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STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The Briefing Room

10:04 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: I welcome the agreement by the Bosnian Serbs to comply with a condition set by NATO for -- and the United Nations -- for ending the NATO air strikes.

American pilots and crews and their NATO colleagues have been carrying out those strikes to prevent further slaughter of innocent civilians in the Sarajevo area and in the other safe areas of Bosnia. Now, the Bosnian Serbs have stated that they will end all offensive operations within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, withdraw their heavy weapons from the zone within six days and allow road and air access to Sarajevo within 24 hours. NATO and the U.N., therefore, have suspended air operations temporarily, and will carefully monitor the Serb compliance with these commitments.

That suspension is appropriate. But let me emphasize, if the Bosnian Serbs do not comply with their commitments the air strikes will resume.

Today's development are a direct result of NATO's steadfastness in protecting the safe areas, and the close cooperation between the U.N. and NATO. They also reflect the intense diplomatic efforts by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and the U.S. negotiating team, as well as those of our European and Russian partners.

Now the Bosnian Serbs must carry out their commitments and then turn their energies toward a political settlement that will end this terrible conflict for good. They should have no doubt that NATO will resume the air strikes if they fail to keep their commitments, if they strike again at Sarajevo or the other safe areas.
Today's actions, however, following last week's successful meeting in Geneva of the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, are important steps along the path to peace in Bosnia. A lot of work remains to be done, but we are absolutely determined to press forward to reach a settlement to this conflict -- not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table. We can and we must end Bosnia's long nightmare.

Q Mr. President, what do you think is the possibility of transforming this into a permanent peace in Bosnia?

THE PRESIDENT: I think there's a good possibility if the parties themselves wish to do it. And Ambassador Holbrooke and his team are working hard. We're getting good support from Europe and from Russia. I think we have a chance.

Q Since you last spoke in so formal a setting, even so formal a setting as this, a lot has happened, including the biggest military operation in NATO's history -- something that you certainly urged -- intense activity by your diplomats. And you have seemed almost shy about coming out and talking about it. Is that just an abundance of caution, or why is that, sir? (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Not an abundance of caution, but what I have wanted to do, first of all, is let our actions speak for themselves. I thought it was important to have our actions speak for themselves.

I also think it is important that even though the United States has provided a great deal of the energy and leadership in this effort, in this, the first difficult security crisis in Europe after the Cold War, I think it is important that the NATO forces and the United Nations be seen to be united and working together, and we are. And so that explains how we have tried to handle this publicly.

Q In talking with Mr. Mladic and Mr. Karadzic and in really getting them to sign an agreement, is there a contradiction because they are convicted war criminals or accused war criminals --

THE PRESIDENT: Accused.

Q -- accused war criminals? And do you think they can now enter sort of the world of nations just like any other leader?
THE PRESIDENT: First of all, those decisions will all have to be made down the line by the community of nations. The most important thing is that the work continue now to make a comprehensive peace.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 10:08 A.M. EDT
THE PRESIDENT: I welcome the agreement by the Bosnian Serbs to comply with a condition set by NATO for -- and the United Nations -- for ending the NATO air strikes.

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NATO and the UN will suspend air operations temporarily and carefully monitor Serb compliance. If suspension is appropriate, but if there is not compliance, they will not comply, the strikes will resume.

Today's developments are a direct result of NATO's steadfastness in protecting the safe areas, and the close cooperation between the UN and NATO. It also reflects intensive diplomatic efforts by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and the U.S. negotiating team, as well as by our European and Russian partners.
The Bosnian Serbs must now carry out their commitments in good faith, and then turn their energies toward a political settlement to end this terrible conflict for good. They should have no doubt that NATO will resume the air strikes if they fail to follow through, or if they again attack Sarajevo or the other safe areas.

Today's actions, which follow last week's successful meeting in Geneva of the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, are important steps along the path to peace in Bosnia. Much work remains to be done. But we are determined to press forward to reach a settlement of this conflict not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table -- and to end Bosnia's long nightmare.
PRESIDENT WILLIAM JEFFERSON CLINTON
STATEMENT ON BOSNIA
THE WHITE HOUSE
SEPTEMBER 14, 1995

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9/14/95 5 p.m.

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THE WHITE HOUSE
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American pilots and crews and their NATO colleagues have been carrying out those strikes to prevent the further slaughter of innocent civilians in Sarajevo and the other safe areas in Bosnia.

Now, the Bosnian Serb leadership has agreed to end all offensive operations within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, to withdraw all their heavy weapons from the zone within six days, and to allow unrestricted road and air access to Sarajevo within 24 hours.

NATO and the UN will suspend air operations for 72 hours and carefully monitor Serb compliance with these commitments. Provided the Serbs begin to carry them out, we will extend the pause for another 72 hours to allow them to complete the withdrawal of their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo.

Today's agreement is a direct result of NATO's steadfastness in protecting the safe areas, and the close cooperation between the UN and NATO. It also reflects intensive diplomatic efforts by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and the U.S. negotiating team, as well as our European partners, including Russia.
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Let me also point out that, in parallel with these Bosnian Serb commitments, the Bosnian Government has vowed to refrain from offensive actions in and around Sarajevo. It will also allow UNPROFOR to monitor its heavy weapons inside the exclusion zone. These are welcome steps—but they were not preconditions for this agreement.

Today's agreement, which follows last week's successful meeting in Geneva of the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, is an important step along the path to peace in Bosnia. Much work remains to be done. But today we are closer to settling this conflict not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table -- and ending Bosnia's long nightmare.
From: Blinken, Antony J.
To: Johnson, David T.; Vershbow, Alexander R.; Lake, W. Anthony; Berger, Samuel; Soderberg, Nancy E.
Cc: /R, Record at A1
Subject: [CONFIDENTIAL] Bosnia Statement
Date: Thursday, September 14, 1995 5:11PM
Priority: High

<<File Attachment: BOS9-14.DOC>> Attached, draft POTUS statement on today's Bosnia agreement.

Blinken
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NATO and the UN will suspend air operations for 72 hours and carefully monitor Serb compliance with these commitments. Provided the Serbs begin to carry them out, we will extend the pause for another 72 hours to allow the Serbs to complete the withdrawal of their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo.

Today's agreement is a direct result of NATO's steadfastness in protecting the safe areas, and the close cooperation between the UN and NATO commanders throughout this operation. It also reflects intensive diplomatic efforts by Assistant Secretary of State Richard Holbrooke and the U.S. negotiating team, and our European partners, including Russia.
The Bosnian Serbs must now carry out their commitments in good faith, and then turn their energies toward a political settlement to end this terrible conflict for good. They should have no doubt that NATO will resume the air strikes if they fail to follow through, or if they again attack Sarajevo or the other safe areas.

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Today’s agreement, which follows last week’s successful meeting in Geneva of the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, is an important step along the path to peace in Bosnia. Much work remains to be done. But today we are closer to ending this war not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table and ending Bosnia’s long nightmare.
I welcome the announcement by the UN Force Commander, General Janvier, that the Bosnian Serbs have agreed to comply with UN and NATO conditions for a cessation of the air strikes launched in response to the August 28 Bosnian Serb attack on the Sarajevo market. Following extensive meetings last night in Belgrade with Assistant Secretary Holbrooke and his team, the Bosnian Serb leadership has agreed to end all offensive operations within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, to withdraw all their heavy weapons from the zone within six days, and to allow unimpeded road and air access to Bosnia’s capital within 24 hours. NATO and the UN have agreed to suspend air operation for 72 hours to monitor Serb compliance with these commitments. If the Serbs are carrying out their commitments, then there will be a further 72-hour pause to permit the completion of the withdrawal of the heavy weapons.

This agreement is the direct result of the steadfastness displayed by the members of the NATO Alliance in carrying out their decisions to protect the safe areas, along with the close cooperation between the UN and NATO commanders throughout the operation. It also reflects intensive diplomatic efforts by Dick Holbrooke and the rest of the U.S. negotiating team, reinforced by the efforts of the Russians and our other European partners. I hope that the Bosnian Serb leaders will carry out their commitments in good faith, and that they will then turn their energies toward the completion of a political settlement that can end the conflict for good. They should have no doubt that NATO will resume the air strikes if they do not follow through, or if they resume attacks on Sarajevo or the other safe areas.

I would also like to point out that, in parallel with these Bosnian Serb commitments, the Bosnian government has stated that it will refrain from offensive actions in and around Sarajevo. They have also agreed that UNPROFOR to monitor its heavy weapons inside the exclusion zone. These are welcome steps -- although I should stress that these were not preconditions for the Bosnian Serb agreement that has been announced today.