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LETTER DATED 23 APRIL 1996 FROM THE SECRETARY-GENERAL
ADDRESSED TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

I have the honour to transmit the attached communication dated 23 April 1996, which I have received from the Secretary-General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

I would appreciate your bringing it to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(Signed) Boutros BOUTROS-GHALI

Annex

Letter dated 23 April 1996 from the Secretary-General of
the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the
Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolution 1031 (1995) of 15 December 1995, I enclose herewith the fifth report on the operations of the multinational implementation force (IFOR). I would appreciate your making the report available to the members of the Security Council.

On 18 April (D+120) we passed a major milestone in the implementation of annex 1-A to the Peace Agreement for Bosnia and Herzegovina. In general I am satisfied with the cooperation and compliance of the Parties in implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement to date, although, as you will note from the report, their efforts to come into compliance with the D+120 requirements have been affected by practical difficulties. The cantonment and demobilization of forces by all Parties are expected to proceed, and IFOR will continue actively to monitor progress towards compliance in this area.

Regrettably, tensions continue, as evidenced by the two civil confrontations over the past weekend. Such tensions may grow more acute as the thousands of refugees and displaced persons begin their repatriation. The success of IFOR remains closely linked to the success of the civilian mission, particularly concerning the elections and economic reconstruction. Within its capabilities, and as far as its principal tasks allow, I can assure you that IFOR will continue to maintain the closest possible cooperation with civilian agencies, and particularly the Office of the High Representative, to ensure a successful conclusion to the remaining eight months of our mandate.

(Signed) Javier SOLANA

Enclosure

Fifth report to the Security Council on the operations of
the multinational implementation force (IFOR)

IFOR operations

1. The multinational implementation force (IFOR) now comprises approximately 55,000 personnel in theatre, from all the nations of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and from 16 non-NATO contributors. Offers from further non-NATO countries are still pending. IFOR air assets continue to provide sufficient capability to secure the airspace, defend and support IFOR ground forces and monitor compliance. IFOR maritime assets also remain deployed in support of IFOR.

2. IFOR continues to carry out its primary task of implementing the military aspects of the Peace Agreement by monitoring, and where necessary ensuring, compliance by the Parties with their obligations under annex 1-A. IFOR forces have been heavily engaged in ground and aerial surveillance of the Inter-Entity Boundary Line and the Zone of Separation, including the destruction of bunkers; monitoring of de-mining; the movement of air defence and heavy weapons to agreed barracks/cantonment sites; and country-wide patrolling, including the removal of illegal checkpoints in order to ensure freedom of movement also for the civilian population. In addition, IFOR continues to assist a range of civil organizations, on a case-by-case basis, from available resources without detriment to its primary mission.

3. IFOR's robust capabilities and rules of engagement enable it to defend itself effectively and to provide protection for others involved in implementing the Peace Agreement. By far the greatest risk to IFOR as well as other personnel remains the very large number of mines that are scattered throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Incidents continue to cause casualties among IFOR personnel and local people.

Cooperation and compliance by the Parties

4. IFOR will continue to execute its mission in an even-handed manner. There continues to be reasonable adherence to annex 1-A to the Peace Agreement by all Parties, but efforts to come into compliance with the requirements specified for D+120 (18 April) for cantonment and demobilization appear to be limited by practical considerations. The overall assessment is that:

- The cease-fire continues to hold and the Parties remain generally in compliance with the Cessation of Hostilities;
- Generally all Parties have been in compliance with the Zone of Separation around the Inter-Entity Boundary Line. Local violations by all Parties have continued to occur, although such violations have decreased in number since the last report;

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- All Parties are moving heavy weapons and forces to agreed cantonment areas and are pursuing the demobilization of forces required at D+120. However, compliance has proved to be difficult within this time scale as the scale and complexity of this task have exceeded the military organizational capabilities of the Parties. IFOR is actively monitoring progress towards compliance and is inspecting designated cantonment sites with effect from D+121 (19 April). Air defence systems, which were to have been secured in designated sites by D+90 (19 March), are now subject to confiscation when discovered outside agreed cantonments;
- It remains unclear whether full compliance has been achieved on the removal of foreign forces. Although the Parties have undertaken to reach compliance with article III of annex 1-A to the Peace Agreement, it is likely that a small number of foreign forces remain in contravention of the Peace Agreement. IFOR will continue to insist on full compliance as soon as possible;
- Thanks to the efforts of the High Representative, a major release by all Parties of prisoners of war took place during the beginning of April. Each of the Parties continues to hold a number of prisoners, although in many cases they have provided dossiers on these individuals to the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia for possible investigation as war criminals. IFOR is actively cooperating with the International Committee of the Red Cross to establish accurate records;
- Restrictions on the freedom of movement of civilians, refugees and displaced persons continue to cause concern. Illegal checkpoints discovered by IFOR are immediately removed by IFOR forces and the International Police Task Force.

5. The Joint Military Commission and its supporting structure of military commissions are operating effectively. In particular, the Inter-Entity Boundary Line Subcommittee has made progress in helping the Parties negotiate adjustments to the Boundary Line.

Cooperation with the High Representative and international organizations

6. The civil aspects of the Peace Agreement remain crucial to its success and IFOR has continued to assist the High Representative and the international organizations involved in civil implementation, as far as its principal tasks, as defined in the Peace Agreement, and available resources allow. IFOR is already engaged in supporting a number of reconstruction projects, including route upgrading; bridging and maintenance; recommissioning and reconnecting vital utility plants; refurbishment of schools, medical facilities and other community amenities; and assistance with specialized transportation of materials. IFOR continues to provide security and logistical support to teams of the International Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia investigating possible mass grave sites, such as one examined near Srebrenica earlier this month. IFOR and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) planners are also continuing to cooperate in examining the potential support to be provided by IFOR for elections.