



Press Release

Department of Public Information • News Coverage Service • New York

SG/SM/5216

1 February 1994

TRANSCRIPT OF PRESS CONFERENCE BY SECRETARY-GENERAL BOUTROS BOUTROS-GHALI

HELD AT HEADQUARTERS ON 1 FEBRUARY 1994

Mr. SILLS (Spokesman for the Secretary-General): Let me make a couple of announcements before we start. First of all, the Secretary-General will begin with some introductory words. We have interpretation available: English, French and Arabic. The press conference will be a maximum of 45 minutes. May I ask that when you are recognized by me to ask a question you identify yourselves.

Finally, could I ask that when the press conference is over you remain seated until the Secretary-General departs.

Mr. Secretary-General?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Thank you. Happy new year. I know that I am 31 days late, but still, happy new year.

As you know, there are a number of vacancies in the top echelon of the Secretariat, and I have decided to propose to the General Assembly for its approval the appointment of Ambassador José Ayala Lasso of Ecuador to the new post of High Commissioner for Human Rights.

I have also decided to appoint Ambassador Hans Corell of Sweden as Legal Counsel to succeed Mr. Carl-August Fleischhauer, who has been elected a judge of the International Court of Justice.

As you know, Mr. James Jonah will leave the Department of Political Affairs. The Department of Political Affairs, as agreed by the General Assembly, will be headed by a single Under-Secretary-General, Mr. Marrack Goulding. I have decided to appoint Ambassador Lansana Kouyate of Guinea as Assistant Secretary-General in that Department, reporting to Mr. Goulding.

Yesterday, I received General Bertrand Guillaume de Sauville de Lapresle, and I have decided to appoint him as Force Commander of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in the former Yugoslavia, replacing General Jean Cot. I still have to send a letter to the Security Council to receive its approval; in fact, I believe we have already sent the letter.

Those are the new appointments. Certain other posts remain to be filled. I have not yet been able to do this, but as soon as I do it I will inform you.

I am at your disposal to answer any questions.

Mr. SILLS: I call on the President of the United Nations Correspondents Association, Mr. Svarzman.

Mr. SVARZMAN: We welcome you, Mr. Secretary-General, in this unusual circumstance; we don't see you very much, speaking with us. We would like to see you maybe every month, if possible.

The first question is on a very difficult situation -- the question of Bosnia. Since last year, when the Security Council approved the resolution

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authorizing the use of military force, the air support, everyone thought the thing was very clear. But the more we ask, the more explanations we get, the more letters we see, the more everything becomes unclear. Who will decide, and why and when? Why the delay? Have you been hampered by certain pressures by permanent members of the Security Council?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First, I have sent a letter to the Security Council. This letter was based on a resolution that was adopted by the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) summit meeting on 11 January. At that summit meeting, NATO asked UNPROFOR to do a study on how to use air force they used the words "air strikes" -- in two situations: Srebrenica and Tuzla. I have had many meetings in Geneva with all the staff to see what ought to be done, and three days ago I presented a letter to the Security Council.

In that letter, we say that personally I am in favour of using air force to implement, in the case that we should need to use air force. But to use air force, you must make a distinction between two cases. One is air support and the other is air strikes. In the case of air support, according to the decision taken by NATO, they have already given a mandate to the General who is dealing with this operation in Bosnia. Thus I gave a mandate to my Special Representative, Mr. Akashi, who can ask NATO to use air support -- air support being the use of air forces in the case of self-defence to help soldiers who are on the ground.

The second situation, air strikes, is different. It can be a preventive attack -- destroying a bridge, destroying an airport -- or a punitive attack, which is one week or two or three days later, again to destroy certain basic infrastructure. Concerning air strikes, according to NATO's decision, they need a resolution adopted by the NATO Council. So even if you ask NATO tomorrow, "Please launch an air strike", it will have to take a decision which will have to be adopted by the NATO Council. And as you know, the Council takes decisions by unanimity.

So what we have done is to give a mandate to our Special Representative on the ground, Mr. Akashi, who will take into consideration the political situation, the humanitarian situation and the military situation, and can immediately ask for air support in the case of Tuzla and in the case of Srebrenica. This is what has been done, and the reaction of the members of the Council was very positive. We received support from all the members concerning this approach, or this plan, to Tuzla and Srebrenica.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, what is your feeling regarding the war of letters between Mr. Denktash and Mr. Clerides, and how do you see the official prospects for negotiations in Cyprus?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I am optimistic. I believe that the two letters are positive letters. We hope that the Special Representative, Mr. Joe Clark, will continue his negotiations in the next few days, and I believe that the two letters have a positive element. There is a breakthrough; there is the political will on two sides to adopt certain measures to build confidence

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between the two communities. The fact that they accept those measures does not mean that we will not discuss the substance concerning the future of relations between the two communities in Cyprus.

This may be a personal interpretation, but I am quite optimistic. I see that there is progress, that there is a breakthrough and that there is now the political will on both sides to begin the peace process again. The purpose of adopting as a first step certain measures to build confidence -- among them, as you know, a very detailed programme for opening an international airport in Nicosia and the withdrawal of a certain presence in Varosha, which will be under United Nations supervision -- is to allow the two communities to have direct contact. Those direct contacts between the younger generations of the two communities will help to promote peace, because it is useless to sign an agreement if the two communities do not know each other. The younger generations do not know each other, because during the last 17 years there has been no direct contact. The leaders of the age of Mr. Denktash or Mr. Clerides know each other, because they are old friends, but the younger generations do not know each other.

I believe that what is very important is that while negotiations are under way we have to promote certain measures to build confidence between the two communities, so that once the agreement is concluded, implementing it will be easy.

QUESTION: Can I please take you back to the former Yugoslavia? You made the distinction between air support and air strikes. Do you still reserve for yourself the right to make a decision on air strikes if the NATO Council were to make a recommendation, or are you prepared to leave it to the NATO Council? Secondly, what is your view of the information now coming in of Croatian forces operating inside Bosnia? Are you personally in favour of moving towards sanctions against Croatia if a case is made for a military presence?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: As to the first question, I have received a mandate from the Security Council to use air power: I have to give the green light. Thus, I still have this mandate concerning the use of air support. But the difference, as I mentioned, is that air support could be done automatically after I give my agreement, but, concerning air strikes, though I give my agreement I am not at the end of the chain of command. We still have to receive the agreement of the NATO Council in the case of air strikes. According to the mandate I received from the Security Council, I still have to give the green light concerning air strikes.

On Croatia, yes, yesterday we received information that Croatians are in Bosnia -- and this was confirmed by Mr. Chinmaya Gharekhan (Special Political Adviser to the Secretary-General), who gave this information to the members of the Security Council -- and the decision has to be taken by the Security Council concerning what ought to be done in the light of these new elements in the situation in the former Yugoslavia.

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QUESTION (interpretation from French): There is currently a campaign in Haiti disseminating the idea that the referee throws the ball out onto the pitch, and then there is partiality on the part of the United Nations vis-à-vis certain situations, especially that of Haiti. In your view, has there been adequate impartiality, or has the United Nations really not asked for an amnesty for the military, as was done in the Governors Island Agreement?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from French): I think the United Nations strives to be entirely impartial. Let me add that the United Nations means, first of all, the Security Council, whose 15 members come from different parts of the world. Secondly, there is the Secretariat, which also tries to be as impartial as possible. And, thirdly, we have the Friends of Haiti, which is a group of four States. Hence, I would say that the fact that decisions are shaped by many States from different parts of the world and having different attitudes, some of them geographically very far from Haiti, gives one the greatest possible objectivity and impartiality in the solution of the problem of Haiti.

QUESTION: Regarding the talks between Greece and The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, are you satisfied that the good offices of Mr. Vance are getting any closer to a breakthrough? Is there going to be a meeting between the two parties after such a long time of nothing happening? Secondly, when would you submit a report to the Security Council on whether this thing is going anywhere or whether it should just be given up?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I had a meeting last week with Mr. Cyrus Vance concerning the talks between The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Greece, and we had an exchange of letters. We hope to have a meeting between the two experts soon, and we are carrying on our mission. I believe that we are doing the best we can to find a solution to this problem. A few months ago we were on the point of reaching a solution, so there is no reason why we should not continue, and I hope that we will be able to find a solution that will take into consideration the points of view of both The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and the Republic of Greece.

QUESTION: Can you be more precise on what you said about Croats in Bosnia and Herzegovina? Croatia said volunteers have been reported in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but not regular troops. So, according to the information you received, are they regular troops or volunteers?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: The report we received does not say exactly if they are regular troops or volunteers. They say that a certain number of Croats have now penetrated into Bosnia. But the report does not tell us. Maybe in the next few hours we shall have more information, but the latest information does not say precisely whether they are volunteers or regular troops.

QUESTION: On Somalia, Mr. Secretary-General, are you satisfied that you have the right number of troops and the right type of troops now, and are you satisfied with what you know will be the Security Council resolution that they will no longer disarm the factions, or do you see problems ahead after March?

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The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Well, I don't know -- the Security Council is still discussing the resolution, so I don't know what will be the resolution of the Security Council. This is question two.

On question one, I believe that we have taken into consideration the fact that we will not be able to have more than 22,000 troops, and on this basis we have established our plan. Our plan is to protect certain non-governmental organizations, to protect certain centres of distribution of humanitarian assistance and at the same time to continue the peace process, i.e. to continue the process of reconciliation between the different factions.

Yesterday I received a long telephone call from the Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Mogadishu, Ambassador Lansana Kouyate, who is leaving for Nairobi to continue talks with the different factions, the 12 on one side and Aidid on the other. We are still doing our job and we are hopeful that we will be able to achieve the formation of, let us say, a provisional administration (Transitional National Council).

On the other hand, we have been very successful in creating a local Somali police, which is doing a good job, not only in Baidoa, but in other regions. So I will say that, in spite of all the difficulties, in spite of the departure of many troops from Somalia, we are hopeful that we will be able to continue our action in favour of peace, security and, at the same time, the reconstruction and rehabilitation of Somalia.

QUESTION: The crossing of the border of equipment from Serbia, which has been seen by numerous reporters and other observers, is in direct violation of the United Nations sanctions to prevent the shipment of arms. In addition, if the reports are true of the use of Serb or Croat troops inside Bosnia, do you not characterize this as a direct violation of the United Nations Charter? And what kind of action would then have to be taken?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I don't want to avoid giving you an answer, but certainly these decisions have to be taken by the Security Council. I will present to the Security Council the maximum of information received from different sources, and the Security Council will have to take the decision as to whether it is a violation or not. Two, the Security Council will decide if it is in the interests of the peace process to adopt sanctions or further sanctions; everything has to be decided by the Security Council.

The last meeting I had with the Special Representative, Mr. Stoltenberg, was yesterday. He has left for Moscow now. For the time being we believe that we must continue the negotiations, in spite of all the difficulties. We have no other channel but to continue the negotiations. Meanwhile, if the Security Council decides to adopt another approach -- and certainly in the next few weeks we may have to have a general reassessment of the situation, because many Member States are thinking of withdrawing their troops from Bosnia. But for the time being, I believe that we must make the maximum effort to continue negotiations, hoping that we will be able to find a solution.

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You will not solve the problem of Yugoslavia in a few weeks or a few months. It needs patience; it needs continuous negotiation. We might reach a solution and then an accident may happen; we would then find ourselves back at square one and we must continue, as long as the international community has not decided to use peace enforcement, and even if it does decide to do so, there are many experts who say that it will be useless.

So, for the time being, our only approach is to continue to negotiate, in spite of the atrocities which are being committed; in spite of the emotions of international public opinion; and in spite of the fact that it seems that we are not progressing and that we have one setback after another. We still must continue to negotiate.

We have now adopted many measures to use air force to obtain certain results on the ground. There is no reason not to use force. On the contrary, once we use force we give credibility to the fact that we say we will use it.

QUESTION: Do you support the European initiative, which the Americans have not yet accepted, to pressure the Bosnian Muslims to accept peace now, even if they are not completely satisfied?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: I believe that negotiations are going on between the Europeans and the Americans to find a joint position concerning what ought to be done. I know that the Foreign Minister of the United Kingdom is in Washington today, and he will certainly discuss a common position to be adopted by the major Member States involved in Yugoslavia and the fact that Mr. Stoltenberg went to Moscow. We are trying to obtain a consensus among the major Member States to see what ought to be done and what the new direction of the negotiations will be.

I can say nothing more because we are still working on this.

QUESTION: Using the explicit language of Chapter VII of the Charter, Security Council resolutions call for implementation of the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people, not of the Indians or Pakistanis. Why do your reports and statements focus on the interests of the potential beneficiaries of a Kashmiri plebiscite rather than on the self-determination of the Kashmiri people itself? Pursuant to Chapter VII, is it not essential for the Secretary-General to exercise his good offices to implement the United Nations resolutions calling for a plebiscite on Kashmir, irrespective of the interests of the potential beneficiaries?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: No, because, first, we need the agreement of the two main protagonists in this problem: India and Pakistan. The two must ask the Security Council, the Secretary-General or the United Nations for mediation. Unless we have the agreement of the two, we will not be able to intervene.

Secondly, the Simla Agreement mentioned that negotiations have to continue between the two protagonists. Negotiations were held a few days ago between India and Pakistan. I do not know the results of those negotiations,

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but both sides declared that they will continue to negotiate. Both sides therefore continue to negotiate on this subject and neither has asked the Secretary-General for mediation or even for the intervention of the United Nations. We need the agreement of the two sides if we are to play a role.

QUESTION: As it looks now, it is going to take quite a long time, until the end of the year, before Mr. Ekeus's Commission can conclude whether or not Iraq has implemented the provisions of section C of Security Council resolution 687 (1991). In the meantime, are you willing to engage, or are you in fact engaging in any renegotiation of the conditions of limited oil sales? We understand that there is talk of raising the amount from 1.6 billion to 3 billion, but what about the conditions themselves? Secondly, there are many different views as to whether the implementation of section C of resolution 687 (1991) should lead to the implementation of paragraph 22 of that resolution.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Let me begin with your first question. We began this negotiation during the month of July, under the Chairmanship of Mr. Carl August-Fleischhauer, the Under-Secretary-General for Legal Affairs, and this was precisely to obtain a partial lifting of the oil embargo -- oil in exchange for humanitarian assistance. At the last minute the Iraqis discontinued those negotiations. Since then I have mentioned to them that we are ready, if they want, to resume the negotiations, because we believe that it is in their interest. There is no incompatibility between a partial lifting of the oil embargo and a total lifting of it. If tomorrow the Security Council decided on a total lifting, then there would be no reason for a partial lifting. But a partial lifting of the embargo, or oil in exchange for humanitarian assistance -- this was the point of view I defended -- would create a new political atmosphere, a new atmosphere of confidence between the United Nations and Iraq, between the Security Council and Iraq. So the advantage of a partial embargo is not only that Iraq would receive money which would cover the distribution of additional humanitarian assistance, but that it may create a new political atmosphere in favour of Iraq.

As I say, if they decide tomorrow to begin to resume negotiations concerning a partial lifting of sanctions, we have no objection and we are ready, because our role is to serve all States Members of the United Nations.

QUESTION: Just to clarify, are you ready to renegotiate the conditions?

The SECRETARY GENERAL: We are ready to renegotiate whatever has to be decided for the partial lifting of the oil embargo, and, by the way, whatever agreement is negotiated by us will have to be approved by the Security Council. So, as I mention very often to the Iraqis, it may be that what we do will not be approved by the Security Council. So we will present a draft agreement between the Secretariat and Iraq on how the partial lifting will be implemented -- and here you have the problem whether the oil will go through the pipeline of Turkey or the pipeline of the Gulf, etc., etc. -- but once this agreement is concluded we will need the agreement of the Security Council.

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QUESTION: Do you believe that it only takes Iraq to implement all that is demanded of it by Ekeus in order to lift the total oil embargo as in paragraph 22, or do you believe that the Iraqis should implement 688 and the demarcation of the borders resolution, and, you know, the ones related to ceasing the oppression, before paragraph 22 is implemented?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This question has to be decided by the Security Council, but according to the different declarations of the Member States -- at least the three most involved countries in the Security Council -- they have a broad interpretation on lifting the sanctions and not a legally restrictive one.

QUESTION: Since you commiserate not only with atrocities, but with the atrocity of the whole situation in Bosnia, now, once it is established that regular armed forces of Croatia have invaded a Member State, Bosnia, would you bring the matter to the Security Council under Article 99 of the Charter?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First of all, to give you an example, I just returned from The Hague in Holland, where I was received by the President of the criminal courts. They are doing a wonderful job; we have overcome all the logistical difficulties in cooperation with the Government of Holland: they have the building, they have rooms, and they are beginning to work. This morning -- and this is very important -- we received a grant from Pakistan, Mrs. Bhutto, of \$1 million, which will help us to create a special fund to sustain the criminal courts. The criminal court will soon begin its work very seriously, and this is a very positive contribution, which is why I went to The Hague to confer with them.

Concerning your question, I will give the maximum information to the Security Council, but the Security Council has to decide and I don't know what the decision will be.

QUESTION: The Representative for Western Sahara just came back a couple of weeks ago. In your last report you warned that if one of the parties does not accept the plan of the Secretary-General you might go without it and hold the referendum. Are you still convinced of the need to do that? Are you willing to go ahead and override one of the major parties to the conflict in that area?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First, I will continue to try to provide direct contacts -- the last one failed, here in New York -- between the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO) and the representatives of the Government of Morocco, because I believe that through direct contact between the two we will be able to establish a climate of confidence, again, with the same approach. Supposing that the referendum were to happen tomorrow. The implementation of the result of the referendum -- whether the referendum is in favour of the Polisario or in favour of Morocco -- will need the cooperation of the two protagonists on the ground. So it is important to carry out a double operation: one, the direct contact between

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the two to create a climate of confidence; and two, to continue the process of the referendum. So we are continuing; we are conducting the registration, which is going well.

But concerning your question, this will have to be decided openly by the Security Council. I will present the question to the Security Council and say, "Look: we have done all this preparatory work; we have registered all the voters. There is still disagreement between the two sides. What is your decision?" The Security Council can say, "Continue to negotiate", or the Security Council can say, "Enough is enough. Let us have the referendum even if one of the two parties refuses to participate."

But the decision will have to be taken by the Security Council. Meanwhile, we continue to proceed with a view to achieving the various preparations for the referendum. Let us hope that the referendum can happen within the next few months of this year.

QUESTION: A question about the Human Rights Commissioner: some human rights groups have expressed concern that Ambassador Ayala Lasso, while an experienced and respected diplomat, does not have much, if any, human rights expertise. So how would you explain your decision to appoint him to this post?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: That is not my assessment. I believe that he has expertise in human rights. If you read his curriculum vitae, you will find that he has written a lot on the subject. Secondly, the fact that he was able to overcome all the opposition to the creation of the job and that he was the chief negotiator of the resolution, which was adopted by consensus by the General Assembly, is proof that he is very well aware of the problems of human rights.

Secondly, he will be at the top; he will have a whole administration. The Centre for Human Rights is still at work in Geneva. He will do mainly work of coordination between the different agencies and programmes dealing with human rights.

But I can assure you that he has the necessary experience to be a specialist in the problems of human rights.

QUESTION: Let's look internally. You mentioned that at the top, many people are leaving. Some have left and have levelled criticism against you. There was a letter leaked by Melissa Wells -- the sixth person, I believe, in seven years to have her job. She said that your decision-making is too centralized; you keep things too much to yourself. I wonder if you can respond to that, and tell us why so many people seem to leave and don't stay here; there is no consistency.

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: First, we have regular meetings with my collaborators, on a daily and weekly basis. So, any decision that is taken is taken after discussion with the various Under-Secretaries. You can find in my schedule the number of regular meetings we have, every day, with all the collaborators. So the policy is not centralized at all. Quite the contrary.

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Secondly, concerning the case of Melissa, she had a contract for one year, and she returned to the State Department. This is what I can say on this subject.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, for well over a year, the world community has, to use a phrase, fiddled while Bosnia burned. Each country tries to shift the responsibility as well as the focus for action from NATO to the United Nations back to NATO. Why can you not prevail upon the members of the Council to lift the arms embargo on the Bosnian Government so that the Bosnians can defend themselves?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: Again, this type of decision has to be adopted by the Security Council. But if you ask my personal advice, I believe that this could be dangerous, because it would provide more arms in the region and it might open the way for a real war in the region. And what is our aim? Our aim is not only to find a peaceful solution within the borders of the former Yugoslavia, but you have another very important aim, which is not mentioned: to contain the dispute inside the borders of Yugoslavia. We want to avoid a war in all the region, so it is important to maintain the presence of the United Nations, it is important to maintain the embargo, and it is important to continue to negotiate.

Now, we may use force; I believe that it is important to use air force without any hesitation to impose certain decisions taken by the Security Council. But I would not advise that, directly or indirectly, we reinforce the position of the protagonists so that they will continue to fight each other. I believe that this is a negative approach. But this is my point of view. The decisions have to be taken by the Security Council.

QUESTION: Mr. Secretary-General, back to Somalia. Have there been any contacts between the United Nations and the Aidid faction? And do you not think, sir, that General Aidid is part of the peace process, and when is the United Nations going to involve him in this peace process?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We are ready to have contact with Mr. Aidid; we have no objection to that. We already have contact with him; he signed the agreement of March last year in Addis Ababa. I saw him last year in January in Addis Ababa. So for us, we are dealing with all the parties, and one of the roles of the United Nations is to talk to all the parties so that we are able to promote peace. Our aim is to talk to all the parties. Once the Security Council adopted a decision that it does not wish to arrest Aidid, there was no difficulty for us. And, by the way, we have held discussions with these parties, with Osman Atto, with the different leaders on the spot, and we have no objection to holding discussions with Aidid; on the contrary. We welcome discussions with him.

QUESTION: There are several peace-keeping operations that are now in various degrees of crisis. Part of that crisis involves relations between the United Nations and various Member States, most particularly the United States

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itself. How do you see protecting United Nations independence and the continuity of its actions from this kind of varying embrace and rejection, particularly by the United States?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: This crisis has two dimensions. The first is a financial one. Member States do not pay their contribution to the budget of the peace-keeping forces. The explanation is that this budget was \$600 million two or three years ago, and it has reached the figure of \$3.6 billion. One of the results of this is that the United Nations is not able to pay immediately the Member States who contribute troops to peace-keeping forces on the ground.

So we receive complaints from many countries which have a small budget, saying, "We cannot continue to contribute to peace-keeping forces because you do not pay our contribution, or you pay too late." And this is the case of a country like Jordan, a country like Uruguay, a country like Tunisia, a country like Egypt, a country like Zimbabwe. They complain, "We need the money. We cannot wait one or two years to be paid." So this financial crisis is the first, basic element that creates a real obstacle.

The second obstacle is that Member States hesitate very much over sending troops on the ground. We have the experience: as you know, a resolution was adopted in May to add 8,000 additional troops in Bosnia, and we have not been able to obtain more than 1,000 troops. We still need 7,000 troops.

So those are the two basic crises of the peace-keeping operations. I believe we will be able to overcome these crises, because it is in the interest of the international community to solve this problem. Public opinion in the United States is not eager for that country to play the role of world policeman. The United Nations is there to do that job, and there is a consensus that despite all the difficulties, despite all the contradictions, the only forum existing today that can play this role is the United Nations. We have tried to encourage certain regional organizations to replace the United Nations or to cooperate with the United Nations. The result was that Member States said, "No, we want the United Nations. We want the United Nations flag." So there is a real demand, and our role is to overcome those difficulties.

This is not peculiar to the United States; many other countries have the same problem. They are hesitating: "Why must I send my kids to be killed for a peace-keeping operation in some very difficult, distant place? My public opinion will not accept this, and we will have problems." All the Member States have the same problem. Our role is to try to convince them that it is in their national interest to participate in this kind of operation, that it is in the interest of the international community, and that in the next few years we may have more and more ethnic wars and more and more small confrontations. These confrontations can spread like a disease all over the world. So it is in the interest of the international community to reinforce the United Nations and to reinforce peace-keeping.

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We have our ups and downs. It is normal that in cases where we are not successful in an operation, the result will be very negative: "Forget about it!" But we have been successful in many operations. We just have to make an evaluation of why we have not been successful in this or that operation. We must also mention, to be fair, that we have been successful in many other operations. So we have to continue this approach, in spite of the difficulty, in spite of the different forms of hesitation shown by different Member States. I maintain what I said in "An Agenda for Peace" a year and a half ago: this is the only way to be able to contribute to peace and security at the world level.

QUESTION (interpretation from French): "Does General Jean Cot now have the authority to ask for air support in Bosnia and Herzegovina?"

The SECRETARY-GENERAL (interpretation from French): As he is the head of the United Nations Force there, he must speak to the Special Representative for the Secretary-General in the former Yugoslavia, Mr. Yasushi Akashi, and he will transmit that request to me, if it is a question of an air strike. If it is a question of air support, with regard to the two zones of Tuzla and Srebrenica, my Special Representative may take that decision immediately without needing to consult the Secretary-General. But the decision is with the Special Representative, Mr. Akashi, who conducted the Cambodia operations.

QUESTION: At the beginning of your term you expressed a commitment to a reform of the management of the United Nations, streamlining the Organization and making it more efficient. Recently, that effort seems to have stalled; we do not see much evidence of that. I am wondering if you could tell me where that stands, in your view. And, in particular, you probably know that the United States Senate has approved a measure to withhold funds based on your appointment of an inspector-general for the Organization. What is your view of that?

The SECRETARY-GENERAL: We have abolished 30 per cent of the high positions and the political appointees. We are trying to carry out restructuring in different posts abroad, in the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat) in Africa. We have done the same with the different offices of the United Nations and we are continuing. It is a long operation and it will take time. And it is a continuous operation, because, just to give you an example: when you decide to create a new job, the job of High Commissioner for Human Rights, automatically you will add a new specialist to work in this field. So, on the one hand, the Member States are asking for restructuring, and on the other hand, the General Assembly has decided on the creation of new posts, and something which is new.

We were involved in two or three peace-keeping operations before. We are involved today in nearly 22 peace-keeping and observer operations with the same number of civil servants working. We are involved in 46 operations related to democratization. We have sent now or will be sending in the next few weeks 1,600 observers to South Africa. So we are overstretched; we are overloaded; we are involved in many operations. Yet -- and this is very

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important -- we are maintaining the same number of civil servants. They are doing wonderful work. The fact that we have more than 1,000 civil servants who have accepted to leave Headquarters and to work in the field -- in Cambodia, in Angola, in South Africa now, in Somalia -- proves that we are carrying out, practically on a continuous basis, the structural reform of the United Nations. It is, I believe, a continuous process.

About the nominations for an inspector-general, I have no objection. This has to be studied to know exactly what ought to be the competence of this job, and the General Assembly has to accept the idea. I personally will be very happy to have somebody to help me in the field of administration.

Next time I promise that we'll do it soon -- not next year.

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