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DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force
23 March 1993

Evaluation of Revised OSD Paper on "Lifting Siege of Sarajevo"

We continue to doubt the feasibility of any plan that falls short of the full demilitarization of Sarajevo, requiring all Bosnian forces (Serb and Muslim) to withdraw beyond the 30-kilometer.

- We strongly doubt that the Bosnian government would agree to evacuate its forces from Sarajevo while Serb units (albeit without their heavy weapons) remain in the outer zone. The Bosnian Government officials would fear that, if the Serbs renewed efforts to seize the city, Government forces would be too far away to respond. Moreover, Serb forces in the outer zone would harass or expel Muslims there.
- Removal of Bosnian Serb forces beyond the 30-kilometer circle while permitting lightly-armed Muslim forces to remain in Sarajevo, also strikes us as unworkable because of Serb opposition to giving up their gains.
- We continue to doubt that a "small US contingent" would suffice to induce the Europeans to contribute another 10,000 or so troops.
- We are concerned about the paper's retaining the statement about obtaining troops from the existing UNPROFOR contingents in Croatia. This option is not viable because it would make conflict between the Croats and Croatian Serbs more likely.

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ISSUE PAPER

LIFTING THE SIEGE OF SARAJEVO

Background

This plan for lifting the siege of Sarajevo would be but one element -- albeit a major one -- of a larger plan of military arrangements for implementing an overall peace plan agreed upon by the parties. It is recognized that there are inherent limitations in drafting a plan without knowing more about the overall context.

Despite the agreements made at the London Conference last August, Bosnian Serb forces under the direction of Radovan Karadzic continue to pound the city of Sarajevo from 15 "major" artillery sites in the hills around Sarajevo. Additionally, with the exception of the Sarajevo airport, which is held by UNPROFOR, we believe there are 6000-8000 Bosnian Serb Army regular troops and 4000-5000 Serb irregulars in the area of Sarajevo. Opposing them are 15,000-20,000 Bosnian government forces. The map at Tab A shows the reported locations of Bosnian Serb artillery in the immediate area of Sarajevo. In recent days, Bosnian Serb units have pressed forward into the suburbs of Sarajevo and into Stup, threatening to cut off the city from the airport.

There is no reliably open land route from Sarajevo to Muslim-controlled territory, all roads out being held by Serbian forces or subject to fire from them. Sarajevo depends for its food on UNHCR supplies, mostly delivered by airlifts (in which US planes participate). UNHCR estimates that, despite periodic interruptions of the airlift and of distributions from the airport warehouses, it has provided minimum subsistence rations to the city, at virtually the full level of requirements. However, food beyond survival rations, and other basic services -- water, electricity, medical supplies, fuel, building materials -- are not being provided with any regularity. Though the electrical power substations that serve the city remain largely intact, the main power switching center in downtown Sarajevo has been destroyed, and the gas pipeline and three major (400kv) power lines servicing the city pass through Serb-controlled areas. It must be noted that the city's water and sewerage systems depend on electricity.

Sarajevo continues to function as the official headquarters of the GOBH, which the USG recognizes, although we do not, for security reasons, maintain an embassy in the city. (No country maintains an embassy there, although France does have a resident ambassador on the ground.) Significant numbers of foreigners, including UN officials (some of whom are American military attached to the UNPROFOR headquarters), journalists, and relief workers, are in the city.

Two proposals have been made for breaking this siege: the Western European Union's "Safe Haven Sarajevo" document and the Vance/Owen plan's Draft Military Accord. In addition, NATO has proposed a concept analysis of "relief areas" and "safe zones" (NATO 742). All contain many common elements, similar schedules for being put into effect -- though the Vance/Owen plan is more detailed and offers more specifics on necessities for implementation.

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The plan developed below attempts to draw upon the strengths of the two existing proposals, bearing in mind the political and military realities. Since we do not have a clear sense of what different Russians have meant when they talk of a joint initiative to lift the siege, we have not endeavored to factor possible Russian views into this plan. Indeed, since their ideas might be problematic at best, perhaps it would be better to present them with our concept.

Design of the plan was based upon several assumptions. First, it assumes agreement and full compliance by all parties with all steps of the implementation process, which is problematical at best. Second, no estimates for the number of troops required to enforce the plan after compliance by the parties have been made independently. Rather, the estimates used in the original Vance/Owen and WEU formulations are repeated. Additionally, there will be a continuing requirement for humanitarian aid. The plan assumes that such will be provided by other agencies and makes no provision for escort, distribution, etc.

A major consideration is that the plan, like the Vance/Owen and WEU models, calls for the demilitarization of the city proper. In effect the legitimate government of Bosnia-Herzegovina is denied the ability to maintain military forces in its own capital.

There are, in principle, at least two other conceptual approaches to "lifting the siege":

1) Driving the Serb forces investing the city back a sufficient distance -- some 30 km for them to be out of artillery range of the city and vital infrastructure facilities -- that they could no longer impose a direct threat to the population in the city or its links with the airport, while permitting GOBH functions to continue to operate from Sarajevo.

Such an approach would seek to replicate the effects of decisive local military success by the Bosnian forces. There is no reason to believe the Serbians would voluntarily agree to pull back unilaterally, other than as a part of a general settlement (if then). Use of foreign forces to compel such an end to the vulnerability of Sarajevo to military attack would require very substantial ground and air forces and would amount to large scale, direct combat intervention on the Bosnian side. Accordingly, this approach has not been examined in detail.

2) Securing an agreement not to use heavy weapons against Sarajevo, or to a withdrawal of heavy weapons by both sides. (For these purposes, "heavy weapons" mean direct fire weapons over 12.7mm, mortars and artillery of 82mm and above, tanks, and ground-to-ground missiles.)

This would entail the Bosnian government forces' removing their heavy weapons from the city altogether and the Serbians' pulling their heavy weapons back some 30 km from the city. (Alternatively, heavy weapons would be assembled in set locations and placed under UN control.) Thereafter, both sides would remain free to continue to fight over the city and access to it, but only with lightly armed units. The focus in the plan is therefore on heavy weapons rather than on driving the Serbs back. The effect would be to reduce the dangers to the

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civilian population-- and, in practice, to shift the military balance toward the Muslims, who have more troops but many fewer heavy weapons.

Bosnian President Izetbegovic has said he will insist on a halt to the shelling of Sarajevo as a condition to participating further in the Vance/Owen talks. Presumably he would be prepared to agree to have Bosnian units stop their shelling of Serb positions in exchange. Whether the Serbian forces would regard keeping the Bosnians in the talks as a sufficient incentive to agree to cease shelling, much less place their heavy weapons under UN control, is uncertain.

Some element of outside enforcement is likely to be necessary for a limit on heavy weapon use to be meaningful. After the 1991 Vance accords for Croatia, Krajina Serb heavy weapons were assembled under UNPROFOR guard, but when Croatian forces broke the truce to attack Krajina Serb positions in the "pink zone," the Krajina Serb forces pushed the UN guards aside and retook control of the assembled weapons. Without an international commitment to monitor compliance with a ban on heavy weapons deployment or use and to take action against violators, it is unlikely that a ban would hold for long.

However, whether described as a prohibition on use of heavy weapons or an agreement to withdraw them from the area, this approach would differ from the first in that it might be enforceable with less foreign ground involvement. The USG, and possibly other outside governments as well, by use of highly sophisticated surveillance equipment and airborne weapons capabilities, might be able to locate and attack weapons deployed or used in violation of such an agreement, without having to use ground forces, and with a more focused and limited military commitment than would be entailed by attempting to drive off Serbian forces generally from around Sarajevo. While capabilities to detect violations and attack heavy weapons used or deployed in violation of a ban would be much less than 100%, it would probably be possible to impose a significant cost on violations. However, the weapons involved are relatively easy to conceal and are highly mobile, and the US would definitely not be able to detect and attack all violating weapons. Further analysis of US surveillance and attack capabilities are at the Codeword level.

In the event the US or other outside countries used air power to enforce a heavy weapons ban around Sarajevo, they would have crossed the line to direct military action in the conflict and, because of the imbalance in heavy weapons capability, to de facto intervention on the Bosnian government side. Even if, as seems likely, that action could be taken with relatively good effect and without requiring ground forces, US planes would be exposed to Serbian air defenses (and to the risk of a Bosnian Muslim provocation). Moreover, the Serbian forces would have the option of responding to the US action in other areas, e.g. by ceasing to permit UN relief operations or attacking UNPROFOR units. In this respect, enforcing a heavy weapons ban presents considerations similar to those involved in enforcing the no-fly zone.

The balance of this paper details a proposal for an agreed demilitarization of Sarajevo.

Basic Elements of Plan

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Stopping the fighting in and around Sarajevo on an agreed, internationally monitored basis will require the following basic elements:

- An agreement by the warring parties to undertake this plan and to accept international monitoring of its implementation.
- In conjunction with this agreement will be a declaration of forces and weapons, followed by a cease-fire within three days of agreement. A demarcation line -- whose position will be

determined in the agreement -- will be established, and within 48 hours of a cease-fire parties must withdraw personnel, heavy weaponry, and equipment to 1-3 km (depending on terrain) beyond the demarcation line.

- Establishment of a 2-part "safe zone" that will require the withdrawal of troops and their heavy weapons in order to provide protection to the civilian population in and around Sarajevo. The inner zone would consist of the Sarajevo core, its airport, significant power infrastructure, and the immediate concentration of civilians in the plain of Sarajevo. It will measure 15 km east to west and 2-3 km north to south except in the heavily disputed western part of the city, where it will measure 8-9 km north-south. All military personnel and their equipment will be withdrawn from within the inner zone. For the Bosnian Muslims, compliance would mean withdrawal of all military forces from the inner zone, along established "safe routes" (see below) through Serb-controlled areas, to Muslim-controlled areas in central Bosnia. There is risk and difficulty in demanding that the GOBH demilitarize the city as a quid, but the Serbians would probably insist. The advantage, however, is that GOBH demilitarization of Sarajevo gives us some hope of presenting this as even-handed, still neutral, and therefore it would not be necessary to end the humanitarian aid effort. This advantage holds especially if Russia participates in monitoring/enforcement. Moreover, since we might be seen as having entered the war on Bosnia's side, we might be able to play up disarming the city's defenders as balancing the pain on both sides.

We should also consider, however, if we would want first to propose enforcement of the heavy weapons part of the London agreement, and save demilitarization of Sarajevo to offer the Serbians if they demand a quid. Another alternative might be to move not just the Serb heavy weapons but the Serb forces themselves outside the 30-Km outer zone, and allow Bosnian forces minus heavy weapons to remain in the city, perhaps with their strength significantly reduced and subject to monitoring by the Joint Commission. A variation of this would be to require all Bosnian forces (Serb and Muslim) to withdraw beyond the 30-kilometer ring. That would also be easiest for UNPROFOR to enforce.

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Although UNPROFOR military personnel will continue to monitor the boundary of the inner zone, civilian authorities under UN supervision will be responsible for maintaining law and order within it. The outer zone would extend to a 30 km radius from Sarajevo and would be patrolled by UNPROFOR. Teams of UNPROFOR members and local authorities will maintain civil order in the towns on the outer zone. All heavy weapons would be removed from the outer zone to beyond the 30 km radius from the center of the city and placed in depots under UN control. In practice, this would create a "doughnut" around Sarajevo into which Serbian units would not be permitted to move heavy weapons.

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- Introduction of a **10,000-member UNPROFOR military and civilian contingent** to undertake the operations listed below. This contingent will maintain its own, organic air support. (This represents a minimum force, according to the WEU plan, based on "confidence in political agreements." The WEU "worst case" stated that up to a division (15-20,000) would be needed.) This augmented UNPROFOR will be responsible for:
 - monitoring the inner zone boundary between Serb-controlled territory outside Sarajevo and the demilitarized city inside;
 - monitoring compliance with the cease-fire and with the ban on heavy weapons in the 30 km radius area; in the event of violations, UNPROFOR peace keepers would, through the joint commission, issue a warning to the offending parties, including a short deadline for "cease and desist;" upon expiration of deadline, peace keepers would shift to a peace-enforcing operation, using their broad ROE authority and air support to force compliance
 - opening the blue roads and monitoring compliance with the requirement of free passage along the "blue routes" from the city, to include operation of checkpoints and convoy escorts;
 - maintaining civil order within the inner zone with local authorities, i.e. in the city and its immediate environs. Civil authorities in the outer zone would be executed by teams consisting of combined units of UNPROFOR troops and local civil police authorities;
 - its own self-defense without issuance of a warning, initiated by commanders on the scene;
 - occupation of militarily significant points in the outer zone so as to form quick, mutually supporting reaction forces in the event of cease-fire violations.(Note that these are the forces' duties assume compliance by the parties; compelling compliance or punishing non-compliance would require additional effort)
 - Establishment of a **Joint Commission** for executing and monitoring the plan. It will be composed of the Commander of the UNPROFOR Sarajevo Command, a command and support element from UNPROFOR, and a representative from each of the warring sides consisting of the commander for the troops in the area affected.
 - The opening of **safe routes** along the major transportation corridors surrounding Sarajevo in order to allow for the protected withdrawal of forces and weaponry, the free movement of UN forces and relief convoys, and the control of entry to and exit from the "safe zone." Safe routes would be from Sarajevo northwest to Zenica, northeast to Zvornik on the Serbian border (which is the main entry point for UNHCR relief convoys from Belgrade), southwest to Mostar, and to Split. Except to the northwest, these routes extend through contested areas outside the 30 km circle. (It would, theoretically, be possible to add other routes, e.g. to the

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east and northeast to permit supply to eastern Bosnia from Sarajevo). UNPROFOR personnel would establish checkpoints along these routes and at the outer limits of the "safe zone."

- **Restoration of civilian infrastructure**, with a joint commission of representatives of all sides and a UN civilian team determining priorities and needs and executing the work with civil authorities and UN technical experts.

Implementation of the Plan

~~The plan is to be carried out in 4 phases. Under the best of circumstances the full implementation could take place over a period of approximately 3 weeks. Though phases will follow a sequential order, steps within each phase may be carried out in a parallel manner, except where noted.~~

Phase I: Agreement and cease-fire

Step 1 - Agreement by the warring parties.

Step 2 - Cease-fire within 24 hours of agreement and a freeze on movement of forces and weapons. Within 48 hours of cease-fire, warring parties will move all troops, weapons, and equipment to 1-3 km (depending on terrain) beyond a demarcation line along the to be determined by the agreement.

Step 3 - Declaration of forces within 72 hours of cease fire, which will include precise documentation of number and location of personnel, heavy weapons, and a description of minefields.

Step 4 - Declaration of "safe routes" between Sarajevo and the 3 cities listed above.

Step 5 - Declaration of the inner and outer safe zones.

Step 6 - Declaration of fall back/assembly areas beyond the outer zone to which the warring parties and their heavy weapons will be withdrawn.

Step 7 - Establishment of Joint Commissions for weapon inspections and infrastructure repair.

Phase I should require 4 days to complete. Steps 3-6 can be executed simultaneously.

Phase II: Demilitarization of inner zone

Step 1 - UNPROFOR military personnel will move to the following areas: 1) the demarcation line to complete the separation of forces; 2) the outer limits of the inner zone to control access to it and prevent reinforcements to any of the parties; 3) the checkpoints along the "safe routes" and the entry and exit point to these routes. Along with inspectors from the Joint Commission, UNPROFOR military personnel will begin to move into the outer zone to establish positions for the later removal of weapons

Step 2 - UNPROFOR military personnel begin clearing "safe routes" of obstacles and land mines. They also carry out repairs on these routes where necessary.

Step 3 - Upon completion of Step 2, safe routes will be open to civilian and humanitarian movement.

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Step 4 - All parties begin removal of heavy weapons from the inner zone, withdrawing along designated safe routes to designated areas established by the agreement beyond the 30 km limit of the outer zone.

Step 5 - Only upon full completion of step 4, all parties will evacuate troops from the inner zone, withdrawing along the safe routes to designated areas established by the agreement beyond the 30 km limit of the outer zone. (As noted above, this effectively de-militarizes the city, because the Muslim forces must move out entirely.) The evacuation would have to be conducted in a fashion that does not upset the military balance, i.e., there must be provisions that ensure Serbian forces now in place would not be able to over run or seriously harass a city which had been left

defenseless except for Muslim forces in the outer zone. Specifically, we recognize the potential danger of requiring the Bosnian government to pull all of its forces out of Sarajevo and relocate them in central Bosnia, whereas Serbian troops minus their heavy weapons would be allowed within 2-15 KM of the city, with heavy weapons close enough to the city to permit rapid reinforcement if the ceasefire were broken at any point. Moreover, even if the present non-heavy-weapons balance in the outer zone would enable Bosnian forces there to protect themselves and the city, there must be some provisions for preventing influx of new forces, e.g., implementation of a military freeze and some kind of patrols of the perimeter to prevent a buildup.

Step 6 - UNPROFOR military personnel previously in place along the demarcation line and Joint Commission teams undertake inspections to determine full compliance with withdrawal of heavy weapons and troops. This plan allows for UNPROFOR to issue warnings in cases of non-compliance with deadlines, then shifting from peacekeeping to peace enforcing if deadlines pass. The U.S. would not participate in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia on the assumption that the parties will voluntarily comply with the agreements; the best hope for getting "voluntary" compliance is to have the muscle and clear intent to enforce if necessary. Because, short of a decision to sweep all Serbian forces (the likely violators of the cease-fire) from the 30 KM zone through major military action (which would probably require even more than the division planned by the WEU and serious -- read NATO -- command and control), UNPROFOR would be in a difficult situation: constantly faced with decisions on when to shift modes, assuming even a low-level of violence.

The shifting back and forth under these circumstances would see firefights breaking out between forces previously on peaceful terms, followed by a period of tense peace, and then possibly more violence, an extremely difficult scenario for small unit commanders.

The remedies for the problems outlined above might be (1) a universal, ceasefire followed immediately by political negotiations country-wide, to

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encourage the Bosnians to withdraw and the Serbs to cooperate; and (2) a credible threat of overwhelming force were the Serbs to carry out even low-intensity attacks against Muslims or even UNPROFOR. "Nickle and dime" Serbian attacks producing clumsy UNPROFOR response as it tries to shift from peacekeeping to police to peacemaking and back is a recipe for disaster. Yet the threat to be credible has to be real (i.e., involving the U.S.).

Step 7 - UNPROFOR civilian personnel move to inner zone to oversee the maintenance of law and order in conjunction with existing civil authorities.

Step 8 - Joint Commission for infrastructure begins determining and mapping most vital installations for attention and repair.

The steps of phase 2 should take about 7 days for completion under the most benign circumstances, though necessary repairs on the safe routes may require additional time.

Phase III: Heavy weapons removal from outer zone

Step 1 - All parties begin removal heavy weapons from the outer zone. Weapons are to be moved outside the 30 km limit of the safe zone and turned over to UNPROFOR personnel at designated locations. Those that cannot be moved will be placed under UNPROFOR supervision. Military personnel will not be required to evacuate this outer zone.

Step 2 - UNPROFOR and Joint Inspection teams begin inspection searches within the outer zone to monitor compliance with weapons withdrawal/deactivation.

Step 3 - UNPROFOR/local police teams move into place to maintain civil authority within the outer zone. Such police teams could not guarantee that the outer zone would not become a dangerous no-man's land, with a largely Muslim population, Serbian troops, and UNPROFOR forces in an area of hundreds of square miles. UNPROFOR by its presence would have an obligation to do its best to preserve the peace between Muslims and Serbs, but probably has inadequate forces to cover every hamlet, in a situation where at least low-level violence and "settling of accounts" are almost inevitable.

Step 4 - Repair of Sarajevo's civilian infrastructure begins, using local help as well as UN technical teams.

The steps of Phase III should require 7 days under the best of circumstances.

Phase IV: End State (approximately 3 weeks after agreement)

UNPROFOR military personnel and Joint Commission Inspectors continue monitoring compliance of weapons removal from outer zone.

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UNPROFOR observers are in place on safe routes and at entry and exit points of the safe zone.

Civil Authority is functioning.

UNPROFOR patrols are operating along limits of inner zone. (Note: the Joint Commission responsible for executing and monitoring such patrols will be comprised of UNPROFOR representatives, Serbian military Commanders, and GOBH civilian officials since, in the latter's case, there would be no GOBH military commander in the inner zone)

Most significant power, transportation, and communication infrastructure is functioning.

Comment

The Vance-Owen plan makes no provision for the number of UNPROFOR civilian and military personnel that will be necessary for its implementation. The WEU plan estimates that it could require a force of up to 20,000. It is questionable that current troop contributing countries, having provided 24,000 UNPROFOR personnel for the former Yugoslavia, will make 20,000 more available for Sarajevo. It will be extremely difficult to obtain 10,000 for the mission, but it could be possible under two conditions. First, almost half of this number could be obtained from the existing UNPROFOR contingents, with perhaps 1,000 from each of the four UNPA's in Croatia. Second, it will be easier to obtain more European and Canadian and other participation if the United States commits forces to this mission. These US personnel could be in the civilian UN component and involved in the supervision of the civil authorities in the inner zone and the rebuilding of Sarajevo's infrastructure. Even this small US contingent might have symbolic meaning and could encourage current participating countries to provide the remaining needed forces. If a small U.S. contingent fails to prompt other participating states to provide real military forces, significant U.S. forces on the ground would probably be necessary. Ultimately only the U.S. might be able to provide the credible "overwhelming force" threat cited above as necessary. We note in conclusion that it would be inadvisable to redeploy forces in Croatia to Bosnia; not only would that weaken the already inadequate forces in Croatia, it would send precisely the wrong signal to Zagreb and the Krajina Serbs alike.

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