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**Statement by the Secretary General of NATO,
Javier Solana**

On behalf of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, I wish to extend my deepest condolences to the American people and especially to the families of those who perished on the US aircraft which crashed yesterday near Dubrovnik.

U.S. Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown was a personal friend of mine. I had enormous respect both for his abilities and his passionate commitment to open trade among nations as a pathway to peace among nations. He contributed greatly to strengthening the transatlantic link between Europe and North America, and indeed worked tirelessly to promote closer ties and understanding among peoples throughout the world. Ron Brown was a symbol of promise not only to Americans, but to people everywhere. He was a man of peace whose tragic loss will be felt by all who knew and admired him.

It is especially poignant that Secretary Brown and the business executives travelling with him perished on a mission of peace. They were seeking to reinforce the multifaceted efforts the international community is undertaking to help the people of Bosnia emerge from their long nightmare of war and rebuild their shattered lives and economy. Their accidental deaths in the service of peace only underline the absolute necessity for the Bosnian people to match the international community's commitment with their own commitment to achieve true national reconciliation. Such is the only basis for a lasting peace, which NATO and IFOR will continue vigorously to pursue.

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