



Bosnia UPDATE

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

Lloyd Spence, Chairman

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Quotes of the Week:

"If we considered the presence of one mujahedeen [in Bosnia] to be a violation [of the peace accord] then we would be held hostage by our own absolutism."

--U.S. official, 4/17/96

"It was not in keeping with our government's policy to rudely expel these people who had fought with us. It was our impression that Clinton was not opposed."

--Bosnian Foreign Ministry official, 4/17/96

"This is the most complex electoral process in all of history, in my opinion."

--Robert Frowick, OSCE chief of mission in Bosnia, 4/19/96

"Nobody wants freedom of movement. Nobody wants the other side's refugees to come home."

--U.N. official, 4/21/96

"We are not going to become a rent-a-crowd-control organization."

--NATO spokesman, 4/23/96

"Let me reiterate that the Department of Defense has no plans to extend IFOR's mission beyond one year."

--Thomas Longstreth, DOD Bosnia Task Force Director, 4/23/96

"The mission will end on December 20, 1996, but all the troops won't be out.... it will take a month, maybe longer, to get all the troops out after December 20."

--Kenneth Bacon, DOD spokesman, 4/25/96

In Bosnia and the Balkans:

NATO leaders say that IFOR will turn its attention to "supporting civilian responsibilities" now that the initial military tasks of the Bosnia mission have been completed.

Two Nordic IFOR soldiers are killed and two others are wounded when their vehicle strikes a landmine near Tuzla.

Croatian officials say that Croatia and Iran signed a secret agreement last December to increase military cooperation and to provide weapons to Bosnia and Croatia. A U.S. official says the United States was not told about the agreement in advance and that "as soon as we found out about it, we made sure it was stopped."

Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and the United Arab Emirates pledge a total of \$100 million as part of the international effort to arm and train the Bosnian army.

A British newspaper report says it is "increasingly likely" that a European NATO force headed by Britain and France will remain in Bosnia after U.S. forces withdraw.

U.S. intelligence sources say

Iranian Revolutionary Guards continue to use camps in northern Bosnia for training purposes. They also note that Iran's intelligence agency is working with the Bosnian intelligence service, which has provided Bosnian passports to Iranian mujahedeen.

Czech IFOR troops fire weapons into the air and deploy armored personnel carriers to prevent clashes as 400 Bosnian Serbs attempt to block 200 Muslim refugees from returning to their former homes in Otoka, in northwest Bosnia. U.S. helicopters are used near Dobo, in northern Bosnia, to disperse a crowd of 100 Muslims and 200 Serbs. U.S. troops are used to break up a subsequent confrontation. In Mahala, in northern Bosnia, U.S. forces block vehicles carrying hundreds of Muslim refugees in order to prevent violence with Serbs. NATO officials say they expect additional confrontations as more refugees seek to return to their former homes.

Several Muslim refugees are killed in clashes with Bosnian Serbs. French IFOR troops watch as Serb demonstrators stone vehicles and smash the windows of buses carrying refugees near Sarajevo.

Croatian officials say the Bosnian government has dispatched commando units, trained by Iranians, to hunt down and capture or kill suspected war criminals. A White House spokesman says the

U.S. will seek an explanation from the Bosnian government.

Bosnia's U.N. Ambassador, Mohammed Sacirbey, says Western charges that Iranians remain in Bosnia reflect a "conspiracy." He says, "There are no hit squads or Iranian troops or instructors here." Other Bosnian government sources say NATO should "put up or shut up" regarding the charges.

Bosnian Justice Minister Hilmo Pasic says peace and justice cannot be restored to Bosnia unless indicted war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic are removed from power and delivered to the War Crimes Tribunal.

In Washington:

Senate Majority Leader Bob Dole announces that the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence and the Foreign Relations Committee will investigate issues related to the Iranian arming of Bosnian Muslims during the arms embargo and the Clinton Administration's conduct. The House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence will also investigate the Iranian arms transfers. House Speaker Newt Gingrich announces the establishment of a special "select subcommittee" to look into the issue.

The White House, invoking executive privilege, refuses to turn over to Congress a report by the President's Intelligence Oversight Board regarding the Clinton Administration's involvement in Iranian arms shipments to Bosnia.

Defense and State Department officials testify that there are no plans to extend IFOR's mission or delay the withdrawal of U.S. IFOR troops from Bosnia beyond the one-year deadline. Two days later, the

Defense Department announces that a "significant force" will remain in Bosnia until the last day of the mission and that U.S. troops will remain there for "a month, maybe longer" afterward.

The Pentagon raises its estimate of the cost of the Bosnia operation from \$2.3 billion to \$2.8 billion. The \$500 million increase is attributed to intelligence gathering and distribution, "unanticipated harsh environmental conditions," measures to improve the quality of life and "to respond to safety concerns," and "unanticipated NATO support requirements."

In Geneva:

The chief of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission in Bosnia, Robert Frowick, says the elections scheduled for September under the terms of the peace agreement may not be possible at that time. He cites problems involving free access to the media and freedom of movement as obstacles to meeting the election timetable. In addition, it is estimated that an additional \$153 million in foreign aid will be necessary to hold the election.

In Brussels:

Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman, General Shalikashvili, says NATO will maintain its current troops strength in Bosnia for the next five months to ensure a secure environment for September's scheduled elections.

In The Hague:

The War Crimes Tribunal releases Bosnian Serb General Djordje Djukic after deciding not to prosecute him because he is terminally ill with cancer.

Compliance Watch:

Bosnian Serbs, Muslims, and Croats fail to meet the April 19 deadline for withdrawing soldiers and heavy weapons to barracks and storage sites. A NATO official says it is unlikely the pullback will be accomplished in the next several weeks. An IFOR spokesman, Major Simon Haselock, says the parties are trying to comply "as hard as they can," but that "the magnitude of the task has meant that, even given the best will in the world, they haven't been able to do it." IFOR commander Admiral Leighton Smith says he is satisfied with the progress made so far.

U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees spokesman Ron Redmond says freedom of movement in Bosnia remains severely restricted. He states that the obligations assumed by the former warring factions to allow freedom of movement and the return of refugees "have not been met by any of the parties."

The Bosnian government frees a Serb colonel who was arrested on war crimes charges but not indicted. Ten other Serbs who were not indicted are also released, along with a Croat and Muslim who are freed by Bosnian Serbs. Thirty-six prisoners are still thought to be held by the sides.

Western intelligence sources report that the Bosnian government has begun covert production of landmines, in violation of the Dayton accord.

IFOR troops confiscate a variety of illegal air defense weapons from Bosnian Serbs, including more than 50 surface to air missiles.

Previous issues and additional background information on any of the items in this UPDATE may be obtained from Tom Donnelly (x65372), David Trachtenberg (x60532), Will Marsh (x56045) on the staff of the House National Security Committee.