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MEMORANDUM FOR MADELEINE ALBRIGHT
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FROM: SANDY BERGER

SUBJECT: Bosnia Strategy

At their informal meeting on Wednesday, Principals asked the Deputies to review our medium- and long-term strategy for Bosnia on the basis of the attached NSC paper, with a view toward formulating recommendations or options for the President. The paper is extremely sensitive and should be held closely.

I have scheduled a Deputies' meeting for Saturday, July 22 at 3:00-4:00. Attendance will be Principals plus one.

Attachment

Tab A July 17 NSC paper: Bosnia Endgame Strategy

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July 17, 1995

BOSNIA ENDGAME STRATEGY

Summary: With the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa, we need to make an all-out effort in the coming weeks to restabilize the situation on the ground, restore UNPROFOR's credibility in Sarajevo, Central Bosnia and Gorazde (see separate paper), and press for a realistic diplomatic settlement this year. If this effort fails, we should let UNPROFOR collapse this year and help the Bosnians obtain the military capabilities needed to level the playing field. This would be underpinned during a one-year transition period by air strikes to protect Sarajevo and the other safe areas, reinforced if possible by an UNPROFOR successor force based on a coalition of the willing. Following the transition, the Bosnians would be on their own.

Restabilization post-Srebrenica and Zepa: We have little time to devise and implement steps to strengthen UNPROFOR and halt the pattern of increasingly aggressive Serb behavior. If we do not change the status quo, the Serbs will move on Gorazde and renew the strangulation of Sarajevo, and the French will likely decide to withdraw -- leading to UNPROFOR's collapse and a protracted NATO withdrawal operation in circumstances that will represent a defeat for the UN and the Alliance. It will also guarantee passage of unilateral lift by the Congress in a manner that will damage relations with our allies and make it impossible to sustain a Presidential veto.

Our priority is to shore up UNPROFOR in Sarajevo and Central Bosnia by reducing its vulnerability, using the RRF to open secure routes to Sarajevo, and making more aggressive use of NATO air power (under a single key) to halt Serb artillery attacks on the exclusion zones. We should also support efforts to deter a Serb attack on Gorazde, recognizing that a U.S. contribution to this effort may be needed to prevent a French decision to pull out. In order for this strategy to succeed, we need to persuade the Bosnian Government that it is in its interest to keep UNPROFOR even if this means writing off Srebrenica and Zepa and concentrating UNPROFOR's efforts in Sarajevo and Central Bosnia. We would also need to be sure, before embarking on steps to protect Gorazde, that Bosnian forces will defend the enclave, since even a reinforced UNPROFOR presence is not capable of doing this on its own.

Pressing for a political settlement this year: The best way of avoiding an UNPROFOR withdrawal and the new challenges of a post-withdrawal strategy would be to make an all-out effort at obtaining a political settlement this year. The strengthened UNPROFOR and more aggressive use of NATO air power described above will restore some of the leverage we have lost over the past year vis-à-vis the Bosnian Serbs. But we will also need to offer some new inducements to break the logjam surrounding "acceptance" of the Contact Group plan. The loss of Srebrenica and Zepa may open the way to more realistic territorial solutions, and we will need to have a heart-to-heart discussion with the Bosnians aimed at eliciting greater flexibility on the map, constitutional arrangements, and possibly the Bosnian Serbs' right to secede from the Union after an initial period. We will also need to sweeten our offers to Milosevic in order to encourage him to put real pressure on the Bosnian Serbs. At Annex I is a more detailed gameplan for an early diplomatic breakthrough.

Supporting Bosnia's Survival post-UNPROFOR: If the last-ditch effort to obtain a settlement fails and/or we fail to restabilize the situation on the ground, we will need to face up to the issue of UNPROFOR withdrawal (including how to mitigate the risks of OPLAN 40104 and secure Congressional support) and implementing a post-withdrawal strategy. Indeed, it would be preferable to face these issues this year rather than having to implement a messy and protracted NATO withdrawal operation in the middle of the election campaign, when the parties will have an

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even greater incentive to embarrass us or try to draw us into the conflict. **We should begin consulting with our key Allies now on our post-withdrawal strategy** in order to bolster their resolve to strengthen UNPROFOR in the short term, and to force them to face up to their responsibility to help support Bosnia's survival if withdrawal must occur.

Leveling the playing field: Our post-withdrawal strategy should have as its goal providing the Bosnians with sufficient military capability to survive the immediate Serb onslaught, consolidate their authority over Sarajevo and Central Bosnia and, within a short period of time, to begin to regain territory allotted to them under the Contact Group proposal. This would make the ultimate resolution of the conflict the result of a balance of power on the ground rather than dependent on the actions of the international community.

- Our preferred approach would be to lift the arms embargo multilaterally through passage of a UNSC resolution, perhaps part of the same resolution terminating UNPROFOR's mandate and authorizing withdrawal. Our allies have indicated they will go along with lift after UNPROFOR withdrawal. To secure a Russian abstention, we would, at a minimum, need to make the lift applicable to all republics of the former Yugoslavia (including Serbia-Montenegro), and we might also need to accept substantial sanctions relief for Belgrade as well.

Additional Support during the Transition: Although the Bosnians are stronger now than when we first pushed lift-and-strike in 1993, until they acquire and assimilate new arms, they will still need additional support to survive the Serbs' preemptive offensives. At a minimum, we will need to help the Bosnians ensure the survival of Sarajevo as the linchpin of a future Bosnian state. Therefore, for a one-year transition period, we would:

- Press our NATO Allies to continue enforcing the no-fly zone, to deprive the Serbs of air superiority (this would, of course, require preemptive SEAD); as a fallback, we would enforce the NFZ through a coalition of the willing.
- Conduct aggressive air strikes against a broad range of Bosnian Serb military targets to protect Sarajevo (and possibly the other remaining safe areas) against Serb artillery attacks. This would preferably be done through NATO or, if our allies refused to renew the NATO mandate post-UNPROFOR, through a U.S.-led coalition of the willing. The air strikes would be based on new UNSC authority (since existing authority under 836 and 844 is tied to UNPROFOR) or, as a fallback, on a Bosnian Government request for collective self-defense. Forward air controllers would be provided by members of the UNPROFOR successor force, if available (see below), since we would want to avoid assigning this function to the Bosnian Government. We would limit the commitment to Sarajevo and possibly the other safe areas to avoid becoming full-scale combatants; in any case, Bosnian ground forces, with HVO cooperation, can hold their own in Central Bosnia.

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- **Support the deployment of a successor force to UNPROFOR** to reinforce the Bosnians' hold on Sarajevo and the other safe areas, and to continue to promote stability in Federation-controlled areas of Central Bosnia. Such a force would be a coalition of the willing composed of those UNPROFOR contributors willing to remain plus new forces from Islamic countries (except states like Iran -- the Bosnians would have to agree to rule that out). If possible, the force would be deployed under a Chapter VII UN mandate with the explicit mission of supporting Bosnia against Serb aggression. Otherwise, the force would deploy at the request of the Bosnian Government, invoking Article 51 of the UN Charter. (The humiliating prospect of Islamic countries taking the place of European countries in solving a European problem could prompt some of our Allies to stay and participate in the successor force.)

We would set a time limit of one year (end of 1996) on the NFZ and air strike commitments, making clear to the Bosnians that once the playing field is leveled, they are on their own. The mandate of the successor force could extend beyond a year if the coalition members were willing. In addition to providing arms and training to reinforce the Bosnians' ground force capabilities, we would ensure they obtained effective air defenses to counter Serb air capabilities when the NFZ lapsed.

Keeping Belgrade Out: Leveling the playing field becomes a much more formidable challenge if Belgrade intervenes on a large scale in support the Bosnian Serbs. We would offer **substantial sanctions relief** to induce Milosevic to stay out, **fully seal the border**, and **accept a much larger international monitoring force**. We could also encourage Milosevic by brokering a mutually favorable deal with Tudjman over the Krajina and Sector East (see below). We would at the same time **warn Milosevic that, if we detect Serbian military support, we will use air power** against Serbian forces operating inside Bosnia and against the Drina bridges and other supply routes, and that we do not rule out strikes against military targets inside Serbia.

Regional containment strategy: As we moved to arm the Bosnians, we would need to take a range of steps to prevent a widening of the conflict to other parts of the region, to include:

- Reinforcing UNPREDEP in Macedonia to deter Serbian border encroachments and a new crackdown in Kosovo, together with a reaffirmation of our warnings to Milosevic regarding air strikes against Serbia in the event he provokes armed conflict in Kosovo;
- Strengthening UNCRO and providing increased economic assistance to Croatia to discourage Tudjman from launching a full-scale war in Krajina in the near term (while at the same time encouraging continued low-level attrition operations that could help limit Krajina Serb support to the Bosnian Serbs);
- Possibly going even further to broker a Belgrade-Zagreb deal whereby Milosevic would abandon the Krajina (Sectors North and South) to Tudjman in return for a piece of Sector East and assurances regarding Bosnian Serb confederation with the FRY following a settlement; and
- Possibly deploying preventive peacekeeping forces along Hungary's and Albania's borders with the FRY.

We would, at the same time, intensify our efforts to **sustain the Federation and Bosnian-Croat military cooperation**. And we would make clear that we stand ready to **broker a political settlement and assist in its implementation**, although at this stage we would jettison the Contact Group approach and devise a new basis for the negotiations.

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Annex I: Gameplan for a Diplomatic Breakthrough in 1995

To achieve an agreement this year that reflects the changing strategic realities, we will need to adapt elements of the Contact Group plan while preserving its essential core as the starting point.

- We would begin with a **heart-to-heart talk with the Bosnians**, stressing that, in light of the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa and renewed Western readiness for tougher action, they must think more realistically about the shape of a settlement (map, constitutional arrangements, even 51:49). They also need to bend in their demand that the Serbs "accept" the CG plan as the "starting point" and agree to at least exploratory CG contacts or proximity talks with Pale.
- In talks with Pale, we would float **possible modifications to the Contact Group map**. At the outset, these would preserve the 51:49 ratio, but provide for a more compact and cohesive territory for the Federation (e.g. trading Srebrenica, Zepa -- and possibly Gorazde -- plus a widening of the Posavina corridor for full Federation control over Sarajevo and additional territory in central Bosnia). Consistent with a recent Silajdzic proposal to Juppé, we could state that up to 10 percent of the Contact Group map was subject to renegotiation.
- Ultimately, we should be prepared to **press the Bosnians to accept less than 51% if they can** obtain higher-quality territory and more defensible Federation frontiers in Central Bosnia.
- We would, similarly, **develop the Contact Group's proposed constitutional principles** to show the Serbs the amount of autonomy their republic would have within the Union and the scope of the "parallel special relationship" with Serbia.
- If necessary, we would press the Bosnians to agree that the Serbs can conduct a **referendum on secession after 2-3 years**, as had been agreed in the 1993 *Invincible* package. We would argue that, if the Bosnians cannot persuade the Serb population that their best future lies in reintegration, there is no point in blocking the *peaceful* separation of the Union along the lines of the Czechoslovak model.
- We would propose to the Allies and Russians mutual participation in funding a **post-settlement "mini-Marshall Plan" for the Balkans, including the prospect of EU association agreements**, designed to foster regional economic recovery and integration and thereby give all parties a stake in peace.

In tandem with these steps, we and our Contact Group partners should tell Milosevic the time has come for him to put up or shut up, i.e. that:

- We will terminate the current sanctions relief in September if he has not recognized Bosnia and taken visible action to terminate military support for Pale (and Knin);
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- Moreover, if sanctions relief is terminated and the ICFY mission departs, any resumption of large-scale support for Pale will be met not only by a tightening of economic sanctions against the FRY, but by U.S. or NATO air strikes against the Drina bridges and key supply routes.
 - At the same time, in conjunction with the threat of terminating sanctions relief for non-compliance, we would **increase the rewards offered to Milosevic for initial positive steps**, such as suspending all non-strategic trade sanctions if he recognizes Bosnia and/or really seals the border, and perhaps lifting vice suspending a few of the phase-one sanctions.

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