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MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Intelligence

FROM: Chief, DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

SUBJECT: Principals' Committee Meeting on Bosnia
17 March 1995

1. Tomorrow's Principals-only meeting will focus on the recently-initiated review of US policy toward the former Yugoslavia, possible initiatives to avoid renewed fighting in Bosnia, nailing down details of the new UN force for Croatia, and required next steps for prepositioning of NATO forces in Croatia. You will not be required to take the lead on any issue or to deliver an intelligence update.

-- At the pre-brief, the BTF will provide you with talking points keyed to the agenda items and any late-breaking developments. [REDACTED]

2. Policymakers have been seized this week with implementing the agreement Assistant Secretary Holbrooke negotiated with Tudjman. A number of hurdles need to be overcome. Talks at the UN on a new mandate resolution, for example, have revealed differences between the US and some of the allies, as well as growing Croatian concern-[REDACTED]-that the resolution will not reflect Zagreb's understanding of its agreement with the US. Finally, the Serbs have yet to state whether they will reject the new UN Forces in Croatia (UNFIC). A key issue remains the extent to which the new UN force will "control" Croatia's border crossings with Bosnia and the FRY.

-- [REDACTED] the Croatians believe they can cancel the new mandate at any time if there is evidence that military supplies continue to cross the border. (State Department officials involved in the talks continue to maintain-[REDACTED]-that Tudjman understands that the border force will not be effective in stopping military traffic.)

-- The State Department prepared an interpretation of the Holbrooke-Tudjman agreement in response to questions from Krajina Serb "President" Martić that clearly is designed to win Serb acceptance of the new force. Specifically, it says that the force would assist in "controlling" the border by "monitoring and reporting" on the crossing of military goods, that it would not be deployed against the will of either party, and that

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Washington believes the Vance Plan remains operative for Croatia.

The CROATIA AGREEMENT TAB includes our assessment of the difficulties involved in creating a new mandate and developments that could cause the whole thing to unravel sooner rather than later. It also includes an assessment--prepared in response to a request from DAS Bob Frasure--that the Krajina Serbs ultimately will accept a border force if it is small and focused on "monitoring." The INTERNATIONAL REACTIONS TAB includes background materials on European and Russian views. [REDACTED]

3. Transforming UNPROFOR into UNFIC will involve a number of challenges (see the ESTABLISHING UNFIC TAB). In addition to probable difficulties in defining UNFIC's role in "controlling" or "monitoring" crossing points, some troop contributors will insist on a unified command for all of the former Yugoslavia, and it may be difficult to develop a force of sufficient size if Croatia insists that only Western troops be included. The withdrawal of significant numbers of UN troops as UNPROFOR transforms itself may be accompanied by increased skirmishing between the two sides.

-- Tensions have increased along the confrontation line. In a reflection of Serb concern about the possibility of conflict, [REDACTED] Milosevic authorized the deployment to the Krajina late last month of a special Interior Ministry unit to help train Krajina Serb forces and assist in any fighting. [REDACTED]

4. In terms of the overall US policy review, TAB A under MEETING PAPERS includes the latest version of NSC Director Vershbow's paper. The paper notes that earlier discussions revealed a consensus against taking more forceful measures to support the Bosnian Muslims or to punish the Bosnian Serbs and Serbians. Vershbow raises the concern, however, that the favored more limited "muddle through" containment policy might not work given the Muslim determination to fight and inevitable Congressional pressure to lift the arms embargo once the war escalates and the CNN factor sets in.

-- The key area of contention remains whether the US should continue the present policy of supporting the Muslims (State position), or shift to a more neutral position and urge the Muslims to scale back their expectations for a political settlement (DoD position). [REDACTED]

5. For the short-term, Principals will consider how to avoid renewed fighting in Bosnia. Izetbegovic, Silajdzic, and Karadzic have all stated publicly in the last few days

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that the cease-fire will not be extended beyond 30 April. State was tasked to prepare a paper for the meeting with ideas for avoiding conflict, which we have not yet received.

- One obvious way to put pressure on the Muslims to extend the cease-fire would be to cut off the flow of weapons to them. (This option probably will not appear in the State paper!) [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

A. Norman Schindler

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