

**Statement of
Secretary of Defense William J. Perry
On the Deployment of U.S. Troops
with the Bosnia Peace Implementation Force**

**Senate Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on Defense
December 1, 1995**

Thank you Mr. Chairman. Secretary Christopher has already described the Bosnia peace agreement that was initialed in Dayton. This agreement was achieved through tireless efforts of the Secretary and his lead negotiator, Dick Holbrooke. Dick's team included LTG Wes Clark from the Joint Staff and Jim Pardew from my staff. As a result of their efforts we have a real opportunity to achieve peace in Bosnia and protect and advance America's security interests in Europe.

Last Friday I spoke to 700 leaders from the First Armored Division -- every leader from the Division commander down to the company NCO's. I can tell you they understand the mission we are giving them, they are trained and ready and enthusiastic. The First Armored Division will be the core of the U.S. ground component in the Bosnia Peace Implementation Force (IFOR). They had five questions they wanted me to answer and I want to tell you and the American people what I told our soldiers.

The questions were, "Why should we commit U.S. forces to IFOR in Bosnia? Who else is sending troops? What is our mission? When will we deploy? And what is our exit strategy?"

After I answer these questions, GEN Shalikashvili will talk more about the specific mission tasks of our forces, their capabilities and the command structure. He has just come from reviewing the NATO plans with the NATO Military Committee.

Why should we send ground forces to Bosnia-Herzegovina?

I believe there is a set of propositions that create an "iron logic" as to why we should commit ground forces to Bosnia as part of the NATO implementation force:

The United States has vital political, economic and security interests in Europe.

The war in Bosnia threatens these interests.

We now have an opportunity -- the first real opportunity in four years -- to end this war.

To seize this opportunity, a NATO force is required to implement the peace.

The United States is the only nation that can lead that force to success.

Finally, although there will be risks associated with this operation, the risks to the United States of allowing this war to continue and perhaps spread are even greater.

It is this "iron logic" that drives the decision that we should, at this time, commit ground troops to the NATO IFOR. Let me expand on each of those points very briefly.

The United States has vital political, economic and security interests in Europe. I regard this as an indisputable fact. For the past fifty years we pledged our lives and treasure to preserve the security of Europe against the threat of the Warsaw Pact. We understood that keeping Europe stable and secure ensured our own security. The threat from the Warsaw Pact has passed from the scene, but the collapse of the Soviet empire unleashed ethnic rivalries that continue to threaten stability in Europe and Central Asia. We are in the process of creating new structures to deal with these problems -- the Partnership for Peace, an expanded NATO, and a pragmatic partnership with Russia, but the war in Bosnia threatens those positive developments.

When I say the war threatens our interests, I am not referring to the actual war itself and the direct consequences of the war, as appalling as those are. Many of you will support this commitment in part on the grounds that we have a moral obligation to seize this opportunity to end the killing and the atrocities. I am deeply sympathetic to that view, but as the Secretary of Defense I try to base my recommendations on colder analysis.

I'm talking instead about the danger of this war expanding to a wider part of Europe. This is not an academic concern. Only two months ago, I would have given you even odds that the Croat offensive in Bosnia would provoke a renewed, all-out war between Serbia and Croatia. And all during the last three and a half years, the danger has been palpable that this war would spread south into Kosovo and Macedonia, involving Albania, and perhaps Greece and Turkey. Given that we have the opportunity, there is certainly a moral imperative to stop the bloodshed and violence in Bosnia-Herzegovina, but it is that danger of a wider war that is the most significant threat to U.S. interests. The best way of avoiding the spread of the war is to stop it.

We now have such an opportunity. It is the first time in four years that we have been able to get all of the parties to step forward to sign an agreement. I talked with each of the presidents involved and their delegations in Dayton. I believe there were two factors that brought them reluctantly to this agreement. First of all, a war weariness -- four years of fighting, a quarter of a million people killed, two million refugees. They are just sick of the war. Previous diplomatic efforts had been thwarted by the belief of one or more of the parties that they had more to gain by continuing to fight.

The second factor was that the warring parties were impressed and awed at the military capability of the United States and NATO. They got a sample of that during the

bombing raids. They witnessed our military power, but they also came to believe that, in the context of an agreement, that power would be used constructively, not to harm them, but to enforce the peace. That was the solid foundation which allowed them to step forward and make the necessary compromises to reach this peace agreement. Compromises, by the way, for which the three Presidents will be criticized in their own countries.

Therefore, in order to seize this opportunity for peace, we must make an American commitment to participate. None of the parties, certainly not the Bosnian Federation, and also surprisingly, neither the Croats or Serbians, would have been willing to sign the peace agreement without an American commitment to participation in the IFOR. And one of the parties has already publicly stated that they would withdraw from the agreement if that commitment to participate is not met.

So the real alternative to implementing this peace agreement, to passing on this chance for peace, is to allow the war to start up again. Failure to meet the American commitment could lead to another six months, another year, another two years of war -- resulting in humanitarian tragedies in Bosnia and risking the danger of the war spreading -- and thus endangering America's interests in European security.

This is not a blind plunge into a conflict. For four years and two administrations, we have, in the face of great pressure, refused to enter this war as a combatant on the ground. And we will not send U.S. troops into a war in Bosnia. We have said we will engage only to implement a peace agreement -- with the consent of the three parties. We now have that agreement and that consent. If the parties don't sign or if they otherwise renege on the consent, we won't go forward.

And we will be taking every possible action to minimize the risks necessarily entailed in the IFOR. NATO is going in with a large force -- 60,000 total on the ground in Bosnia. Sixty thousand is the number of troops that GEN Joulwan, the Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, has determined he needs to accomplish the mission. Additional support troops will be located in neighboring countries. The air strike component will also be located out of country -- the commanders will have access to as much NATO air power as they require. Some have argued that we could get by with a smaller force on the ground. A large force has advantages both from the point of view of deterrence and for planning our deployment. In any event, if we err, I prefer it to be on the side of sending in too many. If it turns out we don't need that many, we can pull some of them out. That is a lot better than not sending enough and scrambling to put more in later.

The American component of this force will include 20,000 ground troops in Bosnia. There are sound military reasons to organize our military presence around a full American division which has the advantage of self-sufficiency and organic support elements. The American force will be able to protect itself under any circumstances. This large a force also is indicative of our size and our leadership position in NATO.

We are going in with a well-armed and well-trained force and with robust rules of engagement. The U.S. ground contingent is built around the 1st Armored Division. Nobody should doubt that the 1st Armored Division is capable of taking care of itself. The 1st AD's Abrams tanks, Bradley fighting vehicles, artillery, and Apache helicopters will be sufficient to take on any opposition in the region.

Who else is going?

Two thirds of the IFOR will be non-U.S. While there will be 20,000 Americans in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as of today, more than 25 nations have stated an intent to join this force. Every NATO nation except Iceland plans to send troops. The British 12,000 to 14,000; the French 7,000 to 9,000; the Germans 4,000; Italians and Spanish about 2,000 each; and nine other nations about 1,000 each. In addition, there are more than a dozen non-NATO nations that have offered forces.

The 1st AD commander, MAJ GEN Bill Nash, will have under his command his own division plus some other U.S. units, but he will also command soldiers from seven to 10 other countries.

He will have a Nordic brigade of 4,500 troops, who are well-trained and well disciplined, and know the terrain. This brigade will consist of Norwegians, Finns, Danes, Swedes, and perhaps a Polish battalion. A very positive aspect is that many of their personnel have served a year or more on the ground in the Tuzla area where our troops will be centered. We can learn from them; in fact, our survey teams already are benefiting from the experience of the Nordic forces.

MAJ GEN Nash will also have a Turkish task force of one or two battalions. And he will have a Russian brigade. This poses some challenges to MAJ GEN Nash, but it's also a historic opportunity. I've spent most of my life as a "Cold Warrior," and as recently as a few years ago I could not have imagined the prospect of a Russian brigade serving under an American division commander.

I have met with GEN Grachev four times in the last seven weeks, trying to hammer out the agreement for Russian participation. We agreed on an arrangement putting the Russian brigade under GEN Joulwan's operational control, but giving him a Russian deputy who will transmit Joulwan's orders to that brigade. GEN Grachev agreed that MAJ GEN Nash will have tactical control of that brigade.

In addition to the military arrangement, GEN Grachev and I discussed the issue of political control. We reached agreement "in principle" on an arrangement that gives Russia the opportunity to consult, to be fully informed and to have input on matters involving Russian forces. This will be done through a formal consultative committee. But the final decisions of political control will be left to the North Atlantic Council, preserving unity of command. NATO and Russia would take each other's views into account, but if any disagreement cannot be resolved through this committee, the decisions

would stand. Russia, of course, would have the option to withdraw from the operation, but we do not expect that contingency to develop. In any event, inability to agree would not prevent NATO from proceeding.

I have invested so much time on this issue because of the impact that Russian participation will have on the future security in Europe. Last month, I met with all the NATO defense ministers in Williamsburg, Virginia. There was unanimous agreement that we wanted Russian participation -- providing it could be arranged without jeopardizing unity of command. In the Europe of the future, we do not want to isolate or exclude Russia. We want to find a way to include them inside the circle working with us, rather than outside the circle in a posture of confrontation.

The wide participation in the IFOR is a symbol of the new Europe. The effort will define how security in Europe is going to be handled for decades to come. In effect, we will be defining what post-Cold War Europe is all about and how its security will be assured. We will be creating new relationships with these military leaders of other countries, not just NATO countries, that will have a positive effect on the security of the United States for decades to come. But the entire effort depends on U.S. leadership. That is the lesson of Dayton, where U.S. leadership made the difference in diplomacy. That is the lesson of the NATO bombing campaign, where U.S. leadership stiffened the resolve of NATO. And that is the lesson that European leaders repeat to me at every meeting -- if the U.S. leads, the military job will be done right and we will succeed.

What is the mission for IFOR?

The mission of IFOR is to oversee and enforce implementation of the military aspects of the peace agreement: Cessation of hostilities, withdrawal to agreed lines, creation of a zone of separation, return troops and weapons to cantonments. And, of course, IFOR will be responsible for its own self-defense and freedom of movement. The forces, their training, their equipment and their Rules of Engagement (ROE) are geared to these missions. I've just completed my second trip to the units getting ready for the operation. I have talked with every commander in the U.S. chain: from SACEUR, GEN Joulwan, who will be in overall command; to ADM Smith, who will be the theater commander; to LTG Walker, the ground forces commander; to MAJ GEN Nash; to the brigade, battalion and company commanders and the senior NCO's. They understand the mission; they have the training and equipment they need; they are ready to go if the order comes.

This mission will be even-handed. If they get any provocations, either by the Bosnian Serbs or the Bosnian Federation forces, they will respond. They will have the authority to move anywhere in Bosnia. They will be based primarily in the Federation, but will be enforcing a zone of separation which goes several kilometers into Bosnian Serb territory and will have to maintain lines of communication that pass through Bosnian Serb territory. Therefore in the peace agreement, we insisted on and got the authority to go anywhere in Bosnia to carry out our mission.

Our troops have all trained extensively for their mission. They will have robust Rules of Engagement and have been trained and disciplined in how to apply the ROEs. If our forces are attacked, or if hostile intent is demonstrated by opposing forces, our rules of engagement will permit the immediate and effective use of deadly force. Our troops are well-disciplined, and well-trained. They know how to react across the full spectrum of situations they might encounter. They will use force as required and have been trained to control the level of violence, but make no mistake, they will have full authority to use deadly force if they believe they need to.

It is important to be prepared for the mission, and we are. But the commanders also understand what they are not going to do. The IFOR will be operating under NATO military and political control, not under UN control. We expect the UN to give a mandate to a whole set of military and civil operations in Bosnia. IFOR will be the military side of that mandate. The civilian programs will include rebuilding the infrastructure, revitalizing the economy, bringing refugees back for resettlement, and providing for free elections. Those tasks will not be IFOR's job, but none of them can be done without IFOR successfully accomplishing its mission. IFOR must provide the security environment that allows all those other things to be done.

Our troops are not going to equip and train military forces. However, in order to achieve a lasting peace in the Balkans, it will be essential to achieve stable and balanced force levels within Bosnia-Herzegovina and among the states of the former Yugoslavia. That military stabilization should be achieved, to the extent possible, through arms limitations and reductions, rather than by the introduction of large quantities of new arms into the region. All of the parties agreed to an arms control process modeled after the CFE agreement which would result in stability through a build down of arms. As significant as the arms control measures in the Dayton agreement are, they may not be sufficient to achieve military stabilization. In that case, the United States will work with other countries to ensure that Federation armed forces obtain the necessary equipment and training by the time the NATO-led implementation force withdraws from Bosnia-Herzegovina. But we hope and expect that arms control will succeed because of the interest of the parties and their neighbors in Europe. One week after the Paris signing there will be a conference in Bonn to structure the arms control process.

We have recognized that there will be risks in this operation. But because the governments have consented, the risks do not come from entering into a war as a combatant and fighting organized units. We do expect that there may be individuals or gangs who challenge the authority of IFOR or try to harass the forces. We also expect problems from harsh weather, poor infrastructure and mines -- there may be as many as six million mines in the country.

Our forces have trained against these risks. Three weeks ago I visited our training areas at Grafenwoehr and Hohenfels, Germany. At Grafenwoehr all the units of the 1st AD went back through refresher training in their combat skills, such as tank gunnery

practice. They then transitioned to Hohenfels where EUCOM has created a mini-Bosnia -- complete with villages, villagers, Serb and Federation armies, para-military units, blackmarketeers, smugglers, UN and NGO officials, bad roads, snipers, mines, mud and even CNN. The units are run through every conceivable scenario we could think up, and we had the help of British, French, Dutch and Canadian peacekeepers who have served in Bosnia and seen it all. If they succeeded in solving the problems, the trainers just made it harder. The objective, as stated by GEN Joulwan, was "to make the scrimmage harder than the game."

When will the troops deploy?

The timing of the operational deployments is dependent on the signing of the peace agreement, the UN Security Council resolution, and a North Atlantic Council decision to deploy the IFOR. I expect that GEN Joulwan will be given authority by the NAC today to deploy enabling forces, including some U.S. personnel, so that after the agreement is signed he can quickly stand up IFOR using European units already in Bosnia. This preparatory step is needed if the main body of U.S. and NATO troops are to be able to enter swiftly and safely, if the order to go is given. This step does not preempt Congress's consideration of our plans because the combat units of the 1st AD will not begin to flow until after the agreement is signed.

After the signing, the force would build up rapidly, moving from Germany to Bosnia by rail and road. By the end of the second month, we will have our entire force in and we'll maintain that and build down in the last few months. General Shalikashvili will lay out the schedule in more detail.

What is the exit strategy?

We believe the mission can be accomplished in one year, so we have built our plan based on that timeline. This schedule is realistic because the specific military tasks in the agreement can be completed in the first six months, and thereafter IFOR's role will be to maintain the climate of stability that will permit civil work to go forward. We expect that these civil functions will be successfully initiated in one year. But, even if some of them are not, we must not be drawn into a posture of indefinite garrison.

By the end of the first year, we expect that we will have achieved perhaps several months of a stable security environment, will have broken the cycle of violence and will have the civil program efforts starting to take hold. That is why I believe that the London Conference to get reconstruction and economic efforts off to a quick start is very important.

In the final analysis, it is up to the parties to achieve peace. Our effort will give them that opportunity.

In conclusion, I want to emphasize my belief that this is both a commitment that is important to our national interests and an achievable mission. History has demonstrated the consequences of instability in Europe. Two generations of Americans paid the price. The conditions for peace in the Balkans now exist. But they require American commitment and leadership. If we do not fulfill that commitment we will rue the consequences for the long term security of Europe and for our own security.