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Bosnia Stabilization Force (SFOR) and U.S. Policy

Updated September 1, 1998

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ABSTRACT

This report provides background and analysis on the NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) in Bosnia and Hercegovina. After a brief background section, the report details the composition of the force, its mission, and its cost to the United States. Other sections discuss Administration policy and Congressional action on SFOR. The report will be updated as events warrant.

Bosnia Stabilization Force (SFOR) and U.S. Policy

Summary

In December 1995, a NATO-led implementation force (IFOR) was deployed to Bosnia to enforce the military aspects of the Bosnian peace agreement. President Clinton said the deployment would last "about one year." IFOR successfully completed its main military tasks, but implementation of the civilian aspects of the accord, for which IFOR did not have direct responsibility, was at best a mixed success. Faced with the possible collapse of the peace agreement if IFOR pulled out, on November 15, 1996, President Clinton pledged to keep U.S. troops in Bosnia as part of a NATO-led Stabilization Force (SFOR) until June 1998. A similar state of affairs a little over a year later led the President to announce on December 18, 1997 that he had agreed in principle that U.S. forces should participate in a Bosnia peacekeeping force after the mandate of the current SFOR expired in June 1998.

In a March 1998 certification to Congress, the President proposed that SFOR not be assigned a fixed end-date, but asserted that the deployment will not be open-ended. He outlined ten conditions to be met in Bosnia in order for the NATO-led force to be withdrawn: continuation of the cease-fire; a restructured, re-trained and re-integrated police; effective judicial reform; dissolution of illegal pre-Dayton institutions; democratically regulated media and access to independent media; free and democratic elections with implemented results; free-market reforms, with an economic program worked out with the International Monetary Fund; phased and orderly minority refugee returns; a functioning multi-ethnic administration in Brcko; and full cooperation by the parties with the war crimes tribunal.

The composition of SFOR has varied little since the renewal of its mandate in June 1998 as *Operation Joint Forge*. As of July 1998, it comprises forces from 34 countries, totaling approximately 35,000 troops. The U.S. contingent in Bosnia remains at about 8,300, but by October 1998 it will be reduced to 6,900. One notable change in the SFOR force structure has been the addition of a 600-man Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU) to deal with outbreaks of civil violence. SFOR's main mission remains enforcing the military aspects of the Dayton peace accords, but over the last year NATO has become increasingly willing to devote resources to supporting key civil implementation tasks.

After fierce debate, the House and Senate passed separate resolutions in December 1995 expressing support for the U.S. troops in Bosnia, although not necessarily for the mission itself. Legislative efforts to bar funds for the deployment of U.S. troops to Bosnia were narrowly rejected. In the 105th Congress, similar efforts to bar a U.S. deployment after June 1998 were also rejected, although the FY 1998 defense authorization and appropriations laws contain reporting requirements that must be fulfilled before an extended deployment may take place. During its debate on the FY 1999 defense authorization and appropriations bills, the Senate rejected attempts to force a gradual reduction in U.S. forces in Bosnia, but approved a sense-of-the-Senate amendment that called for the withdrawal of U.S. forces "within a reasonable period of time."

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Bosnia Stabilization Force (SFOR) and U.S. Policy

Background

After three years of war in Bosnia, on November 21, 1995, the presidents of Serbia-Montenegro, Croatia, and Bosnia-Herzegovina, as well as representatives of the Muslim-Croat Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the Bosnian Serb Republika Srpska, initialed a largely U.S.-mediated peace agreement for Bosnia at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base near Dayton, Ohio. The final peace agreement was signed by the parties in Paris on December 14, 1995. In order to enforce the military aspects of the agreement, the agreement called for a NATO-led implementation force (IFOR) to be deployed to Bosnia. In a nationally televised address on November 27, 1995, President Clinton justified dispatching U.S. troops to Bosnia as part of IFOR by saying U.S. engagement was needed to stop the great suffering caused by the war; to bring stability in Europe, a region vital to U.S. interests; and to maintain U.S. leadership in NATO. President Clinton said the deployment would last “about one year.” Subsequent statements by Administration officials asserted that U.S. forces would be out of Bosnia by the end of 1996. The United States contributed about 19,000 troops to the approximately 54,000-man force.

On December 15, 1995, the U.N. Security Council authorized the deployment of IFOR. On the next day, NATO’s North Atlantic Council approved the IFOR deployment, activating the deployment of the main body of troops. On December 20, 1995, the U.N. force in Bosnia (UNPROFOR) transferred its authority to IFOR, starting the process of implementing the military aspects of the peace agreement. Over the next year, IFOR successfully completed its main military tasks, which were to separate the forces on the ground and oversee their demobilization.

However, implementation of the civilian aspects of the accord, for which IFOR did not have direct responsibility, was at best a mixed success. Civilian aspects of the accord were coordinated by High Representative Carl Bildt, while various international bodies were charged with helping to implement aspects of the accord. It should be noted that the chief responsibility for peace implementation rested with the Bosnian parties, who showed intransigence on many issues. Freedom of movement remained limited and very few refugees returned to their homes. Indicted war criminals remained at large. Elections were held for most levels of government on September 14, 1996, without violence or other serious incidents. However, many observers charged that the election campaign was less than free and fair, and some alleged possible fraud in the vote count. The results consolidated the strength of the main nationalist parties. Municipal elections, which were to have been held on September 14, 1996, were postponed by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) until September 13-14, 1997, due to fraud and

manipulation of registration procedures, primarily by the Bosnian Serbs, and other problems. Key Bosnian government institutions were created only in January 1997. Internationally funded reconstruction efforts began to show some results in rebuilding infrastructure, albeit almost entirely in the Federation, but had not touched off a self-sustaining economic recovery. Although IFOR's primary responsibility was to assure the implementation of the military aspects of the peace accord (and by doing so provide a secure environment in which civilian implementation could take place), it also aided some civilian implementation efforts directly on a case-by-case basis.

On November 15, 1996, President Clinton announced that the Administration had agreed in principle to keep U.S. troops to Bosnia as part of a new NATO-led peacekeeping force for Bosnia. Clinton said the force would remain there until June 1998. He said the mission of the Stabilization Force (SFOR) would be to "prevent a resumption of hostilities so that economic reconstruction and political reconciliation can accelerate." NATO ministers approved the SFOR plan on December 10, 1996, and the U.N. Security Council authorized the force on December 12, for an 18-month period. SFOR formally took over command from IFOR on December 20, 1996.

In late 1997, the United States and other countries participating in SFOR found themselves in much the same dilemma that they faced one year earlier — either pull out and face the possibility of a resumption of fighting, or remain in Bosnia and continue a seemingly open-ended commitment. On December 18, 1997, President Clinton announced that he had agreed in principle that U.S. forces should participate in a Bosnia peacekeeping force after the mandate of the current SFOR expires in June 1998. He did not set a new departure deadline, but said the force would leave only when the Bosnian peace process was self-sustaining. In a March 1998 certification required by the FY 1998 defense authorization and appropriations acts (P.L. 105-85 and 105-56), President Clinton laid out ten benchmarks to measure progress toward that goal, including a continued cease-fire; police restructuring; an effective judicial reform program; dismantling of pre-Dayton institutions; a freer media environment; free and fair elections; free market reforms; an orderly refugee return process; a functioning multi-ethnic administration in Brcko; and cooperation with the war crimes tribunal. On June 11, 1998, NATO defense ministers formally approved the extension of SFOR's mandate. On June 15, 1998, the U.N. Security Council approved Resolution 1171, which extended SFOR's mandate until June 21, 1999. On June 20, 1998, SFOR began to operate under its new mandate.

SFOR Overview

The composition of SFOR has varied little since the renewal of its mandate in June 1998 as *Operation Joint Forge*. As of July 1998, it comprises forces from 34 countries, totaling approximately 35,000 troops. The U.S. contingent in Bosnia remains at about 8,300, but by October 1998 it will be reduced to 6,900. This reduction was agreed to by the NATO allies to try to assuage domestic U.S. political pressures critical of U.S. ground force participation. There are currently an additional 3,000 U.S. personnel in Hungary, Croatia, and Italy providing support functions for SFOR. This includes Air Force, Navy, and Marine Corps pilots flying air support

missions from Italy. Though not officially a part of SFOR, the U.S. Sixth Fleet is on routine station in the Mediterranean, should its resources be required.

Both NATO's Supreme Allied Commander (SACEUR) Gen. Wesley Clark, and the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. Hugh Shelton have argued against troop reductions below 6,900 at this time, maintaining that greater reductions could erode effectiveness and place remaining troops at greater risk. NATO military officials believe a robust and obvious military presence is the most effective way to forestall a resumption of intra-Bosnia hostilities or attacks on SFOR. SFOR force requirements will be reviewed every six months, in conjunction with evaluations of progress in implementing the Dayton Accords, and troop levels may be reduced depending upon the stability of the region. An independent factor which may influence NATO decisions on troop levels in Bosnia is the on-going conflict in the Serbian province of Kosovo. Though Kosovo is not contiguous to Bosnia, and no effect has been yet seen on events in Bosnia, the conflict nevertheless raises tensions in the region. SFOR air units have already been used in the NATO airpower demonstration exercise *Vigilant Falcon* carried out around Kosovo in June 15, 1998. Were NATO to decide to take more forceful action in Kosovo, it is unclear what, if any, role SFOR would play. It is likely, however, that at least the SFOR-dedicated air units based in Italy would be involved.

Congress remains concerned about the U.S. troop levels in Bosnia, as indicated by several amendments offered to the DOD FY1999 authorizing and appropriating legislation. (See **Congressional Concerns**). The Senate adopted an amendment, sponsored by Senators Thurmond and McCain, to S. 2057, the FY1999 DOD authorizing legislation, requiring by September 30, 1998 a detailed presidential report on the impact of a phased U.S. reduction of forces to 2,500 by February 2, 2000.¹

The U.S. SFOR contingent is called *Task Force Eagle* and has command of the Multinational Division North sector headquartered near Tuzla. For the first two years of Bosnia operations, units stationed in Germany — 1st Armored Division and 1st Mechanized Infantry Division — provided the core of the U.S. contingent. From September 1997 to July 1998, the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment (Ft. Polk, LA) was the command unit. Command was then returned to the 1st Armored Division, which will be replaced in October by a brigade of the 1st Cavalry Division (Ft. Hood). The 1st Cavalry will remain in Bosnia for at least one year, rotating brigades every six months. Given the open-ended nature of *Operation Joint Forge*, it has become necessary to involve stateside Army units to reduce the burden on European-based units. Other units scheduled to deploy to Bosnia this Fall include elements of: 35th Armor Regiment, 40th Engineer Battalion, 4th Air Defense Artillery Regiment, and the 11th Aviation Brigade. In addition to these heavy units, there are considerable military police, civil affairs, psychological operations, and logistical support units in the U.S. contingent. The proportion of these types of units has increased steadily since the initial NATO deployment, which consisted primarily of heavy armor and mechanized forces. This reflects the almost complete lack of armed resistance

¹S. 2057 was subsequently inserted in H.R. 3616, the House version of the DOD FY1999 authorizing legislation, which is currently in House-Senate conference.

NATO forces have encountered, and an increasing involvement in the civil implementation objectives.

Reserve forces and the National Guard continue to play a significant role in Bosnia, particularly in the Army and the Air Force. About 16,000 Army reservists and 10,000 Air Force reservists have participated in or supported Bosnia operations. While most of the Army personnel have been involuntarily activated under the Presidential Reserve Call-Up Authority (10 USC Sec. 12304), most of the Air Force personnel have been volunteers.

One notable change in the SFOR force structure has been the addition of the Multinational Specialized Unit (MSU). Created in response to a U.S. initiative, the MSU is composed of about 600 paramilitary police. They are to serve as a two battalion rapid response force to deal with outbreaks of civil violence, thereby relieving SFOR combat troops of the responsibility of dealing with relatively low-level crowd violence. Unlike the existing International Police Task Force, an unarmed U.N. training/observer group, the MSU is armed with automatic weapons and light armored vehicles. They are under NATO command and are authorized to deploy throughout Bosnia. Tactical command of their activities will fall to the NATO sector headquarters in which they are operating. Currently, Italy and Argentina are contributing personnel to the MSU, and talks are underway with Spain, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and the Netherlands concerning their participation in early 1999. The United States is unlikely to contribute to this unit because it has no comparable paramilitary police forces. Perhaps the most critical role for the MSU will be working to assist the safe return of refugees to their former homes. They may also become involved detaining suspected war criminals.

Table 1 shows the troop and combat aircraft contributions of all SFOR participants.

Table 1. SFOR Units/Aircraft
(number of personnel)

	SFOR Ground Force Units	SFOR Combat Aircraft
Albania	1 infantry platoon (40)	
Austria	1 transport company (230)	
Belgium	1 mechanized infantry battalion 1 transport company	3 F-16 fighters
	(850)	
Bulgaria	1 engineer platoon (30)	
Canada	1 mechanized infantry battalion (1,250)	
Czech Republic	1 mechanized infantry battalion (640)	
Denmark	1 mechanized infantry battalion (747)	
Egypt	1 mechanized infantry battalion (270)	
Finland	1 mechanized infantry battalion (270)	
France	1 mechanized brigade 1 airmobile company 1 reconnaissance company 1 military police company 1 engineer battalion	10 Mirage fighters 8 Jaguar fighters 8 Jaguar recon
	(2,500)	
Germany	1 mechanized brigade (2,470)	14 Tornado recon
Greece	1 transport company (230)	
Hungary	1 engineer battalion (310)	
Iceland	6 medical personnel	
Ireland	1 military police company (50)	
Italy	1 mechanized infantry brigade(1,600)	6 Tornado fighters
Jordan	1 special forces team (10)	
Latvia	1 infantry platoon (39)	
Lithuania	1 infantry platoon (40)	
Luxembourg	1 reconnaissance platoon 1 transport platoon (36)	

	SFOR Ground Force Units	SFOR Combat Aircraft
Malaysia	1 mechanized infantry battalion (925)	
Morocco	1 mechanized infantry battalion(650)	
Netherlands	1 mechanized infantry battalion (1,080)	9 F-16 fighters
Norway	1 infantry battalion (615)	
Poland	1 mechanized infantry battalion (400)	
Portugal	1 airborne infantry battalion (320)	
Romania	1 engineer battalion (200)	
Russia	1 airborne infantry brigade (1,400)	
Spain	1 mechanized infantry brigade (1,550)	8 EF-18 fighters
Sweden	1 mechanized infantry battalion (510)	
Turkey	1 mechanized infantry brigade (1,520)	18 F-16 fighters
United Kingdom	1 armored infantry battalion 1 mechanized infantry battalion 1 armored recon battalion 1 infantry company 1 artillery battalion 1 engineer battalion 1 aviation battalion (5,000)	12 Jaguar fighters 2 Jaguar recon
United States	1 mechanized infantry brigade 1 artillery brigade 1 military police battalion 1 aviation brigade 1 engineer brigade 1 support brigade (8,300)	6 F-16 fighters 1 AC-130 gunship 3 EC-130 3 EA-6B
Ukraine	1 mechanized infantry battalion (380)	

Source: Department of Defense; NATO AFSOUTH HQ, July 1998

SFOR Mission Clarity and “Mission Creep”

NATO has delineated the following tasks in the SFOR mission. They have been endorsed by the Administration, and forwarded to Congress in the President's report on Bosnia operations, as required by the FY1998 Defense Authorization Act. (House Document 105-223). They are divided into two categories: key military tasks and key supporting tasks, with latter to be undertaken depending upon available means and capabilities.

Key Military Tasks

- Maintaining deterrence of renewed hostilities.
- Preventing removal of weapons from cantonment
- Maintaining the operation of the Joint Military Commissions
- Ensuring force protection, freedom of movement and continued compliance with the cease-fire and Zones of Separation.
- Monitoring the military components of the Dayton Accords and, if required, enforcing compliance.
- Controlling the airspace over Bosnia.
- Contributing, within means and capabilities and in a manner similar to SFOR's previous approach, to a secure environment within which civil implementation can continue.

Key Supporting Tasks

- Supporting the High Representative
- Supporting phased and orderly returns of refugees by contributing to a safe and secure environment, but not forcible returning of refugees or undertaking to guard individual locations.
- Supporting the conduct of elections and the installation of elected officials.
- Supporting the International Police Task Force in assisting local police by providing back-up support and secure operating environment, but without undertaking civil police tasks.
- Supporting the High Representative and the OSCE in media reform efforts.
- Supporting the international war crimes tribunal and efforts against war criminals.
- Supporting the OSCE, on a case-by-case basis, in implementing the regional arms control regime contained in the Dayton Accords.
- Supporting the implementation of the Brcko decisions presently in effect
- Contributing to the continued improvement of freedom of movement throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The military tasks remain SFOR's primary mission, but over the last year NATO has become increasingly willing to devote resources to the key supporting tasks noted above. A recently issued mission statement from *U.S. Task Force Eagle* headquarters announced it would coordinate civil-military activities in the following areas: rule of law, resettlement of refugees, enhanced democratization, improvement of public security, economic recovery, infrastructure repair, and media reform.² This indicates a potentially much broader sweep of activities than NATO's commanders were willing to undertake for the early years of

²Task Force Eagle Home Page, [<http://www.tfeagle.army.mil/Mission.htm>], September 1, 1998.

Bosnia operations. Basing a refusal to become involved in incidents of civil violence or the pursuit of war crimes suspects on what often appeared, to some observers, as a very conservative interpretation of their mission, NATO commanders focused almost exclusively on separating and disarming the ethnic faction armies. With these tasks accomplished, and facing increasing pressure to acknowledge that the Dayton Accords' civil implementation efforts required a greater level of NATO military support, SFOR commanders began to play a more active role in 1997. Upon assuming command, NATO SACEUR Gen. Wesley Clark played a leading role in increasing SFOR's participation in non-military stabilization activities.

This trend was reinforced when it began to be evident that NATO would not withdraw its forces with the expiration of the original SFOR mandate in June, 1998. In considering the extension of the deployment, the question of mission duration was paramount. There had been considerable criticism of IFOR and SFOR's fixed deadlines, noting that those in Bosnia who opposed the Accords were encouraged by these withdrawal deadlines to simply wait it out rather than cooperate. Even strong critics of U.S. "open-ended" commitments who had supported fixed dates for withdrawal, objected to politically palatable "deadlines" that then came and were *de facto* ignored as operations continued under new mandates and names. In response to these and other criticisms, NATO political leaders decided in June 1998 that SFOR should have no date certain for withdrawal. Rather, its withdrawal would depend upon the extent of progress made in implementing the Dayton Accords, with specific benchmarks of progress outlined, and semi-annual force requirement evaluations mandated. The NATO allies formally approved these benchmarks (See p. 12), and the SFOR Operation Plan call for SFOR to develop, in coordination with international civilian agencies, criteria to evaluate progress. In addition, SFOR headquarters is also preparing estimates of how long it will take to achieve each benchmark. NATO SACEUR, Gen. Wes Clark expects SFOR to report the criteria and timelines in September. The Administration has affirmed that it will in turn provide this report to Congress.³ With the decision to tie length of deployment to the civil implementation of the Dayton Accords, it has become incumbent upon NATO military commanders to pay greater attention to the "supporting tasks" — the sooner these are accomplished the sooner SFOR forces will be reduced or withdrawn. This change has, however, heightened concerns that tying SFOR's duration to successful civil implementation could result in a very lengthy deployment given the continued animosity among ethnic groups. And, while casualties have been extremely low⁴, the financial costs for Bosnia-related operations since 1992 have totaled an estimated \$9.4 billion through FY1999⁵, presenting significant challenges to both lawmakers and DOD officials in a period of budgetary restraint.

The concept of "mission creep" is one that has attracted much attention. The term is generally accepted to refer to the incremental broadening of mission objectives and the addition of mission tasks to a point where they move beyond the original purpose of the operation or deployment. This concern comes to the fore primarily when costs — either in dollars or U.S. casualties — are significant or when an operation is judged a failure. Often cited is the experience in Somalia in 1993 where what began as a humanitarian aid escort mission escalated over time into combat search and capture raids against local faction

³*Goals of the Dayton Agreement*, Message from the President of the United States, House Document 105-292.

⁴U.S. forces have had only one fatal casualty attributed to hostile action: a senior enlisted man who was killed when he picked up a landmine.

⁵Department of Defense, Office of the Comptroller. This figure also includes U.S. air and sea operations conducted in support of United Nations peace-keeping missions prior to NATO's IFOR/SFOR operations.

leaders. The highly publicized failure of one of these raids, in which U.S. forces sustained 18 combat fatalities, brought strong criticism of the Administration for allowing such “mission creep” to occur and led to the withdrawal of U.S. troops. The issue was of less concern during recent U.S. operations in Haiti, where no armed opposition was encountered and costs were relatively lower.

While the last two and a half years of NATO operations in Bosnia have seen no escalation to combat, (indeed IFOR/SFOR have been remarkable for the lack of casualties attributable to hostile action) the emphasis of SFOR activities has undeniably changed. It can be argued that SFOR has not experienced “mission creep”, but has simply shifted its focus from primary to secondary tasks of the original mission statement. Nevertheless, the types of activities SFOR troops are undertaking and the level of resources dedicated to them have altered over the last year.

Perhaps the most notable change has been the increased efforts to detain war crimes suspects. Though approximately 30 suspects remain at large (out of 67 as of April 1998), British, Dutch, and U.S. troops have been noticeably more active in detaining or capturing individuals for transfer to the international war crimes tribunal. And, this activity has been credited with in turn encouraging other suspects to surrender voluntarily. On July 29th, however, press reports indicated that U.S.-British plans to seize the two most important war crimes indictees — Former Bosnia Serb President Karadzic and military leader Gen. Mladic — have been suspended owing to lack of cooperation by French military commanders, and U.S. commanders concerns about potential civilian and military casualties.⁶ There appears, therefore, to be some continued self-limiting by NATO commanders in this area of activity.

One of the more challenging mission areas for both civil and military authorities is the safe resettlement of refugees in regions of continued ethnic tension. Yet, this task is critical to the overall success of the Dayton Accords. Even the new mission statement of SFOR notes limits to the extent to which SFOR will become involved (See **Key Supporting Tasks** above). To assist in this task, NATO has created, and placed under SFOR command, the paramilitary police Multinational Special Unit (MSU). This unit is expected to serve as a rapid reaction force to deal with incidents of low-level violence and crowd disturbances, thereby freeing SFOR combat troops from these responsibilities. Though the creation of the MSU was a U.S. initiative, the United States has no paramilitary police to contribute to the unit. Consequently, any escalation of MSU activities that occur will not involve U.S. personnel.

In general, it appears that NATO officials, and U.S. officials in particular, while accepting some greater responsibilities in civil activities are remaining sensitive to the issue of “mission creep”. They are likely to have to continue to balance the desire to accelerate implementation of the Dayton Accords with concerns over increased combat troop involvement in non-combat roles, particularly within the U.S. Congress.

SFOR Costs

⁶“U.S. Cancels Plans for Raid on Bosnia...”, New York Times, July 26, 1998, p. 1; “*Hunt for Karadzic*”, Time, August 10, 1998, p. 68.

Each participating nation in SFOR, including the United States, covers the costs of its Bosnia-related operations. According to figures supplied by the DoD Comptroller's Office in March 1998, DoD's incremental costs for IFOR/SFOR were \$2.2317 billion in FY 1996 and \$2.087 billion in FY 1997, for a total of \$4.3192 billion. DoD estimates FY 1998 incremental costs at \$1.7976 billion and FY 1999 costs at \$1.6659, making a total of \$7.782 billion for FY 1996-FY 1999.

Administration Policy on SFOR

Part of the Clinton Administration's early strategy on the NATO force in Bosnia was to focus on the force completing its mission within a set time frame. Until the Implementation Force's 12-month mission was nearly completed, the Administration avoided making any firm pronouncements on possible successor missions to IFOR or possible U.S. participation in such a mission, emphasizing rather IFOR's scheduled completion and full withdrawal by the end of 1996. Throughout that year, Administration officials had reiterated the President's pledge to keep the U.S. troop commitment to IFOR to about one year. Administration officials acknowledged the probable need for some sort of international military presence to remain in Bosnia after IFOR, but would not commit to a position on U.S. participation.

On November 15, 1996, President Clinton announced that the United States would take part in a NATO follow-on force in Bosnia. He estimated that the U.S. troop contribution to the successor SFOR would amount to about 8,500 troops, or less than half the number of U.S. troops in the original IFOR. He recommended an 18-month mandate for the NATO force, with further reductions envisaged at six-month review intervals. NATO's later decisions formally establishing SFOR upheld these principles. The principal rationale for continued U.S. military engagement in Bosnia developed by the Administration was that, notwithstanding the many achievements of IFOR, peace efforts in Bosnia still needed additional time to consolidate. An outside security force would be able to provide the stability for economic reconstruction and political reconciliation to continue. Administration analysts assessed that hostilities were likely to resume in Bosnia after a full withdrawal of international forces.

At the same time, the Administration rejected a simple extension of IFOR's mandate. Instead, it emphasized that IFOR had indeed completed its mission within 12 months and that the Stabilization Force and its mission were distinct from IFOR. The Administration differentiated SFOR from IFOR in response to charges that it had broken its promise of completing IFOR's mission in 12 months. President Clinton also made the claim that the SFOR mission was "far more limited" than IFOR's, thus requiring fewer troops. Plans to steadily reduce the force's size indicated that SFOR was expected to do less, rather than more, than IFOR. As it turned out, NATO refrained from drawing down SFOR force levels during its 18-month tenure.

Already in early 1997, some Administration officials began to offer predictions that another successor force may well be required to follow SFOR after June 1998. In contrast, Defense Secretary William Cohen strenuously emphasized the firmness of the Administration's commitment of U.S. troops to SFOR for 18 months only. Secretary Cohen stated that he would pursue the possibility of having the Europeans develop a post-SFOR operation.⁷ Many observers expressed skepticism about this strategy, since no European power had demonstrated any inclination to lead or even participate in a post-SFOR force

⁷ U.S. Senate. Committee on Armed Services. Hearing on the Fiscal Year 1998 Defense Budget. February 13, 1997.

without the United States. In late 1997, top Administration officials began to lay the groundwork for an extended U.S. military commitment to Bosnia. In September, National Security Advisor Samuel Berger reiterated that the United States maintained a significant stake in Dayton's success and left open the possibility of a longer-term engagement in Bosnia. On November 4, President Clinton met with congressional leaders to discuss progress in Bosnia and the possibility of U.S. participation in a future multilateral force.

On December 18, 1997, in a statement before the press, President Clinton announced his agreement in principle that U.S. forces would participate in a NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia after SFOR's mandate expired in June 1998. As justification, President Clinton said that, while progress in Bosnia was "unmistakable," it was not yet irreversible. A follow-on force was needed in order to preserve the gains made in the past two years by U.S. and allied peacekeepers in Bosnia, and to allow further progress toward a self-sustaining peace to continue. In a major departure from earlier U.S. policy, Clinton stated that the deadline approach of the earlier forces was wrong and emphasized that the new mission must be tied to concrete benchmarks, not to a deadline.

On March 4, 1998, President Clinton certified to Congress⁸ that the presence U.S. armed forces was required after June 30, 1998, in order to meet U.S. security interests. In the certification, the President asserted that the United States had major national interests in peace in Bosnia, that it was in the U.S. interest to see the Dayton agreement implemented rapidly, and that U.S. forces should continue to participate in the NATO-led force. He called for the level of U.S. participation to be reduced from 8,500 troops in Bosnia to 6,900 troops. While he proposed that the force not be assigned a fixed end-date or "arbitrary deadline," he asserted that the deployment will not be open-ended.

Answering the question of what the exit strategy for U.S. forces was, the President's certification outlined ten conditions to be met in Bosnia in order for the NATO-led force to be withdrawn: continuation of the cease-fire; a restructured, re-trained and re-integrated police; effective judicial reform; dissolution of illegal pre-Dayton institutions; democratically regulated media and access to independent media; free and democratic elections with implemented results; free-market reforms, with an economic program worked out with the International Monetary Fund; phased and orderly minority refugee returns; a functioning multi-ethnic administration in Brcko; and full cooperation by the parties with the war crimes tribunal. On the same day, the President submitted to Congress a request for emergency supplemental appropriations that included costs for the Bosnia operation: \$486.9 million for Fiscal Year 1998, and \$1.86 billion for Fiscal Year 1999 (see following section for further details).

In testimony before Congress in June 1998,⁹ U.S. envoy Robert Gelbard testified that SFOR's presence in Bosnia and role in providing a secure environment remained critical. According to Gelbard, the secure environment provided by NATO has allowed for accelerated implementation of many aspects of the peace agreement. It has supported the ascendance to power of the moderate Bosnian Serb leadership. It has permitted many more refugees to cross entity lines in order to return to their homes. At the same time,

⁸"Certification of U.S. Armed Forces Continued Presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina," Message from the President of the United States. March 4, 1998. 105th Congress, 2nd Session, House Document 105-223. The certification was pursuant to Section 8132 of P.L. 105-56, the Fiscal Year 1998 Department of Defense Appropriations Act, and to Section 1203 of P.L. 105-85, the Fiscal Year 1998 National Defense Authorization Act.

⁹105th Congress, 2nd Session, U.S. Senate Committee on Armed Services, Hearing on NATO Operations in Bosnia, June 4, 1998. Reuters transcript.

Administration officials contend that SFOR is not itself assigned or involved to any greater extent with nation-building tasks or police work.

Defense Secretary Cohen and other Administration officials have refrained from giving any target dates or time schedules for deployment of the NATO-led force. Instead, progress in achieving the benchmarks (outlined above) are to be reviewed by NATO in order to “focus efforts, measure progress, and permit steady reduction in force levels.”¹⁰ In response to questions from Members of Congress, Administration officials have also refrained from publicly assigning target dates for the fulfillment of each of the benchmarks.

Congressional Role

President Clinton’s decision to deploy U.S. forces to the NATO Implementation Force touched off heated debate in Congress in late 1995. At the time, many Members of Congress were concerned about the potential for large numbers of U.S. casualties in a “quagmire.” Many also doubted whether vital U.S. interests were at stake in Bosnia. President Clinton requested an “expression of support” from the Congress for the Bosnia deployment. In December 1995, the House of Representatives and the Senate passed separate resolutions expressing support for U.S. troops being sent to Bosnia. Legislative efforts to reject the President’s decision by barring funds for the deployment of U.S. troops to Bosnia were narrowly rejected.¹¹

In 1996, as it became clearer to most observers that a follow-on mission to IFOR would be required, both Houses of Congress held numerous hearings on the future of U.S. forces in Bosnia. While all praised the performance of U.S. troops in IFOR, some Members charged that the Administration was breaking its promise to keep U.S. troops in Bosnia for one year only. Many Members also criticized the Administration for not consulting with Congress in a forthright manner on the realistic prospects for a follow-on mission. This time the Administration did not request an explicit expression of support from Congress for SFOR. In the end, however, the 104th Congress adjourned before final decisions were made on SFOR and without any vote on the subject.

Legislation in the 105th Congress

In March 1997, the Administration submitted a request for about \$2 billion in emergency supplemental appropriations and rescissions for FY1997 to cover DoD costs of contingency operations in Bosnia and elsewhere, and emergency disaster relief in the United States. The Senate version of the bill (H.R. 1469) barred funding for a U.S. ground deployment in Bosnia beyond June 30, 1998 and required the President to submit a detailed report on the costs of the Bosnia deployment, and of other aspects of U.S. policy toward

¹⁰Secretary of Defense Cohen statement before the House National Security Committee, March 20, 1998.

¹¹For further information on the congressional debate on IFOR, see U.S. Library of Congress. Congressional Research Service. *Bosnia Implementation Force (IFOR) and Stabilization Force (SFOR): Activities of the 104th Congress*, by (name redacted). Update January 6, 1997.

Bosnia before funds from the supplemental can be made available. The House version did not contain these provisions. The measure passed the House on May 15, 1997, and the Senate on May 16. The House and Senate approved a conference agreement on June 5; the conference report did not include the funds cut-off for the Bosnia deployment. The President vetoed the bill on June 9 over policy provisions unrelated to foreign policy. The President signed the bill without the controversial provisions on June 12 (P.L. 105-18), providing DoD with \$1.9 billion to cover SFOR-related costs. The law required the President to submit a detailed report on the costs of the Bosnia deployment within 60 days.

The House-passed version of H.R. 2266, the FY 1998 defense appropriations bill, barred funding for the deployment of U.S. ground forces to Bosnia after June 1998. The Senate-passed version of the bill did not contain this provision. The conference report did not include the fund cut-off. Section 8132 of the conference report, passed by both Houses on September 25, 1997 and signed by the President on October 8 (P.L. 105-56), barred funding for the deployment of U.S. forces in Bosnia beyond June 1998, unless the President certified to the bipartisan leadership of Congress by May 15, 1998 that a continued deployment is needed to meet the national security interests of the United States. The law required that the certification include why such a deployment is in the national interest, how many U.S. troops will be deployed and for what duration, the mission and objectives and exit strategy for those forces, the cost of the operation and the impact of the deployment on the morale, retention, and effectiveness of U.S. forces. The section also said that the President had to submit a supplemental appropriations request for any deployment beyond June 1998.

The conference report for the FY 1998 defense authorization bill (H.R. 1119) contained a non-binding provision (Section 1202) that says that "it is the sense of Congress that United States ground combat forces should not participate in a follow-on force in Bosnia and Herzegovina after June 1998." The section also said that the United States may decide to provide support to a follow-on force of European ground troops, under the aegis of the European Security and Defense Identity or NATO, in "command and control, intelligence, logistics and, if necessary, a ready reserve force in the region." Section 1203 prohibited funding for the deployment of U.S. ground forces in Bosnia after June 30, 1998, unless the President certified by May 15, 1998 to the bipartisan leadership of Congress that a deployment beyond June 1998 is needed to meet U.S. national security interests and that U.S. forces will not be used as "civil police" in Bosnia. The President was required to submit a detailed report on an extended Bosnian operation similar to the report required by the FY1998 defense appropriations law. Other sections required Administration reports on the activities carried out by U.S. forces in Bosnia; progress toward implementation of the Bosnia peace accord and steps to be taken to transfer responsibility to a European-led peacekeeping force. The House approved the conference report on October 28. The Senate approved the report on November 6, and it was signed by the President on November 18 (P.L. 105-85).

On March 4, 1998, the Administration submitted to Congress a supplemental appropriations request that included \$486.9 million for U.S. military operations in Bosnia for the last quarter of FY1998. The President requested a budget amendment providing for \$1.8586 billion for U.S. troops in Bosnia for FY 1999. The President also submitted the certification required by P.L. 105-56.

On March 18, 1998, the House considered H. Con Res. 227, offered by Representative Tom Campbell. The resolution said that, pursuant to the War Powers Resolution, the Congress directs the President to remove U.S. troops from Bosnia within 60 days unless Congress approves a resolution authorizing the U.S. troop presence. The resolution was rejected by a vote of 225-193.

On March 26, 1998, the Senate completed consideration of S. 1768, an FY1998 supplemental appropriations bill that included \$487 million in incremental costs for U.S. participation in SFOR from July through September 1998. The bill included an amendment by Senator Levin that "urges" the President to reach an agreement with NATO establishing as NATO policy the benchmarks for Bosnian peace agreement implementation set out in the President's certification required by P.L. 105-56. The agreement would also include a schedule for achieving the benchmarks and a formal process to review any failure to achieve the benchmarks on schedule. The amendment required the President to submit a report by June 30 on efforts to reach such an agreement with NATO, and subsequent reports semi-annually on progress on achieving the benchmarks. On March 31, 1998, the House passed its version of the supplemental bill, H.R. 3579, which provides \$487 million in incremental costs for Bosnia. The House bill requires the Secretary of Defense to submit a quarterly report to the House and Senate Appropriations Committees on progress toward achieving the benchmarks set out in the President's certification. On April 30, 1998, the House approved the conference agreement for H.R. 3579 by a vote of 241-164. On the same day, the Senate approved the conference agreement by a vote of 88 to 11. The conference agreement provided \$487 million in incremental costs for U.S. military operations in Bosnia. It contained both the Levin amendment on NATO benchmarks and a requirement for a semi-annual report by the President to Congress on progress toward achieving the benchmarks. It was signed by the President on May 1 (P.L. 105-174).

In April 1998, the Senate considered a resolution of ratification of the protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty admitting Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic to NATO (Treaty Doc. 105-36). On April 30, the Senate defeated by a vote of 80-20 an amendment offered by Senator Craig that would have required the enactment of a law specifically authorizing the continued deployment of U.S. troops to Bosnia before the deposit of the U.S. instrument of ratification (the final step before the protocol enters into force).

On May 21, 1998, the House passed the FY 1999 defense authorization bill (H.R. 3616). Section 1201 limits FY 1999 DoD expenditures for U.S. troops in Bosnia to \$1.8586 billion, the amount requested by the Administration. Section 1202 requires the President to submit a detailed annual report on progress toward implementation of the peace agreement and on the expected duration of the U.S. deployment to Bosnia. The section also requires the Secretary of Defense to report on the impact of the U.S. Bosnia deployment on the capability of U.S. forces to conduct "two nearly simultaneous major theater wars."

On June 26, 1998, the Senate passed its version of the FY 1999 defense authorization bill (S. 2057). An amendment offered by Senator Byrd and Senator Hutchison would have required the President to submit a plan to Congress to reduce U.S. forces in Bosnia to the average level of those deployed by Great Britain, Germany, France, and Italy by February 2000. The President would not be able to appropriate FY 2000 funds for a higher troop level if Congress passed a joint resolution approving the plan within 30 days after its submission to Congress. Some Members have objected to mandated U.S. troop reductions. The amendment was not taken up on the floor of the Senate.

An amendment offered by Senators Strom Thurmond, Carl Levin and Dan Coats expresses the sense of the Congress that U.S. forces "should not remain in Bosnia and Herzegovina "indefinitely, in view of the world-wide commitment" of U.S. forces. It says the President should work with other countries in SFOR to withdraw U.S. forces from Bosnia "within a reasonable period of time, consistent with the safety of those forces and the accomplishment of the Stabilization Force's military tasks." It adds that the President should offer U.S. support in such areas as "command and control, intelligence, logistics and, if necessary, a ready reserve force in the region." A second-degree amendment, by Senator John McCain, requires the President to make several reports. One report would assess the likely impact of a phased reduction of U.S. forces in Bosnia. A second report would discuss

the status and mission of the "NATO force of gendarmes or paramilitary police force" in Bosnia. The provision also would also require a detailed report each time that the President seeks funding for the Bosnia mission. The report would outline the "performance objectives and schedule for the implementation of the Dayton Agreement", as well as the military and non-military missions of U.S. forces in support of the objectives. The report would discuss the risks posed to U.S. forces by these missions and their costs. Finally, the report would include an assessment of the state of planning for the assumption of all military missions within Bosnia by European forces, with U.S. support in logistics, intelligence and air power. The Thurmond-Levin-Coats amendment, as modified by the McCain amendment, was approved by a vote of 90-5.

Senator Robert Smith offered an amendment that would have barred FY 1999 funding for the Bosnia deployment after March 31, 1999, unless Congress votes on a joint resolution approving the Bosnia deployment. The amendment does not require that the resolution passes for the money to be released, only that a vote is taken. The amendment was tabled by a vote of 65-31.

On June 24, 1998, the House passed H.R. 4103, the Fiscal Year 1999 defense appropriations bill. The House version did not include the President's request for \$1.8586 billion for Department of Defense costs for the Bosnia operation. On July 30, the Senate passed its version of the bill (S. 2132). The Senate agreed by voice vote to an amendment offered by Senator Stevens that added \$1.8586 billion for an Overseas Contingency Operations Transfer Fund to pay for the Bosnia mission. The Senate voted 68-31 to table an amendment by Senator Hutchison to the FY 1999 defense appropriations bill (S. 2132) that would have required the President to reduce the U.S. troop presence in Bosnia to 6,500 by February 1999 and 5,000 by October 1999. The amendment would have also barred the use of DoD funds to conduct or provide direct support to law enforcement activities in Bosnia (except for training or to prevent imminent loss of life); to conduct or provide support to any activity that would jeopardize the primary military mission of the NATO-led force in Bosnia; to resettle refugees if the resettlement effort is part of an effort to gain control of territory allotted to the other entity or exposes U.S. forces to substantial risk; or to implement any change in the legal status of Bosnian territory without the agreement of all parties. The Senate approved an amendment by Senator Hutchison expressing the sense of Congress that "declining defense budgets and expanded missions, including the ongoing, open-ended commitment of U.S. forces" to Bosnia have eroded the readiness of U.S. forces to "execute the National Security Strategy of the United States ."

Congressional Debate

President Clinton's announcement in December 1997 that U.S. troops would stay in Bosnia until a self-sustaining peace takes hold has sparked Congressional debate. Many Members have expressed concern that U.S. troops are engaged in an open-ended deployment to Bosnia, with an ever-expanding mandate. They say that the benchmarks laid out by the Administration are very broad in scope and will take many years to achieve, if they can be achieved at all. Many Members favor a pullout of U.S. ground troops from Bosnia in the relatively near future, turning the Bosnia mission over to the U.S.'s European NATO allies, with the United States providing logistical, intelligence and other support. Many Members have also expressed concern that the Bosnia mission was absorbing limited DoD funds that should go toward such areas as research and development, readiness and weapons procurement.

While most Members have expressed a strong desire to have U.S. ground troops leave Bosnia in the near future, there is more controversy on how to achieve this goal. Senator Carl Levin, Senator John Warner and other Members have pushed the Administration to provide timelines for the achievement of the benchmarks laid out by the

Administration, and have stressed the need for the Administration to press the Europeans to take over the Bosnia mission within a reasonable amount of time. These ideas were incorporated in S. 1768, which provided FY 1998 supplemental appropriations for the Bosnia operation, and S. 2057, the FY 1999 defense authorization bill.

Other Members, while supporting these efforts, express great skepticism about the concept of the benchmarks, saying it is unlikely that it is unwise to tie the withdrawal of U.S. troops to benchmarks that cannot be achieved in the foreseeable future, if at all. They favor stronger measures to compel U.S. troop reductions. These arguments were made by Senator Byrd and Senator Hutchison during Senate debate on the FY 1999 defense authorization and appropriations bills. However, during the debate on the FY 1999 defense authorization bill, Senator Cain said that while he shared the frustration of many Members with the open-ended nature of the U.S. presence in Bosnia, he believed that it was the role of the President as Commander-in-Chief and military commanders in the field to set troop levels in Bosnia, not Congress.

In addition to concerns about the wisdom of Administration policy in Bosnia, some Members have expressed Constitutional objections to the Bosnia mission, saying that it was started without explicit Congressional authorization, and should be terminated unless Congress passes legislation giving specific approval to the Bosnia deployment. This viewpoint was reflected in H. Con. Res. 227 and the Craig amendment to the ratification of protocols to the North Atlantic Treaty.

While many Members emphasize their desire to see a pullout of U.S. troops from Bosnia in the relatively near future, some Members stress the need for a continued U.S. military presence on the ground to ensure that progress continues. During debate on S. 2057, Senator Joseph Biden said that, while he favored pressure on the U.S.'s European allies on the issue of the Bosnia mission, it would be a mistake to push for the withdrawal of U.S. ground troops from Bosnia as long as a NATO-led peacekeeping force remained in the country, because such a move could undermine U.S. leadership in NATO.

BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA



Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress, August 1998.

G-1998-22-S.I.

Boundary Source: "The SFOR Mission," A Joint Intelligence Report from the U.S. C.I.A. and D.I.A., based on information available as of 1 June 1997.

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