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OUTGOING CODE CABLE

MOST IMMEDIATE

TO: WAHLGREN, UNPROFOR, ZAGREB  
 INFO: WAHLGREN, BELGRADE FOR LORD OWEN, ICFY  
 INFO: VANCE, NEW YORK  
 FROM: ANNAN, NEW YORK  
 DATE: 23 APRIL 1993  
 NUMBER: MSC 676  
 SUBJECT: Srebrenica

1703 APR 23 P 1:35

*[Handwritten signature]*

*Duty OFFICER*

*TO PROTECT TO LORD OWEN.*

1. The following refers to our telecons and to Lord Owen's handwritten message today about what exactly UNPROFOR has undertaken in Srebrenica.

2. As we see it, the demilitarization of Srebrenica was a step agreed by the parties, not one proposed by the United Nations. Nonetheless, in order to save lives, UNPROFOR is lending its good offices to help both parties fulfil the commitments they have made to each other. This includes receiving weapons from the defenders of Srebrenica for the purpose of demonstrating to the attackers that they have no reason to attack. In doing so, however, UNPROFOR takes on a moral responsibility for the safety of the disarmed that it clearly does not have the military resources to honour beyond a point.

3. UNPROFOR's position, as you have so clearly explained on the telephone, is that should its peace-keepers be attacked in Srebrenica they would fire back in self-defence; this includes

*Wahlgren / de 23-26 APR. 1993.*

*TOR 231945.*

defence of their mission, i.e. they would use force if armed elements attempted by force to intrude into the demilitarized area. However, as you have also stressed to us, UNPROFOR has deployed in Srebrenica with the agreement of the parties and the threat of the use of force in this context is intended to apply in a situation where a small number of armed elements violate this agreement. We understand, of course, that 145 peace-keepers cannot be expected to resist a full-scale invasion by the Bosnian Serb Army; and that, should heavy artillery shelling occur, UNPROFOR will take shelter like everyone else.

4. While the above is clear to us, and is fully agreed by Canada's Permanent Representative here, it appears that public statements by a number of UNPROFOR officials have somewhat clouded the picture. We fully appreciate the importance of sounding determined, and of not issuing any confessions of impotence to the Bosnian Serbs; but it seems to us essential that, in making brave declarations about UNPROFOR's willingness to resist attacks on Srebrenica, we also make it clear that we are deployed in the context of an agreement, and that the onus remains on the parties to treat Srebrenica as a "safe area", as resolution 819 demands.

5. In this connection, and given your public statements that Srebrenica is fully demilitarized, we see no need for UNPROFOR to participate in house-to-house searches for weapons. You will undoubtedly be made aware by the visiting Security Council delegation of the strong feeling amongst several Member States that UNPROFOR should not participate too actively in "disarming

the victims".

6. Finally, I wish to confirm our telephonic instruction that the withdrawal of the Bosnian Serbs from the areas surrounding Srebrenica should be placed firmly on the agenda of the Mixed Military Working Group by UNPROFOR, in pursuance of the Security Council's explicit demands in resolution 819. We are aware of your views on the matter, but would wish it to be raised explicitly by the UNPROFOR representative on the MMWG, and the official Serb reply transmitted back through us for the information of the Security Council.