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PAGE 01 BELGRA 03473 01 OF 02 190910Z

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SECRET SECTION 01 OF 02 BELGRADE 003473

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TAGS: PREL, SR, BK

PAGE 01 BELGRA 3473 190907Z JUL 96

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SUBJECT: SERBIAN SECURITY SERVICE ON KARADZIC AND
HOLBROOKE AGREEMENT

SECTION 01 OF 02 BELGRA 3473

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY LEBUTLER, CDA. REASON: 1.5(B).

2. (S) FOLLOWING NEGOTIATIONS WITH RS LEADERS
(KRAJISNIK AND BUHA) AND MILOSEVIC ON JULY 18,
AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE, ACCOMPANIED BY ROBERTS OWEN AND
CHARGE BUTLER, RETURNED TO MILOSEVIC'S IN-TOWN VILLA FOR
FOLLOW UP DISCUSSIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER MILUTINOVIC,
IN THE EARLY HOURS OF JULY 19. SHORTLY INTO A LIVELY
SESSION, SERBIAN SECURITY SERVICE CHIEF STANISIC ARRIVED
AT 0130 FROM PALE WHERE HE HAD PERSONALLY SECURED
KARADZIC'S AND PLAVSIC'S SIGNATURES ON THE THREE POINT
AGREEMENT REMOVING THE FORMER FROM POWER.

3. (S) IN SHARP CONTRAST TO MILUTINOVIC'S LIGHTER MOOD,
STANISIC PROJECTED A MORE PURPOSEFUL PRESENCE IN
RELATING THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE SIGNING IN PALE.

4. (S) IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE'S QUESTION
ABOUT HOW KARADZIC REACTED TO THE AGREEMENT, STANISIC
STATED THAT KARADZIC READ IT CAREFULLY AND SIGNED IT
WITHOUT DELAY. HE ADDED THAT HE BELIEVES THAT KARADZIC
AND OTHERS WILL NOT PRESENT ANY PROBLEMS AND WILL BE
COOPERATIVE. HE SAID THAT PLAVSIC SEEMED FRIGHTENED OF
THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT SHE IS NOW EXPECTED TO

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: FRANK H PEREZ
DATE/CASE ID: 21 APR 2009 D200900011

UNCLASSIFIED

Ref: 09-0008

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UNDERTAKE AS THE PRESIDENT OF THE RS.

5. (S) HOLBROOKE: WHY DID KARADZIC SIGN WITH RELATIVELY LITTLE RESISTANCE TODAY AFTER HAVING HELD OUT SO LONG IN ALL PREVIOUS NEGOTIATIONS? IS KARADZIC NOW GIVING UP POWER, OR IS HE PLANNING TO RUN THE RS MUCH AS POL POT RUNS CAMBODIA?

STANISIC WAS EMPHATIC: KARADZIC FULLY COMPREHENDS THE IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT HE HAS DONE IN SIGNING THE AGREEMENT. EVEN HIS COUNSELLORS IMPRESSED UPON HIM THAT THIS WAS THE END OF HIS STAY IN POWER.

6. (S) HOLBROOKE: DOES PLAVSIC UNDERSTAND THAT HER COMMENTS WILL HAVE A CRITICAL IMPACT ON FROWICK'S DECISION ON EXCLUDING (OR NOT) THE SDS FROM THE ELECTIONS:

STANISIC: SHE DOES UNDERSTAND THIS. KARADZIC'S ACTIONS HAVE BEEN CONSISTENT WITH DEFENDING HIS PARTY, AND FACED WITH PROSPECT OF BEING THE CAUSE OF THE SDS BEING EXCLUDED FROM THE ELECTIONS, HE ACCEPTED THE NEED TO STEP DOWN.

7. (S) STANISIC SAID WE HAVE MUTUALLY ACCOMPLISHED MUCH IN RECENT DAYS. HE COMPLAINED THAT HE LEFT PALE FEELING DRAINED AND LACKING A SENSE OF SECURITY. HE STRESSED THAT HE NEVER FELT PHYSICALLY THREATENED. HE SUGGESTED JOKINGLY THAT KARADZIC WILL SPEND HIS DAYS READING DOSTOYEVSKY. (WAR AND PEACE)?

9. (S) ON THE PROSPECTS OF GETTING KARADZIC OUT OF BOSNIA, STANISIC SAID THAT KARADZIC WOULD "DIE FIRST." UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCE HE SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN OUT BY FORCE AS HE IS A SYMBOL TO THE PEOPLE OF THE RS. BELGRADE AND THE USG HAVE PUT HEAVY PRESSURE ON HIM LATELY WHICH HAS BEEN EFFECTIVE. TOO MUCH PRESSURE MIGHT CAUSE INDIVIDUALS FROM THE MILITARY AND THE POLITICAL SCENE TO CARRY OUT ATTACKS, RISKING CURRENT GAINS. HE SAID TOO MANY PEOPLE IN PALE AND THE RS CARRY WEAPONS, THE MEANS WITH WHICH TO MAKE THE ATTACKS. HOLBROOK COMMENT: WE KNOW THAT THIS IS STANISIC'S PERSONAL VIEW, NOT SHARED BY MILOSEVIC.

10. (S) AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE ASKED IF THERE WAS A THREAT OF UNREST IN THE RS FROM THE THREE POINT AGREEMENT. STANISIC DISCOUNTED THIS POSSIBILITY, WITH THE CAVEAT THAT WE NEEDED TO WAIT AND SEE ONCE THE DUST SETTLED.

11. (S) STANISIC SAID KARADZIC WAS NOT PLANNING TO MAKE ANY FAREWELL ADDRESSES, AND MILUTINOVIC ADDED THAT THE OTHER RS LEADERS HAD BACKED OFF OF MAKING PRESS ANNOUNCEMENTS FOLLOWING OUR EARLIER MEETING IN PARTICULAR, KRAJISNIK INITIALLY WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING ABOUT PARAGRAPH THREE (LEAVING THE SDS), BUT CONCLUDED THAT FROWICK'S STATEMENT WOULD BE ENOUGH.

12. (S) STANISIC OFFERED SOME ODD PHILOSOPHICAL OBSERVATIONS ON KARADZIC, CALLING HIM A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS MAN AFFECTED BY THE SACRIFICE OF SO MANY YOUNG BOSN IAN SERBS FOR HIS CAUSE. FOR THIS REASON HE DOES NOT WANT TO ABANDON THE PEOPLE.

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13. (S) ASKED ABOUT MLADIC, STANISIC LAUGHED FOR THE ONLY TIME DURING THE SESSION, SUGGESTING THAT HE IS DEEP UNDERGROUND IN HIS HQS.

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SECTION 02 OF 02 BELGRA 3473

14. (S) HOLBROOKE CONVEYED OUR APPRECIATION FOR STANISIC'S EFFORTS IN THIS PROCESS, BUT UNDERLINED THAT WE REMAINED CONVINCED THAT BOTH KARADZIC AND MLADIC MUST LEAVE THE COUNTRY, AS WELL AS POWER, DESTINATION BEING THE HAGUE WHERE THEIR LEGAL RIGHTS WILL BE PROTECTED.

--IN THIS CONTEXT, AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE APPRISED STANISIC OF OUR SUGGESTION WHICH HE CHARACTERIZED AS EXTRAORDINARY, FOR KARADZIC TO GO TO MONTENEGRO FOR A TRANSITIONAL PERIOD. HE STRESSED THAT THIS PROPOSAL HAD BEEN MADE WITH NO AUTHORITY FROM WASHINGTON. HOWEVER, HE AND MR. OWEN WERE PREPARED TO TRY TO SELL IT TO WASHINGTON IF KARADZIC HAD BEEN INTERESTED IN IT. AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE SAID HE COULD NOT GURANTEE THAT THIS PROPOSAL WOULD STAY ON THE TABLE AFTER THE TEAM'S DEPARTURE.

15. (S) ON THE WAY OUT OF THE MEETING, MILUTINOVIC PULLED AMBASSADOR HOLBROOKE ASIDE TO WHISPER A MESSAGE FROM MILOSEVIC THAT WE SHOULD NOT TAKE THE MONTENEGRO OPTION OFF THE TABLE NOR SHOULD WE DISCUSS THIS ISSUE WITH STANISIC IN ANY DETAIL.

16. (S) COMMENT: FROM CHARGE'S EXPERIENCE, STANISIC IS A SERIOUS INTERLOCUTOR WITH AN EXCELLENT TRACK RECORD FOR CREDIBILITY, ENHANCED BY HIS INTERACTION WITH U.S. COUNTERPARTS SINCE DAYTON. HE PROJECTED AN UNWAIVERING VIEW THAT KARADZIC WILL NEVER LEAVE BOSNIA WILLINGLY, WHICH CONTRASTED WITH THE HINTS FROM MILOSEVIC/MILUTINOVIC THAT THIS OPTION MAY NOT BE IMPOSSIBLE. STANISIC WAS CONVINCING IN HIS PRESENTATION ON THE LIKELIHOOD THAT KARADZIC AND PLAVSIC WILL ABIDE BY THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT TO STEP DOWN FROM POWER. WITH HARD WON CREDIBILITY AT RISK, EMBASSY ASSESSMENT IS THAT BELGRADE WILL ENSURE FULL COMPLIANCE. BUTLER

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