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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20506Meeting of the Principal CommitteeDATE: April 23, 1994  
LOCATION: Oval Office  
TIME: 1:30 - 2:30pm

SUBJECT: Minutes of PC Meeting on Bosnia (S)

## PARTICIPANTS:

The President

CIA

ADM William Studeman

The Vice President

JCS

GEN John Shalikashvili

The Vice President's Office  
Leon FuerthDIA

ADM Michael W. Kraemer

State

Secretary Warren Christopher

White House

Thomas McLarty

DODSecretary William Perry  
Walter Slocombe

Anthony Lake

David Gergen

George Stephanopoulos

USUN

Ambassador Albright

NSC

Jenonne Walker

Minutes

Admiral Kraemer of DIA described continuing Bosnian Serb attacks on Gorazde despite NATO's ceasefire ultimatum. Mr. Stephanopoulos noted CNN reports of preliminary indications of a Bosnian Serb pullback, which Mr. Lake said UNPROFOR General Rose believes to be the case. The President asked why, if the Bosnian Serbs intended to comply, they had not already done so and Mr. Lake described evidence of serious command and control problems they are experiencing.

General Shalikashvili reviewed NATO actions to date: (1) CINCSOUTH Admiral Smith at 0630 EDT April 23 had asked UNPROFOR agreement to NATO air strikes in response to clear violations of the ceasefire ultimatum but was told by UNPROFOR Deputy Commander McGinnis that both Akashi and de Lapresle were away and the Deputy Commander did not have authority to agree; (2) at 0830 Admiral Smith faxed a written request to UNPROFOR and received no answer; (3) SACEUR General Joulwan sent Admiral Smith to Zagreb for a face to face meeting with UNPROFOR officials at which General de Lepresle said that the threat of NATO air strikes was

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working and Akashi should be given time to get the Bosnian Serbs both to cease shelling Gorazde and to withdraw forces as demanded by NATO. Admiral Smith was now meeting with Akashi to determine the latter's intentions and especially to press for a clear understanding of the conditions for NATO air strikes.

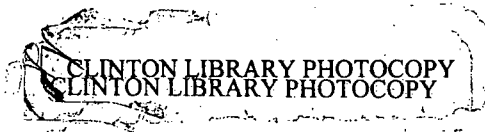
Ambassador Albright reviewed NATO Secretary General Woerner's efforts to persuade Akashi to agree to air strikes and Akashi's plea to Woerner that the Bosnian Serbs should be given more time. She also noted the UN's view that an UNPROFOR presence in Gorazde would permit verification of what is happening and that Akashi had told Kofi Annan that the presence of UNPROFOR should not impede air strikes. Mr. Lake added that Karadzic is claiming that NATO's conditions will be met when UNPROFOR is in Gorazde. He further noted the French refusal to join an UNPROFOR detachment for Gorazde.

The President asked if Akashi in effect had authorized Gorazde to be shelled today. Mr. Lake said our view was that there should have been NATO air strikes today and that should be made public.

Mr. Lake said there was no important operational decision to be taken as to what will happen in the next few hours. The important thing is what we say to UNSYG Boutros Ghali about what should happen after midnight Sunday GMT. His recommendation, accepted by the Group, was to distinguish at that time between continued shelling and compliance with NATO's demand for force withdrawals. If shelling continues, there should be NATO airstrikes. But if the ceasefire is holding and there is evidence that the Bosnian Serbs are withdrawing as demanded by NATO, then we would be in a poor position to push for air strikes. This is so both because the best outcome on the ground would be one similar to Sarajevo--compliance without airstrikes, even if the deadline slips somewhat--and because since there is evidence that Mladic and local Bosnian Serb commanders are calling for a ceasefire and pullback, if NATO conducts airstrikes and if Bosnian Serbs then take UNPROFOR lives, there would be serious problems with London, Paris, and other UNPROFOR governments.

In response to a question from Secretary Christopher, General Shalikhvili said that night operations are possible. In response to a question from the President, the General replied that there would be a little less danger to NATO pilots from some air defense guns but the risk from heat seeking missiles would be about the same as during daytime operations.

Mr. Gergen, who joined the meeting late, noted that he had come from CNN where the public disagreement between NATO and the UN was "going down very badly". But, he continued, there was no pressure to do anything now. People seemed to understand that we should wait until tomorrow morning in Bosnia and, if by then the firing had subsided and a pullback was underway, there would not be strong media pressure for airstrikes.

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The President then concluded that we need some time to see what happens on the ground, but also a credible explanation for the the UN-NATO conflict. That explanation should be as honest as possible without unduly complicating the ability of the two organizations to work together.

Mr. Lake suggested making clear that CINCSOUTH, the USG, and NATO Secretary General Woerner all believed that the Bosnian Serbs were in violation of NATO's ultimatum and that there should be airstrikes; NATO's commander and the UN met during the course of the day; but because they saw evidence that the threat of NATO airstrikes was having the desired effect, UN officials recommended delaying airstrikes. Mr. Berger suggested we make any such statement prospective, emphasizing that NATO's threat still obtains, with which the President agreed.

Secretary Christopher concurred with the decision, but said someone should telephone UNSYG Boutros-Ghali to point out how he has damaged the UN. UN officials had been claiming that procedures for authorizing airstrikes had been streamlined, but had really screwed up.

The President speculated that Rose, de Lapresle and Akashi wanted to avoid airstrikes if at all possible in order to minimize the risk to UN personnel in Bosnia. The question, he continued, is how to avoid the absence of strikes today looking like a major defeat for NATO and the US.

Mr. Lake said that the next four hours do not matter very much; the next 12 hours matters a lot and in the next 12 days most of all.

The Vice President asked if the NATO-UN decision-making procedures have changed. Mr. Lake replied that the "ice breaker" issue has not been resolved. Our position is that it has been broken, but it may not matter because UNPROFOR seems to be consulting Akashi. General Shalikashvili said that the NAC's April 22 decision did not change procedures and UNPROFOR still can keep NATO from conducting air strikes or limit the scope of airstrikes if they do occur. The Vice President termed that "untenable".

Secretary Perry said we need to prepare now so if firing resumes in Gorazde tomorrow we can go in big. Mr. Lake agreed, asking Ambassador Albright to ensure that Boutros Ghali makes clear to all in the UN chain of command that if Gorazde is shelled on Sunday "we whack them". The President asked how best to convey that message: Boutros-Ghali to Akashi? Ambassador Albright said that Boutros-Ghali believed he already had done so.

The President said that it may not be the worst thing in the world not to have conducted airstrikes today, since three of the nations with people on the ground are NATO members, if we can get agreement now to go all out tomorrow if necessary. We must not spend six hours tomorrow repeating today's exercise. Secretary Christopher said he would call Boutros-Ghali. General

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Shalikashvili will ask Admiral Smith to verify that Boutros-Ghali has passed the message to Akashi.

The President said the group should reconvene at 5:00 today, just before the NATO deadline expires. We dodged a bullet today, he noted, but we cannot permit the same thing to happen tomorrow.

Secretary Christopher suggested we say there was some confusion today; Secretary Perry that the policy is working because we are getting compliance. The Vice President and Mr. Lake suggested it had not worked well for those who died from continued Serb shelling today. Mr. Lake said we should just lay out the facts without characterizing them, including by saying there had been confusion.

Mr. Gerqen said we would need to background the press today, especially on the UN veto of NATO airstrikes. The President said the UN had not vetoed; it honestly believed the policy was being complied with and wanted a delay when NATO wanted immediate action, but did not veto the basic decision. Dumping on someone on background, the President continued, hurts us tomorrow; it only makes us look weak. So we should stick to facts: we were ready to go this morning, the UN thought NATO's ultimatum was working and made a decision not to undermine the policy but to delay it. If we get into a pissing match with the UN it will make us look weak. We believed there was a violation and the UN did not disagree.

The Vice President asked what criteria would trigger NATO strikes. Mr. Lake said (1) clear violation of the ceasefire must be responded to and that means any shelling by heavy weapons rather than small arms fire; (2) absence of clear sign that the Bosnian Serbs are doing all they can to comply with the withdrawal demand and UNPROFOR troops are permitted into Gorazde area to see it.

General Shalikashvili said that if NATO strikes, its targets must not be limited to offending guns but should include groups of targets. Mr. Lake agreed, saying the targeting should be pursuant to NATO's decision. General Shalikashvili said we have identified 110 Bosnian Serb heavy weapons around Gorazde, and within a day or so would like to hit all of them.

The President asked what he should say to the press when walking back to Blair House. The Vice President recommended that he avoid comment. Mr. Lake said he would background the press.

The President closed the meeting by asking the group to reconvene at 5:00.

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