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UNITED NATIONS



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United Nations Peace Forces - Headquarters
Forces de Paix des Nations Unies - Quartier GénéralLieutenant General Bernard JANVIER
Force Commander

ZAGREB, 2 June 1995

Dear Rupert

I have just received your strategic planning issues draft dated 1 June 1995 and I am grateful of the job you have done summarizing the situation we are facing now in Bosnia-Herzegovina and proposing options to be taken in such a critical environment.

As you mentioned we must put the actions to take along with the line of an overall strategy. This strategy is still to be defined at a higher level. But I am rather confident that there will be positive developments after what I would described as a period of limited political movement. I think there are now good indications of potential progress and this must be taken into account both the Secretary-General guidance and the particular views expressed by the nations in the past few days.

I am quite confident that after some hesitations we are now merging towards a more coherent and consensual approach.

As described in your situation overview, we must hold matter in balance while essential political decisions are taken. I totally support the guidance you have given to your Sector Commanders, the measures you have taken to stabilize the situation and the planning process you have initiated and carried out since the first day of this crisis.

I share your assessment that ideally political dealings must be conducted on a clear basis and preferably at the highest level but I am afraid that we will soon be fully involved in the process of negotiating (or participating in the negotiation) the release of our personnel and I would like to point out that this, along with the security of all our forces, is my utmost priority.

My objective to-day is to maintain our «political freedom to manoeuvre» thus allowing our political leadership to undertake negotiations that would lead to:

- the release of the hostages;
- the signing of broader agreements.

This is how the Secretary General's decision concerning the use of air power should be construed.

We must definitely avoid any action which may degenerate into confrontation, further escalation of tension and the potential use of air power. This is why I feel your suggestion to use Mount Igman road, even after notification to the Serbs, is untimely in the present circumstances.

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I would ask you, however, to plan and prepare for such an action so that it may be carried out at the appropriate time. I believe this will only be possible on the basis of a clear decision at the political level (SRSG) and the availability of military means allowing us to establish tactical superiority, which is far from being the case today. We must be prepared to handle the consequences such an action might bring.

As far as the enclaves are concerned, I am fully aware of the situation.

The main priority is supplying our forces with food. With this in mind, I would ask you to contact the BSA so as to ensure resupply, first of all of Zepa. I would like to emphasize that we are not seeking any compromise but rather to have the Serbs face their responsibilities and the consequences should they not cooperate. They must be encouraged to understand our resolve to provide the necessary support for our forces.

At the same time as we attempt to gain their cooperation, we must continue the planning and initial battle procedure that has already been started to resupply the enclaves by air. With respect to the fuel necessary to maintain basic living conditions in the enclaves, it would also be desirable to obtain freedom of passage and/or change our deployment to reduce consumption.

As far as the hostages are concerned, the SRSG is now developing a strategy that hopefully will take advantage of the expected positive developments of today, largely due to your effort in stabilizing the situation. Additionally, the Red Cross is pursuing its own efforts and will request that UN military authorities be allowed to visit them. The problem of the four Serb prisoners is being considered at a higher level and you will be given direction in due course.

In conclusion, I congratulate you on your outstanding leadership during this crucial period. You and your key staff have stabilized a situation which although still tense, could have been much worse with a great loss of life, both UN and warring party. In order to exploit this success I now ask you to plan for the Igman Option but to take no direct action pending political negotiation and my authority.

Yours