

## **Letter to Congressional Leaders on Bosnia**

*June 20, 1997*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

In my report to the Congress of December 20, 1996, I provided further information on the deployment of combat-equipped U.S. Armed Forces to Bosnia and other states in the region in order to participate in and support the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)-led Stabilization Force (SFOR), and on the beginning of the withdrawal of the NATO-led Implementation Force (IFOR), which completed its mission and transferred authority to the SFOR on December 20, 1996. I am providing this supplemental report, consistent with the War Powers Resolution, to help ensure that the Congress is kept fully informed on continued U.S. contributions in support of peacekeeping efforts in the former Yugoslavia.

We continue to work in concert with others in the international community to encourage the parties to fulfill their commitments under the Dayton Peace Agreement and to build on the gains achieved over the last 18 months. It remains in the United States national interest to help bring peace to Bosnia, both for humanitarian reasons and to arrest the dangers the fighting in Bosnia represented to security and stability in Europe generally. Through American leadership and in conjunction with our NATO allies and other countries, we have seen real and continued progress toward sustainable peace in Bosnia. We have also made it clear to the former warring parties that it is they who are ultimately responsible for implementing the Peace Agreement.

The United Nations Security Council authorized member states to establish the follow-on force in United Nations Security Council Resolution 1088 of December 12, 1996. The SFOR's tasks are to deter or prevent a resumption of hostilities or new threats to peace, to consolidate IFOR's achievements and to promote a climate in which the civilian-led peace process can go forward. Subject to this primary mission, SFOR will provide selective support, within its capabilities, to civilian organizations implementing the Dayton Peace Agreement.

The parties to the Peace Agreement have all confirmed to NATO their support for the SFOR mission. In particular, the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina have indicated that they welcome NATO's planned 18-month SFOR mission to be formally reviewed at 6 and 12 months with a view to shifting the focus from stabilization to deterrence, reducing the force's presence and completing the mission by June 1998. The first such review is to be conducted on June 26, 1997.

United States force contribution to SFOR in Bosnia currently is approximately 8,500, roughly half the size of the force deployed with IFOR at the peak of its strength. Many of the U.S. forces participating in SFOR are U.S. Army forces that were stationed in Germany. Other participating U.S. forces include special operations forces, airfield operations support forces, air forces, and reserve personnel. An amphibious force is normally in reserve in the Mediterranean Sea, and a carrier battle group remains available to provide support for air operations.

All NATO nations and 21 others, including Russia, have provided troops or other support to SFOR. Most U.S. troops are assigned to Multinational Division, North, centered around the city of Tuzla. In addition, approximately 2,800 U.S. troops are deployed to Hungary, Croatia, Italy, and other states in the region in order to provide logistical and other support to SFOR.

Since the transfer of authority from IFOR to SFOR on December 20, 1996, U.S. forces sustained a total of two fatalities, neither of which was combat-related. Four American service members were also injured in accidents. As with the U.S. forces, traffic accidents, landmines, and other accidents were the primary causes of injury to SFOR personnel.

A U.S. Army contingent remains deployed in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia as part of the United Nations Preventive Deployment Force (UNPREDEP). This U.N. peacekeeping force observes and monitors conditions along the border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania, effectively contributing to the stability of the region. Several U.S. Army support helicopters are also deployed to provide support to U.S. forces and UNPREDEP as required.

Most of the approximately 500 U.S. soldiers participating in these missions are assigned to the 2nd Battalion, 37th Armor, 1st Armored Division. A small contingent of U.S. military personnel is also serving in Croatia in direct support of the Transitional Administrator of the United Nations Transitional Administration in Eastern Slovenia.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive, and in accordance with various statutory authorities. I am providing this report as part of my efforts to keep the Congress fully informed about developments in Bosnia and other states in the region. I will continue to consult closely with the Congress regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

**William J. Clinton**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks at the Opening of the First Working Session of the Summit of the Eight in Denver**

*June 21, 1997*

I'm very pleased to welcome my fellow leaders to Denver as we open this Summit of the Eight. And I want to say a special welcome to our friend President Yeltsin, who joins us for the first time from the beginning to the end of this meeting. Russia's growing role in the shared world of market democracies reflects the progress and the potential of this age.

We meet at a moment of remarkable possibility for our nations and for the world. Powerful forces are drawing our nations closer together, delivering the promise of prosperity and security to more people than ever, changes that, like this, bring vast opportunities as we approach the new century, but we also know they bring new challenges. Our citizens must have the skills they need to suc-

ceed in a fast-changing economy. And as barriers fall, problems that start in one country can spread quickly to another, whether they are currency crises, organized crime, or outbreaks of deadly diseases.

Our challenge in this moment of peace and stability is to organize ourselves for the future, to make change work for us, not against us. We must seize the opportunities of the global economy to expand our own prosperity, bring in other nations that want to share in its benefits, and work together to meet the new threats. None of our nations can meet these challenges alone, and more than ever our summit process is an engine of common progress.

Over the next 2 days, we'll discuss the best ways to deepen and extend the benefits of the 21st century marketplace, to help our societies thrive as our populations grow older, to strengthen further the stability of the world financial system, to generate economic growth throughout the world. We'll continue our efforts to bring new partners in Africa and elsewhere into the community of market democracies. And we'll strengthen our growing cooperation to meet threats to our common security, such as our rapid response network to fight nuclear smuggling, common endeavors to combat terrorism, and initiatives to stem infectious disease, including the search for an AIDS vaccine.

It is fitting that we meet in a public library, a place where people come together to learn and share ideas without regard to their own backgrounds. If we pool our strength, we can achieve great things for all our people and the world. I look forward to addressing those challenges with my fellow leaders over the next few days, and again, I welcome them to Denver.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. at the Denver Public Library. In his remarks, he referred to President Boris Yeltsin of Russia.

### **The President's Radio Address**

*June 21, 1997*

Good morning. I'm speaking to you today from Denver, Colorado, where the leaders of the world's top industrial democracies are