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UNP 062/32	
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09 JUN 1993	
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BONN FOR SECRETARY OF STATE'S PARTY

YOUR TELNO [REDACTED] BOSNIA: SAFE AREAS

SUMMARY

1. Line to take at meeting on implementation of SCR 836.

DETAIL

2. We welcome this Secretariat initiative to seek clarification from the co-sponsors and Canada. This will offer a useful opportunity to establish an agreed line in practical and presentational terms before the EC, NAC and NACC meetings next week.

3. Paragraph 4 gives the broad lines of our approach reflecting a meeting I had with officials on 6 June. Paragraph 5 sets out a line on detail.

4. Our line remains as enunciated repeatedly in public over the last week. We regard UNSCR 836 as a preparatory step to a new operation in safe areas. To be effective the safe areas concept requires:

- local agreement between the parties in and around safe areas:
- substantial additional troop contributions:
- satisfactory arrangements for the use of air power between General Wahlgren and COM5ATAF.

The UK already has the largest troop contingent in Bosnia. We do not intend to increase this. Nor do we plan to redeploy: our forces are fully engaged on current duties, notably in Vitez which remains very tense. Present UK personnel in the Tuzla area are for humanitarian purposes only and are located only at an airfield a few kilometres from the town. They are not protecting forces. It follows that other forces will be required if UNPROFOR is to be in a position credibly to undertake the functions set out in paragraphs 5 and 9 of UNSCR 836. We

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understand that General Wahlgren has suggested the need for an extra 31,000 troops. We would not quarrel with this judgement. We hope that even if it does not prove possible to meet it in full, substantial additional force contributors will be made available to UNPROFOR by those nations who are not currently troop contributors but who have expressed concern about the situation in Bosnia. If reinforcements are offered, better to use them in concentrated form than scattered about thinly.

5. Comments on points raised in Secretariat paper:

i) Detering attack: We agree that UNPROFOR's ability to deter attacks against the safe areas will depend on the resources they have available (recognising that there is at present no spare capacity), and on the basis of pre-negotiated agreement (recognising the lack of success in the past in making such agreements stick). We also recognise the danger to the troops providing such a deterrent presence. Hence our offer of air support eg if the Canadians should come under attack and more generally in support of UNPROFOR in and around safe areas. But we have no plans at this stage to provide additional assets on the ground. We also recognise that there is an element of bluff as well as danger in using the presence of small forces as a means of deterring attack, and that if the sanction of air power had to be invoked this would increase the military risk to UNPROFOR and UNHCR throughout Bosnia, and could be the prelude to withdrawal.

ii) We agree that the reference to monitoring the ceasefire is confined to the safe areas and immediate environs. As far as Tuzla is concerned, the small British force of company size already there (which cannot be augmented because the main force in the Vitez area has its hands full) is unlikely to be able to do much outside the town and its immediate vicinity, not least because it must continue to give priority to its existing humanitarian task. We would be resistant to any suggestion that other BRITFOR troops should be diverted from humanitarian work to policing safe areas. If reinforcements from other nations become available it may be possible to patrol more widely within the large (50 km square) Tuzla salient, which is the militarily preferable way of proceeding.

iii) Promoting withdrawal of military units etc. This is what UNPROFOR have done in Zepa and Srebrenica on the basis of negotiation and signed agreements, and what we understand General Morillon is seeking to do for Sarajevo. The aim is

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to ensure that civilian populations are protected to the extent possible in keeping with the provisions of the Geneva Conventions. It may be appropriate for some safe areas to become demilitarised zones. But even when they do not (in the light of the exception given to the Bosnian units in operative paragraph 5) we recognise that it will be important to ensure that Bosnian government forces do not use safe areas as protected sites within which to regroup and attack the Serbs/Croats, if this can be done. UNPROFOR should rely throughout on persuasion: force should not be used.

iv) We agree with the views in paras 5 and 6 of the Secretariat paper.

v) We agree that authority to call on NATO for deployment of air strikes should rest with General Wahlgren (not local UN commander or General Morillon) building on the arrangements currently in place for enforcement of the No Fly Zone. We also agree with Annan's view (para 3 of your telno [REDACTED]) that allies should not execute air strikes unless specifically asked for by UNPROFOR. Since use of air strikes would be a watershed they should be ordered only as a last resort and for limited reasons, ie protection of UNPROFOR as opposed to protection of the safe areas themselves.

vi) We agree that air space management should be exercised through a single organisation: this should be COM5ATAF as for NFZ enforcement. (Separate note by fax.) There will need to be suitable UNPROFOR representation at HQ 5ATAF, and ground-to-air communications will need to be in place across UNPROFOR from the outset.

vii) We would envisage air strikes as deemed justified in the case of sustained attack on the safe areas which imperils UNPROFOR, but it will be for the UNPROFOR Force Commander to determine the precise circumstances, in line with the terms of the Resolution. We need to be very wary of the consequences, since this would be likely to alter the whole basis of operations in Bosnia, raising the threshold of violence and endangering both UNPROFOR personnel and UN civilian workers. However, any initial air strike should be very heavy, both to enhance deterrence and because there might not be a second chance. (For example, mobile targets might be moved).

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