

## NATO to Republika Srpska, 22-04-1994

Following the NATO ultimatum demanding the removal of heavy weaponry from Sarajevo and surrounding areas in February 1994 (see case NATO to Republika Srpska, 09-02-1994), fighting continued in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Bosnian Serbs were encroaching on UN-established safe areas, one of which was Goražde in south-eastern Bosnia-Herzegovina. In late March 1994 Bosnian Serb forces started marching on Goražde, occupying its outer areas in the first week of April.<sup>1</sup> They then moved in closer on 9 April and shelled Goražde on 10 April. This prompted a limited US response when US fighter jets bombed a small number of Bosnian Serbian targets. The US actions were legitimised by UN officials as 'close air support' to protect UN staff under UNSC Resolution 836.<sup>2</sup> Bosnian-Serb President Karadzic accused the UN of partiality and threatened to break off all contacts. His top General Mladic declared that NATO fighter jets were to be shot at should they threaten Bosnian-Serb assets.<sup>3</sup> On 16 April a British jet was downed and on the ground between 150-200 UN forces were taken hostage by Bosnian Serbs.<sup>4</sup> On 19 April Karadzic announced that if NATO were to continue its aerial bombardments, it would result in 'total war'.<sup>5</sup> Mladic warned United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) Commander Rose in ominous terms: 'one more attack and I will shoot down aircraft--cannot guarantee safety of UNPROFOR and will attack UNPROFOR and your headquarters.' [sic]<sup>6</sup> Meanwhile, the Bosnian Serb forces kept attacking Goražde. The Russian government, which had thusfar been supporting the Bosnian Serbs, demanded that they cease their attacks forthwith, indicating that Russia considered backing the use of force should they not. On 22 April NATO's North Atlantic Council (NAC) established a 'military exclusion zone' with a radius of 20 kilometres around Goražde, for all 'Bosnian Serb heavy weapons (including tanks, artillery pieces, mortars, multiple rocket launches, missiles and anti-aircraft weapons)'.<sup>7</sup> The military exclusion zone also applied to the other safe areas. The official text of the NATO ultimatum demanded:

that, with immediate effect, if any Bosnian Serb attacks involving heavy weapons are carried out on the UN-designated safe areas of Goražde, Bihać, Srebrenica, Tuzla and Žepa, these weapons and other Bosnian Serb military assets, as well as their direct and essential military support facilities, including but not limited to fuel installations and munitions sites, will be subject to NATO air strikes, in accordance with the procedural arrangements worked out between NATO and UNPROFOR following the Council Decisions of the 2nd and 9th August 1993; [..]

that, after 0001 GMT on 27th April 1994, if any Bosnian Serb heavy weapons are within any designated military exclusion zone as described above, these weapons and other Bosnian Serb military assets, as well as their direct and essential military support facilities, including but not limited to fuel installations and munitions sites, will be subjected to NATO air strikes [..]<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 146–47. Lucarelli, *Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, 60.

<sup>2</sup> Keesing's, *Keesing's Record of World Events February, 1994 Bosnia, 39966*, vol. Volume 40 ((formerly Keesing's Contemporary Archives), Keesing's Worldwide, LLC - All Rights Reserved, 1931-2013, 2015).

<sup>3</sup> Keesing's.

<sup>4</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 147.

<sup>5</sup> Keesing's, *Keesing's Record of World Events February, 1994 Bosnia, 39966*.

<sup>6</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 147.

<sup>7</sup> The North Atlantic Council, 'Decisions on the Protection of Safe Areas Taken at the Meeting of the North Atlantic Council', NATO, 1994, [http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official\\_texts\\_24462.htm](http://www.nato.int/cps/en/natohq/official_texts_24462.htm).

<sup>8</sup> The North Atlantic Council.

On 22 April, however, UN Special Envoy Yasushi Akashi had also flown to Belgrade where he had concluded a ceasefire agreement with Karadzic and Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic. The bombardment of Goražde continued on 23 and 24 April. Meanwhile Bosnian-Serb forces did not make any preparations to comply with the demands set out in the ultimatum. Under the cumbersome double key-agreement –in which both the UN and NATO had to authorise air strikes–<sup>9</sup> Yasushi Akashi did not go along with the proposal of NATO secretary-general to initiate air strikes on 23 April, when the fighting continued.<sup>10</sup> Only when the Russian government reversed its position and openly declared that the ‘only alternative to air strikes is compliance by the Bosnian Serbs with their commitments,’ did the Bosnian Serbs cease their attacks.<sup>11</sup>

Soon thereafter, Ukrainian forces arrived in Goražde, followed by British and French forces the following days. On 27 April Field Marshal Sir Richard Vincent, chairman of the Military Committee of NATO, declared there had been ‘general compliance by the Bosnian Serb Army with NATO’s deadline’.<sup>12</sup> In late April, the international Contact Group was established consisting of France, Great Britain, Russia and the U.S, to coordinate peace making efforts. The UNSC assented to sending an additional 6,500 peacekeeping forces to the region.<sup>13</sup> Once again, the Bosnian Serbs had caved in after strong pressure and complied with another NATO ultimatum, but it was clear that the end of the conflict was not yet in sight.

---

<sup>9</sup> Michael F. Harsch, *The Power of Dependence: NATO-UN Cooperation in Crisis Management* (Oxford University Press, 2015), 42–43.

<sup>10</sup> Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 149. Lucarelli, *Europe and the Breakup of Yugoslavia*, 62.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Specter, ‘Conflict in the Balkans; Moscow Withdraws Its Objections to NATO Strikes Near Gorazde’, *The New York Times*, 24 April 1994, sec. World, <http://www.nytimes.com/1994/04/24/world/conflict-balkans-moscow-withdraws-its-objections-nato-strikes-near-gorazde.html>.

<sup>12</sup> Keesing’s, *Keesing’s Record of World Events February, 1994 Bosnia*, 39966.

<sup>13</sup> Keesing’s. Burg and Shoup, *The War in Bosnia-Herzegovina*, 151.