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THE WHITE HOUSE  
WASHINGTON

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN

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March 18, 1995

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ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

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FROM: ANTHONY LAKE *R*

SUBJECT: U.S. Participation in Step Two Prepositioning for UNPROFOR Withdrawal from Bosnia.

Purpose

To obtain your agreement for U.S. forces to deploy to Croatia as part of NATO Step Two Prepositioning.

Background

Principals met Friday afternoon to discuss next steps in NATO prepositioning following this week's activities at NATO. Last week, you tentatively approved U.S. participation in a Step Two option that involved nearly 1800 personnel, including 450 Americans, 320 of which would deploy to Croatia. This was subject to completion of Congressional consultations and a subsequent decision by Principals before actual deployment of U.S. personnel to Croatia.

Facing criticism from some Allies, NATO military authorities this week developed a scaled-back prepositioning option involving only 80 personnel, including up to 20 Americans, who will deploy to Croatia to set up a communications system. NATO is seeking our agreement to identify and deploy the forces to support this step. Even with the smaller option, not all Allies support prepositioning, so our decision may not result in the immediate deployment of U.S. personnel to Croatia. But we should be prepared to deploy the 20 in any case.

The larger option you previously approved is still an active option and NATO is seeking our agreement to identify the forces (450 Americans) and to authorize training in Germany. A subsequent decision by the NAC will be required, however, before the larger force deploys to Croatia. Shali believes the decision is many weeks away.

After considering the impact of the Tudjman decision and the deteriorating situation in Bosnia, Principals agreed that we should agree to participate in this precautionary step. The Tudjman decision reduces the threat to the U.S. forces who will deploy to Croatia. But the ever-increasing likelihood that

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cc: Vice President  
Chief of Staff

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large-scale fighting will resume in Bosnia this spring necessitates the continuation of prudent military steps to prepare for UNPROFOR withdrawal should it become unavoidable.

If you agree, we will inform Congress on Monday of our intention to participate in the small NATO repositioning step and follow with fuller briefings on Wednesday. We will cast this as a limited, precautionary move that is being taken even though we oppose UNPROFOR withdrawal. We will inform NATO of our decision on Tuesday.

We do not expect this step will provoke much controversy on the Hill, since the deal with President Tudjman makes UNPROFOR withdrawal unlikely, at least in the short term. But a new letter to you from Senators Dole, Helms et al. (attached) makes clear that we will face tough sledding if and when a decision to withdraw is made. The letter insists on full NATO command, without any UN dual-key, and robust rules of engagement as preconditions for U.S. participation in any NATO extraction operation (which are fully consistent with our position). But more importantly, the letter demands that Allies commit to support multilateral lifting of the arms embargo post-withdrawal as the *quid pro quo* for U.S. participation.

We are seeking time on your schedule to fully brief you on the NATO plan (OPLAN 40104) that covers U.S. participation in UNPROFOR withdrawal from Bosnia. Principals agree that, notwithstanding the difficulties we will face on the Hill, the scope of the operation argues in favor of seeking Congressional authorization and funding in advance of committing U.S. troops to the operation.

#### RECOMMENDATION

That you authorize U.S. representatives at NATO to support the scaled-back option, including the deployment of up to 20 U.S. personnel to Croatia, following notification of Congress.

Approve  Disapprove

That you authorize U.S. representatives at NATO to agree to form the larger force (450 Americans) and conduct training in Germany, with the actual deployment of U.S. personnel to Croatia subject to a subsequent NAC and Principals decision.

Approve  Disapprove

#### Attachment

Tab A President's Decision Memo

Tab B Letter from Senators Dole, Helms, Thurmond et al.

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