TESTIMONY ON THE BALKAN CONFLICT
Given by former U.S. President Jimmy Carter
before the Senate Armed Services Committee

June 14, 1995

Although I have been invited on a number of occasions since leaving the White
House, this is the first time I have come to Washington to testify before a
Congressional committee. I agreed to do so only after consulting with General John
Galvin, whose unique experience and interest in the Balkan region is strongly
complementary to my own and whose views seem to be basically compatible. We
feel that our joint testimony might be helpful in finding a way to bring peace to
Bosnia-Herzegovina.

We are here as private citizens, with no authority to speak for others and with no
desire to be critical of our own government or others who are attempting to prevent
violence in the area and to protect innocent people.

We also want to make it clear that we do not excuse or condone any of the human
rights abuses, violations of cease-fires, taking of hostages, or failure to comply with
United Nations resolutions by any of the combatants in the area.

I have been asked to speak first, and will outline briefly my own recent involvement
in the region, since this is the basis for my later recommendations.

At The Carter Center we monitor regularly the world's conflicts, attempting to
understand their history, the primary participants, issues that are currently in
dispute, and efforts that are being made to resolve them. We receive many requests
from active or potential combatants for assistance, but our policy is to encourage
mediation by others, and not to duplicate their efforts or compete with them.

When we believe it is advisable to accept one of these mediation requests in a
sensitive political arena, we first assure that we have the approval of the President
of the United States and, when appropriate, the Secretary-General of the United
Nations. When our proposal to be mediators is not accepted, we do not act. We have
received such approval in a number of cases, including Nicaragua, Somalia, Liberia,
North Korea, Ethiopia/Eritrea, Haiti, and the Sudan.

We constantly face one of two basic questions that make mediation very difficult
and sometimes unpopular:

First: How to correlate the inviolability of a nation's sovereignty with self-determination for minority groups within that country.

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Second: How to deal with leaders who are condemned by our government if they
are the only ones who can resolve a crisis and prevent further human suffering.

In our work we are always very careful to comply with U.S. policy and with any
pertinent resolutions of the United Nations. We do not ask for official status or
authority, and always submit any potential agreements to our government for final
approval and further action.

We have followed these guidelines meticulously in the case of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Last year, on December 7, I was asked by the Bosnian Serb leader, Dr. Radovan
Karadzic, to receive a delectation from him. He said that many demands were being
made of the Serbs and he had not been able to discuss his responses with anyone in
authority.

After calling President Bill Clinton and obtaining his approval, on December 14 I
received a three-person delegation at my home in Plains. After extensive
discussions, a tentative agreement was reached that I would go to Bosnia-Herzegovina provided the Serbs would a) first release unilaterally all prisoners of
war who were less than 19 years old and mutually exchange all other POWs with the
government officials in Sarajevo, b) permit United Nations convoys to deliver relief
supplies to Sarajevo and other safe havens, c) impose a cease-fire around Sarajevo,
d) open the airport there to United Nations flights, and e) guarantee respect for
human rights and let human rights representatives come into the area.

By telephone, I confirmed this commitment with Dr. Karadzic and also shared the
information with President Clinton, who approved the agreement. Dr. Karadzic then
offered to confirm his promises publicly and asked that CNN permit him to do so
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Later that night I drafted what I considered to be a comprehensive cease-fire
proposal, based on the discussions with the Serb delegation in my home, my talks in
Zagreb and Sarajevo, and briefings from U.S. and U.N. officials.

Before going to Pale, I requested of the Serbs that both Dr. Karadzic and the military
commander, General Ratko Mladic, meet with me, to assure that whatever we
evolved would have both political and military backing. Our negotiations in Pale
included them and a number of other top Serb officials. We had some difficult
moments, but finally concluded an agreement with some modifications of my
original draft. Its terms included:

a) An immediate cease-fire and cessation of hostility for at least four months, to
be enforced by the interposition of United Nations forces.

b) The prevention of the firing of any guns or weapons that might damage
people or property.

c) A comprehensive peace agreement to be negotiated during this period, under
the auspices of the Contact Group using mediators proposed by the Contact
Group and mutually agreed by the parties.

d) In all respects, both sides to be given equal treatment.

e) During this period, unrestricted movement of relief convoys, use of the
airport at Sarajevo, and the delivery of humanitarian services, with U.N.
forces helping to assure that no armaments or weapons of war are in the
cargoes to be delivered.

f) Each side to be responsible within its controlled areas for the protection of
human rights in accordance with international standards. Special
rapporteurs are to have unimpeded access to insure compliance.

g) All people, regardless of age, sex, or ethnic origin, to have the right to live in a
location of their choice.

h) An early exchange of all detaineinte 0 612 792 re
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By telephone, I read this document to representatives the State Department and
White House and, with their approval, I signed the document as a witness to the
signatures of Doctor Karadzic and General Mladic. (Enclosure A)

Back in Sarajevo the next morning, we obtained a closely parallel agreement with
President Izetbegovic, with only one difference: a demand "that the Serbs accept the
51/49% map as a prerequisite to peace talks. (Enclosure B)

In order to clarify some issues and make implementation dates earlier and more
specific, we returned then to Pale and concluded an additional agreement
(Enclosure C). Back in Sarajevo, President Izetbegovic accepted the additions.

Now we had common agreement for a temporary period of peace during the
holidays, Christmas and New Years, a 4-month cease-fire through the month of
April, a cessation of hostilities between military forces of both sides with
UNPROFOR to interpose its units between them, the withdrawal of government
forces from the demilitarized zone on Mount Igman near the Sarajevo airport, an
early exchange of all detainees, and an opportunity for the Contact Group to work
with both sides to resolve any remaining issues.

I pointed out to the news media on my departure the only unresolved issue was that
Muslim/Croat officials were insisting that, as a prerequisite to peace talks, the Serbs
would have to "accept" the 51/49% plan; the Serbs, on the other hand, were willing
to negotiate "on the basis of" the same plan.

Since that time we have received reports from U.S. and UN officials and, with their
approval, have maintained contact with leaders in the region.

The Bosnian Serbs have presented to us their own territorial proposal, reducing
their controlled area from 70% to 53% and professing their willingness to negotiate
the remaining differences. I understand that the Bosnian Serb proposal was
provided to members of the Contact Group in March.

On one occasion in January, the full Contact Group did have one meeting with the
Bosnian Serbs and the U.S. member visited Pale once or twice, but since then the
Contact Group has isolated the Bosnian Serbs and maintained a policy of
communicating only with Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic on matters
involving the Bosnian Serbs.

The end of the cease-fire period came at the end of April with no negotiations having
been undertaken. Since then, as is well known by members of this committee,
government forces have attacked from within the safe zones, the Serbs have
responded with shelling, travel through the relief supply routes and the Sarajevo

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airport has been restricted, NATO planes have bombed Serb positions, hostages
have been taken, and a higher level of conflict is now threatened.

The question is, where can we go from here? Although no one can guarantee
ultimate results, there are two basic alternatives: the escalation of military conflict
or a determined attempt to negotiate a comprehensive peace agreement.

The United Nations is facing an almost impossible dilemma, serving as a peace
enforcer when there is no peace agreement. However, the United Nations Protective
Force (UNPROFOR) has performed well, I believe, both with its humanitarian
mission and also in reducing the level of fighting and the resulting casualties. If you
compare the past year with previous times, there has been a dramatic reduction.

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As earlier agreed by the Bosnian Serbs and Muslim-Croat federation officials in
Sarajevo when we were there, there would be balanced and equal treatment of the
two sides.
This period of peace might also include the lifting of United Nations trade sanctions
against the Serbs as long as Serbia and the Bosnian groups act in good faith. This
would be a powerful incentive for compliance.
Peace talks would best be held in a neutral place under the auspices of the United
Nations or the Contact Group, and with an agenda that might include such
constitutional issues as the degree of autonomy of the Muslim/Croatian and Serbian
groups within a united Bosnia, mutually agreeable territorial divisions based on the
51/49% proposal of the Contact Group, and the right of special relationships with
Serbia and Croatia.
Both sides, the Bosnian government and the Bosnian Serbs, must be at the
negotiating table. All those interested in peace, including the government of the
United States, should urge both sides to seek a peaceful resolution of this continuing
crisis.
Obviously, we cannot speak for any parties to the dispute or for those involved in
peacekeeping, but there is every reason for exploring these ideas as a reasonable
alternative to the existing deadlock and the strong possibility of another surge in
bloodshed.
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ENCLOSURE A
Bosnian Serb Agreement Comprehensive Peace Agreement
December 19, 1994

We the undersigned agree that we and those under our authority will:

1. Commence negotiations on an agreement for cessation of hostilities on
December 27, 1994, with the intent to conclude the agreement by January 15,
1995. This agreement would be implemented immediately by instituting a
cease-fire by interposition of U.N. forces along the line of confrontation, by
cessation of all military activities and the exchange of prisoners, etc. This
cessation of hostilities will last for four months or for a longer period if
mutually agreed by both parties.

2. We agree that, while the cessation of hostilities is in effect, we shall negotiate
a comprehensive peace agreement, with the proposal of the Contact Group as
the basis for negotiation of all points. This will be done at a mutually
acceptable site, under the auspices of the Contact Group, using mediators
proposed by the Contact Group and mutually agreed by the parties, All issues
are to be resolved in full cooperation with the Contact Group, In all respects,
both sides will be given equal treatment.

3. During this period there will be unrestricted movement of relief convoys, use
of the airport at Sarajevo in accordance with existing agreements, eli

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It is realized that other difficult issues and unresolved questions will have to be resolved. This will be done peacefully, utilizing the services of UNPROFOR and the
Contact Group as appropriate.
Signed December 20, 1994
Alija Izetbegovic
President
Jimmy Carter
Witness

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ENCLOSURE C
Additional agreement to that of December 19, 1994
December 20, 1994

1) It is agreed that the negotiations to establish a total cessation of hostilities
will commence on 23 December 1994, with the intent to conclude the
agreement by 1 January 1995.

2) A complete cease-fire, throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina, will be implemented
at noon, 23 December, 1994, to be monitored by U.N. forces along all lines of
confrontation, by cessation of. all military activities.

3) Based on assurances that convoys and humanitarian services will pass freely,
the Bosnian forces will withdraw from the Igman demilitarized zone in
accordance with the existing agreement, prior to commencement of the
negotiations described in item (1) above.

Radovan Karadzic

Witnessed: Jimmy Carter

[Note: Since we concluded this agreement during the last few minutes of our stay in
Bosnia-Herzegovina, I received approval of all three of these items from President
Izetbegovic by telephone from the airport before announcing them and departing.]