret police, the CIA, and others are sure who is here and who is not."

-- Mohammed Taherian, Iranian Ambassador to Bosnia, commenting on NATO charges that Iranian forces remain in Bosnia, 3/19/96.

In Bosnia and the Balkans:

Sarajevo is reunited as control of Grbavica, the last of five Serb-held suburbs scheduled to change hands under the peace accord, reverts to the Bosnian Federation amid massive looting and burning of property and the exodus of thousands of Serb residents. Critics charge that NATO has encouraged the destruction by issuing statements that Serbs "have the right to burn their own houses" and that IFOR "is not a police force and will not undertake police duties."

An American soldier is killed and another is injured in a truck accident near the town of Gornje Babine.

Iran's Ambassador to Bosnia says his country is prepared to arm and train Bosnian forces if the United States withholds such assistance. He says, "Nobody can impose restrictions on our military assistance. If they ask us to help them defend themselves, we will help. We don't make conditions for this aid."

A NATO spokesman says IFOR will become more actively involved in the civilian rebuilding of Bosnia, noting that "the military

commanders have now accepted that they will change their emphasis.... We're now saying that we will assist in civil projects in a much more dynamic way than we have done hitherto."

Concerns are raised over the continuing viability of the Muslim-Croat Bosnian Federation. Agreement is reached on certain measures, including a common flag, taxes, and power sharing arrangements.

U.N. High Representative for Bosnia, Carl Bildt, says a military force must remain in Bosnia after the year deadline for IFOR withdrawal. He says, "Refugee return is a two-year plan. Reconstruction will take much longer than one year. Almost everything depends on a feeling of overall security for which some kind of military presence will be required."

Hillary Clinton visits U.S. troops in Bosnia. Also, Secretary of Defense Perry travels to the Balkans. He says IFOR will have "zero tolerance" for anyone restricting freedom of movement and that if NATO troops encounter a checkpoint "they will knock it out and they won't be polite about it." He says U.S. forces still plan to leave by the end of the year.

U.S. troops are tasked with providing security for war crimes investigators examining mass graves.

Less than half of the expected 1,721 members of an international civilian police force have arrived in Bosnia. About ten percent of those who have arrived have been sent home for failing language or driving tests.

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Mostar is reunited and joint Muslim-Croat police patrols begin. A meeting of the Contact Group adjusts the municipal boundaries drawn up by European Community administrator Hans Koschnick.

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U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright is heckled by Bosnian Serbs and her motorcade is stoned during a visit to Vukovar, in Eastern Slavonia, which is scheduled to revert to Croatian control.

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NATO officials express concern that landmines removed by the parties in compliance with the peace agreement are being stockpiled for later use. A U.S. officer says, "We want to destroy them, but there's nothing in the peace agreement that says they have to be destroyed."

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Serbian President Milosevic extradites to the War Crimes Tribunal two Bosnian Serbs suspected of committing atrocities in Srebrenica. Croatian President Tudjman agrees to allow a Bosnian Croat general indicted for war crimes to "submit himself" to the tribunal for questioning, but his lawyer says he will not cooperate. Bosnian U.N. Ambassador Muhamed Sacirbey accuses the U.S. of withholding evidence from the tribunal.

In Geneva:

Secretary of State Christopher meets with the presidents of the parties to the peace agreement to discuss problems with its implementation. He praises Serbian

President Milosevic for his commitment to compliance, but argues that U.N. economic sanctions on Serbia should remain in place. All parties again agree to comply fully with their obligations under the Dayton accord and agree to a 12-point plan for bolstering the Muslim-Croat Bosnian Federation.

In Ankara:

The United States pledges \$100 million in surplus military equipment at an international donors conference, conditioned upon removal of the Iranian military presence from Bosnia. Turkey pledges \$2 million in training assistance. Concerns are expressed over the lack of support from other countries and its potential impact on the overall Bosnia mission.

In The Hague:

The War Crimes Tribunal issues its first indictments for war crimes committed against Bosnian Serbs, charging three Muslims and a Croat.

In Washington:

The General Accounting Office estimates that the cost of the Bosnia operation to the United States has increased by \$329 million above what was anticipated.

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A Defense Intelligence Agency assessment concludes that "the overall strategic political goals of the former warring factions have not fundamentally changed" and that without a major international reconstruction effort and commitment to political stability, "the prospects for the existence of a viable, unitary Bosnia beyond the life of IFOR are dim."

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The House National Security Committee approves a reprogramming request of nearly \$1 billion to fund the Bosnia operation.

Compliance Watch:

The military aspects of the Dayton accord are completed, 90 days after the agreement entered into force, as the last of Sarajevo's Serbheld suburbs is transferred to Bosnian Federation control.

NATO reports that Iranian mujahedeen are training Bosnian government forces. A NATO spokesman says, "A threat does remain from foreign forces in Bosnia. It's a threat from terrorist activity, and it's also a violation of the Dayton peace agreement."

The Bosnian government releases more than 100 Serb prisoners of war. The release of additional prisoners, including 26 held in Tuzla, is sought. U.N. High Representative for Bosnia Carl Bildt calls the partial release a violation of the peace agreement. A U.N. spokesman says, "This does not constitute compliance, and measures to ensure compliance are being considered."

Freedom of movement throughout the Bosnian Federation continues to be hampered by checkpoints that block traffic. In addition, Croats within the Federation maintain the rebel state of Herceg-Bosna and Muslims maintain a secret police force in violation of the constitution.

The Bosnian government, under U.S. pressure, removes the head of its Agency for Information and Documentation, an organization said to have been established in violation of the peace accord and that has been linked to Iranian terrorist activity. Bosnian President Izetbegovic admits that the existence of an Iranian training camp was a "mistake, and a violation of what we signed."

Bosnian Serbs attack Muslim-Croat Federation police officers in Grbavica. Bosnian Federation police refuse to allow the International police force to monitor their work or to patrol jointly with them in the Sarajevo suburb of Ilidza.

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.