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18 May 1995

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Central Intelligence

FROM: Chief, DCI Interagency Balkan Task Force

SUBJECT: Principals' Committee Meeting on Bosnia and Croatia, 19 May 1995, 1430-1630 EDT

1. Tomorrow's Principals' Committee meeting is supposed to focus on "unanswered policy questions" related to OPLAN 40104, whether the US should even continue to support the plan, and what type of UNPROFOR the US should support. Compared with recent meetings, this discussion could prove to be more general and force consideration by the Principals of where they see the conflict in Bosnia going and what role the US should play.

- You will not be required to take the lead on any agenda item.
- However, given developments on the ground, you may be called on to assess the fighting around Sarajevo and the status of the Croatian withdrawal from the zones of separation. The Task Force will provide you with talking points on these and other issues during the pre-brief. [REDACTED]

2. The NSC paper prepared for the meeting (see TAB A under MEETING PAPERS) points to the need for a review of fundamental principles: "We are in a critical period for US policy toward Bosnia that could see the withdrawal of UNPROFOR and the introduction of NATO/US ground forces for a mission whose outcome is uncertain." The paper suggests that UNPROFOR is no longer able to perform its mandate and, under the circumstances, poses the question of whether the US should continue to support an UNPROFOR presence. After considering options other than an UNPROFOR withdrawal, it concludes that the only realistic option is to seek Allied support for an UNPROFOR pull-back from vulnerable positions, coupled with more robust enforcement of the remaining mandate, including NATO airstrikes.

- UNPROFOR, in our view, may still have more utility than the NSC paper suggests. The paper says that UNPROFOR is unable to ensure delivery of humanitarian assistance. True, there are problems with the airlift and blockage of some convoys. But convoys are getting through and, other than parts of the Bihac pocket, there are no serious humanitarian problems.

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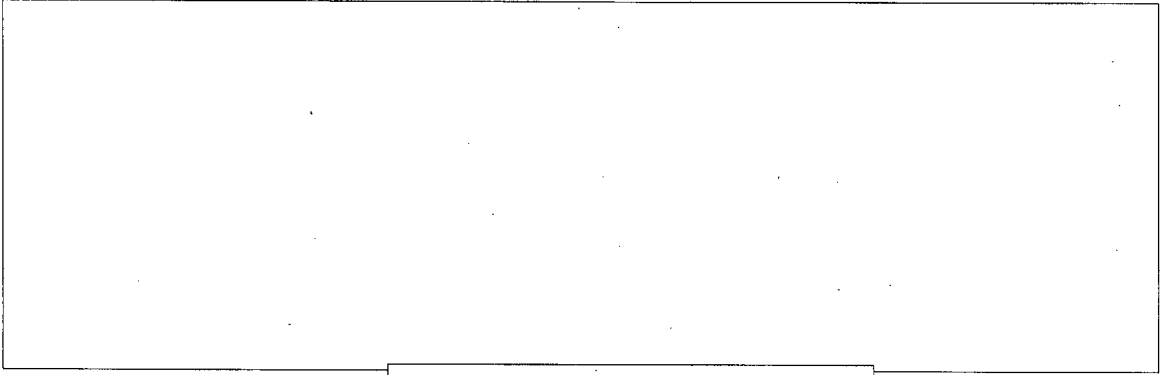
- The paper fails to acknowledge that many of UNPROFOR's problems--in particular, the recent increase in fighting--result from Muslim-initiated military offensives that the Serbs are responding to. Containing the conflict in Bosnia, in our view, requires putting pressure on both sides.
- We assess that maintenance of an international presence in Bosnia is essential in containing the conflict.
- The "retrench and reinvigorate" option for UNPROFOR that the NSC paper recommends is not the worst of the four options in terms of heightening the risks of a widening of the conflict, but it would endanger the eastern enclaves. The "muddle through" approach, in our view, may be the best option in terms of containing the conflict--at least for now. [REDACTED]

3. Principals will also consider a number of unanswered policy questions related to implementation of OPLAN 40104. These relate to how the NATO force would respond to various contingencies once it is deployed (for example, would it help evacuate citizens from the eastern enclaves or prevent the enclaves from being overrun by the Serbs), and what type of post-UNPROFOR Bosnia we would like to see? The OSD paper contained in TAB D under MEETING PAPERS suggests a very limited mandate for the NATO force in which its sole purpose would be to evacuate UNPROFOR. The force would not evacuate civilians, would not defend the enclaves against Serb attack, and would take all necessary means to defend itself if attacked.

- The NSC representative to the Bosnia IWG has expressed concern that this limited mandate would not be politically do-able. He has painted a scenario in which Administration officials would need to, in effect, ask Congress to expend significant funds for a NATO operation in which 20,000-plus US ground troops would be deployed to Bosnia to assist the Serbs in overrunning the eastern enclaves.
 - These concerns have led some in the Administration to wonder whether we should continue to support OPLAN 40104. In their view, if we do support it, we need to get serious about planning for implementation. If we do not support it, we need to develop alternatives, including one in which no NATO forces are used. [REDACTED]
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A. Norman Schindler

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