



# F.Y.I.

FYI 66  
October 11, 1995

## CONDITIONS FOR SENDING U.S. TROOPS TO BOSNIA

By John Hillen  
Policy Analyst

The President has promised to send 25,000 U.S. troops to Bosnia to police a peace settlement. He should not do so without the approval of Congress. Any operation as risky and potentially long-reaching as this one demands the full participation and approval of the House and Senate, and Congress should ensure that certain conditions are met before American troops are sent to Bosnia. While affirming the principle that all American forces, including ground troops, can be used in lesser regional conflicts and peacekeeping operations in Europe, Congress also should note the special risks and dangers associated with the Bosnian peace plan and ensure that specific criteria are met before American troops are deployed.

As Congress debates whether U.S. troops should be committed in Bosnia, it should remember that:

- X **America must lead in NATO, but sound leadership demands that the U.S. question a mission with ambiguous goals and ill-defined objectives.** Washington should commit to NATO operations in principle but should not support losing propositions.
- X **The promised 25,000 American troops would cost two to three times more than the \$1 billion - \$2 billion estimated by the Clinton Administration.**
- X **The Administration has not spelled out a coherent military plan that specifies the exact mission of the troops, the criteria to determine the success of that mission, timetables, rules of engagement, or command and control arrangements (especially concerning Russian participation).**
- X **The plan to send 50,000 - 70,000 heavily armed NATO troops is clear evidence that this mission is an exercise in peace-enforcement, not peacekeeping, as the Administration claims.** NATO troops will be authorized to undertake limited offensive operations against warring factions that violate the conditions of the peace accord.
- X **Because of this, "mission creep," the unintentional acceptance of new missions and mandates, is built into this plan.** As in Somalia, there will be pressure to increase operations and reinforce troops in order to "succeed."

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- X **U.S. forces will not be accepted as impartial peacekeepers.** The U.S. recently launched a comprehensive air campaign against the Bosnian Serbs and announced plans to train the Bosnian Muslim Army during the Bosnian deployment. The U.S. is no longer neutral in this conflict. This phenomenon also occurred in Lebanon in 1983 and Somalia in 1993, where the lives of American Marines and soldiers were needlessly lost because America failed to appreciate that belligerents viewed the U.S. as a combatant.

## THE ROLE OF CONGRESS

The Congress should:

- ❶ **Insist on full congressional approval for any deployment of U.S. troops to Bosnia;**
- ❷ **Hold hearings to determine the feasibility of U.S. participation in a Bosnian peace force; and**
- ❸ **Insist that the President meet the following conditions prior to any deployment of U.S. forces:**
  - ✓ **Establish** that U.S. national interests are threatened in Bosnia-Herzegovina;
  - ✓ **Publicize** exactly what military commitments the Administration has made to both NATO and the Bosnian government;
  - ✓ **Establish** that the peace accord is not merely another transient cease-fire, but a politically sustainable agreement;
  - ✓ **Confirm** that all parties have withdrawn to clearly recognizable lines of demarcation that can be policed efficiently by a NATO force;
  - ✓ **State** strategic and operational objectives for the U.S. force that are clearly defined, attainable, and sustainable;
  - ✓ **Describe** the exit strategy and clear criteria for determining mission success, including an “escape clause” in case the peace accord proves ephemeral;
  - ✓ **State** the deployment, rotation, and redeployment timetables, as well as whether they are event-driven or time-driven;
  - ✓ **State** clearly the mission cost and the effect on U.S. strategic readiness posture;
  - ✓ **Present** a well-defined command and control structure that clearly addresses the role of Russian forces;
  - ✓ **Ensure** that there is no overlap of responsibility and authority with the United Nations Protection Force, which should be entirely separate from the NATO chain of command;
  - ✓ **Present** contingency plans for various scenarios that realistically address additional resources, cost, and operational feasibility;
  - ✓ **Submit** a multinational force structure and command and control plan that ensures unity of command and effort among the many nations taking part;
  - ✓ **Demonstrate** that there are clear rules of engagement that are compatible with U.S. training and doctrine, with American forces not to be given static and passive missions that allow them only to react to initiatives of the warring belligerents;
  - ✓ **Ensure** that U.S. troops will be deployed in sufficient strength to guarantee force protection and fully supported operations (no “token” force should be deployed in a dangerous theater); and

- ✓ **Explain** how past U.S. actions in Bosnia are consistent with a “peacekeeping” role.

## **CONCLUSION**

There is clear evidence that American ground troops could imperil a Bosnian peace force by discrediting its impartial standing. Instead of committing large numbers of ground forces, the U.S. should play to its strengths by supporting this mission with capabilities that only the U.S. can contribute. These include strategic airlift, logistics, intelligence, and combat air support if necessary. American ground troops offer no tactical or operational advantage to a Bosnian peace force. They offer only political advantage for reluctant European allies.

The U.S. should agree, in principle, to deploy its military forces (including ground troops) to assist in peacekeeping operations in Europe. But the Bosnian peace plan is not peacekeeping; it is peace enforcement. As yet, there is no reliable or sustainable peace settlement in Bosnia. When there is, the U.S. should consider sending in any forces necessary, but only if the foregoing conditions are met.

