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Filed on:

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

30 July 1992

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YUGOSLAVIA

The Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary discussed Yugoslavia this afternoon, particularly in the light of the letter which the Prime Minister had received from Lord Owen and the letter which the Foreign Secretary had received from Lady Thatcher. Mr Hamilton and the Chief of the Defence Staff joined the meeting later.

The Foreign Secretary said that the Americans were looking for a new Security Council Resolution on "all appropriate means" to ensure that they could provide adequate military cover for humanitarian operations in Yugoslavia. They were partly motivated by the desire to show that they were not indifferent to the fate of the Muslims. This had an impact on the peace process and also helped them maintain support for their policy in Iraq. The Americans were not considering military intervention.

The Foreign Secretary said that we were not dealing with an aggressive army pushing into Bosnia from Belgrade. We were dealing with local Commanders, influenced by but not controlled by, nationalist leaders. We were not dealing with armies or terrain that lent itself to the kind of response Lady Thatcher and Lord Owen had in mind.

The Foreign Secretary described Mrs Chalker's first class handling of yesterday's UNHCR Conference and the notion of relief zones. The nature of our approach to this issue and to the supply of relief generally had been to take advice from the UN, UNHCR and ICRC on the ground. They had advised against raising the military profile in a way which would make the UN a target of attack. This pointed to continuing with the present system by which convoys effectively negotiated their way through. If the recommendation of the people on the ground changed, then we would need to reconsider our approach accordingly.

In subsequent discussion with Mr Hamilton and the CDS, the Prime Minister said that the Foreign Secretary would need to respond more or less point by point to Lady Thatcher's letter and would need an input from the Ministry of Defence to the military points she had raised.

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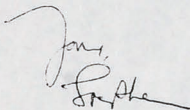
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The Prime Minister also asked for:

- (a) an analysis of what would be involved in a full-scale military operation designed to separate the warring parties and impose a peace;
- (b) an analysis of the implications (including for UK participation) if UNPROFOR decided to move from their present tactics to one where they sought fuller protection for humanitarian convoys with the possibility of hostile fire being returned;
- (c) more detailed work on what would be involved in refugee relief zones in terms of constructing the zones themselves and the implications of providing protection for them.

I should be grateful if this work could reach me by Tuesday 4 August.

I am copying this letter to the Private Secretaries to members of OPD and to Sonia Phippard (Cabinet Office).



J. S. WALL

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Foreign and Commonwealth Office