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# U.S. Recognizes 3 Breakaway Yugoslav Republics

By DAVID BINDER

Special to The New York Times

WASHINGTON, April 7 — The United States, which for months held out for a unified Yugoslavia, announced today that it was recognizing the independence of three of that country's secessionist republics.

President Bush said in a statement issued by the White House that he would move immediately to establish diplomatic relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia, the three republics that have been recognized already by the European Community.

The American declaration came nine months after a civil war broke out in Yugoslavia, following the independence moves of Slovenia and Croatia. The conflict has smashed the foundations of the federation of six republics that had arisen under Communist rule at the end of World War II. Bosnia and Herzegovina announced its independence last month and the European Community tendered formal recognition on Monday.

## Split in 5 Parts

This means that on the territory of what once was the six-republic nation of Yugoslavia, there now are five separate entities. These are the three independent countries, Slovenia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina; the remnants of the Yugoslav state, made up of the republics of Serbia and Montenegro, and the secessionist republic of Macedonia.

The independence of Macedonia has not yet been officially recognized by the European Community or the United States out of deference to Greece, which already has a region named Macedonia and is opposed to an independent Macedonia out of concern it would have claims to Greek territory.

The Administration action was designed to bring United States policy into line with that of the European Community on Yugoslavia. The community recognized Croatia and Slovenia in January.

## Vance Mediation Effort

The United States held back then because the United Nations envoy, Cyrus R. Vance, a former secretary of State, was engaged in negotiations to end the fighting in the region and senior United States officials believed American recognition in January might set back the chances for the United Nations to arrange a solution. A United Nations peacekeeping force has now been approved and initial elements have already arrived in Croatia to take up positions between Serbs and Croats.

The statement issued by the White House said the United States would also "work intensively" with the European Community toward concurrent recognition of Macedonia. Joint recog-

The Bush statement said that as a result of American recognition, the Administration would lift sanctions against Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia and Slovenia. The sanctions, involving both economic aid and trade benefits, were applied to all of Yugoslavia last December.

The Administration said these sanctions would be lifted from Serbia and Montenegro as soon as those two republics ceased blockading commerce with Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

On a day when the House Foreign Affairs Committee drafted a resolution pressing for United States recognition of Croatia and Slovenia, the Administration took pains to explain its rationale for delaying such action.

A year ago, when Slovenia and Croatia were threatening to secede, Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d strongly urged against such a move and sought to hold together the Yugoslav federation. And Washington fruitlessly sought to delay the European Community recognition when it was pushed by Germany at the end of last year and accomplished in January.

Judy Smith, the White House spokeswoman, said, "the reason why we did it was because now we feel that it can contribute to the peace process." Margaret D. Tutwiler, the State Department spokeswoman, pointed out that Mr. Vance, the United Nations special

envoy for the Yugoslav crisis, had warned repeatedly against "moving precipitately," and noted: "We took very seriously what the former Secretary of State said."

At the White House, a "senior official," asking not to be identified said, "We have felt that for the United States to have proceeded with selective recognition — that is of Croatia or Slovenia — before now would not have served the purpose of containing and ending the conflict."

## U.S. Indifference Denied

The official rejected suggestions that the United States had distanced itself from the Yugoslav conflict or remained relatively indifferent to it. "We did not simply wait," he said. "We took advantage of the continued influence that we did have," particularly with regard to the intensified combat in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

He said that after a referendum on March 1 endorsed independence for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Administration had pressed the European Community to recognize the sovereignty of the government in Sarajevo, saying, "We think that it's critical that you move with us with regard to Bosnia, because if we don't, we may have stopped a war in one location, we may now see a war, perhaps an even worse war, in the other." So, we think we've accomplished that as well."

nition of Macedonia is now not expected before early May, in the hope that Greece and the Macedonian secessionists in Yugoslavia will be able to negotiate their differences.

In addition it said the Administration would discuss with Serbia and Montenegro their plans to remain together "in a common state known as Yugoslavia."

The Bush statement underscored the Administration's intent, in recognizing the three republics, to promote the United Nations effort, and to help negotiations among the warring parties that are continuing under the auspices of the European Community.

But the statement took no note of the clashes in recent days in Bosnia and Herzegovina pitting ethnic Serbs against Croats and Muslim Slavs that have left scores dead in that republic. A White House spokeswoman said in response to a question that "there has been some concern" about the latest fighting.

The Administration said that in recognizing the three republics that have been the scenes of the fiercest battles of the civil war, the United States "accepts the pre-crisis republic borders as the legitimate international borders of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Slovenia."

This obliquely referred to the desire expressed last year by both Serbia and Croatia to alter the borders of their republics and at some point, to divide up Bosnia and Herzegovina between them. The fighting by Croatian and Serbian forces in Bosnia and Herzegovina appears to be aimed at carving out enclaves of Serbs and of Croats in

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## Yugoslavia Calls Air Strikes on Croat Towns in New Republic

By CHUCK SUDETIC

Special to The New York Times

SARAJEVO, Bosnia and Herzegovina, April 7 — The Serbian-led Yugoslav Army ordered air strikes today on predominantly Croat-populated towns only hours before the United States recognized Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state.

According to a Yugoslav Army spokesman, the pre-dawn air attacks on the towns of Siroki Brijeg and Citluk in western Herzegovina were ordered in retaliation for an all-night assault by Croatian militiamen on Serbian forces at Mostar Airport.

The fighting around Mostar, a logistically important junction city, opened a new front in the spreading violence pitting ethnic Serbs against Muslim Slavs and their Croatian allies in a conflict that is rapidly assuming the character of civil war.

Street corners in Sarajevo, the capital, were today being guarded by men and boys wearing berets and lugging automatic rifles. Sniper fire struck the republic's Parliament building while

protesters occupying its main hall forced a smattering of legitimately elected representatives to convene in a small room usually reserved for press conferences. This evening artillery rounds exploded over the city.

### 13 Reported Dead

At least 13 people died in violence throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina today, Sarajevo Television said.

After the aerial attacks Alija Izetbegovic, the Muslim-Slav President charged the Yugoslav Army with waging war on his republic.

"The bombing and rocketing of Siroki Brijeg and Citluk were an attack on the Croat people and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which is an internationally recognized sovereign state," he said.

But even with its statehood recognized by the European Community and the United States, Mr. Izetbegovic and Bosnia and Herzegovina's other leaders were faced with having most of the country under the control of either the Yugoslav Army, which is directed from Belgrade, or by the growing num-

ber of militias in the region.

The Eastern Orthodox Serbs, who account for about 31 percent of Bosnia and Herzegovina's 4.3 million people but control 60 percent of its territory, are overwhelmingly opposed to independence. The Muslim Slavs and Roman Catholic Croats, who make up about 61 percent of the republic's population, generally favor independence.

As the nationalist tensions rose, leaders of the Serb community responded to the international recognition by declaring the independence of what they called the Serb Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In this they followed the precedent of what Serbs had done in portions of Croatia soon after that republic seceded from Yugoslavia.

The Serb leaders here claimed the right to associate their lands with Serbia and Montenegro in what would be a Serb-dominated remnant of Yugoslavia. Meanwhile, the two Serbs on Bosnia and Herzegovina's executive council today resigned.

The Serb militias here have been

armed by the Yugoslav Army, which has become almost entirely Serbian with mass desertions by Muslim Slavs and Croats.

### Denial by Army

The Yugoslav Army, which has an estimated 100,000 troops stationed in Bosnia and Herzegovina, has a vast advantage in firepower over the Croat militiamen against whom it has been waging open warfare for several days.

"The evidence is growing stronger by the day that the army is backing the Serbs in Bosnia," a Western diplomat in Sarajevo said today.

The army denies it is taking sides against Bosnia and Herzegovina's elected government, and says that army units on Sarajevo's outskirts and around its airport are there for protection.

"Yugoslav Army units took up positions two days ago to defend the city," the Sarajevo commander, Gen. Milutin Kukanjac said. "We have enemies who are putting out disinformation aimed at creating chaos inside the army."

The Globe and Mail, Wednesday, April 8, 1992

# Yugoslav planes attack Bosnia

## Serbs opposed to split from republic claim large territory as their own

Reuter and Associated Press

SARAJEVO — Yugoslav air force planes launched attacks in Bosnia and Herzegovina yesterday, and Serbs opposed to the republic's split from Yugoslavia claimed large parts of its territory as their own.

Sarajevo radio said six civilians, including a 14-year-old, were killed and 30 were injured when aircraft fired missiles on the southwestern town of Siroki Brijeg. The military denied the raid, saying it had attacked nearby military installations.

Fighting between rival Serbs, Muslims and Croats flared again in several towns, one day after the European Community announced it would recognize Bosnia's independence.

"The crisis in Bosnia-Herzegovina has now entered the phase of civil war, with a great number of human casualties," the Yugoslav government said in a statement condemning the EC.

The United Nations authorized the earliest possible full deployment of a 14,000-member peacekeeping force that will try to separate warring Serbs and Croats in neighbouring Croatia. So far only advance parties have arrived.

UN Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali said a three-month ceasefire in Croatia remained fragile and warned of "serious dangers" if deployment were delayed further.

The United States also recognized Bosnia yesterday as well as Slovenia and Croatia, which won EC recognition in January.

Leaders of Bosnia's Serb minority, which opposes the break sought by Muslims and Croats, proclaimed an unofficial Serb republic within Bosnia and reserved the right to unite with the remnants of Yugoslavia.

"This is a great day for the Serb people in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Serbian leader Radovan Karadzic told television in the Serbian and Yugoslav capital, Belgrade.

The Serbian proclamation deepened Bosnia's worst political chaos since the Second World War. The bloodshed is the worst in Bosnia in that period, and dozens of people have been killed in clashes. Scores more have been wounded and thousands forced to flee their homes.

In Belgrade, the federal government denounced recognition of Bosnia, which will reduce Yugoslavia to Serbia, its ally Montenegro, and Macedonia, which also wants independence.

In a protest to leaders of the Serb-led army, Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic demanded an end to army attacks, which he said had also damaged Medjugorje, a place of pilgrimage for Roman Catholics.

Bosnian officials told the army, which has tens of thousands of troops in Bosnia, not to oppose recognition.