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UN efforts to develop operational plans for UNCRO are lagging, and the situation on the ground in Croatia remains uncertain and tense. This presents two dangers for limiting the Balkan conflict to a small war in Bosnia. First, hostilities could result as both sides flex their muscle with clashes, cease-fire violations, exercises, and other provocations. The most serious of these has been the Croatian advance west from Bosnia toward Croatian Serb headquarters in Knin.

The second danger is that international energy will be consumed by getting UNCRO deployed, instead of using the limited time UNCRO buys us to push for settlement talks. Without progress toward reintegration and reconciliation in Croatia, we will have a much harder time keeping Zagreb on the path of peaceful means in dealing with the Serbs.

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The parties remain far apart on what they will agree to publicly regarding UNCRO's presence and operations. The UN Secretariat therefore plans to propose a general, "implementable" plan for UNCRO next week and ask the UNSC to approve it irrespective of whether the parties embrace it entirely. This approach reflects the reality that important details of UNCRO's operations will only be defined in day-to-day operations on the ground. Ambassador Albright emphasized to UN representatives Akashi and Stoltenberg Wednesday that time is limited and the plan they present to the

We must try to meet minimum Croatian expectations that Zagreb gets something out of all the recent fuss besides a name change. GOC anxiety that Tudjman will be seen at home as having sold out is real. This is reflected in Croatia's latest letter to Boutros Ghali, which is tough in putting demands on UNCRO that are not entirely reasonable. From our viewpoint, UN redeployment out of the UNPA's and onto their periphery, i.e. the separation zone and the international border, is important. What the border force actually does is less important, provided it at least puts more soldiers at checkpoints that UNPROFOR did.

At the same time, we should try to launch direct talks between Knin and Zagreb. We would start by approaching the other Z-4 members (EU, Russia, UN) and encouraging them to support such an effort. While pushing for political talks in order to start people on both sides thinking about the prospect of serious negotiations, we could at first focus on the economic confidence-building measures, implementation of which has bogged down in some cases.

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