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19 February 1993

MEMORANDUM FOR: Jenonne Walker, NSC Senior Director
for Europe

SUBJECT: Reactions to Secretary Christopher's
10 February Announcement of US Policy
Toward the Former Yugoslavia

Most governments have publicly welcomed the greater US activism, but each player tends to expect a more vigorous US engagement to translate into support for their particular interests. Moreover, there is no international consensus on how to proceed from here.

--The Bosnian factions have not agreed on the details of a peace plan, but each believes US engagement will improve the chance for a resolution on their terms. They are especially glad that the US does not favor imposing a solution, giving each of them a veto over any proposals. The Bosnian Serbs believe the emphasis on diplomacy forestalls foreign military intervention. The Bosnian Muslims, in contrast, hope that it heralds greater involvement, including eventual use of force, by the outside world. The Bosnian Croats see a new diplomatic effort as an opportunity to consolidate the gains they make under the Vance-Owen plan.

--UN officials see greater US involvement as a way to ease the burden on overextended UN financial and personnel resources. Vance and Owen were glad to see that Washington did not totally dismiss their plan, but Owen continues some criticism of the United States--both openly and privately--for undercutting the mediators' efforts.

--West European Allies were also relieved at the emphasis on diplomacy, and they now expect more concrete assistance from Washington, including troops and money to support the peacekeeping force. They remain reluctant, however, to take military steps, including enforcing the no-fly zone. The British insist they will not provide any more troops unless the US does the same. Smaller countries, such as Spain and Belgium, have indicated they would pull their forces out if the level of violence and the risk to their troops increases. The EC is on record as favoring a tightening of economic sanctions.



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--Neighboring Balkan states now look to the United States for more assistance in monitoring sanctions, [redacted] East Europeans also hope that Washington will protect them if their security is threatened as a result of their efforts to support sanctions.

--Russia was flattered to be drawn in as a major player and it supports a renewed diplomatic effort. But because of domestic political pressure and a desire to avoid exacerbating the conflict, Yel'tsin remains opposed to any use of force. Moscow also wants a "balanced" approach that does not single out the Serbs for criticism or pressure and has called for rewarding Serbia for its cooperation by lifting some of the sanctions. Russia probably would contribute to an expanded peacekeeping force.

--Mid-East Muslim countries have been cautious in their reactions until they see more clearly what US involvement entails and how the Bosnian Muslims respond. Turkey, for example, sees US action as a step in the right direction but remains convinced that it will be necessary to use force to roll back Serb aggression and protect the Bosnian Muslims. Muslim governments remain concerned that the Vance-Owen plan puts too much stress on ethnicity as an element of a solution.

--Japan has taken a low profile on the Balkan crisis and has had little to say about the Secretary's speech beyond a general and noncommittal endorsement of continued diplomatic efforts.

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