The White House

STATEMENT BY THE PRESS SECRETARY

For Immediate Release	February 9, 1994

U.S. RECOGNITION OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAV REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA

Today, the United States extended formal recognition to the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and declared its intent to establish full diplomatic relations. The President conveyed this decision in a letter delivered in Skopje to President Gligorov. This move is in recognition of the democratic expression of the citizens of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia to establish a sovereign and independent state based on democratic principles. This action will help promote stability in the region. We join nearly every other country of Europe in taking this step.

In extending formal recognition, we have taken into account the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's commitment to peaceful cooperative relations and its respect for the territorial integrity of all of its neighbors and the inviolability of existing boundaries. Establishment of diplomatic relations will take place upon receipt of assurances regarding matters of importance to the U.S., including respect for CSCE norms and principles, enforcement of UN-imposed sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro, and a commitment to work constructively with the United Nations to resolve differences with our long time ally Greece.

We recognize that Greece and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia have outstanding differences which we expect will be resolved through good faith negotiations. We further expect that our recognizing the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia will encourage flexibility in addressing the symbolic and constitutional issues which separate the two parties so that they can overcome the problems that stand in the way of a normal bilateral relationship. We believe that lasting peace and stability in the Balkans depends on states' mutual respect and adherence to CSCE principles. We also take note of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's commitment to democratic principles, to human rights, to the creation of an open, free market economy and to its desire to seek peaceful solutions to problems in the region.
Ms. deLasik: Good afternoon. Thank you for coming to our briefing today.

Secretary Perry will open with an opening statement, and then General Shalikashvili will also have some comments, and then the two have agreed to remain for a limited number of questions.

Dr. Perry?

Secretary Perry: Good afternoon.

Today I would like to give you a report on some of the developments of the last 36 hours relative to Bosnia. These are developments about which I am cautiously optimistic.

The parties are effectively complying with the NATO ultimatum of 9 February. The Serb and the Muslim forces have both removed their heavy weapons away from the Sarajevo area, or alternatively, turned them over to UN control. There has been no shelling of Sarajevo for ten days now.

Compliance, however, is a continuous act. It is not something done for 24 hours and then ignored. We will continue to monitor compliance closely. We will be flying reconnaissance missions over Sarajevo and are prepared to strike if either of the following conditions make that necessary.

First, if we determine that heavy weapons are in the zone but not under UN control. And second, if Sarajevo is shelled by heavy weaponry, whether located in or out of the exclusion zone.

In addition, we are prepared to respond if the UN ground commander requests close air support, as authorized under the existing UN resolutions.

Yesterday I was in Aviano, Italy, where I met with the NATO air crews and their leaders, Admiral Boorda and General Ashy, who were charged with assembling the strike force that would have carried out the NATO ultimatum should that have been necessary. They have assembled a powerful air fleet -- F-15's, A-10's, F-16's, French Mirages, British Jaguars, Dutch F-16's, as well as tankers, AWACS, and reconnaissance planes -- a truly impressive air armada.
I found the crews in a high state of readiness. They have been flying over Bosnia, and in particular, over Sarajevo for months now. They have practiced target runs. They have trained with the UN ground air controllers. In sum, they were, and are, ready and capable of striking any target that is found in violation of the NATO ultimatum.

The threat of a military response was real, and it continues to be real. They continue to maintain intensive surveillance over Bosnia.

While I was in Aviano, I met with the Ministers of Defense and the military chiefs of the countries that would participate in any air strikes. These are the Ministers of Defense from the United Kingdom, France, and the Netherlands. Italy also participated as the host nation supplying the bases. I want to say a special word of thanks for the Italian support.

At the meeting, Admiral Boorda gave the Ministers a briefing on his operational concept, his rules of engagement and on the current situation. The meeting was remarkable in its historical context and symbolism. As we met, there was the possibility that within a few hours NATO forces would be sent out on combat missions under NATO orders for the first time in the history of the Alliance.

What was striking to me was the unanimous agreement among the Ministers that we must adhere to the ultimatum set February 9th by the North Atlantic Council, and that we would use the air fleet, if necessary. That is not to say that we did not pose hard questions to ourselves and to our commanders. These are people who well understand that no military operation is risk-free. But the meeting was characterized by a firm sense of resolve to proceed upon the course laid out in the February 9th decision of the North Atlantic Council.

It also was clear that the Ministers had confidence in the forces assembled and in the plans that had been drawn up by the commanders.

Most importantly, the Ministers were impressed with the close coordination between NATO and the UN troops on the ground in Sarajevo. In fact, the meeting was interrupted several times by updates on the progress of the ground observers who were verifying compliance with the agreement. That was particularly reassuring to the Ministers whose forces were slated to participate in air operations, but who also had troops on the ground. All in all these were unprecedented coordination arrangements between these military forces.

The status and the completeness of compliance was a key subject at the meeting. While the current situation at the time of the meeting showed strong
reasons to be optimistic and it was clearly the hope of the Ministries that air strikes 
would not be necessary...I emphasize that they were all emphatic that if the 
warring factions did not comply, Admiral Boorda should proceed with his plans.

Finally, I would note that as the meeting broke up, each of the Ministers 
prepared to report back to his own government, and they also took upon themselves 
the responsibility to report to other countries who had troops on the ground, or who 
were in a position to bring influence to bear.

For example, shortly after the meeting I not only called President Clinton 
and Secretary General Woerner, but also Minister of Defense Grachev of Russia, 
Mr. Collenette of Canada, and Minister Ruehe of Germany.

The consequences of the capability we put into place, and the resolve shown 
by the participating countries, has been played out now on the ground. It is 
important to note that the meetings of Ministers also included the Deputy UN 
commander, General McKinnes, who gave the report on the progress of weapons 
being turned in to UN control. These reports were confirmed by tactical 
reconnaissance and there has been a productive interplay between General Boorda's 
air reconnaissance assets and the UN observers on the ground.

The UN had set up cantonments in which they collected the weapons turned 
in. They sent out foot patrols to sights reported by air surveillance, and to sites 
reported to them by the Serbs and the Muslims. Every site that they reached 
agreed to put their weapons under UN control. This was truly a major 
breakthrough since it indicated a real willingness and intent to comply. It is the 
first psychological breakthrough we have seen for peace in Bosnia.

The combination of our capability, the resolve of the NATO nations, and the 
willing response of the Serbs and the Muslims led General Cot, General Rose, Mr. 
Akashi, and Admiral Boorda all to conclude that air strikes are not necessary at 
this time. The basis of that judgment was that there was at the time of the 
deadline, effective compliance with NATO's requirements.

Just a month ago, Sarajevo was being bombarded by artillery -- often more 
than a thousand rounds a day -- resulting in thousands of Sarajevans being killed 
and tens of thousands injured. The past ten days, no shells have fallen on Sarajevo.

These results are not only a great relief to the people of Sarajevo, but an 
important step forward for the cause of peace in Bosnia. But the cessation of the 
shelling is but one step in a long, difficult journey.
On this journey we must focus on several opportunities. First, we must sustain the ban on heavy weapons and shelling. Surveillance -- both in the air and on the ground -- will continue. We will maintain our air crews in a high state of readiness, in the event that either the Serbs or Muslims return their weapons to the Sarajevo area or start shelling.

Secondly, we must build on these steps on the ground by taking additional actions to relieve the suffering of the civilians in Sarajevo. Fuel is still a major problem; electricity is shut off in many areas; and relief convoys are still being harassed.

Third, we must build on the willingness of the Serbs and the Muslims to take this one small step for peace to try to achieve the overall objective of a comprehensive peace agreement. We must keep our eye firmly on that all-important goal.

Finally, we must build on the close cooperation we have developed in the international community to bring pressure to bear. I have already talked about the excellent cooperation among NATO nations and between NATO and the UN civilian and military representatives on the ground. I also want to stress the constructive Russian role.

I have been in contact with Minister Grachev several times over the past week. From my first call, I have urged him to use his influence on the Serbs to get them to turn in their weapons. Yesterday when I talked to him, I thanked him because the events on the ground indicated that he did use his influence. It is hard to read intent and motivations among the warring factions on the ground, but I can measure results.

All that is on the plus side of the ledger. But the history of the Balkans does not provide a great deal of encouragement. But these events, weighed against that history, do provide some hope. This is the first time in the history of this fighting, in fruitless negotiations, that we have not had the worst outcome.

I was reminded of the story of the scorpion and the frog, which I will transplant from another part of the world where it was first coined. The scorpion and the frog were at the side of a river -- let's call it the Drina River. The scorpion wanted to cross, but he couldn't swim. So, he asked the frog if he could ride across the river on his back. The frog let the scorpion on his back and they started across the river. When they were halfway across the scorpion stung the frog who became paralyzed.

Just before they sank below the surface of the water, the frog asked the scorpion, "Why did you do that? Now we're both going to drown."
To which the scorpion responded. "Well, this is the Balkans."

This time, for the first time in the history of the recent conflict, it could be said that the scorpion did not sting the frog. For the first time, we did not have the worst possible outcome.

It is important not to overstate the grounds for optimism. But it is equally important not to miss the opportunity that lies ahead of us.

I see three reasons to be cautiously optimistic. First, there has been no shelling in Sarajevo now for ten days. Second, we have had a psychological breakthrough in that the Serbs and the Muslims have been willing to turn over their weapons to UN forces. And third, is the close communication and strong resolve which has developed among the NATO partners on this issue.

I would now like to turn the floor over to General Shalikashvili to talk about the situation on the ground, as we now see it, and the problems that the various teams in air reconnaissance had in verifying compliance.

General Shalikashvili: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

I know that you are very anxious to ask questions so I won't take very long, but let me just use a few slides here, or charts to tell you where I think we have been and where we are today.

The first slide just simply shows you the history of the shelling of Sarajevo over the last 60 days from a high of some 1,744 rounds in one day, just before Christmas, to on your right hand side of that chart -- eight days, zero shelling.

It might be also useful to remind ourselves that during the time that Sarajevo has been under siege during this war, since the beginning of this war, I am told that over 9,000 people in Sarajevo have been killed, and over 57,000 have been wounded -- many of those children. I think, viewed in that light, those eight zeros on the lower right hand side of the chart assume a very special meaning.

This next slide shows you what we saw on the 9th of February, the day of the NATO decision. We were, at that time, tracking some 26 heavy weapon sites from both factions, each one of them containing a multiple number of weapons. As you can see, all of them were within a circle of about 20 kilometers, or 12.5 miles, and it is for that reason that NATO established the zone, or that circle from which all weapons had to be withdrawn, or if they could not be withdrawn, would be turned over under NATO control.
This next chart will show you the 11 sites that UN established into which those weapons would be brought in...and they're shown here as those blue squares with the UN symbol on them. And the round circles are those locations from which the weapons were either moved into these cantonment areas or from which they were moved outside of the circle.

Let me show you, more importantly, the results as we now know them. And please understand that this is the information we have right now. It will probably change in the next few days as they catalog better, and so on. But what we know now is that in those 11 sites that have been established for the control of weapons, the Bosnian Serb army has now moved 250 weapons, and the Muslims some 48 weapons.

Now, in addition to these weapons that the UN now controls, the next chart will show you an additional 18 locations where there are weapons still out in the countryside. Fifteen of those sites, marked by the blue symbol, are where, right now, there are UN personnel controlling those weapons. By the way, those are 45 additional weapons that are under UN control, in addition to those that I've shown you earlier.

There are two sites, which at the time we were meeting there, we still did not have UN personnel there, but those are weapons at two sites, containing seven weapons, that have been turned over to us by the Serbs. We just have not been able to get there yet because of the heavy snow and the location where they are. We know where they are, and the UN teams are making their way over there to take control of those seven weapons, and those two sites are marked here in red.

The final chart that I wanted to show you sort of reinforces what Secretary Perry said earlier, that we, on the military side, are very well aware that this is not the end yet, and that we have to remain vigilant, that we have to very carefully continue to monitor compliance with the NATO decisions...and that is that no weapons are brought back into the 20 kilometer circle, and that any shelling of Sarajevo is effectively dealt with.

To that effect, NATO air crews remain ready to strike, if, that would be called for. As an example, just today over 150 sorties have flown over that area.

Finally, I would say that military personnel continue to be involved in the humanitarian effort. Many of our NATO colleagues on the ground are providing security to convoys. We in the United States military, principally, are participating in the airlift into Sarajevo and the airdrop that still is ongoing.
With that, I think both Secretary Perry and I are ready for your questions.

Q: Dr. Perry and General, I might ask you... you said on the way to Italy that the meeting was being held with the determination that the slaughter would stop. There is slaughter going on elsewhere in Bosnia now. President Clinton made it clear earlier that the expansion of the plan to save people in Sarajevo would not be extended to the rest of Bosnia unless you could handle it, unless you could enforce it.

Could it be enforced? And is there political will, as you know, if any, among the other Defense Ministers, to do so?

Perry: We joined the French in making this proposal to the North Atlantic Council for two reasons. First of all, we thought it would facilitate progress towards a peace agreement. And secondly, we wanted to take steps that would greatly reduce the slaughter of the innocent civilians in Sarajevo. Both of those objectives have been accomplished.

We are considering other ways of expanding actions of that sort, but any such consideration has to be measured by the same two tests as this first one. Does it really move us forward towards peace negotiation, and can it reduce the killing of civilians in the mean time. All such proposals will be considered based on those two criteria.

Q: But can it be enforced? And I'd like to ask General Shalii to answer it also. What did General Joulwan say, and Admiral Boorda? Could it be enforced if you did extend this?

Shalikashvili: Certainly it can be enforced. If the question is, are there sufficient airplanes to do so, depending on into how many areas we would move that. I am absolutely convinced that the nations would make the airplanes available. So, I don't think the issue is an issue of military capability. It is rather the test that Secretary Perry applies to that question, and I think we need to carefully weigh it in that light before we discuss it.

Secondly, if I may, this is only the first day of the success in Sarajevo. We have to make sure that this is something that will hold and that has a broad, more lasting cessation of shelling into Sarajevo before we push any further.

Q: General Shalikashvili, may I ask you a follow-up question from your charts? The charts did not mention how many, unless I missed them, of how many of those relevant heavy weapons have been removed altogether from the exclusion zone, rather than remaining under supervision or in cantonment areas. And also, is the implication of your charts that there are no additional weapons within the area.
that are not either supervised...about to be supervised today or in cantonment areas?

Shalikashvili: On your first question as to how many weapons were moved, we do not know, specifically, how many moved. We did not count every weapon that moved out.

On your second question, we are convinced that what I showed you here represents all the weapons that we know about. That does not mean that in the days to come we could not find some other weapons there that have been abandoned, left behind, that we don't know about. I cannot exclude that. But the combination of the numbers I gave you represent everything that we know about today.

Q: And as far as going out of the exclusion zone, I understand you may not have precise figures or you don't have 100 percent confidence, but you must have some order of magnitude sense of how much went out and where it went.

Shalikashvili: The Serbian leadership indicated to us that they were going to turn over about half of them to us and take about half of them out. That's about as good as I can tell you.

Q: Back to the question of building on the Sarajevo precedent, I'd like to focus in on the fact that Sarajevo was one of six safe haven areas that have been declared. And in addition, there are two areas that are not safe havens in which there's been very heavy shelling -- the Mostar area, which involves Croatia, and Alovo, where there have been reports of a major Serb offensive building up, which could, in fact, cut Tuzla off from Sarajevo.

Are any of those areas active candidates, in your view, for something similar to the Sarajevo ultimatum? Or, are they fit candidates for that sort of thing? How do you view these areas?

Perry: Nothing has been ruled out at this stage, and we're considering many options. But, as General Shalikashvili has said, our first and most important objective is to secure the gain we've already made, and we will not seriously consider taking more options until we are certain that this one is really secure. So, those options are certainly weeks away...not days away.

Q: What options are under consideration that might be short of issuing another Sarajevo type ultimatum? Are there other, more limited uses of force that could be used...

Perry: Let me state again that our major effort, our major thrust in the weeks ahead, are going to be in the overall peace negotiations. We look at these other measures to the extent they reinforce and supplement that. The attention is
drawn to these measures because of their dramatic effect, but they do not, in and of themselves, bring about peace. Our major thrust is going to be on peace.

Q: Just as a quick follow-up to General Shalikashvili. We've had, as reporters, different intelligence on the situation at Alovo. Is there, based on our military surveillance and reports from the field, a substantial Serb offensive building up there, and does its aim seem to be to cut Tuzla from Sarajevo?

Shalikashvili: I'm not sure that I can verify that. It is clearly an area that we are watching carefully, but I'm not prepared to tell you that we, from the intelligence that we have, are prepared to reach the conclusion that you just reached.

Q: The one question that we haven't addressed ourselves to, or maybe I missed it, is the why. Why do you gentlemen feel that the Bosnia Serbs, at this point, were willing to move the artillery and turn them over? Was it the fear of the air strikes, although there are many who say the air strikes would not have been that effective. Was it the Russian intervention? In your opinions, was there any single factor, or were there several factors that caused this to happen at this point?

Ferry: You're asking the most difficult question of all, what's inside the mind of another person or another negotiating team. But, I could speculate on a few things that could be in their minds. First of all, there could have been no doubt in their mind on both the capability and the resolve of NATO to act. That had to be a dissuading factor.

Secondly, as I indicated to you, I believe the Russians used their influence on the Serbs to persuade them that turning over their weapons would be in their best interest.

Third, this has been a long, and difficult, and bitter war, and I would have to believe that they are looking for some relief and seeing some prospects of heading towards a general peace.

Q: General Shali...on the concept of extending the NATO air strike threat to other areas, before we are able to go ahead with the missions or the possible missions into Sarajevo we practiced for a long time -- intense coordination efforts with the NATO/UN people on the ground. Would you go through the same thing before you could reasonably extend this into other areas?

Shalikashvili: I think, as far as the command and control arrangements are concerned, as far as the practice is concerned, as far as the coordination between the aircrews and people on the ground is concerned. I think that any additional training, or any additional preparatory work would be much, much less if you were to extend that. There might be some additional crews that are required, but that, too, would be not as extensive as setting up the system in the first place. But again,
I would caution, before we reach conclusions that that's the next logical step, I'd like to side very much with Secretary Perry on the issue that this is the time, now, to consolidate that which we have achieved, or appear to have achieved here in Sarajevo, and make sure that is working before we overreach some place else.

Q: Can you tell us about your latest telephone conversations with Pavlo Grachev? Did you have another phone conversation with him today?

Perry: Yes, I did. Without going into details on that telephone call, we were discussing various ways in which we might reinforce the positive move towards peace that's already been made. The principal point that I made to General Grachev was noticing that, while many of these weapons have come under UN control, some of them have been moved out of the area, and that it would be a step backwards for peace if these artillery pieces were then sent to shell other cities. And that he, and we should do everything we could to see that that did not happen.

So, we talked about many things, but the thrust of it relative to Bosnia had to do with curtailing the use of those extra artillery pieces to shell civilians in other cities.

Q: Did he request U.S. troops on the ground to assist in what's going on there?

Perry: Yes. He suggested that the peacekeeping efforts would be enhanced by having more troops on the ground, and particularly U.S. troops. I told him that President Clinton's position on that had been clear for some time, that we were prepared to send troops to assist in the peacekeeping efforts at such time as a general peace agreement was reached.

Q: Is it still your view, and I'd like General Shalikashvili also to answer this, that what is required to implement any peace agreement now foreseeable is a reinforced, tailored U.S. position of about 25,000 troops?

Perry: I'll ask General Shalikashvili to comment also, but I would just observe that until we know what the details, or even the basic outline of the peace agreement is, it's hard, if not impossible, to estimate how many total ground troops will be needed to enforce it. Therefore, I couldn't put a number to any U.S. troops who would be needed at this time.

Shalikashvili: I think it's absolutely correct. We remain in constant contact with the U.S. commanders in Europe to ask them, did they keep in step with the political process so they can adjust their plans, but they tell us time and again, and they're absolutely right, that until you see the final product, what it is, what the military tasks are that flow from that peace plan, you really can't come even close to what it is that you would need. So, I think any number that I would give you would be misleading. The President, when asked this question today, said under the
conditions that he has often already outlined, we remain committed to help in implementing the peace plan, but the only numerical thing he would mention is that, as long as that is not over half of the total number required.

Q: The reason I ask though, is because as you know, Under Secretary Tarnoff has been going around Europe giving them a very specific number of no more than 15,000 or no more than a third, and I've heard strong defense from that view by senior people working for you in this building...for the U.S. military in this building.

Shalikashvili: Again, the total number... I would be misleading you if I gave you one, because I don't know what the military tasks are. The numbers are not just decided by the size of the area that is in control by one group or another. It is really much more driven by the specific tasks that you have to accomplish -- whether you're guarding specific routes, whether you have to do other military tasks like disarm or not disarm factions. That all drives up the numbers, or lowers the numbers. So that we don't know.

Q: We've been told that the United States has offered to send two, very sophisticated, fire suppression/artillery suppression radars to Bosnia with the understanding that U.S. troops would not man them, but there would have to be trained NATO troops from other countries. Are you proceeding with that? Will that go ahead?

Perry: We're exploring that possibility right now, looking at the possibility of sending highly precise artillery locating radars into Sarajevo. To the extent we're exploring it, we're looking at the equipment only, and not the troops that would operate it.

Q: Do you think Admiral Boorda is the next CNO, in your opinion?

Perry: No comment. (NOTE: Off mike comment - "I will comment that Admiral Boorda is a splendid admiral, and doing a marvellous job over at CINCSouth.")

Press: Thank you.

(END)
Admiral Boorda, Commander, Allied Forces Southern Europe  
Feb. 21, 1994

I WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A FEW KEY POINTS.

THE COORDINATION AND COOPERATION WITH UNPROFOR, NAMELY MR. AKASHI, GEN COT AND LTG ROSE HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE SUPERB. I CANNOT TELL YOU HOW MANY TIMES WE HAVE CONFERRED THESE PAST 10 DAYS BUT IT WAS NEARLY CONTINUOUS.

I TALKED WITH GEN COT SUNDAY NIGHT AT 2200 LOCAL, JUST THREE HOURS BEFORE THE DEADLINE. THAT WAS A PREARRANGED TIME FOR US TO REVIEW THE SITUATION TOGETHER.

IT WAS CLEAR THAT THE WARRING FACTIONS WERE ATTEMPTING TO COMPLY AND WERE COOPERATING WITH UNPROFOR IN EVERY WAY THEY COULD. LARGE NUMBERS OF WEAPONS HAD BEEN TURNED IN. LARGE NUMBERS OF WEAPONS HAD BEEN WITHDRAWN AND MANY OF OUR KNOWN SITES HAD BEEN VACATED. UNPROFOR HAD COMPLETE FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT WITHIN THE EXCLUSION ZONE.

IT WAS ALSO CLEAR TO ME THAT THE REMAINING FEW SITES, SIX AT THE TIME GEN COT AND I TALKED, COULD NOT BE VERIFIED BEFORE THE DEADLINE. THAT WAS NOT BECAUSE THE WARRING FACTIONS WERE NOT COOPERATING, IT WAS JUST THE PHYSICS OF THE SITUATION. WEATHER, TIME AND THE HECTIC PACE UNPROFOR HAD BEEN MAINTAINING ALL DAY WERE THE FACTORS OF IMPORTANCE.

IT SEEMED TO US, GEN COT AND MYSELF, THAT WE COULD EXPECT TO FIND SOME OF THOSE SITES VACANT WHEN TROOPS GOT TO THEM. THAT HAS TURNED OUT TO BE THE CASE WITH ALL OF THEM ALREADY THIS MORNING AND INFORMATION IS STILL COMING IN ON OTHERS. BOSNIAN SERBS ARE PROVIDING LIASON TO LTG ROSE TO ASSIST IN BEING SURE WE COVER THE SITES AND VERIFY THAT THEY ARE VACANT OR THAT WE TAKE ANY REMAINING WEAPONS THAT COULD NOT BE REACHED EARLIER UNDER CONTROL.

WITH THIS INFORMATION, IT APPEARED THAT WE PROBABLY HAD COMPLIANCE BUT SIMPLY COULD NOT VERIFY THE LAST FEW PRIOR TO THE DEADLINE.

THE DEADLINE DID NOT CHANGE... UNPROFOR SIMPLY NEEDED TO VERIFY COMPLIANCE.

BASED ON THAT AND PENDING VERIFICATION TODAY, IT DID NOT SEEM LOGICAL TO RECOMMEND STRIKES AND GEN COT AND I AGREED ON THAT POINT.

VERIFICATION CONTINUES TODAY. WE WILL CONTINUE TO MONITOR THE SITUATION ON THE GROUND. WE WILL FLY A HEAVY RECON AND CLOSE AIR SUPPORT SCHEDULE TODAY AND IN THE FUTURE IN SUPPORT OF UNPROFOR.

ANY WEAPONS FOUND THAT ARE NOT UNDER CONTROL WILL BE SUBJECT TO STRIKES.

ANY SHELLING OF SARAJEVO WILL BE CAUSE FOR A STRIKE RECOMMENDATION AGAINST THE PARTY DOING THE SHELLING.

OUR MISSION IS NOT OVER. IT IS A CONTINUING MISSION AND WE HOPE IT WILL BRING THE BEGINNING OF A MORE PEACEFUL SITUATION FOR THE PEOPLE OF SARAJEVO. OUR PEOPLE, ALL THE MEN AND WOMEN OF NATO AND UNPROFOR, ARE DOING A GREAT JOB AND WE SHOULD ALL BE VERY PROUD OF THEM.

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SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It occurs to me that we got this weekend exactly backwards. It should be a Sunday in which the weather is lousy here, so we don't mind being in here, and good there. But we didn't quite get that right.

Let me just again, as I did yesterday, bring you up to date on where we are and then answer your questions, try to be as helpful as I can. Just got reports through General Shali from Admiral Boorda, and the reports are very encouraging. As you know, because you have seen the reports of it, there has been what our analysts call "hectic" activity on the ground all day as the Bosnian Serbs have been drawing heavy weapons out of the exclusion zone. We are confirming artillery sites that have been abandoned, and have been doing so all day. And there was a "dramatic increase" during the course of today, February 20th, in the number of heavy weapons the Bosnian Serbs brought to the cantonment areas. And I can't go into those specific numbers, but it was quite dramatic. There are now 10 of those cantonment areas.

So the real issue before us now is bringing the remaining sites under the control of the United Nations, those sites that the Serbs, for one reason or another, were unable to -- from which they were unable to withdraw their weapons. I might say that on the Bosnian government side, there were also additional weapons brought into the cantonment areas.

With regard to that question then of securing those remaining sites, we -- rather, the United Nations -- is narrowing the number of those sites. They have not secured yet all of them. And they might -- I repeat -- might be able to resolve those remaining sites by tonight, before the deadline; or, because of the weather and the conditions -- the roads around Sarajevo are abysmal, in abysmal shape right now -- they might have to have some time tomorrow for verification of sites and to complete that process.

Q Do you know how many?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you. It's a small -- relatively small number.

Q Was 10 the overall number?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Of cantonment areas?

Q Yes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, these are the areas that have been established by the United Nations for the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian government to bring their weapons into.
But the number of sites out there in the hills that are not yet -- for which there is not yet verification that the weapons have been withdrawn, or which have not been brought under the control of the U.N., has narrowed considerably and is now a relatively small number.

Q Do you -- can't you say what that is?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I can't, I'm afraid.

Q If at midnight our time tonight there were still a relatively small number of these sites either out of our control or there's no verification, would -- or could bombing then begin?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Why don't I come back to that. Let me just finish up where we think we are, and then -- because that is not an unimportant question.

We can confirm also that good cooperation is taking place between the Bosnian Serbs and the United Nations in seeking to comply with the NATO deadline. Today also, as has been the case for all recent days, there was no shelling in Sarajevo, although there was some small arms fire. The 400 Russian troops from Croatia have arrived now at Sarajevo or in that area, although we understand that they have not yet taken up their positions around Sarajevo. There may not be the 800 that was talked about yesterday; we're not sure.

Our position and what will go on this evening: As I have, and others have said before, a deadline is a deadline. There will be no extension of the deadline. Any weapons that are still in the exclusion zone after 1900 local time -- I mean, our time -- and not under U.N. control will be subject to air strikes. As I said yesterday, this does not mean that there necessarily will be air strikes at 1901. It is to say that they are subject to air strikes.

And let me make here an important point for the future. This is not a one-time deal. The NATO decision will remain in force into the indefinite future and, therefore, after tonight, after tomorrow, and on into the future, any pieces of artillery, any heavy weapons in the exclusion zone not under U.N. control will remain subject to air strikes; and any weapons that -- heavy weapons that fire on Sarajevo, either from within that zone or beyond it, in accordance with the NATO decision, will be subject to air strikes.

After the deadline at the same time, we, the United Nations and NATO, will have to assess the situation. Admiral Boorda will be responsible for making the assessment on the NATO side. And his proposed actions at that time will be based on the facts on the ground. That is, are there identifiable heavy weapons within that zone not under U.N. control.

So in short, there is a lot of progress on the ground. There is a very good chance that all of the sites will be accounted for -- the sites of which we know -- we, the U.N. and NATO -- will be secured by tonight. But as I said, it may take some time tomorrow. And it is premature to draw thus firm conclusions.

I can fill you in on the President's activities today --

Q How does that gibe with what Secretary Perry is saying, that there will be no bombing today or tomorrow, no air strikes?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Secretary Perry has not yet said that there will be --

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Q Secretary Perry did not say that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, he did not. And I have just spoken with Secretary Perry and with General Shalik and they did not say that to me.

Q What did he tell Russia?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What he told Grachev -- he did talk to Grachev. It was not a terribly good connection. (Laughter.)

Q Again?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He said, on behalf of the White House phone system -- even the Defense Department phone system have -- he told the Defense Minister that there is some reason to be optimistic that the Serbs are complying; that if that turned out to be true, there would not be air strikes now, but that we were not yet sure if it was true.

Let me say that I have got the Tass World Service text here of what they said -- Grachev said -- and it said that -- he said in an interview that in his, Grachev's, view there would be no air strikes by NATO air forces on Bosnian Serb positions tonight, as envisioned in the NATO ultimatum, and that this -- quote -- "this had become quite clear" after his telephone conversation today with U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry. In other words, this was Grachev's interpretation of what Perry said, rather than a direct statement by Perry, which I think explains --

Q Was that call made from Perry's airplane, or where was that made from?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think probably it was made from the ground. I can't tell you for sure.

Q He's still on the ground?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, he's in the air now.

Q What about the statement by General Rose that there will be no bombing tonight?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we don't have a -- we have not yet received any firm decision along those lines.

Q You said, received any firm decision.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right. I can't speak for him.

Q Isn't it -- you can't bomb those kind of targets in the dark with the people we've got -- with the NATO forces in the hills all around there, you literally cannot hit those kind of targets with any safety and reliability in the dark. So, you almost have to wait to daylight.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: True. But, again, I'm not going to make operational judgments here.

Q You said the U.N. could need some time --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I do hope you hear with precision what I'm saying, which is that there has been tremendous progress; that there is a strong possibility that all the remaining sites can be brought under control by tonight, or possibly by MORE
tomorrow, if necessary; but that it is premature to reach a final conclusion.

Q Have you run into any opposition or any type of problems with those remaining sites from the Serbs? In other words, are the U.N. troops having any problem getting control?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, our reports are that the Serbs are working with the United Nations on this.

Q So it's just a matter of being able to get to these sites, or then getting the weapons out?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you what the specifics are, and I suspect they vary site by site. But the U.N. is working on this.

Q You feel confident that this is going to be cleared up?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm -- confident is not a word I --

Q -- the United Nations would be still continuing securing pieces?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, might be, could be that.

Q It could be.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q But you said it would.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: If they don't finish tonight.

Q But that would amount to an extension of the deadline.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. Let me again be precise, as I said yesterday and the day before, about what the NATO decision was. The NATO decision was that any weapons in the exclusion zone that are not under U.N. control are subject to air attack.

Q Technically -- I understand, but de facto, it would be a de facto extension of the deadline --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No --

Q -- on the ground for the Serbs.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It would not be. If there were a de facto deadline extension, then we would -- we, NATO and the United Nations -- would be saying to the Serbs, you can relax, it's okay; it's all right if they're there; they're not subject to air attack. We are not saying that.

Q What you're saying is technically that -- but we could go in tomorrow morning and then try to secure them?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Could be.

Q But how many hours -- how long would that take?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you that because that's being worked on the ground.

Q When you say securing the sites, do you mean that U.N. personnel are going out and saying, okay, we take control of this tank right where it is right now, or are they just confirming that it's disarmed or confirming that it's --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Either placing U.N. forces between the crews and the pieces, or rendering them inoperable or both.

Q Have the Russians and UNPROFOR finished their discussions about exactly how those 400 troops are going to be deployed? You said they haven't taken up their positions. Who's going to decide what those positions are?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: UNPROFOR.

Q So that's been settled.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: With the Russians, but settled is that they will be under the operational control of UNPROFOR.

Q And when was that finalized?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yesterday at the latest. I spoke about this yesterday.

Q Are they effectively securing these sites because these are weapons that can't be moved into the cantonment, so they have to go out to the sites and say, okay, these --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't speak to the situation at each of the sites, but presumably it was because they could not remove them -- because we know they have made extraordinary efforts today to remove --

Q When you mentioned relatively few, and some sites still need to be secured, does the relatively few refer to dozens or scores or hundreds?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, they're bigger than a bread box and smaller --

Q Single digits?

Q Less than a 100?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'd say --

Q Scores, dozens?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Less than a score probably.

Q Less than a dozen?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Less than a score.

Q A score is 20, isn't it?

Q -- talking about a dozen -- sorry, less than a score of weapons or sites?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sites.
Q Sites.

Q Are we demanding 100 percent compliance, you'll bomb anything that's left?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The NATO decision is very clear — any artillery. And again, let's, because there are some of you who weren't here yesterday —

Q Four score and —

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's 87 and take seven — (laughter.) Let me just make one point here again about compliance, just in the way we all think about this. And, again, the NATO decision was very carefully phrased here, as I said to a number of you yesterday, to make sure that NATO was capable of doing what it said it would do. So the NATO decision was not one of saying there will be a demilitarized zone with regard to heavy weapons in the 20-kilometer radius of downtown, the center of Sarajevo.

It said that any weapon not withdrawn or under U.N. control will be subject to air strikes. And the reason for that is that we cannot know where every weapon is within that 20-kilometer area because you can hide mortars in barns or in basements, or whatever. So this is not a question of verifying that that whole area is free of weapons. It is a question of securing all of those weapon sites that we know of. Do you see what I'm saying? And of that, there is now a relatively small number.

Q Could you go back to what the President has been doing today and -- are you going to hold a vigil around here tonight, or at what point are we going to know it's not going to happen tonight? (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: How do you think we should -- just so that we -- well, I'm sure that on CNN -- (laughter) -- you'll be getting the word out as there are, presumably, some sort of announcements.

Q But we'd like the White House involved -- (laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We don't plan to staff the press office all night. We will certainly, if we get word of some pending action, come back.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- and call and come back in if there was any news to convey. So what we can do is put on the lid with the understanding that if there's anything that we know of we will page out.

Q Is there any way that the Serbs could sneak back in there or get -- rearm themselves?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: If they do, they are at risk. As I said, the NATO decision stands into the indefinite future.

Q A senior Pentagon official traveling with -- told reporters that a decision had been made not to bomb tonight, but to wait until tomorrow daylight to reassess. Things look very positive; things are going well and there's not going to be bombing.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That is similar to what I just said -- there has not yet been that decision made --

Q When there is one, will you let us know? (Laughter.)
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And I've talked to two senior officials from Defense.

Q And did those Defense officials say that there was a decision made, as has been reported by --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not any Defense official I've talked to.

Q Did Secretary Perry also --

Q Tell us what he did today and what he's doing tonight.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There was an intelligence briefing this morning at 9:00 a.m. that I received. I then conveyed that to the President on the situation on the ground this morning, as well as I was also in touch with some of our military commanders there and conveyed their views -- their reports also to the President.

He then spoke this morning at around 10:25 a.m., I guess, to Secretary Perry, General Shalikashvili, General Joulwan and Admiral Boorda -- conference call; they were at Aviano. And they reported to him on the NATO Defense Minister's meeting and on their appreciation of the situation on the ground.

He then was at church. Then this afternoon around -- what time? -- he spoke to Yeltsin.

Q At 1:27 p.m.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: At 1:27 p.m. this afternoon -- I'm sorry -- before that I got another intelligence briefing and reported that to him. And then at 1:27 p.m., he spoke to President Yeltsin.

Q Did Clinton call Yeltsin?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He said this morning as soon as he got out of church that we would probably be calling Yeltsin. And we were -- I was starting to -- I was going to call the number when Yeltsin called him. So it was sort of mutual consent, I guess.

Q But, technically, Yeltsin called.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Or else we knew that he was calling and then we placed a call, I can't remember. But Yeltsin -- in effect, Yeltsin placed the call.

Q Yeltsin placed it, he didn't initiate it.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: But I will say again that we were planning also to suggest a call to them, as the President said this morning. In any case, it was an excellent connection. (Laughter.) The call went for about 20 minutes or so.

Q Was it in the Oval Office?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, he was in the Residence then. He was having lunch and broke off from the lunch to take the call.

In essence, the President said he was encouraged by Serb efforts to comply with the NATO decision. He congratulated Yeltsin for Russian efforts to promote Serb compliance with it. The

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President said that no decision on air strikes was yet taken. And they agreed to stay in touch about the diplomatic process, which is going forward.

On that subject, I might --

Q What did Yeltsin say?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Basically that we need to stay in touch, that we need to work on the diplomatic process now.

Q Did he say, don't bomb?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I don't think so, because the President began with a description of where we are; and as I recall, then Yeltsin did not make an argument against bombing.

Q There will be contact with Yeltsin before any air strike?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President has said that he will try to do so, yes.

Q Did they discuss the troops that will remain --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.

Q His decision isn't to actually start the air strikes or to make the assessment --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay, let me get back to that. Just on the subject of then the diplomatic process, there is plans now to have a meeting of experts in Bonn on Tuesday among us and the Germans and the French and the British and the Russians, at which Ambassador Redman will report on the progress in his talks in pursuing our diplomatic initiative.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: At the meeting, I believe the European Union tried to --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, right.

Q Was it the European Union --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The present presidency, which is Greece; the most recent one, which is Belgium; and the next one, which is Germany.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So it's only two out of those three.

Q Where was the meeting?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It will be in Bonn.

Q It will be in Bonn.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, next Tuesday.

Q This coming Tuesday.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

And the President will be receiving further reports, of course, during the remainder of the afternoon into the evening. He may well have other phone calls with foreign leaders. I think it's very likely that he'll talk to Secretary General Woerner this
afternoon, who, again, has done an extraordinary job over the past weeks and months on this issue.

Q — President Yeltsin's message to the President?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think — I mean, in general, it was less of a message in both directions than a sharing of notes on where the situation is and agreeing on the importance of our -- continue to work together on the diplomatic side.

Q And did the President reiterate in the call that he would try to reach Yeltsin before any military action will unfold?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I don't believe so. Doesn't have to.

Q But you said he said so --

Q Are you willing to grant any leeway because of weather conditions, that people are trying to comply?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: As I said, the deadline is the deadline. It is possible after the deadline that there would be a period tomorrow, because of the weather, for verifying that compliance, possibly even for securing a few sites that the Serbs have in effect said that they are prepared to see secured. But the deadline is the deadline. And that should not be seen as an extension of the deadline.

Q How likely is that possibility of time for verification?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Can't tell you. As I said, it's possible that it will get done tonight.

Q Are you aware of any efforts by the Serbs or any other party to disguise, hide, camouflage, otherwise keep any of the weapons from being --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: A philosophical point, but if we were aware of them, they wouldn't be doing it. So, no, we're not aware of those efforts. Our evidence is that the Serbs are cooperating with the United Nations in helping the United Nations gain control of weapons that could not be moved.

Q Why do you think the Serbs are suddenly complying? Are you encouraged by their actions that this could lead to peace settlement?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think they are complying because they saw the seriousness of the NATO decision and the determination of NATO to see the decision complied with, and the cooperation between NATO and the United Nations -- which has been excellent this week between General Rose and Admiral Boorda -- and that the Russians were conveying very clearly to the Bosnian Serbs that importance of their complying. And, yes, it does encourage me. I mean, there is -- obviously, this is a very, very complicated issue and one that would be very hard to resolve diplomatically. But I think that there is a certain momentum that comes out of this that I hope we can take advantage of in the coming weeks in working for a diplomatic solution.

And as I said yesterday, it is always very important that power and diplomacy be harnessed together. And the sign of NATO seriousness I think should have a positive effect then in the negotiations.
Q Is there any plans at this point to issue similar ultimatums to other towns that are being bombed?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I addressed this yesterday and I guess this is the same answer, if I can remember it -- I'll bore the rest of you with it. But, clearly, the main issue before us now is Sarajevo, which is of exceptional importance in every sense politically as well as militarily. We will then have to see where we go after Sarajevo. The first is to complete this. The NATO Summit did decide that we would make efforts both to open the Tuzla airport and to see to the rotation of troops in Srebrenica; and both are proceeding. And as I said yesterday, it's important to remember that we have a long-standing commitment to close air support for UNPROFOR troops, should they request our support. And that certainly stands, as well.

Q Just a quick follow-up. Did the issue of extending the ultimatums to other areas come up in the conversation with Yeltsin?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not that I remember, no.

Q And what happened to the other 400 troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you. We do know that the 400 are there. It is possible that they would be filling in then for the troops that left Croatia.

Q Those 400 are coming in --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, that are coming into Sarajevo from Croatia, but we don't know.

Q Just to be clear on where we are on this side. You were saying that as of this afternoon, there are something fewer than 20 sites that have not yet been secured by U.N. forces. Is that because the Serbian forces have been slow in relinquishing them in part because of the weather, or is it because the U.N. forces have had to battle with the snow and are short of men and have simply been unable to get to them?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, I can't tell you the exact reasons, but I have heard no reports of the Serbs resisting the U.N. doing so.

Q And have some of these sites been abandoned, as you understand, or are they all still being protected or watched over by Serbian troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, these are sites either that have not yet been abandoned, or that we're not sure about.

Q And that these are -- if there are fewer than 20 sites, there are conceivably a good bit more than 20 weapons, is that right?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't know; could be.

Q And the other thing I'd like to be clear on --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And, again, these are sites that the U.N. knows about.

Q Right.

Q -- is that you said that there had been no decision not to bomb tonight.
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No decision to bomb, no decision not to bomb. But a lot of progress.

Q If there's fewer than 20 sites left, how many sites in all are we to start with?

Q Twenty known sites.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again -- yes, known sites.

Q What was the number to start with?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't give you that.

Q Ballpark?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'd rather not.

Q Could we go through the process of deciding on air strikes, of Boorda does what, Rose does what, the President does what.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me see if I can have some general consistency in my answers -- I need my Bob Dole chart. (Laughter.)

Q One more question on sites. You did say earlier, the sites that they didn't or couldn't withdraw from, isn't that what you said -- didn't or couldn't?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right. And, again, I use both words simply because I don't want to make a judgment on why and then turn out later to be wrong. But I have seen or heard no evidence that they were refusing to allow U.N. access to any sites.

The decision as to whether to strike weapons and weapon sites is made by the NATO CINC South, Admiral Boorda. And the United Nations has the, for the first strikes, decision-making authority also. Admiral Boorda and General Rose and General Cot make those decisions. And on the U.N. side that is then taken to Mr. Akashi, who is the Secretary General's representative in Zagreb. He is under the authority, of course, of Secretary General Boutros-Ghali.

And as I said yesterday, I, frankly, don't know whether in a practical sense Akashi would then consult with Boutros-Ghali or not, although we believe that Boutros-Ghali has given that authority to Mr. Akashi.

So the U.N. gets a check-off on the first strikes. Thereafter, strikes are ordered by the NATO commander in coordination with the United Nations and the U.N. commanders. And that is because, of course, the -- both UNPROFOR, the U.N. troops and the UNHCR have a lot of personnel on the ground, and we want to make sure that their safety is seen to as those strikes might be carried out.

Q Beyond this meeting Tuesday, is there anything significant that's happened on the diplomatic effort?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Ambassador Redman's been holding talks. I think they have been useful. I believe that in talks that have been held among the parties, they've said that there's been some narrowing of differences. But we're not yet at the point of real concrete results that we can talk about.

Q Is this meeting in Bonn on Tuesday the international conference that Churkin proposed last week or two days ago?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think so, no. I think he had something more formal in mind. This will be experts meeting to stock of where we are.
Q Did he propose this meeting --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it came through consultations between the State Department and their opposite numbers. And frankly, I don't know and I suspect we never will know who said first, let's together in Bonn. I think it just sort of emerged.

Q Then it's not the -- it's not a Russian initiative.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, it is in the wake of the Russian suggestion of getting together. And it certainly is a way of keeping our consultations going with the Russians and working --

Q Is Redman going to be in charge of the U.S. team in Bonn or will Peter Tarnoff or somebody --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Steve Oxman will be going.

Q Any plans to call or contact Boutros-Ghali this afternoon, this evening, as the deadline grows closer, or tomorrow morning?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not clear. Madelaine Albright has been talking to him. I think she's talked to him today at least once. I believe she talked to him yesterday and we're staying in very close touch with him.

Q Would it be correct to say that it's highly unlikely that air strikes could be carried out before this meeting on Tuesday?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't want to make that judgment.

Q So there's no --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I will say there's been a lot of progress made today.

Q What was your answer to the initial question?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Evasive. (Laughter.)

Q Given the encouraging signs and that some of these sites might need to be verified tomorrow, is it unlikely we'd see air strikes before, I don't know, midday tomorrow our time?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I just don't want to say whether it's likely, unlikely -- I just don't want to characterize it that way.

Q So let's -- if anything, what will happen here at 7:00 p.m. tonight?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I have to go because the President is about to speak to Secretary General Woerner.

Q Give them our best.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We certainly will. (Laughter.) I'll probably see you this evening, I'm not sure.

Q Oh, yeah? Do you expect to be doing this again later?

Q You're going to come back and talk to us tonight?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I might if there's something to talk about. And if not, we'll tell you there's nothing to talk about and you'll know why.

Q Okay.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay? Good.

He will also be speaking to President Mitterrand at around 4:00 p.m. this afternoon. And in both cases, I suspect it will be simply as -- or mostly -- as with Yeltsin, comparing notes, seeing what the situation is and staying in touch.

END 3:45 P.M. EST
THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. It is now over 15 hours since NATO's ultimatum regarding Sarajevo went into effect. According to NATO and United Nations commanders, at this point, the parties are in effective compliance with the ultimatum. There continues to be no shelling of Sarajevo. Over 250 heavy weapons have been placed under U.N. control. All known heavy weapons have now been removed or brought under U.N. control, except for a couple of sites that should be brought under control within hours as the U.N. operation continues. As a result, air strikes have not yet been necessary.

I spoke this morning with U.N. Secretary General Boutros-Ghali and expressed my appreciation for his efforts. I again want to congratulate NATO, our NATO allies and Secretary General Manfred Woerner for their resolve; the United Nations for its efforts and its cooperation with NATO; the government of Russia for its important contributions to a peaceful resolution; and above all, the American military personnel and those from our NATO allies whose courage and skill provided the muscle that made this policy work.

Let me review why we and our NATO allies took this action: to stem the destruction of Sarajevo and to reinvigorate the peace process.

Now that we have brought some breathing space to the people of Sarajevo, we are taking additional steps on both fronts. First, we intend to remain vigilant. The U.N. and NATO will continue to conduct intensive reconnaissance and monitoring of the Sarajevo area. The NATO decision stands. We will continue to enforce the exclusion zone. Any shelling of Sarajevo or the appearance of heavy weapons in the exclusion zone will bring a certain and swift response from the U.N. and NATO.

Second, we are working to renew progress toward a negotiated solution among the parties. A workable, enforceable solution acceptable to all parties is the only way to ensure a lasting solution for Sarajevo and for all of Bosnia.

Negotiations among the parties are set to resume in the near future. American negotiators have been and will remain active in helping to bridge the gap among the parties. Ambassador Redman has had a series of intensive conversations in Europe, and this week in Bonn our experts will meet with the representatives from European Union countries, Canada and Russia to take stock of where we are.

The challenge for all who have been touched by the fighting in Bosnia -- the parties to the conflict, our own nations and the international community -- is to build on this week's progress and create a lasting and workable peace for all the people of Bosnia.

Helen.
Mr. President, are you willing to extend the ultimatum to stop the killing in other parts of Bosnia and to persuade the allies and Russia to go along with the idea of enforcing it throughout the country?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, that's one of the things that we've been discussing this morning and that our representatives will be discussing in Europe this week.

Let me say, first of all, we have to make sure that we continue to do what we can to protect Sarajevo. Second, we should remember that that option is, in effect, available now wherever there are U.N. forces, because if U.N. forces are brought under shelling, they can ask for close air support from NATO. Thirdly, if we decide to pursue this as a strategy, we think it is important, as we did in Sarajevo, that the United Nations not -- excuse me, that NATO not undertake any mission it is not fully capable of performing. And I think that's very important.

So we're reviewing --

Well, wouldn't it be an irony, though, to have killing go on in other parts and just protect --

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. Well, we're very concerned about the prospect that maybe the weapons could be moved out of the Sarajevo area and transferred to another area; we're quite concerned about that. I believe that the United Nations commander on the ground, General Rose, has been pretty clear and forceful about that, too -- as he has been about everything. I think he's making a real difference there.

Mr. President, Bosnia's ambassador to the United Nations has expressed fears that the weapons that are being moved out of Sarajevo are being taken to other battlefronts. Do you see any evidence of that? And, if so, is there anything that can be done to prevent it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we're doing what we can to discourage it, obviously, and we believe that others will, including the Russians. And keep in mind, I think General Rose on the ground will take an aggressive attitude about that. And remember, as I just said to Helen, we now have operative right now a resolution to NATO which we supported which gives the U.N. commanders the option at the present time if they're under shelling to call in NATO close air support.

Mr. President, given your apparent success in this, how do you answer those who will now say to you and to other NATO leaders who may perhaps have been not as enthusiastic as you have been about such an operation, "Why not sooner?"

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would say, first of all, when we got the first approval ever for NATO out-of-area operations last summer, that resulted in immediately a reduction in the shelling of Sarajevo and the casualties, and then they built back up. So we've been working on this for some time. Even before then, we received permission to enforce a no-fly zone. So we've been working on this for some time.

I think that we finally had a consensus among our allies -- and I have to compliment them -- and which included, as I have said many times, NATO members who had troops on the ground there, unlike the United States. So I think that the main thing we need to do now is to build on this and figure out how we can use it to make a permanent peace.

Mr. President, how can you build on this diplomatically? What can the United States now bring to the peace talks? You've always said that it has to be determined among the
parties, but once you have a bottom line from the Bosnian Muslims is there some new initiative, some way to push it? And might the Russian involvement on the ground lead to more Russian involvement in the diplomacy, as well?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I would hope it will. President Yeltsin and I have been discussing this, as you know, intensely -- both through our representatives and directly; and I talked to him again yesterday. I hope that they will be intensely involved in this. I think it is important that all of us who are prepared to stick with this and who have made the same commitment that if there is an agreed-upon peace will help to implement it really push for that kind of peace. On the other hand, I think it is equally important that we not pretend that we can impose a peace that the parties disagree with, that they do not freely accept.

So that's the delicate line we'll be walking, and that's what our people will be discussing this week in Europe.

Q Mr. President, if the United States now is much more actively engaged in working with the Bosnian government to achieve some sort of peaceful settlement, won't that bring additional responsibilities to the U.S. government if the Bosnians do go forward and make major concessions? Specifically, how committed are you to dispatching some 25,000 U.S. military peacekeepers to try to enforce an agreement?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I have said since February of 1993, since shortly after becoming President, that if the parties themselves freely and clearly adopted a peace agreement which the United States felt was an enforceable one, that we would do what could through the United Nations and through NATO to support the implementation of it as long as we had fewer than half of the troops there and as long as we were convinced that the agreement -- that we had a fair chance to implement it. We've not committed to any specific number of troops, but I think we should and that's been my position all along.

Q You first talked of air strikes some 13 months ago. Do you now feel personally vindicated by the events of the past couple of days and week?

THE PRESIDENT: To be honest, I haven't given any thought to that. Let me just say generally, in a situation like this, first of all, it's a complicated, heartbreaking situation. I just want it to -- I want the United States to play a role in stabilizing that part of the world so the conflict doesn't spread and in bringing an end to the humanitarian tragedy.

I believe that the policy that I have advocated is and has been the right one. But I also fully recognize that, unlike our allies that I had to convince to go along with the policy, we did not have troops on the ground there. We did not have people who could be easily outnumbered and killed quickly. So I have to say a strong word of appreciation to our allies in NATO for the work they have done, as well as a strong word of appreciation to General Rose and to the -- generally, the renewed vigor of the United Nations forces in Bosnia because they knew they would be at some risk if this policy ultimatum had to be carried out.

Thank you.

END 12:16 P.M. EST
MS. MYERS: Good evening. President Clinton spoke with Secretary General Woerner from the residence about an hour ago, and the President has issued the following statement.

I have just been informed by NATO Secretary General Manfred Woerner that NATO and the United Nations commanders have concluded that all known heavy weapons of the parties have been withdrawn from the exclusion zone around Sarajevo, or under the control of the United Nations, or soon should be. Therefore, they have concluded that no air strikes in Bosnia by NATO air forces are required at this time.

This week's events clearly have given the residents of Sarajevo a respite from the shelling and a measure of hope. I want to congratulate NATO and each of our NATO allies for the demonstration of resolve that produced these results. I want to commend the high level of cooperation that has been demonstrated between U.N. and NATO.

As I told President Yeltsin in a call earlier today, I want to congratulate the government of Russia for its contributions to this effort.

Finally, all Americans join in praising the courage and skill of our service personnel and those of our NATO allies. They have been the muscle in NATO's ultimatum.

Despite the significant events of the day, we must remain vigilant. All parties should be aware that the ultimatum stands. The deadline has not been extended. Any heavy weapons in the exclusion zone not under U.N. control are and will remain subject to air strikes. NATO's decision applies to any heavy weapons attacks on Sarajevo from within or beyond the zone.

NATO and the United Nations will continue to monitor compliance extremely carefully. The NATO decision and its results provide new potential for progress toward an end to the tragic conflict in Bosnia. In the coming days, American diplomats will be working with the parties to the conflict and our allies and partners to transform this potential into reality.

There will be a background briefing in a few minutes, but I'll take a couple of questions in the meantime.

Q: How many heavy Serbian gun positions are not yet under U.N. control, and when do you expect they will be under U.N. control?

MS. MYERS: Well, the vast majority of heavy weapons have either been removed from the zone or placed under U.N. control. Only a handful of areas remain outside of the U.N. control, and we
expect very soon that most of those will be — or all of those will be within U.N. control. That's something that we'll have to monitor continually; it's something that we're getting reports on from the ground.

Q The Serbs have not complied with the U.N. ultimatum, have they?

MS. MYERS: Well, as the President's statement points out, all of the heavy weapons have either been removed, put under U.N. control, or will soon be under U.N. control. So at this time we don't see any need for air strikes.

Q When you say "soon be" that means they have not complied, have they?

MS. MYERS: We haven't been able to confirm compliance at this point. That's something, again, that we're going to continue to monitor as events proceed.

Q When you say soon, is it a question of hours or days, when you say they will be very soon under the U.N.'s control?

MS. MYERS: Soon. I'm not going to put a time line on it. But again, it's a very small, just a handful of weapons that are not yet under control and we do expect those to be under control soon. There's been tremendous progress today. Clearly, there's been a high level of weapons, a high number of weapons turned over; most of those within the cantonment areas or outside of the exclusion zone. And again, there's been a lot of heavy weather there, a lot of cloud cover. So it's difficult to assess exactly what the situation is on the ground, but we're quite confident that the vast majority of weapons are now within the NATO ultimatum.

Q What do you mean when you say you can't confirm compliance? You can confirm what's already been done.

MS. MYERS: Right, with the exception of those handful of areas where we don't believe that the weapons are under NATO control -- I mean UNPROFOR control at this time. But again, we expect that to happen soon.

Q Did the President know all this, that there would be no air strikes before 7:00 p.m.?

MS. MYERS: Well, he's been following events very closely today, and he spoke, as you know, to a number of people including the Secretary General of NATO, Manfred Woerner, twice -- most recently, at about 7:30 p.m. And at that time, Secretary General Woerner assured him that, again as the President's statement says, that the weapons were either removed or under UNPROFOR control, or would soon be under UNPROFOR control. So it's been a good day.

Q -- can be construed as an extension of the deadline technically?

MS. MYERS: Absolutely not. The deadline is firm and the deadline remains in place. And I think that's an important point. This is something that we'll continue to monitor. We will be vigilant. Any weapons that are in the exclusion zone that are outside of UNPROFOR control that are used to shell the city from within or outside the exclusion zone will be subject to air strikes.

Q Since this worked out as you had hoped, how long might it take the White House, NATO or others to propose a similar solution in Tuzla, Srebrenica and other enclaves where Serb guns have shelled civilians?
MS. MYERS: Well, as you know, U.N.-NATO action already applies to Tuzla and Srebrenica. There's already -- air strikes have already been authorized there to open the airport at Tuzla or to assure the rotation of troops at Srebrenica. I think the focus now is on the diplomatic effort -- to get the diplomatic process reinvigorated.

As you know, we've been pursuing that quite vigorously over the past few weeks. Ambassador Redman's been in Europe meeting with leaders in European capitals, leaders of different countries and leaders to the parties to the conflict. I think, as Tony mentioned earlier, there will be a meeting in Bonn on Tuesday that will include Britain, France, the U.S., Germany, Russia, and the troika of the EU. And I believe Prime Minister Silajdzic will be in Washington tomorrow meeting with Secretary of State Christopher, National Security Advisor Lake, and other administration officials in our effort to invigorate the process.

Q Who does the White House hold responsible for the fact that some of these weapons remain out of U.N. control? Is it because the Serbs have been unwilling to turn them over, or because the U.N. has been unable to take them?

MS. MYERS: I think it's a little difficult for us to determine exactly what's happened at each site on the ground. As you know, there's been a lot of heavy weather there over the past few days. There's been cloud cover; there's been snow. So at this point, there's a few that remain outside of UNPROFOR control, but we do expect that by tomorrow we'll have better information and we expect that those sites will be under UNPROFOR control.

Q Are the Russian troops going to have any role in controlling Serbian weapons?

MS. MYERS: The Russian troops are under UNPROFOR command, so General Rose and others on the ground will determine exactly how the Russian troops are used. That's something that will be worked out between them.

Q Why do you believe the Serbs agreed to comply with the NATO ultimatum?

MS. MYERS: Well, I think quite clearly it was the resolve demonstrated by the allies over the course of the last 10 days. I think we made it clear again and again that a deadline is a deadline, that the ultimatum stood, and that any weapons that were outside of the exclusion zone -- that were in the exclusion zone outside of UNPROFOR control at the end of the 10-day period will be subject to air strikes.

I think certainly the efforts of the Russians helped, the efforts of the allies in this helped. But ultimately, it was the resolve that the allies showed in issuing the ultimatum.

I'll take one more question, and then we'll end it.

Q Was there any formal contact with the Serbian leadership in all of this? I mean, what did they do -- they just came and dropped their guns and then departed, the Serbs? I mean, was there any kind of controlled --

MS. MYERS: There has been a lot of contact on the ground between the UNPROFOR commanders and between the leaders of the various parties there; certainly a lot of dialogue on the ground. I think you've seen various Serbian officials out on television over the course of the last several days.
Q In contact with the U.N. or NATO or --

MS. MYERS: Certainly, he's been in contact at many levels ongoing throughout this, but I think with regards specifically to the weapons, that's happened primarily on the ground.

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 8:31 P.M. EST
MS. MYERS: Good evening. President Clinton spoke with Secretary General Woerner from the residence about an hour ago, and the President has issued the following statement.

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Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 8:31 P.M. EST
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me just give you a little more information that you might want to use in your stories with numbers and why we think we are where we are.

Q Are we on the record here, or on --
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: BACKGROUND.

Today, no shelling, as I'd previously said, and reduced small arms fire around Sarajevo. Let me give you some numbers now which are not final, but about 150 Serb -- Bosnian Serb heavy weapons were turned in today, which is a lot; at 13 field sites, is our information. And the Bosnian --

Q I thought there were only 10 --
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, there were -- it had grown from five to 10 and now our latest report was at 13.

Q Are in cantonments?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes. Or field sites they refer to them. And the Bosnian government turned in a few more. The total then of weapons turned in is close to 250 by the Bosnian Serbs and something under 50 by the Bosnian government.

Let me say something more now about the sites.

Q Do you have any estimate about the numbers that were withdrawn from the exclusion zone?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: None.

Q Nothing at all?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, we really -- because we couldn't tell -- there was such a -- as I said this morning, it was so hectic, that it was hard to tell.

Q Well, is it your expectation it will be an equivalent number, a lesser number, a greater number?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I really don't want to mislead you.

Let me off the record just for how you shade it, I would say at least that many left, but I really don't want to -- I just don't want to mislead you, and I can't be sure.

Q I'm sorry, I didn't hear the question --
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The question was approximately how many had left. And because I don't want you to be misled, I am guessing here, but I would -- on the basis of some knowledge, I would say at least that many --

Q Does that mean about 100 are still left around, be they --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I would not draw that conclusion. Again, by definition, we don't know the weapons that we don't know about.

Q I'm talking about the known sites --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. No, less. No, considerably less.

We are talking about, of known sites that are not yet secured of nine or so. Of those, four should be under U.N. control soon as patrols arrive or U.N. military observer groups, as they call it. Of the remaining five or so -- and I'm saying "or so" because all of this is -- the numbers keep shifting. But these are -- the reason that they are not yet secured is because of inaccessibility due either to weather or to terrain. And we believe that most of them are, in fact, abandoned sites. So when the weather permits, they will be taken over.

Q The first four were abandoned also -- the first four you referred to?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't know. I don't know. But anyway, I think that goes to your question, Doug, that you were asking.

Q But will the second -- are you suggesting the second five will not be taken over soon?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, no, I think they should be soon, yes.

Q What's the difference between first group and the second group in terms of timing?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Because these last five or so are hard to get to -- it's dark now; there's a lot of snow.

Q Is there anything that distinguishes the first four from all of those that have already --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They're more accessible.

Q No, but -- I understand the difference from the first four --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I have --

Q -- but the first four and all the rest of the them that have been turned over --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think this has just been a rolling process, and by definition there had to be a last four.

Q So you're suggesting that of the nine --

MORE
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't know of any particular characteristics.

Q So of the nine that remain, five are inaccessible and we believe may be abandoned; four are about to be --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We believe four are in the process --

Q Meaning it would be none -- none will pose a threat?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We believe that none --

Q You don't think any of these are manned?

Q Of the known ones.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We don't believe so. And certainly -- and you'll recall that there is -- the other part of the NATO decision is that if any weapons are -- heavy weapons are fired at Sarajevo, there will be an instant response. Off the record, I sure wouldn't, if I were at one of those sites, fire off my heavy weapon at Sarajevo.

Q What is the difference, if any, between cantonments and field sites? Cantonments were the site that was prepared for the occasion; and do I understand that field sites is something like an improvised control?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I suspect, but I could not tell you.

Q When do you suspect you will have the remaining site -- the U.N. will have remaining sites under control?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They'll be starting again in the morning.

Q By the end of our day Monday?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I would hope so, yes.

Q I mean, it's not --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I just can't -- I don't want to be one off and then have a -- but I would suspect --

Q -- is nine by the end of the day?

Q Were any planes in the air? Did any planes take off?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, there have been planes flying over all day, possibly for the last days.

Q But that's been ongoing --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's been ongoing throughout this whole thing, yes.

Q -- night perhaps -- can sort of look around during the night or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They have night -- but that doesn't mean they're looking around the night tonight. I just don't know who's --
Q — be fair to say that the NATO allies were willing to show some flexibility in the ultimatum?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. The deadline was a deadline. And this is a very -- well, because time has passed now -- (laughter) -- a deadline was a deadline -- (laughter). This is a very important point, Wolf, that we are now in the period in which heavy weapons that have not been removed from the zone or under U.N. control are subject to air attack. And again I have been saying for days that doesn't mean that they will be attacked; and obviously if there is a site that has been inaccessible that they're moving towards, then you attack them.

Q Have the Serbs actually communicated to the U.N. or to NATO the definition of those sites? In other words, have they said, we have these sites; here they are --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you specifically about those sites. But as I said today, there was good cooperation between the Bosnian Serbs and the U.N. in this process.

Q Does that mean -- the U.N. and NATO have seen those sites and they know they existed, because they have seen them themselves --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, they have seen them --

Q -- or that the Serbs have said, look, we have these sites, here they are?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, we know that the U.N. has seen these sites, has looked at them --

Q But did the Serbs help them to pinpoint those sites?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There was cooperation with the Bosnian Serbs during the day saying here are where the sites are and cooperating in that way. We know that. Now, whether it was the case with those sites -- I'm trying to be precise here -- I don't know, this last group.

Q So what is your assumption about the four sites that will be taken over as to why they haven't been taken over? Is it because --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, I don't know. But almost, as I said to Doug, by definition, there had to be some sites at the end of this process.

Q -- time to do it, but it's a start --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Exactly. Yes. I mean, this has been a process of doing it, and those are the last ones that were in the process of --

Q -- terminated, strictly speaking, after the deadline is not meaningful?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is not meaningful because those four sites were already being worked on during the hours before the deadline. And, again, let me emphasize -- if that's what you're getting at -- that there was not a case that I'm aware of in which the Serbs were putting up resistance in any way. And that's not the case with the four sites.
Q Could you tell us at this point how many sites there were overall in the beginning?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't right now, no.

Q By definition you had to get to the final four, but by definition, you had to get a start.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, that is also -- we may not know how many there were because they were getting onto the road and some of them may have been concealed. You see what I'm saying?

Q As I understand it, the field sites are controlled by U.N. force of a platoon or less, which is a militarily insignificant force. If the Bosnia -- if there were a breach of the cease-fire, are you faced with a situation where you're going to be called in by close air support as well as take out guns and even more difficult military proposition?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: General Rose's statement, and Admiral Boorda's statements, that our definition of control -- their definition of control was that the Serbs would have to -- or any party -- would have to fight for the weapons if they wanted to regain control of them speaks for itself.

Q So, you're saying that the ultimatum is indefinite. This is what has been saying today.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Absolutely, yes.

Q So do you foresee what the conditions would be for the terms of the ultimatum to be changed? What's next?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What's next is to work on the peace process that can finally bring --

Q And keep it ongoing?

Q Silajdzic is coming tomorrow, right?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q Will he see the President tomorrow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There are no plans for him to see the President in --

Q Who's he going to see?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He will probably see the Vice President, we're working on that. He will see Secretary Christopher, he will see me.

Q Tell us more about what the President's going to be doing overnight and into the morning? Calls in the morning, for example.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He'll be sleeping overnight and probably will have another intelligence briefing.

Q Any calls?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm sure he will make more calls tomorrow --

Q Nothing specific?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- to other leaders, but not set yet.

Q. What's the significance of what happened today? You talked about it just a little bit on Friday, but how big a victory -- if that's the right word -- is this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it's very significant both in what has happened, first for the people of Sarajevo itself, whose life is still very difficult with regard to fuel and supplies. But we have seen now every day in the newspapers pictures of the people of Sarajevo going around their everyday lives without being subject to bombardment; and that should give us all great satisfaction. And if you certainly contrast that with the images of two weeks and one day ago, the -- as I said, that should give us great satisfaction.

Secondly, I think it is significant because this has, we hope, created a momentum that can now move the diplomatic process forward towards a solution of this terrible conflict. The momentum comes both from this joining of power to diplomacy and from the fact that the NATO allies have worked so closely together and with such determination, and because the Russians have become constructively involved.

Q. Well, is there a daylight plan?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- And we hope that the Serb -- this Bosnian Serb decision to comply with the NATO decision will also be translated into a flexibility at the negotiating table. So I think it's very significant both in terms of Sarajevo itself and in its implications for our diplomacy.

Could I get some more facts before we --

I don't actually have a lot more except that I can tell you that the Russian contingent is in Sarajevo. It will be deployed, we believe, in the southern -- in the areas -- the southern areas of Sarajevo; and will be in areas -- partly in Muslim areas and partly in Serbian areas; and will be under UNPROFOR control.

I can also tell you that there are now just over 4,000 UNPROFOR personnel in Sarajevo. Just over half are French, but they also include Ukrainians, Egyptians, Russians, British, Swedes, Malaysians and just over 200 U.N. military observers from various countries. And there we are.

Q. Based on the way this played out, would you guess which is back to a similar resolve on the part of our government might have produced a similar outcome several months ago when it was first discussed?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, you recall that over the past year our government has been pressing for various actions. We gained the no-fly zone enforcement, which many had said couldn't be done. As you recall, there was a delay between the U.N. resolution and the enforcement. We made an effort, then, to get the arms embargo lifted, which we failed to do. And then, last July and August, we did -- through a similar effort and similar resolve -- get the alliance to issue the warning over Sarajevo, I believe on August 9th, that in many ways led to where we are today. And then the President, working closely with Secretary General Woerner, got the NATO summit to reaffirm that warning, which led directly to, then, over recent weeks, to the decision of ten days ago.

I think there's been an evolution over time of the views of many allied governments that has made possible the further progress that we've seen in the recent weeks.

MORE
Q Could you give us a sense of the message to * will be tomorrow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. I think we will continue to discuss with him, as Ambassador Redman has been doing, what the Bosnian position is so that we can work through with him that position, and then be able to take it to the other parties.

Q Are you pretty confident that the Serbs will not return to that area —

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't predict one way or the other. As I've been saying for the past few days —

Q I mean, are you optimistic -- not predicting -- optimistic?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not optimistic and I'm not pessimistic. (Laughter.) We will look at this as we have been.

Q State your philosophy. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Never too high and never too low.

END 8:55 P.M. EST
THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

BACKGROUND BRIEFING  
BY  
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL  

February 19, 1994  

The Roosevelt Room  

3:30 P.M. EST

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Welcome to Saturday afternoon at the White House. Why don't I just try to bring you all up to date, and I will not do what I did yesterday and tell you all what our policy is. The President did that this morning and I agree with every word of it. (Laughter.)

Q Could that be on the record? (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. (Laughter.) Let me say in general, first, though, that I think it would be wrong to be either optimistic or pessimistic about what is happening. What will determine the course of events over the next 24-plus hours are the facts on the ground. And I would suggest to you that I'm starting to read reports of, well, the Serbs have said that they will comply and there are reports of movements; therefore, a collective sigh of relief and it's over. And that is not the case.

I just got an update from our people, and our reports are that there was no shelling that took place on the 19th, which is almost over now there. We do not have reports that the Serbs turned in heavy weapons to the cantonment areas during the day there. There were some turn-ins by the Bosnian government. But on the other hand, there is some evidence that the Serbs may be -- Bosnian Serbs -- may be getting ready to enter cantonment areas with some weapons, we don't know how many.

The U.N. reports that there are columns moving out of the exclusion zone, but we cannot confirm how many or how many weapons there might be in those columns. And we do have evidence that some weapons systems still remain in place around Sarajevo, but I'm not prepared to tell you how many.

Q These columns -- you mean moving weapons completely out of these centers -- taking them out as opposed to putting them --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What we have reports of is Bosnian Serb columns moving in the direction of out of the exclusion zone.

Q Carrying armor, or not?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't confirm.

Q Just convoys or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't confirm, but presumably --

Q Trucks or --

MORE
Q You said heavy weapons are still in place? You said there is evidence that some weapons are still in place.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right.

Q Is it a small number?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Everything is relative, including the word small. I'd say -- I can't tell you how many.

Q You also said there is some evidence that the Serbs may be getting ready to move more stuff into the cantonment zone. What sort of evidence would you have that would show us they are getting ready to do it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm in a difficult area here which I can't talk about sources, but there is some evidence of that.

Q But, as of now, are there any Serb weapons that have been turned over to U.N. control?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, yes. And again, I can't give you an exact number, but somewhere between 50 and 100 are under the control of the U.N. now in cantonment areas.

Q Would you say your information is we're still a long way from the acceptable level of withdrawal or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't want to say a long way because, again, our evidence is not complete here in what is going on. The Bosnian Serbs have said that they will comply fully. In fact, they have said that they would comply fully by this evening. There are reports from the U.N. they believe that we are making real progress here. And again, I don't think we should be characterizing that progress and saying that it is nearly complete or not nearly complete. Again, we'll just keep looking at the facts and see what the situation is tomorrow.

Q But they already have broken their promise, they have not fulfilled their promise which was to put all their weapons in cantonment by tonight, by midnight local time.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There may also be some lag time in our -- in the evidence that we can get on this, so I wouldn't reach a conclusion on that either. But, in any case, that is simply what they said. The NATO deadline is tomorrow at 1700 hours, our time.

Q To what degree is the weather a deterrent in withdrawing -- in moving these weapons out of there?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, there are reports of heavy snowfalls, which may be inhibiting their ability to move them. On the other hand, if they are unable to move weapons, then the U.N. has said that if they would place U.N. soldiers around those sites and separate the crews from the weapons.

Q So when you said before that some weapons remain in place, are you concerned that there is not a legitimate reason for those weapons to remain in place?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't know the reason.

Q You know there something -- the snowstorm, is that
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you why. It may be that they are leaving them there; it may be that they haven't simply moved those weapons yet; it may be that there's no -- we simply don't know.

Q Do you have information that the Bosnian Serbs are telling the United Nations, we're having problems with transportation so let's keep in touch, we need some of your men to come see --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't know. I know they are talking. I simply can't answer that.

Do you want me to run through the -- okay, go ahead.

Q I'm sorry. Well, actually it's policy --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay, number one, I went through the rest of my little bits for the day. But again, our policy is clear, as the President said. And as I said yesterday, the NATO decision is a decision. The deadline is a deadline, and we will see what the facts are tomorrow.

On the question of Russian troops going to Bosnia, our reports are that 400 troops will be coming in from Croatia where they have been serving, and that another 400 will be coming in from Russia. The timing of their arrival is uncertain now, probably tomorrow. And they --

Q For both troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, which doesn't mean they will arrive at the same time, but probably tomorrow. And we are told now that they will be under the command, or at least the operational control of General Rose and UNPROFOR.

Q Who is telling you that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I talked to Ambassador Albright an hour or so ago, maybe a little more, and she said she'd confirmed it with U.N. officials. But we're getting the same reports also --

Q Are you getting any directly from Moscow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. As I said yesterday, this is -- I think Russian officials have said this also, but this is an issue between the U.N. and the Russians.

Q Where are the Russian troops going to be?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The U.N. is working out where they would be deployed now.

Q The Russians seem to be assuming that their troops will necessarily automatically, systematically, be used as bumper troops --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, the U.N. will make those decisions with the Russians. And the final deployment decisions, as far as we know, have not been made yet.

Q But the Russians wish to be bumper troops, right?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't assume that now. They have said they would be under the operational control of the U.N.

Q That's never happened before, has it?

MORE
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What?

Q Russian troops under operational control of the United Nations?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, 400 have been with UNPROFOR in Croatia.

Q Is there a difference between under United Nations and under operational command --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I'm trying to use the precise words, and I wouldn't worry about this too much. And if you say command, you're not going to lose future Pulitzer prizes for -- (laughter.) It is a distinction that is important to us, for example, in peacekeeping operations. Command means that on such issues as who gets promoted, who has the final authority, et cetera, that almost always remains national. It does with us. We would not give up our command to U.N. commanders. Operational control means that the U.N. commanders then can say you go here, you go there. Sort of tactical control. And I was just trying to be precise in words.

Q Will Russians be serving under the same terms that the French and the Canadians and the Dutch and the rest of peacekeeping force are serving under?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I haven't heard otherwise.

Q Yesterday you said something like you would trust -- you didn't say trust --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Expect.

Q Expect General Rose to put the Russian troops in the proper place.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think I said in the proper place.

Q You said proper place at one point.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I'm sure he will. I expect that he will.

Q There's a report that the Bosnian vice president is saying that actually the Serbs are bringing things in. Are you aware of any of this or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Into the cantonment areas?

Q No, it seems -- that into that exclusionary zone --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, you mean from outside?

Q Yes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Haven't seen evidence of that.

Q There's another report from Bosnia that placement of U.N. personnel would make air strikes problematic at best because they are going to spread all around the kinds of places that may or may not be under --
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: General Rose has been very clear that if there are U.N. troops around a site, then they have control of that site. And indeed he has gone further and said that if the Serbs or anybody else were to try to -- and I don't know who else it would be -- but if they were to try to regain control of those weapons, they would have to fight for them. That certainly implies that control means control; that they would have control of those sites and, obviously, then the issue of attacking them would not arise.

Q Again, the Bosnian vice president said it would make air strikes technically impossible given the fact the peacekeepers would be deployed. Otherwise, it would be hit by the air strikes. Do you share his interpretation or are you saying it's possible?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, again, because if there are U.N. forces at the site, then that site would -- then the Serbs would not have control of the piece and NATO would not strike them.

Q The 400 troops that are coming from Croatia and the other former Russian troops coming from Russia, you say they are coming in? Where are they going to go before Rose deploys them? Where do they show up, to Sarajevo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q Do they fly into Sarajevo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not sure exactly how they would get there.

Q Regardless of the ultimatum tomorrow and 7:00 --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The one group would.

Q From Moscow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q What objective criterion do you use to determine whether the terms of the ultimatum have been met?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me say a word on that because this is an important thing as you think about tomorrow, and I've said this to a number of you already.

We were very careful in the proposal that we made to NATO, and NATO was very careful in the terms of its decision not to overstate what our objective here is, because we wanted to be sure that our objectives and our means were equivalent -- that we were not promising to do things that we could not technically do. Therefore, NATO did not say that as of the deadline all artillery pieces will have been removed. The reason for that is that you can't know, for example, whether there might be some mortars hidden in garages or houses somewhere in that area. We simply can't know that.

So, we phrased this with great precision to say that any artillery pieces in that area after the deadline are subject to attack. That we clearly can do. And so, again, the terms are that any pieces there are subject to attack. And this is not a question of judging whether there is an 80 percent or 90 percent or something.

Q -- striking those that are there?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It means they are subject to attack?

Q Subject to attack, but not --

Q So are you committed to attack?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We are committed to implementing the decision. I'm also not trying to hint that we won't do it. I'm just saying that we are committed to the decision, they are subject to attack. And I don't want to talk about operational planning.

Q Sir, are you afraid or do you consider that NATO strike power is sort of stymied by the fact that -- apparently decided to spend the night from Sunday to Monday in Sarajevo and that a Russian colonel coming from Moscow who is apparently not a member of the U.N. is visiting along with him?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. Should I go on--

Q What is your analysis of this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Of which?

Q The coming in and the sticking around just to make sure that they will comply --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, this is an important moment for the Russians and I think they want to have Churkin there to make sure that everything goes smoothly.

Q Churkin -- he said that any air strikes would be a rash action, and he said if NATO decided to carry out air strikes at all costs in Sarajevo and -- (inaudible) -- crisis between NATO and Russia. So obviously for them there was no grounds whatsoever for an air strike. Is it correct to say that? Or how do you see exactly --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think clearly, the Russians would prefer that air strikes not take place and that is one of the reasons why they have been encouraging the Bosnian Serbs to comply with the NATO decision.

Again, I would reiterate that the NATO decision is a decision and we are very firm in our intention to see it fulfilled.

Q But as they told you in your communication with them, that as far as they are concerned there is no ground whatsoever for air strikes now.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Perhaps I could describe to you a conversation that took place this afternoon between Secretary Christopher and Foreign Minister Kozyrev. It was a very good conversation. They reviewed the situation on the ground. Christopher noted that the evidence remains ambiguous about Serb compliance as of this time and said that we need full Serb compliance with their commitment to remove heavy weapons; and Kozyrev agreed that Serb compliance is necessary. And he said that he and Churkin would continue to stress that with the Serbs --

Q Did he agree that should there not be compliance there would be grounds for air strikes?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He agreed that there should be compliance. And you can draw your own --

Q Who decides whether there is compliance? Have we decided whether, if there is a stray piece of artillery somewhere,
whether it makes sense to take the extreme step of going after it even if there seems to have been efforts elsewhere to remove other artillery?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't characterize that as an extreme step necessarily but --

Q Major step.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Whatever.

Q Step. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sort of an offhand gesture -- okay. Let me -- actually, let me come back to that just for a moment, okay -- in just a moment.

While we're on conversations today, the President did speak with Mitterrand this morning. They -- it was not a lengthy conversation. How long would you say -- 10 minutes, something like that. They reviewed the situation on the ground. They expressed a common commitment to take action if necessary. And Mitterrand was every bit as firm about that as the President is. They spoke briefly about agreeing that the operational details are in place to take action if necessary, and again, of course, Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili will be going out, leaving this evening for Aviano. And I would expect that the President will be speaking again tomorrow to foreign leaders, but it's not decided yet --

Q Who initiated that call to Mitterrand?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Mitterrand did. Well, Mitterrand had -- his office had said that they would like to have a call and then I think we -- then we agreed on the time. I don't have actually --

Q Would Yeltsin be one of those he's calling tomorrow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We really haven't decided who.

Now I'll come back to what else the President's been doing. I told you about Christopher's conversation with Kozyrev. I've talked to counterparts and so has Perry, I believe. Okay, let me talk about the diplomatic track generally.

We do believe, as I said yesterday, that since power and diplomacy cannot or at least should not be separated, that this period offers a very strong opportunity for making progress on the diplomatic front. Ambassador Redman has been exploring the positions of the parties, including the Bosnian government. He has been making progress here, but we are not at a point yet of clarity.

And, again, as you all know, we are not, in case it crossed your mind, pressuring the Bosnian government into a position. And if you would like me to repeat that 18 times, I will. We feel very strongly about it.

He was in Athens, as you know, at the end of the week to -- because the Greeks are the presidents of the European Union now -- are consulting with them; consulted with the Russians while he was there. He is now in Frankfurt for more meetings, and our expectation is that the talks will begin again probably at the beginning of March.

All right. Processes. And let me emphasize this -- the process here is that the North Atlantic Council authorized NATO
military authorities, who, in turn, have authorized the NATO CINC South -- Admiral Boorda, who happens to be an American, but in this case is acting as the NATO CINC South -- to launch such attacks if necessary.

Let me just pause there for a moment. The point here is that this is not a decision that is made in all of the NATO capitals. That decision was made by the NAC -- the decision to give the NATO commander that authority. So it is not that we will be sitting here tomorrow afternoon and trying to decide and then flash out a message. That is being done there on the ground. That's on the NATO side. On the U.N. side then, the recommendation is made by U.N. military commanders.

Now, the first such strikes must be approved by the United Nations. The United Nations has, in effect, a check-off here. We understand that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has given that authority to Mr. Akashi, who is the Secretary General's representative in Zagreb. When it comes down to it in practice, I cannot tell you exactly whether Akashi will exercise that authority himself or then check with New York. I think it will depend on how he sees the situation at the time. We can't know that. But apparently the Secretary General has given Akashi that authority.

After the first so-called ice breaker, where the U.N. does have this formal check-off, then further NATO air strikes would be carried out in coordination with the U.N. military commanders. And the reason for this is there are a lot of U.N. troops and U.N. HCR people on the ground, and you need to make sure that those strikes are coordinated with the U.N. people to see to their safety.

If there is -- the way it works is if there is then an irreconcilable difference as they try to coordinate at that level, then it would go up the chain to resolve those differences. But these would be NATO operations.

Q On the ice breaker, Rose goes to Akashi, is that the first step?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- Cot and Rose and then to Akashi.

Q Goes up which chain? Which chain -- you say if there's irreconcilable differences --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Their respective chains and then up through the NATO command. I suppose to New York then.

Q Does the President have --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't anticipate that would --

Q Nonetheless, the U.N. either on the ground or in New York has, even after the first strike -- it's the U.N. --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They're involved. They are coordinating with them, but it is not the formal check --

Q But if they say, no, NATO can't launch the plane anyway, it would have to go --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think we would have to see that when we got to it.

Q So from the ground up it would be Rose, Cot, Akashi.
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right.

Q How does the board determine whether air strikes are necessary? Does it consult with Rose to reach that determination or is --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They've been working very closely on this for the last few days.

Q They reach that decision jointly?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Presumably jointly. They may disagree, but they would try in the first instance to work it out jointly, I'm sure.

Q Does the President have the power to override any NATO-U.N. decision? In other words, could he order air strikes not to be conducted?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Theoretically so, since he -- I believe, since he has ultimate command over American forces. But I would not expect that to happen.

Q But he couldn't order an air strike by himself?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not according to the terms of the NATO decision, no.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I was going to say that he has ruled out unilateral --

Q So do you expect that at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow night the situation will remain ambiguous in some way, that we won't know whether to be pessimistic or optimistic? (Laughter.) I mean, in part, is there a problem with the weather --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think we'll know a lot more by tomorrow evening about what the facts are on the ground. But what I'm suggesting is that you not think that at one minute past 7:00 p.m. tomorrow evening there will necessarily be a go or a no go.

Q You said that Christopher, in his conversation with Kozyrev characterized the situation on the ground as ambiguous --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Which is not, let me emphasize, to say that the deadline is not real. At 1701 p.m. Sunday evening any Serbian artillery pieces in the exclusion zone --

Q At 1901.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: At 1901.

Q A deadline is a deadline. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sorry -- they are subject to attack.

Q That's essentially a political decision --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is not essentially a political decision.

Q Can you elaborate on that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The military commanders on the ground will decide based on the evidence on what is going on in the ground.

MORE
Q Is there a plan of action short of launching an air strike for dealing with weapons that are not withdrawn? I mean, would they be willing to try to secure or surround these weapons without launching an air strike?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, the U.N. is already seeking to do that. And the terms of the NATO decision are air strikes. In other words, we're not looking at ground operations or fighting their way in. But they are now, as the Serbs agreed, going in to take over weapons that the Serbs say that they can't move.

Q What about weapons that they can move that they do not move before the deadline, that they're unable to move those weapons because of --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, then they can say, please, come in and secure them. But if they don't, they are subject to air strikes. We are not looking at ground operations.

Q Subject to air strikes means they will be bombed?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They are subject to air attacks, and I'm not going to talk about operational concerns here.

Q There was a big, there seems to be big room for interpretation here. They were subject to air strikes, but it didn't mean they would be bombed. There is big room for political interpretation of what could happen.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The political decision was made by the North Atlantic Council a week ago Wednesday.

Could I talk a little bit, if you want, about what's going on here -- a day in the life of the White House -- because I know some of you had questions about how are we tracking this, what is the President doing, all that.

This morning at 8:45 a.m. the President made the call to Mitterrand. At 9:00 a.m. I got an intelligence briefing in the Situation Room on the situation on the ground. The President then met with his White House advisors and his national security advisors, including Secretary Perry, Secretary Christopher, General Shalikashvili and myself and a number of, as I said, his White House advisors. As you know, then he made his statement at 10:06 a.m. precisely. And then he held a further brief meeting with us afterwards. At around 10 of 3:00 p.m. this afternoon I got another -- an update on the situation on the ground. At 3:00 p.m. I filled in the President and discussed the situation with him some more, reported to him on the Christopher-Kozyrev call, et cetera. I'm sure there will be another update this evening with the President.

Q Who initiated the call between Kozyrev and Christopher?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I couldn't tell you -- I'm sorry. The State Department could.

Do you happen to know?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I don't.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Then tomorrow morning at 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. there will be another intelligence briefing. And if there are major events, of course, during the night, the President will be informed by the Situation Room. And we'll be then updating the President at 10:30 a.m.
I'm trained to stop talking when it clicks. (Laughter.) For her, I don't even breathe. (Laughter.)

At 10:30 a.m. Secretary Perry is going to call the President tomorrow morning. As I said, there will probably be other calls then to foreign leaders probably midday-ish.

We will be here if you have questions. I will be here, Dee Dee will be here, Don will be here. I'll probably do a backgrounder again, if you wish, in the early afternoon sometime. We can work it out mutually. Let's see -- that will be to see where events are going and what would be the best time for you.

Q To get back to policy, if the approach works in Sarajevo, do you think NATO should consider extending it to other towns in Bosnia like Srebrenica or -- try to stop the seige by the Serbs? Is that under consideration?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the first step is Sarajevo. Sarajevo is so important militarily, politically, psychologically so important in symbolic terms also, that clearly the main focus now, the focus now has to be on Sarajevo. And then we will see. Let me note two things about it. One is the NATO decision at the summit to open the Tuzla airport and to see to the rotation in Srebrenica and both of those are proceeding. And the other is to, not just in the context of your question, but of what could happen afterwards, to remind you that there is now a long-standing commitment for close air support for any UNPROFOR troops that request it when under attack.

Q Just to satisfy myself on this point -- I understand that you say that the political decision was made a week ago, but isn't it perfectly possible that two different, reasonable governments will look at the situation on the ground and make two different assessments about what should be done as a result of that? And what happens in that case?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, let me say that this is not a decision that will be made in every NATO capital tomorrow. I'm not saying that there won't be consultations, but that the call is to be made, certainly in the first instance by Boorda and Rose and Cot, and let's see what happens.

Q But what happens if the U.S. talks to Boorda and says, "We think you should go," and another government -- the Canadians talk to him --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We don't call Boorda and say, we think you should go. Boorda is a NATO commander here. He happens to be an American. We're glad he's an American, but he is the NATO commander -- NATO -- the NAC made a decision that after the deadline -- dadadada dadadada -- you've heard it 40 times now -- are subject to attack.

Q And in reality, you don't think he's going to run his decision by the White House?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I do not expect that Admiral Boorda will be calling us tomorrow to say, what do I do?

Q But is it possible that after the fact --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not ruling out consultations then should there be disagreements or whatever, but I am saying that this is --
Q So you expect to be only informed and not ask for input?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Essentially. Unless there are disagreements or — let's see what happens. I don't want to rule that out, but that is the process.

Q How do you -- all the facts coming in; some good ones, some bad ones, some difficult to interpret. You might even have a -- so the person responsible for the global interpretation of that is -- would be, first, the U.N. --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We're not making global interpretations here. We are making interpretations of facts on the ground. And let's see where we are tomorrow.

Q In the President's address this morning, he was significantly harder -- than I have heard him before. I mean, very specifically saying they bear the primary responsibility. And I noticed that there was not a lot of talk of compliance by the Muslims -- at least by name. I think he said "and others" was the word. Do you agree that it was harder --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, not really. We have said --

Q And so is there something going on here that --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I think it was a summary of what we have been saying over the past year. You were hearing it all in one place again. But if you go back, I think, to the statement he made a week ago Wednesday, it was less detailed, but I think the tone was about the same.

Q It seemed to be, if those guys would stop fighting -- it didn't sound like the Serbs were the bad guys the last time. As much, as strongly.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we have said that before.

Q Are all other sides --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There was some other part of this.

Q Well, also the compliance of the Muslims was not specifically referred to, at least as far as I could see.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have -- and I think in that statement said that everybody has to comply. In fact, the Bosnian government has turned over into cantonment a number of its weapons, including tanks. So apparently they are complying. Now, it's easier to tell with them, of course, because they are within -- primarily within the Sarajevo area. And one of the cantonment areas is inside the lines in Sarajevo where the government can place its heavy weapons.

Q So you're satisfied the Serbs --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, I would not be optimistic or pessimistic about anybody, just for the record. But there has been action on their part.

Q Will the President consult with congressional leaders before he launches -- well -- (laughter) --

MORE
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There's been a lot of congressional consultation going on. He called in all of the congressional leaders, as you'll recall a week ago Wednesday and talked this through with them in great detail. During the past week -- the Congress is recessed now, so there haven't been meetings with members of Congress. But we did a couple of briefings at a staff level yesterday. We're making phone calls to congressional leaders. And I think they are -- and the President sent up yesterday, as you know, a report to the Congress consistent with the War Powers Act.

Q Will the President consult with -- or phone Yeltsin before air strikes are launched?
Q Or try?
Q Or try to. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Instant communications as you know; no problem.

Q Ambassador Pickering said that that would be a good idea --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think probably, yes.

Q At it's basis, what is the disagreement between the United States and Russia over handling this problem, or what --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me go beyond probably. I would think, yes, the President would make an effort to speak with him.

Q At its heart what is in disagreement between the United States and Russia over the handling of this problem? What underlies --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right now, I don't see a real disagreement because the Russians are pressing the Bosnian Serbs to comply with the NATO decision.

Q Well, but they repeatedly say they don't accept the NATO ultimatum; they don't -- so why --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They're pressing the Bosnian Serbs to abide by it.

Q With respect to the order, if it becomes necessary, would it -- does it require a new order from President Clinton --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.
Q Everything in on auto pilot, as it were?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, no, there are real live human beings --

Q I mean with respect to any order to use military aircraft, to participate in action --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We would put American aircraft at the service of NATO and the NATO commander --

Q And there's else the President has to do in order for those planes to take off and run a mission for --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's right. This does not mean he is a disinterested observer. And we would be following this very, very closely. And he has, as he said in his
statement, consulted very closely with General Shali to make sure that all the planning has gone smoothly, that every effort has been made to ensure the safety of our pilots, to make sure that we have, for example, search and rescue teams standing by, and he's been briefed on air defenses, et cetera. He has gone through all that.

Q At some point, though, did he not have to issue an order of some sort giving control of U.S. forces to NATO before this operation —

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He retains command, to come back to a distinction we made earlier, but he has turned over operational control through the NAC decision to the NATO commanders.

Q When is that done?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The time of the NAC decision.

Q What standard or analysis —

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And Secretary Perry and General Shali, again, just so that we are doing everything we should, are in Aviano tomorrow to go over all of this to make sure that they, like the other ministers of defense, are satisfied with the planning and state of readiness. So we're doing -- this is not a new thing. American forces have been under the operational control of NATO for a long time.

How come you say, "One more question," with the President and it's about four -- (laughter.)

Q You were doing so well.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And also, why do you just have this smile on your face as you're sitting back there?

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 4:14 P.M. EST
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Welcome to Saturday afternoon at the White House. Why don't I just try to bring you all up to date, and I will not do what I did yesterday and tell you all what our policy is. The President did that this morning and I agree with every word of it. (Laughter.)

Q Could that be on the record? (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. (Laughter.) Let me say in general, first, though, that I think it would be wrong to be either optimistic or pessimistic about what is happening. What will determine the course of events over the next 24-plus hours are the facts on the ground. And I would suggest to you that I'm starting to read reports of, well, the Serbs have said that they will comply and there are reports of movements; therefore, a collective sigh of relief and it's over. And that is not the case.

I just got an update from our people, and our reports are that there was no shelling that took place on the 19th, which is almost over now there. We do not have reports that the Serbs turned in heavy weapons to the cantonment areas during the day there. There were some turn-ins by the Bosnian government. But on the other hand, there is some evidence that the Serbs may be -- Bosnian Serbs -- may be getting ready to enter cantonment areas with some weapons, we don't know how many.

The U.N. reports that there are columns moving out of the exclusion zone, but we cannot confirm how many or how many weapons there might be in those columns. And we do have evidence that some weapons systems still remain in place around Sarajevo, but I'm not prepared to tell you how many.

Q These columns -- you mean moving weapons completely out of these centers -- taking them out as opposed to putting them --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What we have reports of is Bosnian Serb columns moving in the direction of out of the exclusion zone.

Q Carrying armor, or not?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't confirm.

Q Just convoys or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't confirm, but presumably --

Q Trucks or --

MORE
Q You said heavy weapons are still in place? You said there is evidence that some weapons are still in place.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right.

Q Is it a small number?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Everything is relative, including the word small. I'd say -- I can't tell you how many.

Q You also said there is some evidence that the Serbs may be getting ready to move more stuff into the cantonment zone. What sort of evidence would you have that would show us they are getting ready to do it?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm in a difficult area here which I can't talk about sources, but there is some evidence of that.

Q But, as of now, are there any Serb weapons that have been turned over to U.N. control?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, yes. And again, I can't give you an exact number, but somewhere between 50 and 100 are under the control of the U.N. now in cantonment areas.

Q Would you say your information is we're still a long way from the acceptable level of withdrawal or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't want to say a long way because, again, our evidence is not complete here in what is going on. The Bosnian Serbs have said that they will comply fully. In fact, they have said that they would comply fully by this evening. There are reports from the U.N. they believe that we are making real progress here. And again, I don't think we should be characterizing that progress and saying that it is nearly complete or not nearly complete. Again, we'll just keep looking at the facts and see what the situation is tomorrow.

Q But they already have broken their promise, they have not fulfilled their promise which was to put all their weapons in cantonment by tonight, by midnight local time.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There may also be some lag time in our -- in the evidence that we can get on this, so I wouldn't reach a conclusion on that either. But, in any case, that is simply what they said. The NATO deadline is tomorrow at 1700 hours, our time.

Q To what degree is the weather a deterrent in withdrawing -- in moving these weapons out of there?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, there are reports of heavy snowfalls, which may be inhibiting their ability to move them. On the other hand, if they are unable to move weapons, then the U.N. has said that if they would place U.N. soldiers around those sites and separate the crews from the weapons.

Q So when you said before that some weapons remain in place, are you concerned that there is not a legitimate reason for those weapons to remain in place?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't know the reason.

Q You know there something -- the snowstorm, is that
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I can't tell you why. It may be that they are leaving them there; it may be that they haven't simply moved those weapons yet; it may be that there's no -- we simply don't know.

Q Do you have information that the Bosnian Serbs are telling the United Nations, we're having problems with transportation so let's keep in touch, we need some of your men to come see --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't know. I know they are talking. I simply can't answer that.

Do you want me to run through the -- okay, go ahead.

Q I'm sorry. Well, actually it's policy --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Okay, number one, I went through the rest of my little bits for the day. But again, our policy is clear, as the President said. And as I said yesterday, the NATO decision is a decision. The deadline is a deadline, and we will see what the facts are tomorrow.

On the question of Russian troops going to Bosnia, our reports are that 400 troops will be coming in from Croatia where they have been serving, and that another 400 will be coming in from Russia. The timing of their arrival is uncertain now, probably tomorrow. And they --

Q For both troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes, which doesn't mean they will arrive at the same time, but probably tomorrow. And we are told now that they will be under the command, or at least the operational control of General Rose and UNPROFOR.

Q Who is telling you that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I talked to Ambassador Albright an hour or so ago, maybe a little more, and she said she'd confirmed it with U.N. officials. But we're getting the same reports also --

Q Are you getting any directly from Moscow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. As I said yesterday, this is -- I think Russian officials have said this also, but this is an issue between the U.N. and the Russians

Q Where are the Russian troops going to be?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The U.N. is working out where they would be deployed now.

Q The Russians seem to be assuming that their troops will necessarily automatically, systematically, be used as bumper troops --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, the U.N. will make those decisions with the Russians. And the final deployment decisions, as far as we know, have not been made yet.

Q But the Russians wish to be bumper troops, right?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't assume that now. They have said they would be under the operational control of the U.N.

Q That's never happened before, has it?

MORE
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: What?

Q: Russian troops under operational control of the United Nations?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, 400 have been with UNPROFOR in Croatia.

Q: Is there a difference between under United Nations and under operational command?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I'm trying to use the precise words, and I wouldn't worry about this too much. And if you say command, you're not going to lose future Pulitzer prizes for (laughter.) It is a distinction that is important to us, for example, in peacekeeping operations. Command means that on such issues as who gets promoted, who has the final authority, et cetera, that almost always remains national. It does with us. We would not give up our command to U.N. commanders. Operational control means that the U.N. commanders then can say you go here, you go there. Sort of tactical control. And I was just trying to be precise in words.

Q: Will Russians be serving under the same terms that the French and the Canadians and the Dutch and the rest of peacekeeping force are serving under?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I haven't heard otherwise.

Q: Yesterday you said something like you would trust -- you didn't say trust --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Expect.

Q: Expect General Rose to put the Russian troops in the proper place.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I don't think I said in the proper place.

Q: You said proper place at one point.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, I'm sure he will. I expect that he will.

Q: There's a report that the Bosnian vice president is saying that actually the Serbs are bringing things in. Are you aware of any of this or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Into the cantonment areas?

Q: No, it seems -- that into that exclusionary zone outside?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, you mean from outside?

Q: Yes.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Haven't seen evidence of that.

Q: There's another report from Bosnia that placement of U.N. personnel would make air strikes problematic at best because they are going to spread all around the kinds of places that may or may not be under --
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: General Rose has been very clear that if there are U.N. troops around a site, then they have control of that site. And indeed he has gone further and said that if the Serbs are anybody else were to try to -- and I don't know who else it would be -- but if they were to try to regain control of those weapons, they would have to fight for them. That certainly implies that control means control; that they would have control of those sites and, obviously, then the issue of attacking them would not arise.

Q Again, the Bosnian vice president said it would make air strikes technically impossible given the fact the peacekeepers would be deployed. Otherwise, it would be hit by the air strikes. Do you share his interpretation or are you saying it's possible?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, again, because if there are U.N. forces at the site, then that site would -- then the Serbs would not have control of the piece and NATO would not strike them.

Q The 400 troops that are coming from Croatia and the other former Russian troops coming from Russia, you say they are coming in? Where are they going to go before Rose deploys them? Where do they show up, to Sarajevo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q Do they fly into Sarajevo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not sure exactly how they would get there.

Q Regardless of the ultimatum tomorrow and 7:00 --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The one group would.

Q From Moscow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yes.

Q What objective criterion do you use to determine whether the terms of the ultimatum have been met?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me say a word on that because this is an important thing as you think about tomorrow, and I've said this to a number of you already.

We were very careful in the proposal that we made to NATO, and NATO was very careful in the terms of its decision not to overstate what our objective here is, because we wanted to be sure that our objectives and our means were equivalent -- that we were not promising to do things that we could not technically do. Therefore, NATO did not say that as of the deadline all artillery pieces will have been removed. The reason for that is that you can't know, for example, whether there might be some mortars hidden in garages or houses somewhere in that area. We simply can't know that.

So, we phrased this with great precision to say that any artillery pieces in that area after the deadline are subject to attack. That we clearly can do. And so, again, the terms are that any piece would be subject to attack. And this is not a question of judging whether there is an 80 percent or 90 percent or something.

Q -- striking those that are there?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It means they are subject to attack?

Q Subject to attack, but not --

Q So are you committed to attack?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We are committed to implementing the decision. I'm also not trying to hint that we won't do it. I'm just saying that we are committed to the decision, they are subject to attack. And I don't want to talk about operational planning.

Q Sir, are you afraid or do you consider that NATO strike power is sort of stymied by the fact that -- apparently decided to spend the night from Sunday to Monday in Sarajevo and that a Russian colonel coming from Moscow who is apparently not a member of the U.N. is visiting along with him?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No. Should I go on --

Q What is your analysis of this?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Of which?

Q The coming in and the sticking around just to make sure that they will comply --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, this is an important moment for the Russians and I think they want to have Churkin there to make sure that everything goes smoothly.

Q Churkin -- he said that any air strikes would be a rash action, and he said if NATO decided to carry out air strikes at all costs in Sarajevo and -- (inaudible) -- crisis between NATO and Russia. So obviously for them there was no grounds whatsoever for an air strike. Is it correct to say that? Or how do you see exactly --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think clearly, the Russians would prefer that air strikes not take place and that is one of the reasons why they have been encouraging the Bosnian Serbs to comply with the NATO decision.

Again, I would reiterate that the NATO decision is a decision and we are very firm in our intention to see it fulfilled.

Q But as they told you in your communication with them, that as far as they are concerned there is no ground whatsoever for air strikes now.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Perhaps I could describe to you a conversation that took place this afternoon between Secretary Christopher and Foreign Minister Kozyrev. It was a very good conversation. They reviewed the situation on the ground. Christopher noted that the evidence remains ambiguous about Serb compliance as of this time and said that we need full Serb compliance with their commitment to remove heavy weapons; and Kozyrev agreed that Serb compliance is necessary. And he said that he and Churkin would continue to stress that with the Serbs --

Q Did he agree that should there not be compliance there would be grounds for air strikes?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He agreed that there should be compliance. And you can draw your own --

Q Who decides whether there is compliance? Have we decided whether, if there is a stray piece of artillery someplace,
whether it makes sense to take the extreme step of going after it even if there seems to have been efforts elsewhere to remove other artillery?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I wouldn't characterize that as an extreme step necessarily but --

Q Major step.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Whatever.

Q Step. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sort of an offhand gesture -- okay. Let me -- actually, let me come back to that just for a moment, okay -- in just a moment.

While we're on conversations today, the President did speak with Mitterrand this morning. They -- it was not a lengthy conversation. How long would you say -- 10 minutes, something like that. They reviewed the situation on the ground. They expressed a common commitment to take action if necessary. And Mitterrand was every bit as firm about that as the President is. They spoke briefly about agreeing that the operational details are in place to take action if necessary, and again, of course, Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili will be going out, leaving this evening for Aviano. And I would expect that the President will be speaking again tomorrow to foreign leaders, but it's not decided yet --

Q Who initiated that call to Mitterrand?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Mitterrand did. Well, Mitterrand had -- his office had said that they would like to have a call and then I think we -- then we agreed on the time. I don't have actually --

Q Would Yeltsin be one of those he's calling tomorrow?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We really haven't decided who.

Now I'll come back to what else the President's been doing. I told you about Christopher's conversation with Kozyrev. I've talked to counterparts and so has Perry, I believe. Okay, let me talk about the diplomatic track generally.

We do believe, as I said yesterday, that since power and diplomacy cannot or at least should not be separated, that this period offers a very strong opportunity for making progress on the diplomatic front. Ambassador Redman has been exploring the positions of the parties, including the Bosnian government. He has been making progress here, but we are not at a point yet of clarity.

And, again, as you all know, we are not, in case it crossed your mind, pressuring the Bosnian government into a position. And if you would like me to repeat that 18 times, I will. We feel very strongly about it.

He was in Athens, as you know, at the end of the week to -- because the Greeks are the presidents of the European Union now -- are consulting with them; consulted with the Russians while he was there. He is now in Frankfurt for more meetings, and our expectation is that the talks will begin again probably at the beginning of March.

All right. Processes. And let me emphasize this -- the process here is that the North Atlantic Council authorized NATO MORE
military authorities, who, in turn, have authorized the NATO CINC South -- Admiral Boorda, who happens to be an American, but in this case is acting as the NATO CINC South -- to launch such attacks if necessary.

Let me just pause there for a moment. The point here is that this is not a decision that is made in all of the NATO capitals. That decision was made by the NAC -- the decision to give the NATO commander that authority. So it is not that we will be sitting here tomorrow afternoon and trying to decide and then flash out a message. That is being done there on the ground. That's on the NATO side. On the U.N. side then, the recommendation is made by U.N. military commanders.

Now, the first such strikes must be approved by the United Nations. The United Nations has, in effect, a check-off here. We understand that the Secretary-General of the United Nations has given that authority to Mr. Akashi, who is the Secretary General's representative in Zagreb. When it comes down to it in practice, I cannot tell you exactly whether Akashi will exercise that authority himself or then check with New York. I think it will depend on how he sees the situation at the time. We can't know that. But apparently the Secretary General has given Akashi that authority.

After the first so-called ice breaker, where the U.N. does have this formal check-off, then further NATO air strikes would be carried out in coordination with the U.N. military commanders. And the reason for this is there are a lot of U.N. troops and U.N. HCR people on the ground, and you need to make sure that those strikes are coordinated with the U.N. people to see to their safety.

If there is -- the way it works is if there is then an irreconcilable difference as they try to coordinate at that level, then it would go up the chain to resolve those differences. But these would be NATO operations.

Q On the ice breaker, Rose goes to Akashi, is that the first step?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- Cot and Rose and then to Akashi.

Q Goes up which chain? Which chain -- you say if there's irreconcilable differences --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Their respective chains and then up through the NATO command. I suppose to New York then.

Q Does the President have --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Don't anticipate that would --

Q Nonetheless, the U.N. either on the ground or in New York has, even after the first strike -- it's the U.N. --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They're involved. They are coordinating with them, but it is not the formal check --

Q But if they say, no, NATO can't launch the plane anyway, it would have to go --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think we would have to see that when we got to it.

Q So from the ground up it would be Rose, Cot, Akashi.

MORE
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right.

Q How does the board determine whether air strikes are necessary? Does it consult with Rose to reach that determination or is --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They've been working very closely on this for the last few days.

Q They reach that decision jointly?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Presumably jointly. They may disagree, but they would try in the first instance to work it out jointly, I'm sure.

Q Does the President have the power to override any NATO-U.N. decision? In other words, could he order air strikes not to be conducted?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Theoretically so, since he -- I believe, since he has ultimate command over American forces. But I would not expect that to happen.

Q But he couldn't order an air strike by himself?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not according to the terms of the NATO decision, no.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I was going to say that he has ruled out unilateral --

Q So do you expect that at 7:00 p.m. tomorrow night the situation will remain ambiguous in some way, that we won't know whether to be pessimistic or optimistic? (Laughter.) I mean, in part, is there a problem with the weather --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think we'll know a lot more by tomorrow evening about what the facts are on the ground. But what I'm suggesting is that you not think that at one minute past 7:00 p.m. tomorrow evening there will necessarily be a go or a no go.

Q You said that Christopher, in his conversation with Kozyrev characterized the situation on the ground as ambiguous --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Which is not, let me emphasize, to say that the deadline is not real. At 1701 p.m. Sunday evening any Serbian artillery pieces in the exclusion zone --

Q At 1901.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: At 1901.

Q A deadline is a deadline. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Sorry -- they are subject to attack.

Q That's essentially a political decision --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: It is not essentially a political decision.

Q Can you elaborate on that?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The military commanders on the ground will decide based on the evidence on what is going on in the ground.
Q Is there a plan of action short of launching an air strike for dealing with weapons that are not withdrawn? I mean, would they be willing to try to secure or surround these weapons without launching an air strike?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, the U.N. is already seeking to do that. And the terms of the NATO decision are air strikes. In other words, we're not looking at ground operations or fighting their way in. But they are now, as the Serbs agreed, going in to take over weapons that the Serbs say that they can't move.

Q What about weapons that they can move that they do not move before the deadline, that they're unable to move those weapons because of --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, then they can say, please, come in and secure them. But if they don't, they are subject to air strikes. We are not looking at ground operations.

Q Subject to air strikes means they will be bombed? Is there sole discretion there?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They are subject to air attacks, and I'm not going to talk about operational concerns here.

Q There was a big, there seems to be big room for interpretation here. They were subject to air strikes, but it didn't mean they would be bombed. There is big room for political interpretation of what could happen.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The political decision was made by the North Atlantic Council a week ago Wednesday.

Could I talk a little bit, if you want, about what's going on here -- a day in the life of the White House -- because I know some of you had questions about how are we tracking this, what is the President doing, all that.

This morning at 8:45 a.m. the President made the call to Mitterrand. At 9:00 a.m. I got an intelligence briefing in the Situation Room on the situation on the ground. The President then met with his White House advisors and his national security advisors, including Secretary Perry, Secretary Christopher, General Shalikashvili and myself and a number of, as I said, his White House advisors. As you know, then he made his statement at 10:06 a.m. precisely. And then he held a further brief meeting with us afterwards. At around 10 of 3:00 p.m. this afternoon I got another -- an update on the situation on the ground. At 3:00 p.m. I filled in the President and discussed the situation with him some more, reported to him on the Christopher-Kozyrev call, et cetera. I'm sure there will be another update this evening with the President.

Q Who initiated the call between Kozyrev and Christopher?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I couldn't tell you -- I'm sorry. The State Department could.

Do you happen to know?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I don't.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Then tomorrow morning at 8:30 a.m. or 9:00 a.m. there will be another intelligence briefing. And if there are major events, of course, during the night, the President will be informed by the Situation Room. And we'll be then updating the President at 10:30 a.m.
I'm trained to stop talking when it clicks. (Laughter.) For her, I don't even breathe. (Laughter.)

At 10:30 a.m. Secretary Perry is going to call the President tomorrow morning. As I said, there will probably be other calls then to foreign leaders probably midday-ish.

We will be here if you have questions. I will be here, Dee Dee will be here, Don will be here. I'll probably do a background again, if you wish, in the early afternoon sometime. We can work it out mutually. Let's see -- that will be to see where events are going and what would be the best time for you.

Q To get back to policy, if the approach works in Sarajevo, do you think NATO should consider extending it to other towns in Bosnia like Srebrenica or -- try to stop the siege by the Serbs? Is that under consideration?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the first step is Sarajevo. Sarajevo is so important militarily, politically, psychologically so important in symbolic terms also, that clearly the main focus now, the focus now has to be on Sarajevo. And then we will see. Let me note two things about it. One is the NATO decision at the summit to open the Tuzla airport and to see to the rotation in Srebrenica and both of those are proceeding. And the other is to, not just in the context of your question, but of what could happen afterwards, to remind you that there is now a long-standing commitment for close air support for any UNPROFOR troops that request it when under attack.

Q Just to satisfy myself on this point -- I understand that you say that the political decision was made a week ago, but isn't it perfectly possible that two different, reasonable governments will look at the situation on the ground and make two different assessments about what should be done as a result of that? And what happens in that case?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, let me say that this is not a decision that will be made in every NATO capital tomorrow. I'm not saying that there won't be consultations, but that the call is to be made, certainly in the first instance by Boorda and Rose and Cot, and let's see what happens.

Q But what happens if the U.S. talks to Boorda and says, "We think you should go," and another government -- the Canadians talk to him --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We don't call Boorda and say, we think you should go. Boorda is a NATO commander here. He happens to be an American. We're glad he's an American, but he is the NATO commander -- NATO -- the NAC made a decision that after the deadline -- dadadada dadadada -- you've heard it 40 times now -- are subject to attack.

Q And in reality, you don't think he's going to run his decision by the White House?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I do not expect that Admiral Boorda will be calling us tomorrow to say, what do I do?

Q But is it possible that after the fact --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not ruling out consultations then should there be disagreements or whatever, but I am saying that this is --
Q So you expect to be only informed and not ask for input?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Essentially. Unless there are disagreements or — let's see what happens. I don't want to rule that out, but that is the process.

Q How do you -- all the facts coming in; some good ones, some bad ones, some difficult to interpret. You might even have a -- so the person responsible for the global interpretation of that is -- would be, first, the U.N. --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We're not making global interpretations here. We are making interpretations of facts on the ground. And let's see where we are tomorrow.

Q In the President's address this morning, he was significantly harder -- than I have heard him before. I mean, very specifically saying they bear the primary responsibility. And I noticed that there was not a lot of talk of compliance by the Muslims -- at least by name. I think he said "and others" was the word. Do you agree that it was harder --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, not really. We have said --

Q And so is there something going on here that --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I think it was a summary of what we have been saying over the past year. You were hearing it all in one place again. But if you go back, I think, to the statement he made a week ago Wednesday, it was less detailed, but I think the tone was about the same.

Q It seemed to be, if those guys would stop fighting -- it didn't sound like the Serbs were the bad guys the last time. As much, as strongly.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, we have said that before.

Q Are all other sides --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There was some other part of this.

Q Well, also the compliance of the Muslims was not specifically referred to, at least as far as I could see.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We have -- and I think in that statement said that everybody has to comply. In fact, the Bosnian government has turned over into cantonment a number of its weapons, including tanks. So apparently they are complying. Now, it's easier to tell with them, of course, because they are within -- primarily within the Sarajevo area. And one of the cantonment areas is inside the lines in Sarajevo where the government can place its heavy weapons.

Q So you're satisfied the Serbs --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Again, I would not be optimistic or pessimistic about anybody, just for the record. But there has been action on their part.

Q Will the President consult with congressional leaders before he launches -- well -- (laughter) --
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There's been a lot of congressional consultation going on. He called in all of the congressional leaders, as you'll recall a week ago Wednesday and talked this through with them in great detail. During the past week -- the Congress is recessed now, so there haven't been meetings with members of Congress. But we did a couple of briefings at a staff level yesterday. We're making phone calls to congressional leaders. And I think they are -- and the President sent up yesterday, as you know, a report to the Congress consistent with the War Powers Act.

Q Will the President consult with -- or phone Yeltsin before air strikes are launched?

Q Or try?

Q Or try to. (Laughter.)

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Instant communications as you know; no problem.

Q Ambassador Pickering said that that would be a good idea --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think probably, yes.

Q At it's basis, what is the disagreement between the United States and Russia over handling this problem, or what --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me go beyond probably. I would think, yes, the President would make an effort to speak with him.

Q At its heart what is in disagreement between the United States and Russia over the handling of this problem? What underlies --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Right now, I don't see a real disagreement because the Russians are pressing the Bosnian Serbs to comply with the NATO decision.

Q Well, but they repeatedly say they don't accept the NATO ultimatum; they don't -- so why --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: They're pressing the Bosnian Serbs to abide by it.

Q With respect to the order, if it becomes necessary, would it -- does it require a new order from President Clinton --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No.

Q Everything in on auto pilot, as it were?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, no, there are real live human beings --

Q I mean with respect to any order to use military aircraft, to participate in action --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We would put American aircraft at the service of NATO and the NATO commander --

Q And there's else the President has to do in order for those planes to take off and run a mission for --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: That's right. This does not mean he is a disinterested observer. And we would be following this very, very closely. And he has, as he said in his MORE
statement, consulted very closely with General Shali to make sure that all the planning has gone smoothly, that every effort has been made to ensure the safety of our pilots, to make sure that we have, for example, search and rescue teams standing by, and he's been briefed on air defenses, et cetera. He has gone through all that.

Q At some point, though, did he not have to issue an order of some sort giving control of U.S. forces to NATO before this operation --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: He retains command, to come back to a distinction we made earlier, but he has turned over operational control through the NAC decision to the NATO commanders.

Q When is that done?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The time of the NAC decision.

Q What standard or analysis --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And Secretary Perry and General Shali, again, just so that we are doing everything we should, are in Aviano tomorrow to go over all of this to make sure that they, like the other ministers of defense, are satisfied with the planning and state of readiness. So we're doing -- this is not a new thing. American forces have been under the operational control of NATO for a long time.

How come you say, "One more question," with the President and it's about four -- (laughter.)

Q You were doing so well.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And also, why do you just have this smile on your face as you're sitting back there?

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 4:14 P.M. EST
For Immediate Release February 20, 1994

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE TRAVEL POOL

Outside Christ Episcopal Church
Georgetown
Washington, D.C.

12:51 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: I talked this morning with Secretary Perry and General Shalal and General Joulwan and Admiral Boorda in Europe. There is a lot of activity on the ground. The Serbs seem to be moving weapons and also bringing the U.N. forces to the weapons that cannot be moved. So that much is encouraging.

But we are monitoring this as the day goes on. The deadline will stand, and I expect to get further reports throughout the day and to talk to Manfred Woerner later in the day after we see what happens.

Q There seems to be some flexibility on this deadline. I mean, is it exactly at 7:00 p.m. our time, even if they found out they couldn't move certain weapons?

THE PRESIDENT: The deadline only makes the artillery positions subject to attack, and I think that we should keep the deadline and we should keep working at it. There are -- there may or may not be some questions about whether all those weapons can be put into U.N. control, depending as much as anything else on the weather there. And we're just monitoring it.

Right now the report I got just before I came to church here was encouraging, directly from Secretary Perry and the military command we have there. But we're just going to have to wait and see what happens as the day unfolds.

Q Are you hopeful, Mr. President, that you won't have to bomb?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'm hopeful because of what I see happening. But basically, we have the procedures in place now, and as I said yesterday -- I want to say again -- what happens after 7:00 p.m. tonight will be determined by the facts on the ground. It is -- we have already authorized, I and the other leaders in the NATO coalition, we have already authorized our military commanders, working with the U.N., to draw their own conclusions and take appropriate actions. So the mechanisms are in place. This will be determined, as I said yesterday, entirely by what happens on the ground. We'll just have to see.

Q Does the United Nations still have to authorize the first strike?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, the United Nations would have to approve the first strike. And right now, as I said, the activities on the ground seem encouraging. We'll just have to see. But there are still, plainly, weapons that are not yet under U.N. control and
they're not yet beyond the 20-kilometer safe zone. So we'll just have to see.

Q Are you going to talk to Yeltsin before you --
Q Are you going to talk to President Yeltsin?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are in touch, close touch with the Russians, and I may well talk to him before any final determination is made. But that decision has not been made yet, and partly it's a function of the huge time difference, you know, between Washington and Moscow and what time it will be there by the time we know something. But we are keeping in close touch with the Russians and I may well talk to President Yeltsin within the next 24 hours.

Q What are you going to do all day?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know yet. I'm going to go take my family to lunch right now. It's a nice day, and I'm just going to be --

Q Where are you going?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll probably go back to the house and eat. But I'm going to be where I can get some reports.

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.
THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

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Q Where are you going?

THE PRESIDENT: We'll probably go back to the house and eat. But I'm going to be where I can get some reports.

Thank you.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 12:56 P.M. EST
THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release
February 19, 1994

RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: My fellow Americans, this morning I want to speak with you about the conflict in Bosnia. My administration has worked for over a year to help ease the suffering and end the conflict in that war-torn land. Now, a prolonged siege of the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo has brought us to an important moment.

In the coming days, American war planes may participate in NATO air strikes on military targets around Sarajevo. We do not yet know whether air strikes will be necessary. But I want to talk with you about what American interests are at stake and what the nature and goals of our military involvement will be if it occurs.

The fighting in Bosnia is part of the broader story of change in Europe. With the end of the Cold War, militant nationalism once again spread throughout many countries that lived behind the Iron Curtain, and especially in the former Yugoslavia. As nationalism caught fire among its Serbian population, other part of the country began seeking independence. Several ethnic and religious groups began fighting fiercely. But the Serbs bear a primary responsibility for the aggression and the ethnic cleansing that has killed tens of thousands and displaced millions in Bosnia.

This century teaches us that America cannot afford to ignore conflicts in Europe. And in this crisis, our nation has distinct interests. We have an interest in helping to prevent this from becoming a broader European conflict, especially one that could threaten our NATO allies or undermine the transition of former communist states to peaceful democracies.

We have an interest in showing that NATO, the world's greatest military alliance, remains a credible force for peace in the post-Cold War era. We have an interest in helping to stem the destabilizing flows of refugees this struggle is generating throughout all of Europe. And we clearly have a humanitarian interest in helping to stop the strangulation of Sarajevo and the continuing slaughter of innocents in Bosnia.

I want to be clear. Europe must bear most of the responsibility for solving this problem, and, indeed, it has. The United Nations has forces on the ground in Bosnia to protect the humanitarian effort and to limit the carnage. And the vast majority of them are European, from all countries in Europe who have worked along with brave Canadians and soldiers from other countries. I have not sent American ground units into Bosnia. And I will not send American ground forces to impose a settlement that the parties to that conflict do not accept.

But America's interest and the responsibilities of America's leadership demand our active involvement in the search for a solution. That is why my administration has worked to help contain the fighting, relieve suffering and achieve a fair and workable negotiated end to that conflict.

MORE
Over a year ago, I appointed a special American envoy to the negotiations to help find a workable, enforceable solution acceptable to all. And I have said that if such a solution can be reached, our nation is prepared to participate in efforts to enforce the solution, including the use of our military personnel.

We have participated in the enforcement of economic sanctions against Serbia. We initiated airdrops of food and medicine and participated in the Sarajevo airlift -- a massive effort, running longer than the Berlin air lift -- which has relieved starvation and suffering for tens of thousands of Bosnians. Together with our NATO allies, we began enforcement of a no-fly zone to stop the parties from spreading the war with aircraft.

We have warned Serbia against increasing its repression of the Albanian ethnic minority in Kosovo. We have contributed 300 American troops to the United Nations force that is helping to ensure that the war does not spread to the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, which lies between Bosnia and Greece. And we have worked with our allies to ensure that NATO is prepared to help solve this crisis.

In August, at our initiative, NATO declared its willingness to conduct air strikes to prevent the strangulation of Sarajevo and other population centers. NATO reaffirmed that commitment at our summit in Brussels just last month. But the shelling of Sarajevo continued. Two weeks ago, in a murderous attack, a single shell killed 68 people in the city's market. And last week with our NATO allies, we said that those who would continue terrorizing Sarajevo must pay a price.

On that day, NATO announced it was prepared to conduct air strikes against any heavy weapons remaining after 10 days within 20 kilometers of Sarajevo, unless such guns are placed under United Nations control. That 10-day period ends tomorrow night. If the U.N. and NATO authorities find the deadline has not been met, NATO stands ready to carry out its mission. American pilots and planes stand ready to do our part.

I have asked Secretary of Defense Perry and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Shalikashvili, to travel to Italy to meet with their counterparts from other participating NATO countries to review our preparations.

Over the past few days, there have been some encouraging signs in Bosnia that our ultimatum may be working. Bosnian Serb leaders now say they will comply with the ultimatum. There is some evidence that heavy weapons are being pulled back from around Sarajevo, but others remain.

Many nations have helped to underscore the seriousness of our common intent. I have conferred on this matter with Russian President Boris Yeltsin. And the Russians, in the last couple of days, have made very important contributions by using their influence with the Serbs and expressing a willingness to use their U.N. forces to help to enforce this order.

If guns are truly being moved or impounded, we welcome the news. If the Serbs and others fully comply with NATO's ultimatum, there will be no need to use force against anyone. But we are determined to make good on NATO's word. And we are prepared to act. Our actions will be determined by one thing: the facts on the ground.

I want to be clear about the risks we face and the objectives we seek if force is needed. American planes likely will account for about half the NATO air strikes if they proceed. General Shalikashvili has told me that our forces are well prepared for this
operation. But the fact is, there is no such thing as a mission completely without risks, and losses may occur. I have conferred with my national security advisors and told them to take every precaution to protect our courageous soldiers in uniform.

Our military goal will be straightforward -- to exact a heavy price on those who refuse to comply with the ultimatum. Military force alone cannot guarantee that every heavy gun around Sarajevo will be removed or silenced, but military force can make it more likely that Bosnian Serbs will seek a solution through negotiation rather than through Sarajevo's strangulation, and that more innocent civilians will continue to live.

For that reason, I have also ordered American negotiators to intensify their efforts to help the parties reach a fair and enforceable settlement. I have consulted with leaders from both parties in the Congress and asked for their support in this effort. I want us all to stand united behind our forces if they need to conduct air strikes, and united in our determination to do our part in bringing an end to this dangerous conflict.

During this Olympic season, let us recall that only 10 years ago the Winter Olympics were held in Sarajevo. Today, Sarajevo's athletic fields have been transformed into makeshift cemeteries for those killed in that city's siege.

In the week since NATO issued the ultimatum, the big guns around Sarajevo have fallen silent. Now let us work to help make this break in the violence continue so that Sarajevo's future may be marked by images of peace rather than by those of war and carnage.

While the Cold War may be over, but the world is still full of dangers and the world still looks to America for leadership. Now, with our interests at stake and with our allies united at our side, let us show the world our leadership once again.

Thank you, and God bless America.

Q Mr. President, has President Yeltsin assured you that the Russian role will be entirely constructive and under the NATO leadership, and that there is no risk of a renegade Russian force protecting Serb weapons or Serb forces?

THE PRESIDENT: Last night the United Nations Commander on the ground, General Rose, said that he was confident that all the U.N. forces, including the Russian forces, would carry out the U.N. mandate. And I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Q But has President Yeltsin given you any such assurance? When was your last communication with him?

THE PRESIDENT: When did I talk to him -- the day before yesterday, I think. And we've been in constant communication. I have -- based on my communications with him, I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Q Mr. President, if there is compliance is Sarajevo sacrosanct, or will you try to extend and pose the ultimatum in others parts where their slaughter goes on?

THE PRESIDENT: I think for the next day and a half I'd like to let my statement stand for itself.

Q Mr. President, could you just give us an idea of what you think the likelihood would be of the need for air strikes?
THE PRESIDENT: I have nothing to add to the statement I made on that. I think my statement's pretty clear.

Q Do you wish you had prevailed a year ago on this -- in this action -- and could have saved thousands of lives?

THE PRESIDENT: We didn't have the votes we needed, though. We didn't have the consensus a year ago we have now.

Q Do you agree with Mr. Churkin that if there are air strikes, it could lead to a wider war -- it would in fact produce a wider war?

THE PRESIDENT: The purpose of the air strikes is made clear in the resolution of NATO and what the U.N. asked us to do. I think it is clear and self-contained and stands for itself. The words are clear.

Q Are your eyes doing better, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: They are much better. The doctor told me that nothing would heal them but time -- and they're getting a little better. I don't look like the monster from the deep -- (inaudible) -- I did two days ago.

END 10:17 A.M. EST
RADIO ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT TO THE NATION

The Oval Office

10:06 A.M. EST

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operation. But the fact is, there is no such thing as a mission completely without risks, and losses may occur. I have conferred with my national security advisors and told them to take every precaution to protect our courageous soldiers in uniform.

Our military goal will be straightforward -- to exact a heavy price on those who refuse to comply with the ultimatum. Military force alone cannot guarantee that every heavy gun around Sarajevo will be removed or silenced, but military force can make it more likely that Bosnian Serbs will seek a solution through negotiation rather than through Sarajevo's strangulation, and that more innocent civilians will continue to live.

For that reason, I have also ordered American negotiators to intensify their efforts to help the parties reach a fair and enforceable settlement. I have consulted with leaders from both parties in the Congress and asked for their support in this effort. I want us all to stand united behind our forces if they need to conduct air strikes, and united in our determination to do our part in bringing an end to this dangerous conflict.

During this Olympic season, let us recall that only 10 years ago the Winter Olympics were held in Sarajevo. Today, Sarajevo's athletic fields have been transformed into makeshift cemeteries for those killed in that city's siege.

In the week since NATO issued the ultimatum, the big guns around Sarajevo have fallen silent. Now let us work to help make this break in the violence continue so that Sarajevo's future may be marked by images of peace rather than by those of war and carnage.

While the Cold War may be over, but the world is still full of dangers and the world still looks to America for leadership. Now, with our interests at stake and with our allies united at our side, let us show the world our leadership once again.

Thank you, and God bless America.

* * * * *

Q Mr. President, has President Yeltsin assured you that the Russian role will be entirely constructive and under the NATO leadership, and that there is no risk of a renegade Russian force protecting Serb weapons or Serb forces?

THE PRESIDENT: Last night the United Nations Commander on the ground, General Rose, said that he was confident that all the U.N. forces, including the Russian forces, would carry out the U.N. mandate. And I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Q But has President Yeltsin given you any such assurance? When was your last communication with him?

THE PRESIDENT: When did I talk to him -- the day before yesterday, I think. And we've been in constant communication. I have -- based on my communications with him, I have no reason to believe otherwise.

Q Mr. President, if there is compliance is Sarajevo sacrosanct, or will you try to extend and pose the ultimatum in others parts where their slaughter goes on?

THE PRESIDENT: I think for the next day and a half I'd like to let my statement stand for itself.

Q Mr. President, could you just give us an idea of what you think the likelihood would be of the need for air strikes?

MORE
THE PRESIDENT: I have nothing to add to the statement I made on that. I think my statement's pretty clear.

Q Do you wish you had prevailed a year ago on this -- in this action -- and could have saved thousands of lives?

THE PRESIDENT: We didn't have the votes we needed, though. We didn't have the consensus a year ago we have now.

Q Do you agree with Mr. Churkin that if there are air strikes, it could lead to a wider war -- it would in fact produce a wider war?

THE PRESIDENT: The purpose of the air strikes is made clear in the resolution of NATO and what the U.N. asked us to do. I think it is clear and self-contained and stands for itself. The words are clear.

Q Are your eyes doing better, Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: They are much better. The doctor told me that nothing would heal them but time -- and they're getting a little better. I don't look like the monster from the deep -- (inaudible) -- I did two days ago.

END 10:17 A.M. EST
BACKGROUND BRIEFING
BY
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL

February 18, 1994

The Briefing Room

3:14 P.M. EST

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Let me begin just with some general comments on where we are, and then I'll try to answer your questions. The principals met this morning on Bosnia and on other issues for about an hour and a half, I would say, on Bosnia. And then the President went over their recommendations this afternoon.

We have been consulting on Bosnia with the Congress, as you know, for several weeks now, and today we're carrying out staff consultations on the Hill. And as I was about to announce to a breathless world, the President will probably -- is likely to have a statement on all of this tomorrow, probably in the morning.

Q May we assume that this statement is going to be more likely an expression of satisfaction than not?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it'll be an expression of where we are. I suspect that by tomorrow morning, we will not be in a position either to express satisfaction or that we have reached conclusions one way or the other on what will be happening. So --

Q Well, is he likely to be an encouraged President, or --

Q Nonetheless, is it safe to assume that sabre-rattling is unlikely?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think he will discuss tomorrow, as I am about to, where we are, what our policy is, where we hope we come out.

First of all, our position is very clear. As you know, NATO decided on February 9 that any heavy weapons within a 20-kilometer circle from the center of Sarajevo that is not under the control of the United Nations is subject to air attack. And, already, the NATO decision was that any artillery piece or heavy weapon firing on Sarajevo would similarly be subject to air attack.

Let me emphasize that control means control, and that NATO and the U.N. have agreed in general terms that U.N. control means that the Serbs or others would have to fight to regain control of the weapons that have been placed under the U.N. So that is very clear. The decision was a decision, and a deadline is a deadline, and the deadline here is at 7:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Sunday.
We've, as I've said to a number of you, have tried very carefully to set goals that we can reach with available means. Air power alone cannot end the siege of Sarajevo, although it can contribute to that. It cannot compel the withdrawal of all heavy weapons, and it cannot ensure no more shelling. But we can make any who ignore NATO's decision pay a very high price.

Our reports on the situation on the ground today are, I'm afraid, both incomplete and inconclusive. Many heavy weapons have been placed now under U.N. control; we know that. The Bosnian Serb leaders have said that they will comply with the NATO warning, and there has been no shelling of Sarajevo now for several days.

In fact, it strikes me that we can actually say progress and Bosnia in the same sentence, which has seldom been the case in the past. But the actions taken, the actual actions taken on the ground in the next two days will tell the story.

We believe that preparations for implementing the decision have gone very well. Admiral Boorda, the NATO CINC South and General Rose, the Commander of UNPROFOR forces have worked very closely and very well in working through their planning.

NATO agreed with the United Nations last August that the U.N. Secretary General or his representative in Bosnia would authorize the first use of air power, and that subsequent air strikes would then be coordinated between the NATO and U.N. commanders. This is because we have to be sensitive to the safety of the UNPROFOR troops on the ground and of U.N. workers there. But we have worked out very carefully the procedures for that coordination that would take place in subsequent air strikes if we go down that road.

Secretary of Defense Perry and General Shalikashvili will be going to Aviano this weekend to meet with the other ministers of defense from those countries that would be participating in air strikes. The purpose of that meeting is not to redefine the NATO decision or indeed to make new decisions, but to review the planning and the readiness of the NATO forces. And let me again emphasize that from all reports, NATO is prepared to act.

As on other issues, we want to put power at the service of diplomacy. And as you know, Ambassador Redman, our representative to the talks, is in the area, has been meeting with our European allies, representatives, with the Russians and with the parties to work towards progress towards a settlement.

Just a word on the role of our allies and friends in all of this. We have worked with the French and the Russians and others to make the progress that has thus far been gained, and we welcome their contribution. But let me emphasize that no progress would have been possible had it not been for the leadership of the President at the NATO Summit in getting the NATO warning over Sarajevo reaffirmed, and making it very clear to our allies that they should not sign up to that warning if they weren't serious about it, and I think that helped contribute to their going along now as they have in recent days, and the President's leadership since. And I can tell you that he has been very engaged on a daily basis. We have been discussing this with him probably twice a day or more every day for the past couple of weeks, certainly since -- yes, for the past couple of weeks, and he has been making a number of phone calls to foreign leaders, et cetera.

As he said last Wednesday in this room, the reason for this engagement is that we have important American interests at stake here in avoiding a larger war in the region, in the strength and credibility of NATO, in preventing new refugee flows throughout Europe, in our relations in the Muslim world, and, put simply, a
humanitarian interest that each of us felt again when we saw the carnage in the marketplace in Sarajevo just two weeks ago.

In short, the NATO decision stands. A decision is a decision, a deadline is a deadline. We all hope -- all of us -- hope that there will be no need to use force, but we are determined to follow through on the NATO decision, if necessary.

Q To what extent were you surprised by the Russian initiatives? Not by them becoming engaged, but by the specificity of it and the troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President, when he spoke to President Yeltsin a week ago, encouraged the Russians to be involved in gaining Serbian cooperation. And in a number of subsequent conversations, we had made the same point with the Russians. So in general terms, it was -- we knew that they were engaged.

The specifics of that agreement we had not known in advance, but I suspect that the Russians and the Serbs had not known the specifics of the agreement until they reached it, and then went right out to announce it. We have since talked to the Russians, of course, about it.

Let me say a word about the --

Q Today? Talked to the Russians -- did the President talk today?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President has not talked to Yeltsin today. They have been in touch in writing, exchanging letters. On the Russian decision itself to send troops into Sarajevo, we think that this will be a useful contribution so long as it is in the context of the United Nations, so long as the Russian troops are under the operational control of General Rose. And that is being worked out between General Rose and the Russians.

Q The Russians still agree to that?

Q In other words, if there not -- you have some concerns that if they're not under the U.N. flag that --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We think they will be.

Q Do you have any sense of the percentage of the armament that was to be moved that has now been moved, and how much more needs to be done in the next 48 hours?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We can't be sure yet.

Q Rough calculus?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Clearly -- I'd say so far, between 50 and 100 heavy pieces -- heavy weapons have been placed under U.N. control.

Q About how many?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Some hundreds. But we just --

Q So there's a lot to be done?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There is more to be done. We don't know how much has been done in recent hours. And as I said, our reports are inconclusive on that point. We have been
told that they intend to get it done by the deadline; we'll have to see.

Q Given the terrain and given the weather conditions that they say are supposedly slowing some of the withdrawals, are you confident that you'll even know for certain how much progress has been made by the deadline?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Obviously, we think we'll know a lot more by then. The U.N. is now working on ways in which to verify as best they can that they have been removed. And it's really kind of simple. Again, any pieces that are found after the deadline are subject to air attack. So just to emphasize that point so you understand what's going on here, this is not a case in which we certify on deadline plus one minute that they are either all out or not all out. Because, again, it's very hard in a situation in which pieces can -- mortars can be hidden, moved around or whatever to make that certification; that's why we've been very careful in stating our objectives here.

What we can say is what I just did say, which is that if we find them after then, they are at risk and will pay a price.

Q Why do you think the Russians actually decided to come in, and do you think now this capitulation on the part of the Serbs is going to be permanent and that they really will really will lead to peace?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the Russians -- first of all, they didn't just come in, they've been involved at various stages on the diplomatic side in working with us and in trying to encourage the peace process all along last spring. And subsequently as to why they are, I think that the Russians believe, as the important nation that they are, that they have a responsibility to be involved.

There's also an historic, longstanding tie between the Russians and the Serbs, in interests which they are pursuing. So I think they had many of the same interests that we do in being involved.

On whether this will bring peace, that is going to depend on the other avenue that we're pursuing of making progress in achieving a peaceful settlement. And we think that the Russians are going to play a constructive role in that. We're going to be working with them in various ways over the coming weeks in consulting. The President has said that he wishes to work directly with President Yeltsin on this. Ambassador Redman will be doing so. Secretary Christopher is talking to the Foreign Minister.

Q But they are Johnny Come Lately on this story, aren't they? They have not really been active -- the Russians.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think they have been active, as I said, over the last year. You'll recall Foreign Minister Kozyrev came here, I believe late last spring, working on this. And I think again, we welcome whatever participation --

Q What do you make of Mr. Churkin's statement that the choice now is really between negotiation and all-out war and that all-out war will ensue if there are NATO air strikes?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it's not exactly the way I would have put it, but clearly the stakes -- (laughter) -- my Russian isn't very good. But, clearly, the stakes are very high here, and I think we are at a moment, because of the military realities on the ground, because of the NATO position in which diplomatic progress now can be made, we hope that the parties
recognize this, and this may be a moment for progress that might not come again for some time.

Q And do you believe that that statement is true?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Which -- that the choice is either all-out war or peace?

Q That's right. Well, no, that if there are air strikes, there is war?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, I don't think it is necessarily true.

Q Because?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, because we don't know if there are air strikes, what the Serbian reaction would be. We would hope that they would recognize, for example, that --

Q He's talking about the Russian reaction, isn't he?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, I don't think so. No, I think he's talking about all-out war within Bosnia. Correct me if I'm wrong.

Q Good thing, huh?

Q What about the notion of an international conference?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm glad you clarified that.

Q The Russians apparently are also asking for some sort of international conference next week on Bosnia?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We haven't received such a proposal.

Q Would you be in favor of such a conference? Would you support such a conference next week?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think we want to make sure that whatever happens next doesn't interfere with the processes now underway, and we would have to look at it in that context.

Q When Kozyrev made this announcement, he said that he wanted to promote a more active American role. Is it a coded message to let you know that he wants you to put more pressure on the Muslims? How do you interpret what appears to be a criticism?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think the American role has been extraordinarily active for the last few weeks, and that's the reason for the progress that we have seen going back again to the NATO summit and the preparations for it.

Q In repeating General Rose's statement that the Serbs will have to fight to get back any weapons left behind in the zone, are you saying that none of those weapons will ever be returned to the Serbs, that if they leave them inside 20 miles of Sarajevo, they're abandoning them forever?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: So long as they -- it's an interesting question that thus far has not come up in a practical sense. I would suppose that, certainly, so long as they are within the 20-kilometer area, or they have an intention to keep them there, that they remain under that U.N. control. And the meaning of the
phrase is, again, that when they come under control, it means that
the crews are separated from the pieces, and that the U.N. is
interposed so that the crews would have to use force to get back at
them.

Q Given the Russians' opposition --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The reason I hesitate
is there's all kinds of future possibilities of, is there a
settlement, or if not, who owns them, whatever, and I just don't
think we need to decide those quite yet.

Q Given Russia's opposition to the bombing strikes in
the first place, do you see no chance that the troops would be used
to shield any of the weapons the Serbs either cannot or will not
move?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm sorry, there are
too many negatives in that. Sorry, could you try it again?

Q What if the Russian troops stand next to a piece of
Serb artillery?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: If, as we assume they
will be, the Russian forces are under U.N. operational command, we
expect that they will be.

Q What if they're not, sir?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: We expect that they
will be. (Laughter.)

Q Can you operate on that?

Q I mean, that's my point. They're opposed to the
bombing strikes to begin with. If they believe that the Serbs have
made enough of an effort that the U.N. and NATO, if there's a
difference over the amount of effort the Serbs have made --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm giving you a -- no,
I understand. I'm giving you a serious answer. We do not expect
that the Russians will be sending their troops in to defend Serbian
artillery pieces. We expect that they will be under U.N. operational
control. And if they are, then the Russian troops, by definition,
will be controlling those weapons for the U.N. and the issue doesn't
arise. Do you see what I mean?

Q Where are the Russian troops now? I mean, are you
waiting until you work this out before they come in or are they kind
of roaming around and putting themselves where they want to at this
time waiting for --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I'm not sure exactly
where they are now, but I do know that the Russians are talking to
General Rose about this.

Q In terms of a two-year war that's claimed almost
200,000 lives, how big of a milestone is it if the Serbs withdraw
their weapons from Sarajevo?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think it's a
tremendous milestone. I think it -- first of all, Sarajevo, as the
capital, as the largest city, as the focus of so much of the carnage
and suffering is, in itself, if, as the shelling ceases, is a
tremendous step forward in political and humanitarian terms. But,
perhaps even more importantly, I think that these events around
Sarajevo and the assertion of NATO decisiveness and strength will

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give a tremendous boost to the possibilities of a peaceful settlement then. Because, again, you cannot separate power and diplomacy.

Q I'm trying to get to the same question differently. As French troops now, and perhaps tomorrow Russian troops will be positioned in the middle, more and more of the United Nations forces will be moving from humanitarian to a peacekeeping job. Now, when we understand that the Russians do not have the same understanding of peacekeeping as we are, as reflected in Tajikistan or elsewhere, don't you foresee a problem, long-term, trying to do business with the Russians in terms of peacekeeping?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, the Russian troops already have been working with the U.N. simply outside Bosnia and again --

Q Yes, but not as peacekeepers?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: And, again --

Q Not as anti-position forces?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: -- this is one reason why we believe it is so important they be under the operational control of the U.N.

Q Do you have assurances from the Russians about their motivations and intentions here, and if so, from what level?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Oh, I think at every level. In the President's conversations -- do you mean in general terms or on this --

Q Specifically about their sending 800 troops and to Wendell's question about whether they might position themselves to get in the way of Serb -- of us shelling Serb artillery.

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: This is, again, primarily an issue between the U.N. and the Russians. But we will be discussing it with them over the next day or so.

Q That means you do not have any assurances, sir?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, again, as I said, we were not informed in advance of their plan for this, but we are discussing it with them.

Q Can you elaborate a little bit on what the President hopes to achieve by coming to the podium tomorrow, 24 or 36 hours before this deadline?

Q Sunday papers. (Laughter.)

Q How cynical of you.

Q Other than that.

Q What's the message going to be to the Serbs, to the Russians, to the rest of the world?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think he will likely come here to speak about -- first of all -- let me back up. Because there is a clear possibility that American aircraft will be taking part in a NATO operation over Bosnia within, by the way, as has General Shalikashvili and others have been saying, within, we believe, the acceptable levels of risk. But nonetheless, they could well be taking part in such an operation, that it is important that the President, as he did last Wednesday, be telling the American
people why this is important, what American interests are at stake and what our clear but limited objectives are in doing so.

I do not think he will be in a position tomorrow morning to tell you exactly what will happen Sunday evening any more than I can, although we hope that the situation on the ground will be somewhat clearer than it is now.

Q Can you tell us anything about the letters -- the exchange of letters or whatever the written communication was between Yeltsin and the President that you referred to?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: I think, in general, it was expressions on both sides of the importance of our working together on it.

Q And when was this done?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Yesterday.

Q After the Russian announcement that they were sending troops?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Before, I think

Q Has there been any communication since that announcement?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Not between Yeltsin and Clinton. I believe that Christopher is talking to Kozyrev, but you'll have to check at the State Department on that.

Q So it was one letter from Yeltsin or can you clarify that? It was one letter from Yeltsin to the President --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: There was a letter from Yeltsin and a response from the President.

Q And there was no mention of this conference, international peace conference that Kozyrev announced today?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, because again, if I can recall the timing, I would not read too much into that -- and as I said, I suspect that the Russians didn't know what the Serbs would agree to by the time that Yeltsin had written. The Yeltsin letter may have been, in fact, from the previous evening.

Q And what are the consultations on the Hill about? What are you breaking the Hill about? Is there a war powers regulation that you're trying to comply with?

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: The President did send a report to the Hill -- to the Congress consistent with the War Powers Act describing the situation and what we have been doing on Bosnia actually over the preceding months. The consultations are at a staff level -- as you know, our Congress is in recess simply to bring members of Congress' staffs up to date on where we are rather along the lines that I just have with you.

Q Can you just clarify for us what the basis is of the U.S. optimism that Russians troops are under -- would be under U.N. command? Is that based on conversations you or --

SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: No, as I said, we are having those conversations now, but we expect that we will.

Q So the current basis for that optimism is what? What is the current reason for your optimism?
SENIOR ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL: Well, because the Russian troops have been already working within a U.N. context and clearly, the current context in Sarajevo is a U.N. one. So, as I said, I would be very surprised if there was a problem here.

Thank you.
February 17, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker:  

On October 13, 1993, I provided a further report to the Congress on the deployment of U.S. combat-equipped aircraft to support efforts of the United Nations and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) to achieve peace and stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina. As part of my continuing efforts to ensure that Congress is fully informed, I am again writing to you, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to inform you that the United States has expanded its participation in this important effort to reach a peaceful resolution of the conflict in the former Yugoslavia.

Beginning with United Nations Security Council Resolution 713 of September 25, 1991, the United Nations has actively sought solutions to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia. In Resolutions 781 and 786 (October 9 and November 10, 1992), the Security Council established a ban on all unauthorized military flights over Bosnia-Herzegovina. Responding to "blatant violations" of the no-fly ban, in Resolution 816 (March 31, 1993) the Security Council extended the ban and authorized Member States and regional organizations to take "all necessary measures" to ensure compliance with the no-fly zone. NATO agreed to enforce the no-fly zone and "Operation Deny Flight" commenced on April 12, 1993.

Under Security Council Resolution 824 (May 6, 1993), certain parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina have been established as "safe areas." Sarajevo is specifically included as a safe area that "should be free from armed attacks and from any other hostile act." In addition, authority for the use of force in and around Sarajevo to implement the UN mandate is found in Security Council Resolutions 836 and 844 (June 4 and 18, 1993), which authorize Member States, acting "nationally or through regional organizations," to use air power in the safe areas to support the United Nations Protection Forces (UNPROFOR), subject to close coordination with the Secretary General and UNPROFOR.

As my previous reports to you have described, the participating nations have conducted phased air operations to prevent flights over Bosnia-Herzegovina that are not authorized by UNPROFOR. The United States has played an important role by contributing combat-equipped fighter aircraft, along with electronic combat and supporting tanker aircraft, to the operations in the airspace over Bosnia-Herzegovina. The no-fly zone has eliminated air-to-ground bombings and other air combat activity in more
Bosnia-Herzegovina. Most violations have involved rotary-wing aircraft. Our enforcement operations have been conducted safely with no casualties to date.

Recent heavy weapons fire in the Sarajevo area has resulted in a continuing heavy loss of life as well as serious injuries among the civilian population. An attack on February 4, 1994, killed ten people, and the following day a Sarajevo civilian marketplace was hit by a mortar attack that caused numerous civilian casualties, including 68 deaths. The United Nations Secretary General thereafter requested NATO to authorize, at the request of the United Nations, air operations against artillery or mortar positions determined by UNPROFOR to have been involved in attacks on civilian targets in the vicinity of Sarajevo.

On February 9, 1994, NATO accepted the UN Secretary General's request and authorized air operations, as necessary, using agreed coordination procedures with UNPROFOR. In addition, NATO took the decision to set a deadline for the withdrawal of heavy weapons (including tanks, artillery pieces, mortars, multiple rocket launchers, missiles and anti-aircraft weapons) from within 20 kilometers of the center of Sarajevo, with the exception of an area of two kilometers from the center of Pale, or for their regrouping and placement under UN control. After ten days from 2400 GMT February 10, 1994, all heavy weapons found within the Sarajevo exclusion zone, unless controlled by UNPROFOR, will be subject to NATO air strikes. In addition, NATO's decision provides the flexibility to act outside the 20-kilometer zone in response to any further artillery or mortar attacks on Sarajevo and authorizes the initiation of air attacks to suppress air defenses that would represent a direct threat to NATO aircraft in carrying out these operations. Further, U.S. airborne indirect-fire-locating units may be deployed to support these NATO operations. Importantly, U.S. forces assigned to NATO to conduct these missions retain their prerogative to take all necessary and appropriate action in self-defense, consistent with applicable NATO rules of engagement.

In my earlier reports I have informed you about the contribution of U.S. aircraft to participate in NATO air operations in Bosnia. In view of recent events, I have further directed the Secretary of Defense to take appropriate steps to ensure, in conjunction with our allies, that the assets necessary to implement the February 9 NATO decision are available in the region for the conduct and support of the NATO operations described above. At this point, more than 60 U.S. aircraft are available for participation in the authorized NATO missions.

In addition to no-fly zone operations and preparations to conduct air operations pursuant to the NATO decision, U.S. forces have conducted more than 2,200 airlift missions to Sarajevo and more than 1,200 airdrop missions in Bosnia. U.S. medical and other support personnel continue to provide critical services in support of UNPROFOR. Our U.S. Army light infantry battalion in Macedonia is an integral part of UNPROFOR monitoring efforts in that area. Finally, U.S. naval forces have completed over 18 months of operations as an integral part of the multinational effort to enforce the economic sanctions and arms embargo imposed by the Security Council.

I am taking these actions in conjunction with our allies in order to implement the NATO decision and to assist the parties to reach a negotiated settlement to the conflict. It is not now possible to determine the duration of these operations. I have directed the participation by U.S. armed forces in this effort pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief.

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I am grateful for the continuing support the Congress has provided, and I look forward to continued cooperation with you in this endeavor. I shall communicate with you further regarding our efforts for peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

# # #
THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release February 9, 1994

STATEMENT BY THE PRESIDENT

The Briefing Room

6:05 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Good evening. Over the past year, our administration has been working to do what we could to help to end the tragic conflict in Bosnia and to ease the suffering it has caused. Like people everywhere, I was outraged by the brutal killing of innocent civilians in the Sarajevo market last Saturday. The events of the past year and the events of the past few days reenforce the believe that I have that more must be done to stop the shelling of Sarajevo and the murder of innocents.

Therefore, the United States, working with our allies, has developed a series of proposals to address the situation in Sarajevo and to reinvigorate the negotiations to bring the bloodshed and the aggression in Bosnia to an end. As a result, just now in Brussels, NATO has decided that if any Bosnian Serb heavy weapons are found within 20 kilometers of Sarajevo within 10 days -- or after 10 days -- or if there is any further shelling of Sarajevo, NATO commanders stand ready to conduct air strikes against Serb artillery positions. NATO would carry out such strikes in accord with procedures it agreed on last August.

There are reports that as a result of NATO's impending action, Bosnian Serbs have already agreed to withdraw their heavy guns. If these reports are true, I welcome them. We hope that the Bosnian Serb actions will make air strikes unnecessary. But no one should doubt NATO's resolve. NATO is now set to act. Anyone -- anyone -- shelling Sarajevo must recognize this fact and be prepared to deal with the consequences.

Our nation has clear interests at stake in this conflict. We have an interest in helping to prevent a broader conflict in Europe; that is most compelling. We have an interest in showing that NATO, history's greatest military alliance, remains a credible force for peace in post-Cold War Europe. We have an interest in stemming the destabilizing flows of refugees that this horrible conflict is creating. And we clearly have a humanitarian interest in helping to prevent the strangulation of Sarajevo and the continuing slaughter of innocents in Bosnia. These interests do not justify unilateral American intervention in the crisis, but they do justify the involvement of America and the exercise of our leadership.

I have been meeting over the last hour with leaders of both parties in Congress, and I stressed to them that our contribution to resolving the Bosnian conflict will be proportionate to our interests -- no more and no less. We have also insisted that NATO not commit itself to any objectives it cannot achieve. Important as these NATO actions are, we must understand that in the end, this conflict must be settled at the negotiating table by the parties themselves. In short, they must want to stop killing each other and to settle, to resume their peaceful life before that will occur.
I have directed the Secretary of State to have the United States play a more active role in the negotiations. These efforts are well underway. We hope that our efforts and the efforts of other NATO countries and the efforts of perhaps other nations as well can help to reinvigorate the process of peace and bring these parties to an agreement.

The ongoing tragedy in Sarajevo and Bosnia should catalyze all of our efforts to seek negotiated solutions. The actions that I have proposed and that NATO has approved today demonstrate that our nation and the international community cannot and will not stand idly by in the face of a conflict that affects our interests, offends our consciences and disrupts the peace.

Q Mr. President, did you talk to President Yeltsin today about this, and what is Russia's reaction to this ultimatum?

THE PRESIDENT: I did not talk to him today, although I tried to for a couple of hours and there were technical problems that we couldn't get through. So I expect to talk to him -- well, you know it's several hours ahead of us now, so I expect to talk to him either late tonight before I go to bed or maybe even sometime in the middle of the night. I am trying to get in touch with him and he knows that I will take the call whenever we can put it together.

I think when President Yeltsin understands that the action taken by NATO today applies to anyone who violates the safe zone around Sarajevo and not only to Serbs, and understands that the United States is going to put new energy into its own efforts to bring about a negotiated settlement and that we would welcome the Russians' involvement in bringing about a negotiated settlement, that he will if not agree with our action, at least understand it more.

Q Mr. President, now that this warning has been given, what's your understanding of exactly what it takes to trigger an air strike?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, keep in mind, now, I have not seen the language; I was just informed that the agreement was finally reached. But if the position presented to NATO this morning is, in fact, what emerges -- and I believe it was -- then you have the same situation here that we had last August when the first NATO out-of-area action was proposed, which is that the first air strike must be approved by the Secretary General.

He has asked us, by the way, to do this, so that we now have no reason to believe that he would ask NATO to take a meaningless action. In fact, we think he's clearly in sync with us on this. After which all subsequent air strikes would be the result of coordinated decisions by the commander of the United Nations troops on the ground there and the NATO commander in that area, Admiral Borda, the American admiral.

Q Given the difficulty of the terrain, can you give us some sense of what you think the risk is for the pilots involved, for the other personnel involved -- what the level of American involvement will be in this NATO action?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, the level of American involvement in this NATO action, I again will say, there is not expectation -- in fact, we have made it quite clear that this will not involve American ground forces. From the beginning of the administration, we have said that the American forces could only be used, if at all, in the implementation of an agreement that had been freely reached as a part of a broader united force in which, since the problem is in Europe, the American forces would be in the minority. So there will be no American ground troops involved in this action.
I can only say to you what General Shalikashvili has said to me and to the leaders of Congress which is, there is no such thing as a risk-free air operation. I don't want to mislead the American people on that. We have, regrettably, fine young American pilots who die every year in training operations. So there is no such thing as a risk-free operation.

However, we believe that the air defenses are sufficiently rudimentary that the risks are minimal. That is the conclusion of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Q Don't they have to fly very low, given this terrain?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't want to reveal what we would do and how we would do it. All I can tell you is that the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has told me he considers the risks to be small, but you can never tell anybody, when you get in a high-speed airplane with weapons and when people can at least shoot rockets on shoulder weapons against you, that there is absolutely no risk. I can't say that to the American people. But the risks are small.

Q Mr. President, can you tell us more about the diplomatic track? Do you have any new initiatives going into the Geneva meetings tomorrow? There have also been reports that you are going to pressure the Bosnian Muslims to back off some of their demands in order to make peace easier.

THE PRESIDENT: No -- well, that's not exactly true. First of all, I don't think we or anybody else can impose a peace. What the United States has agreed to do as a result of the new energy brought to this whole matter by our European allies is to talk again to the Bosnian Muslims -- as you know, I have been very sympathetic with their position, and have made no secret of it -- to ascertain what their legitimate bedrock requirements are, and to share with them as clearly and honestly as we can what we think both the political and the military situation is; and then, using that as a basis, to go back to do what we can to facilitate an end to this conflict and an agreement.

I think that we have a lot of interests in doing the same thing by the Germans, by the French, by the British -- really new interest in making a committed effort to persuade these parties that the time has come to quit killing each other. But ultimately, they will have to decide that.

I think we all believe -- those of us who have been following this closely -- that there is an awful lot of fighting and an awful lot of dying going on now over relatively small patches of land, and issues like a path to the sea for the Muslims and where would, that ought to be able to be resolved without a huge amount of further bloodshed. And we hope that they, too, have been sufficiently affected by the carnage involving innocent civilians in the last few days that they will see that as well.

And as I said to you, I wish that I could report to you on my conversation with President Yeltsin. There were just problems that it didn't work out because of where he was and where I was. But I think I will talk to him soon, and I hope that he will also want to weigh in on the peace process. He has expressed a willingness to do that before and has encouraged me in that regard before, so I'm hopeful.

Q -- conversations with some of the other leaders who were reluctant to do this? Did you convince them to come along or did you say this is what we're going to do?
THE PRESIDENT: I wouldn't say they were reluctant. Let me say again, look at the position of the Canadians with their soldiers in Srebrenica surrounded by Serbs. They're in a different position. The French, the British, the Spaniards, the Dutch -- there are Europeans who have soldiers on the ground in relatively small numbers for the purpose of carrying out the United Nations missions. They are all legitimately concerned with the prospect of retaliation against their armed forces. And one of the things that we have really given a lot of thought to is what we can do to provide maximum protection to those people. They have bravely carried on in very difficult circumstances, as you know, for sometime. And so we have talked about that.

I think it's a real tribute to those who have forces there that they were so determined finally to try to stop the deterioration of conditions. I think they began to be worried that their forces would be perhaps at more risk if nothing was done. So I am grateful to them for their agreement for this position. And we're going to do the very best we can to make it work.

Thank you.
FAX TRANSMISSION

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"UNPROFOR CONTROL" OF HEAVY WEAPONS - DEFINITION

The control of the non-use of heavy weapons will be achieved through permanent, on-the-ground UNPROFOR armed presence on five to six (5-6) sites, on each side, where heavy weapons are regrouped. If either party attempts to retrieve those weapons, it will have to use force and will, therefore, be in the breach of the accepted conditions. Force will, in turn, be used against it.

The control arrangements already agreed to by the Joint Commission are as follows:

* the principle of regrouping heavy weapons in a limited number of sites, under UNPROFOR control as defined above;
* the deployment of an enhanced observer presence, in an additional information gathering role;
* increased patrolling activity on the confrontation line.