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*National Intelligence Council***SPECIAL ESTIMATE**

Ending US Compliance With the Bosnian Arms Embargo: Military and Political Implications

A unilateral US decision to suspend compliance with the embargo and arm Bosnian Government forces would intensify the fighting in Bosnia. It would not make a substantial difference on the battlefield unless heavy weapons, extensive training, and logistic support were included. Outside ground and air force intervention would be needed to defend vulnerable Bosnian positions until government forces were prepared to conduct effective multiunit offensive operations. The Bosnian Government's war aims would escalate, leading it to defer diplomatic solutions to the conflict. Bosnian Serb forces would strike quickly after a US decision by launching major attacks to disrupt arms deliveries and would harass, detain and perhaps attack remaining UNPROFOR units. Belgrade would resume full support to the Bosnian Serbs to prevent their defeat. Allied confidence in US leadership could suffer if prior agreements were not reached, especially with Britain and France. Russia would condemn the decision and violate existing embargoes against Serbia

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For purposes of this Estimate, we assume that the United States decides not to enforce the embargo against the Bosnian Government (and presumably Croatia), and that it decides to provide arms and training to Bosnian Government forces. In addition, we define success as a Bosnian Government that can protect itself without UNPROFOR, defend isolated Bosnian enclaves, and seize and control much of the territory allocated to it in the Contact Group plan.

More Arms for the Bosnian Government

Bosnian Government forces have improved substantially over the last two years and are now better prepared to absorb additional military equipment. For several months, limited amounts of small arms and ammunition from Iran and other Muslim countries have been reaching government forces, but this aid has not been enough to enable them to retake and hold substantial territory now held by the Bosnian Serbs. Without an increased flow of arms, government forces probably could defend only their core areas in northern and central Bosnia against an all-out Bosnian Serb Army (BSA) assault.

A US decision unilaterally to cease enforcement of the arms embargo and supply weapons to Bosnian Government forces would increase the flow and reduce the costs of equipment for the government. Soviet-style weapons, readily available on the world arms market, would be most easily and rapidly integrated by government forces:

- A steady flow of light weaponry and munitions would enable Bosnian Government forces to inflict heavier casualties and regain modest amounts of territory.

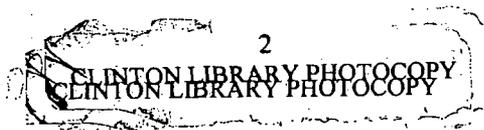
Even with additional heavy arms, Bosnian Government forces would continue to be hampered by a general lack of training and an inexperienced leadership that has had difficulty planning and executing large-scale, multiunit, offensive operations:

- We judge that enough heavy weapons to equip six to 10 brigades with 100 to 200 tanks, 60 to 100 armored personnel carriers, 200 to 300 heavy artillery pieces over 100 mm, and 25 to 40 multiple rocket launchers would be required to retake significant amounts of territory without weakening current Bosnian Government defenses.
- The Army will require six months to one year of training and logistic support to make effective use of new types of weaponry, particularly tanks and large-caliber artillery, in large-scale, combined arms, offensive operations.

The Bosnian Government's pursuit of its war aims is likely to intensify if the United States begins to supply arms, and it would show even less interest in a diplomatic solution to the conflict. Instead, fighting would escalate as the government sought a military victory that allowed it to control substantially more territory than allocated in the Contact Group's plan.

Bosnian Serb Responses

The Bosnian Serb Army would strike long before large-scale deliveries of arms to

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government forces could be effected. The BSA would attempt to cut off Tuzla and Sarajevo, seize the eastern enclaves, and interdict Bosnian Government lines of communication. It would be unable to destroy the Bosnian Government Army, however.

Remaining UNPROFOR units, especially those isolated in enclaves, would almost certainly be detained by BSA elements seeking human shields against air attacks. Withdrawing UNPROFOR units—including virtually all the Europeans—would be harassed and obstructed. Units opting to continue their mission—primarily the Muslim contingents—would be subject to especially violent attacks:

- Europeans would hold the United States responsible for the safe evacuation of European UNPROFOR contingents. US support for UNPROFOR evacuation would require extensive heavy lift, air transport, air cover, and possibly ground troops.

If our judgments on Bosnian Serb reactions are correct, outside air and ground forces would be needed to protect eastern enclaves and Sarajevo from BSA attack as well as to secure vital lines of communication to these areas. Their participation would be required until government forces were adequately prepared to conduct large-scale combat operations independently.

Regional Spillover

Belgrade probably would not directly intervene simply because the United States lifted its arms embargo. It would, however, abandon efforts to blockade the Bosnian Serbs and allow increased logistic support to them, especially fuel and replacement equipment, to offset improvements in government forces. The Yugoslav Army would intervene if government forces began making substantial gains.

Serbia would be unlikely to undertake provocative action in Macedonia while fighting escalated in Bosnia. Greater US involvement in the region, however, could prompt ethnic Albanians in Kosovo to stage an uprising against Serbia and proclaim independence.

Croatia would be crucial to any plan to lift the arms embargo. Croatian support can be had for a price; it will expect compensation in weaponry, increased political and economic assistance from the West, and US help to regain the Krajina. The Croatian Government still would attempt to limit the amount and type of equipment supplied to government forces that could present a long-term threat to Bosnian Croats. Over the longer term, lifting the arms embargo would feed Croat suspicions about Muslim intentions and could further undermine the fragile Croat-Muslim federation:

- In an attempt to prevent or complicate arms shipments via Croatia, Bosnian Serbs might coordinate operations with Krajina Serbs, risking a reopening of the war in Croatia.

Impact on Humanitarian Aid

Although many aid agencies will pull out in the event of a US decision to end its arms embargo, enough will remain to service northern and central Bosnia. Aid to that region does not pass through Bosnian Serb-held territory.

Delivery of aid to the eastern enclaves and Sarajevo will be problematic. These areas cannot be reached by road; airdrop risks will increase, given the virtual certainty that the BSA would seek to down aircraft participating in humanitarian relief. Sarajevo would have enough food to survive the winter, thanks to efforts by black marketeers, but would be cut off from electricity and gas:

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- Intensified fighting would increase the number of refugees that required assistance. In a worst case, if one of the eastern enclaves falls in winter, thousands of refugees will die.

The Broader Implications

A unilateral US move—without prior agreements, especially with Britain and France, on the future of UNPROFOR forces—could damage allied confidence in Washington's leadership of the NATO alliance. Turkey would be the only NATO ally to support the action. Other alliance partners would object and move immediately to withdraw peacekeeping contingents from Bosnia. Calming Greece's hypernationalism and growing Greco-Turkish tensions would be even more difficult, and European and Balkan misgivings over Muslim Bosnia would become more pronounced.

Yel'tsin would condemn a US decision to lift its embargo to preempt hardliners who sought to exploit this issue. Russia also would openly and extensively violate the existing embargoes against Serbia, effectively breaking its pattern of cooperation with the United States on the Yugoslav problem:

- Eastern Europe would be reluctant to publicly support the United States but might use the move to sell arms in the region while reestablishing commercial links to Serbia.
- US actions would legitimize Iran's role in the region as an arms supplier to the Bosnian Government.
- Resolutions condemning US unilateralism would ensue but are unlikely to pass in either the Security Council or General Assembly. Existing UN embargoes and sanction regimes, including those against Iraq, would be weakened.

What Could Affect the Outcome?

- *Conditioning arms shipments to the Bosnian Government by threatening to cut them off, should its forces go beyond the Contact Group allocation, might reassure Western Allies that a diplomatic solution could still be possible.*
- *Easing economic sanctions on Serbia might blunt the Russian Government's criticism and could create an incentive for Belgrade to keep some distance from the Bosnian Serbs and agree to the placement of observers on the Bosnian-Serb border.*
- *A US ground presence in Bosnia might convince the British and French to keep some of their UNPROFOR forces in Bosnia, thereby increasing the chances of isolating the Bosnian Serbs and sustaining the flow of humanitarian relief.*

On the plus side, US unilateral moves will be welcomed in the Muslim world, especially by Turkey.

This Special Estimate was prepared under the auspices of the National Intelligence Officer for General Purpose Forces and the National Intelligence Officer for Europe and was coordinated with the Deputy Director for Intelligence, Central Intelligence Agency; the Director, Defense Intelligence Agency; the Director, National Security Agency; and the Assistant Secretary for Intelligence and Research, Department of State; the Deputy Chief of Staff for Intelligence, Department of the Army; the Director of Naval Intelligence, Department of the Navy; and the Assistant Chief of Staff, Intelligence, Department of the Air Force.

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