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STATEMENT BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL OF NATO

NATO aircraft operating within the provisions of Operation "Deliberate Force", today (05 September 1995), at 13.08 LOCAL, resumed attacks on Bosnian-Serb military targets in Bosnia. The air operations were reinitiated after UN and NATO military commanders concluded that the Bosnian Serbs had failed to demonstrate their intent to comply with United Nations demands to remove military threats against Sarajevo.

The initial strikes, which began 30 August, were temporarily suspended 01 September to permit meetings between UN and Bosnian Serb officials. On 03 September, the North Atlantic Council, taking note of a report by the NATO military commanders on Operation "Deliberate Force", stated that the Bosnian-Serb reply to UN demands was not a sufficient basis for the termination of air strikes, and set out specific conditions.

Since 03 September, the Force Commander, UN Peace Forces and the Commander-in-Chief, Allied Forces Southern Europe have conducted an extensive joint assessment to determine if the Bosnian-Serbs had begun to implement the UN conditions. While some movement of Bosnian-Serb military equipment was observed overnight 04 September, the NATO and UN commanders agreed that the movements were not significant, and therefore judged that the Bosnian-Serbs have failed to comply.

The consequences of such a failure have been repeatedly made clear by the North Atlantic Council and the United Nations, and communicated directly to the Bosnian-Serbs by the UN Peace Force Commander. Accordingly, NATO aircraft were directed to recommence the Operation "Deliberate Force" air strike campaign.

Our objective remains attaining the compliance of the Bosnian Serbs to cease attacks on Sarajevo or other Safe Areas; the withdrawal of Bosnian Serb heavy weapons from the total exclusion zone around Sarajevo, without delay; complete freedom of movement for UN forces and personnel and NGOs and unrestricted use of Sarajevo airport.

We hope that this operation will make clear to the Bosnian Serbs the futility of further military actions and convince all parties of the determination of the Alliance to implement its decisions.

We call again upon all parties to exercise restraint. No one should seek military benefit from our action.

NATO remains strongly committed to the continued efforts of the international community, including those of the Contact Group, to bring peace to the former Yugoslavia through the diplomatic process. I regret that we again must resort to the use of military force to obtain compliance of the Bosnian Serbs. No one can doubt our resolve to see this matter through.

***NATO Information is also available on E-Mail via the following address:
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