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WRITTEN STATEMENT BY PRESIDENT BUSH

Topic: U.S. recognition of the former Yugoslav republics  
Released April 7, 1992

The United States recognizes Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia as sovereign and independent states and will begin immediately consultations to establish full diplomatic relations. The United States accepts the pre-crisis republic borders as the legitimate international borders of Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, and Slovenia.

We take this step because we are satisfied that these states meet the requisite criteria for recognition. We acknowledge the peaceful and democratic expression of the will of citizens of these states for sovereignty.

We will continue to work intensively with the European Community and its member states to resolve expeditiously the outstanding issues between Greece and the republic of Macedonia, thus enabling the U.S. to recognize formally the independence of that republic as well. The United States will also discuss with the governments of Serbia and Montenegro their interest in remaining in a common state known as Yugoslavia.

In light of our decisions on recognition, the U.S. will lift economic sanctions from Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, Macedonia, and Slovenia. Sanctions were applied to Yugoslavia on December 6, 1991. We will lift sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro contingent on Belgrade's lifting the economic blockades directed against Bosnia-Herzegovina and Macedonia. The UN arms embargo remains in effect.

It has been U.S. policy throughout the Yugoslav crisis to accept any resolution arrived at peacefully, democratically, and by negotiation. The United States strongly supports the UN Peacekeeping Plan, as worked out by Cyrus Vance, and the full deployment of the UN peacekeeping force. We continue to support the EC Peace Conference as the indispensable forum for the parties to reach a peaceful settlement of their dispute and to establish the basis for future relations. U.S. recognition is without prejudice to any future association Yugoslav successor states might agree to establish.

The United States views the demonstrated commitment of the emerging states to respect the borders and to protect all Yugoslav nationalities as an essential element in establishing full diplomatic relations. Equally, we view such a commitment by Serbia and Montenegro as essential to proceed in discussions on their future status.

The deployment of the UN peacekeeping force, the continuation of the EC Peace Conference, and the process of international recognition offer all of the former Yugoslav republics an historic opportunity to reject decisively the tragic violence which has marked this crisis. Continued commitment to peaceful dialogue should lead toward reconciliation, toward integration within Europe, and toward cordial and productive relations with the United States. The United States will continue to work to achieve these goals.

END STATEMENT

The Reuter Transcript Report

April 7, 1992

The Honorable Lawrence S. Eagleburger  
Deputy Secretary  
United States Department of State  
2201 C Street, Room 7240  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Mr. Secretary:

It was great shock and dismay that I learned of the ill-timed recognition of the breakaway Yugoslav republics today; Croatia having been recognized between the anniversary of the Nazi invasion of Yugoslavia, which was on Monday, and the anniversary of the founding of the Ustashe government and the Independent State of Croatia, which is Friday. A more fitting tribute to President Tudjman's tendency to reflect on Croatia's "glorious past" does not exist.

The timing also represents a slap in the face not only to the Republic of Serbia, but also, and just as important, to the 1.5 million people of Serbian descent in this country.

It is in that vein, that I would respectfully request that the United States, in establishing full diplomatic relations with the Republic of Croatia, put pressure on the Tudjman regime to issue an apology for Croatia's involvement in the genocide of the Second World War.

Had such an apology been made previous to last June's outbreak of hostilities, as I had advocated, I sincerely believe that the current situation would have manifested itself in a quite different and much more peaceful manner.

Even now, an apology would go far in assuaging the fears of ethnic Serbs in Croatia and Bosnia-Hercegovina, and ultimately hasten the ongoing peace process.

With warm regards,

Sincerely,

Helen Delich Bentley  
Member of Congress