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Dealing with the Terrorist Threat to U.S. ForcesBackground

Article III of Annex 1A of the Dayton agreement stipulates that "all foreign forces, including individual advisors, freedom fighters, trainers, volunteers, and personnel from neighboring and other states, shall be withdrawn from the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina." Withdrawal must take place within 30 days after the agreement comes into force.

The greatest threat to U.S. forces in Bosnia is posed by three main groups:

- *The Mujahedin.* These are a ragtag, but highly motivated assortment of Islamic volunteers from outside Bosnia, who view the conflict as a jihad. The mujahedin, whose presence is estimated at 300-1,500, were used by the Bosnian army as shock troops. Approximately 400 have already been absorbed in the Bosnia army. The Bosnian government apparently intends to absorb as many as possible, distributing them throughout the army's force structure. Mujahedin motivation, lack of discipline, and scattered connections to terrorist groups make them the most immediate threat.
- *Iran's Presence.* There are 350-400 Iranian Revolutionary Guard Corps personnel in Bosnia to train the Bosnian army. The IRGC is one of the Iranian services responsible for carrying out assassinations and other terrorist mission outside of Iran. Iran's intelligence service, MOIS, has a pervasive presence in Bosnia and enjoys easy access to senior officials in the Bosnian government. MOIS has carried out preparations for kidnapping or murdering Americans and may have been responsible for the murder of an American UNPROFOR employee, William Jefferson.

The Intelligence Community believes that the most serious threat to U.S. forces will be the presence of Iranian MOIS and IRGC operatives in and around Zenica.

- *Islamic Groups.* Both Shia and Sunni groups in Bosnia pose a threat to U.S. forces. Hizbollah has an established presence in Bosnia. Anwar Shaban, a key Islamic Group terrorist, now operates in Bosnia as well. Shaban is a disciple of Sheikh Umar Abd el Rahman and is judged highly likely to attack U.S. citizens when the Sheikh receives the lengthy prison sentence

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the court is expected to hand down next month. Shaban's group is regarded as extremely dangerous. There is evidence that Shaban is in effect under Bosnian protection.

What We Have Said

The Bosnian Government has declared its intention to meet its obligations under the Dayton Agreement. We have since made it clear to Izetbegovic and Sacirbey that foreign forces must be expelled within 30 days after the agreement is signed. Izetbegovic gave us his assurances that this would be done. Izetbegovic, however, seemed to refer only to a small group of 200 mujahedin, as against our much larger estimate the Mujahedin presence. He did not allude to the full array of threats facing U.S. forces. Indeed, we have had no reassurance from Izetbegovic that he intends to eliminate the official Iranian presence, or the Sunni extremist groups in Bosnia. Moreover, the dispersion of foreign mujahedin units into Bosnian army formations suggests that he does not intend to expel the bulk of the mujahedin presence.

We should be under no illusion that our demand for the withdrawal of Iran's official presence will be easy for Izetbegovic to carry out. Iran will resist pressure for its withdrawal and will mobilize Islamic diplomatic support on the basis of their extensive prior support for Bosnia and the supposed ambiguity of the Accord as it relates to the nature of Iran's presence in Bosnia.

Bosnia has an ongoing reason for preserving Iran's presence; in October, Tehran pledged \$47 million for Bosnian arms procurement. This commitment to Bosnia coming after three years of support when no other country was meeting Bosnia's defense needs has engendered a strong sympathy for Iran among officials close to Izetbegovic, including Army chief of staff Delic.

What We Want

Within 30 days we would want the following groups removed from Bosnia, whether or not they are covered by the Dayton Agreement:

- Pakistani, Malaysian, Egyptian, Afghan and other foreign mujahedin;
- Iranian personnel associated with the MOIS and IRGC; and
- Members of other extremist groups including the IG and Hizbollah, including branches of Hizbollah or other groups that are ostensibly providing humanitarian assistance or schooling.

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In addition, we would want Bosnia to formally end its arms procurement relationship with Iran and close down training camps operated by proscribed groups.

30-Day Gameplan

First, we would share with Izetbegovic, within the limits of imposed by concern for sources and methods, what we know about the presence of Iranian and other terrorist threats to the U.S. presence in Bosnia. We would make it clear that:

- We expect the Bosnian Government to comply with the Dayton agreement ban on foreign forces.
- U.S. policy requires that the Bosnian Government go beyond the terms of the Dayton agreement to expel Iranian officials and representatives of other extremist groups. This will also require a halt to Bosnian-Iranian arms procurement and training.
- Our ability to block military and economic assistance gives us leverage we are prepared to use.
- We will hold Bosnia responsible for any attacks carried out against U.S. forces by groups we had identified as threats.

We would ask the allies to demarche the Bosnian government along the same lines.

Second, our initial approach to Izetbegovic would be followed up by a strong and explicit Presidential letter and/or phone call emphasizing Bosnia's responsibility for the security of U.S. forces against terrorist attack by any foreign personnel within Bosnia.

Third, we would seek support for this position from Allies and moderate Islamic states. To the extent we can multilateralize this leverage, the better able we will be to bear down on Izetbegovic.

Fourth, we need to get Croatia to cooperate by urging Zagreb to deny refuge to Iranians leaving Bosnia and block the transshipment of Iranians arms. Croatia's large outstanding economic debt to Iran, however, may impede its cooperation in this area.

Fifth, we will need to assure Izetbegovic that we are holding the Serbs equally responsible for expelling unauthorized forces on their side. Arkan's Tigers, in particular, are a threat to U.S. forces and civilian populations. We intend to see them out of Bosnia.

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Sixth, we will need to reassure Izetbegovic that we will ensure that Bosnian forces are equipped and trained and that economic reconstruction is carried out, when we have verified that the Bosnia Government has: (a) met the terms of the Dayton agreement with regard to withdrawal of foreign and unauthorized forces; and (b) expelled Iranian officials and other proscribed groups.

Post-30-Day Gameplan

Augmented intelligence collection and a large initial troop presence in Bosnia should enable us to know whether the Bosnians are complying. We will need to make a systematic effort, however, to track and monitor the status of groups and individuals we have identified. This effort should be continuous, with the list of violators updated and transmitted to the Bosnian government on a regular basis.

In deciding how to respond to noncompliance, we will have to determine whether we are dealing with Bosnian unwillingness or incapacity.

If the Bosnian Government is unwilling, we would put equip and train on hold and withhold disbursement of economic assistance.

If the Bosnian Government is willing but unable to expel proscribed groups, and any of these groups actively threatens or attacks U.S. personnel, we would use force against the threatening elements.

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FROM: NSC - A. Vershbow (NAME) [Redacted] (PHONE NUMBER) 368 OE0B (ROOM NO.)

MESSAGE DESCRIPTION: Paper for December 5 PC on Bosnia

TO (AGENCY)	DELIVER TO	DEPT/ROOM NO.	PHONE NUMBER
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REMARKS:
NSC paper by [Redacted] for discussion at December 5 PC meeting