

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

## PRINCIPALS COMMITTEE MEETING ON BOSNIA, FEBRUARY 5 1993

Tony Lake began by introducing the issue of the "end game": i.e., if we started down the road envisioned in the draft Presidential Decision Document, were we comfortable knowing that at the end of the road we would be under great pressure to help implement a settlement including with forces on the ground.

Madeleine Albright: Before we do that, I want to raise a more basic question. I am troubled by the conclusion we have reached. We are treating this area as of peripheral interest. History suggests it is more central. This policy (comment: the one in the draft PDD) legitimizes ethnic cleansing. It signals to the Central and east Europeans and to Russia that we will do nothing about it. The pieces in the draft PDD are "pretty pallid". I understand that deciding to use American forces in Bosnia would be crossing the Rubicon. But we should think about whether sweeping the problem under the rug creates more problems. The draft PDD is contrary to what Governor Clinton said and not commensurate with the importance of the issue.

Jim Woolsey: I agree with Madeleine.

Lake: (to Madeleine): You mean we should use force to enforce a settlement, not impose one?

Albright: If we say we would never impose a settlement we are blessing ethnic cleansing.

Secretary Aspin: A better way to explain the draft PDD is to say that we have a three pronged strategy. (1) more on the humanitarian front; we may come up with something more muscular. (2) pressure the parties so they will agree under Vance/Owen auspices. (3) try, under Vance/Owen, to come up with a settlement that does not require massive force to enforce.

Secretary Christopher: We should be more aggressive in describing our negative position about the current Vance/Owen plan and the only way we would get people to agree is to be prepared to enforce a settlement. But we should not throw out Vance/Owen at this point and do it ourselves. The whole EC and important figures on the Hill as well as the Russians support Vance/Owen. We cannot create a whole different structure. If an agreement can be reached, we should commit the U.S. to a greater degree of enforcement.

General Powell: I agree the draft PDD is too pallid. It reads more like a press statement than a decision document. But what would Madeleine suggest we do?

Albright: NATO action.

Several speakers: I thought we had agreed that we would help enforce a settlement.

Miss Walker: OSD and ICS Working Group members believed their principals had not agreed to that. That we would only help monitor, not enforce.

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Powell and Aspin both said that had not been their position.

General Powell: I thought we agreed that we would be willing to use force to enforce a settlement, but leave our willingness to do so "just behind the screen".

Mr. Berger: What is the end toward which Madeleine would apply force? To get an agreement or enforce it?

General Powell: The military will do anything that is decided, but we need to know what "it" is that we are being asked to do.

(my notes don't make clear who asked: ground or air forces?

Secretary Christopher: we should start with air power but be willing to use ground forces if necessary.

Mr. Woolsey: We keep talking about enforcing the whole agreement, fixing the whole situation. But we also talk about using only air power.

[Redacted]

There is no carrot in the present draft PDD for Bosnia. If we at least used air power to lift the siege of Sarajevo, maybe in time doing more, we could have not only a "no fly zone" but also a "no drive zone".

[Redacted]

So we could tell the UN that part of the package is that Bosnia can go along with something close to Vance/Owen but we potentially could bring to the party of NATO enforcement a ban on tanks, artillery, and APCs about 20-20 kilometers around Sarajevo.

General Powell" OK, but it is a commitment of bombers to go bomb. (Note: I did not take "OK" to mean agreement that we should do it.)

Secretary Christopher: Madeleine and I did not coordinate our positions before the meeting. But the draft PDD put me in the wrong mood.

Secretary Aspin: In presenting our decision we should start with what we are trying to achieve, call on all parties to end violence, reach a settlement, open the camps, and then say that to accomplish that we have a three prong strategy.

Mr. Lake The problem all along has been promising more than we can deliver. Les' press approach is OK, but only if we can say that at the end of the game we would help enforce something that the parties agree to.

Mr. Berger: What does the use of force mean? Air power, or air and ground?

General Powell: Both. We can use air power but ultimately must go in and separate the parties.

Mr. Lake: And the [Redacted] it alone.



Mr. Furerth: Also, if in going in we can demand implementation of some of the London Accords the Serbs agreed to, especially lifting the siege of Sarajevo. That raises the question of what we would do if the Serbs don't comply.

Mr. Lake: Let me clarify what we seem to be saying. Do we want to add to the President's package that we should say now that if all the parties voluntarily come to an agreement the US will say at the start that we are prepared to use force, including ground forces if necessary, as part of a NATO effort to help implement an agreement. An agreement that the parties had signed would include enforcement provisions.

Mr. Berger: For now we should say only "including the use of force." (Secretary Aspin, others indicate agreement with Berger)

Mr. Lake: If asked whether that means ground forces, say we don't rule it out.

Secretary Aspin: Addressing it later means soon. We will need ground forces to do what the agreement calls for, such as lifting the siege of Sarajevo.

Mr. Woolsey: It would be something useful if we could stop people from killing each other with heavy weapons. Even if small arms continue to be used, that is a game the Bosnians can play. We can take away from the Serbs the heavy stuff and frighten with some of the other.

Secretary Christopher: We should describe our policy as entering the negotiations in a more aggressive way.

Mr. Lake: Yes. The draft press statement was written back because we thought there was no agreement that we would be willing to use force, including ground forces if necessary, to enforce an agreement.

Mr. Lake: Let's talk about options for contributing to the humanitarian effort

General Powell: We have several ideas we're studying. One is to take responsibility for the area southeast of Sarajevo that is not now being served. We would need an UNPRO force similar to what the UK and France have. We would open a corridor from Split or Belgrade. The latter is less promising because we would need Serbian permission. This would show that the US was making a contribution equal to, even greater than, what others are doing. Casualties would not be serious if we do essentially what the British and French are doing. The reason they don't just blast their way through is that sometimes it is better to negotiate than to blast. We would be somewhat more aggressive than the British and French, but not to the point where we have to protect the whole route. Other things we are looking at are do-able but trivial and we would be seen as not entirely serious. Air drops, for instance, are gimmicky and would look like a gimmick. They are not a serious way of delivering supplies. We would not look good just dropping medicines out of a C-130 and not knowing what happens to them. They could turn up on the black market.

Secretary Christopher: What about a one-time surge?

Mr. Lake: Are you also doing an option of lifting the siege of Sarajevo?

General Powell: The French have tossed that out recently. You can take out some artillery. That will make a difference even if not guarantee ending the siege. When the F-16s go home at night the shelling can begin again. Maybe we would luck out and get the same reaction we did by declaring the no fly zone and getting pretty good compliance without enforcement. But to really end the siege would take a full infantry division with air support.

Mr. Berger: What would be the psychological impact on the Serbs of intermittent bombing, of planes taking out batteries on an intermittent basis?

General Powell: I think it would have a deterrent impact. They would have to decide whether to take on the U.S. If they decided to continue the shelling, knowing that we from time to time would get a target would reduce the shelling but not end it.

Mr. Berger: The American people would see a big difference between using force when the parties have asked us to enforce an agreement, and pre-emptive use of force.

General Powell: Also, the relief effort would stop if we used force before a settlement.

Mr. Woolsey: The way the siege was supposed to be ended before was an agreement to put the heavy weapons in cantonments, but within range of Sarajevo. We should require that they move out of range.

Mr. Fuerth: We should insist that the guns be silenced or we will try to silence them, then that they be moved beyond range as part of a settlement.

Mr. Woolsey: Keep in mind the need for NATO agreement if we are to use our planes.

General Powell: If we decided to join the humanitarian effort on the ground, there would be great expectations that the US would force its way through. Field Marshall Dan Rather would criticize us if we did not.

Mr. Lake: What should be our diplomatic strategy?

Secretary Christopher: We should just spread out and do everything. In capitals, by telephone, work on the Bosnians, get the Germans to work on the Croatians and the Russians on the Serbs. Our message to all should be that we are prepared, under a UN and NATO umbrella, to participate in enforcing an agreement, including through the use of force if necessary.

Secretary Aspin: Are the Serbs and Bosnian Serbs the same? How can we bring pressure on all of them?

Secretary Christopher: The Serbs will say "it's not us" but Serbia supplies and ~~controls~~ Serbs. And Russia has a

big influence on Serbia and claims a strong desire to solve the problem peacefully. It would serve Yeltsin's purposes to be effective in bringing about a settlement. The US and Turkey can influence Bosnia. We can change the atmosphere a lot if the US stops sitting on the sidelines.

Mr. Berger: Should we reiterate the warning on Kosovo?

Mr. Lake: How would we tell who was a fault?

Mr. Fuerth: We could elaborate our Christmas demarche, saying we are less interested in who started a riot than in insisting that heavy artillery not be used to put down civil disturbances. We would establish a principle of proportionate response.

Ambassador Albright: What about war crimes?

Secretary Christopher: That will be part of our diplomatic strategy. Part of Madeleine's job is to move it at the UN.

Mr. Berger: Is there a tension or inconsistency between pressing on war crimes and trying to negotiate?

Mr. Lake: We could focus on the grass roots offenders first rather than their leaders who give the commands.

(Speaker unclear in my notes): The US also will take more refugees

Mr. Lake: Jenonne Walker will work with State on a diplomatic, public, and Hill package for the Deputies to review over the weekend. The press package should begin with a roll of the drums: this is what we want and how we are going to achieve it.

Secretary Christopher: We can't do this with backgrounders. We have promised a statement--we've promised a Presidential statement. We should not forego the use of TV if we want to reach the public.

Secretary Aspin, Mr Berger: (Both recommended a Christopher speech, with lots of backgrounding by various officials all speaking from the same prepared text.

Mr. Lake: The sequence should be quick movement from informing allies in capitals, informing Vance and Owen and the Hill, just before the speech on Tuesday or Wednesday.

Secretary Christopher: The US will take the leadership on the diplomatic front to work on Russia to press the Serbs, on Turkey to press the Muslims, and on Germany to press the Croats.

Vice President Gore had joined the meeting a few minutes earlier and Leon Fuerth had been giving him a whispered summary of the group's conclusion, including willingness to help enforce an agreement.

The Vice President: I disagree. The world has let a terrible thing happen in Bosnia, but I always have been very reluctant to use American ground forces and I am sure Bill Clinton will be unless we have absolute objectives. There is

a tension between the word "agree" and "enforce". In that creative tension we might find the parameters of our role. If there truly is an agreement, the requirements of enforcement are minimal. The current Vance/Owen plan would need to be not only enforced but imposed. Then we would have the worst of both worlds. Vance/Owen has a terrible map, and would require lots of American blood and treasure. We do not need to bring to the table a willingness to commit forces. We bring the willingness of the world's leading power to help get a true agreement. We have a great opportunity to position ourselves as the principal spokesman and advocate of a Muslim dominated coalition. In a creative way, we would identify ourselves with the core of the Muslim world. Rabin has spoken out against what is happening in Bosnia. The pressure will build because they are all looking for a way out and looking for an excuse.

Mr. Lake: Yes, to the degree a settlement is imposed, to that degree the requirement to enforce it is greater. But even when they agree, the Croatian experience shows that there still is lots of work to do.

Vice President Gore: We could test their willingness really to agree, for instance by lifting the siege of Sarajevo.

Mr. Lake: At a minimum it will need something on the ground. The more we are prepared to say we will be prepared to help with that, the more we will be taken seriously.

Vice President Gore: There is far more legitimacy to the Bosnian objections to the Vance/Owen map than Vance/Owen agree. Vance/Owen claim that the Bosnians only hold out because they hope we would come in.

Mr. Woolsey: One way to square the circle would be something that was not against Serbia, but against heavy weapons in this conflict. In principle it would be neutral.

Secretary Christopher: We should make an all out effort to persuade and convince the parties rather than impose a settlement. On the other hand, we are not talking about an agreement among three Church groups in California. This is the Balkans. It is not realistic to think that we can do without enforcement, even of a good agreement. To give an air of reality to our position, we have to say that the US will assist in carrying out the enforcement, in conjunction with the UN and NATO.

Vice President Gore: But the American people will not want to send our boys there.

General Powell: The risk of casualties would be relatively low if there is an agreement even by Balkan standards. None of the parties would stand up to a Western force that included the U.S. There would be some snipers or ambushes, but not major resistance.

At this point the President joined the meeting, and Colin Powell described the issue and repeated the last point to him.

General Powell : The nature of a Bosnian agreement will require ground forces. We can punish from the air but not enforce from the air. If there is a reasonably good agreement, even by Balkan standards, the casualties would be acceptable. None of the parties would take on a US/NATO force. There would be snipers, road blocks, ambushes, and the like but it would not be a big deal. It will be expensive. We might luck out and be able to flood the country with troops for a time and then get out.

The President to General Powell: What's your advice?

General Powell: We can perform this mission. But it would be expensive and could be open ended with no promise of getting out. But if we start down the road of diplomatic engagement, we must be willing to help enforce a settlement.

Secretary Christopher: I agree. Vance/Owen as it stands would take a great number of troops to enforce. The alternative is a diplomatic strategy but unless we commit troops it won't get you where you want to go. So we are recommending a middle position, in which we would keep vague just what we will do but commit to some use of American forces.

Secretary Aspin: I agree.

The President: (to General Powell) Can we get out of Somalia first?

General Powell: We could get out of Somalia now if the UN would agree to take it over.

Secretary Christopher: We won't have an agreement in the near term.

The President: About six months?

Secretary Christopher: That's about right

Mr. Woolsey: We should examine whether we could do something useful without troops on the ground. We might limit what we were willing to enforce, agree not to enforce the whole agreement but to prevent the use of heavy weapons. This would mean a no drive zone as well as a no fly zone. It would not be perfect but it would be useful and could be done from the air.

Mr. Berger: There is another possible approach. I don't necessarily recommend it but it should be considered. We could say this is a European problem and they should take responsibility for enforcing a settlement.

The President (interrupting): We can't do that without giving up our whole position in the world.

Mr. Lake: We will prepare a strategy for implementing this policy.

The President and Vice President left the meeting. After a few minutes the meeting resumed to confirm that State, assisted by the Working Group, would prepare the outline of a speech as well

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as cables to key leaders and talking points for telephone calls,  
for consideration by the Deputies Committee.

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