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REPORT OF THE SECRETARY-GENERAL PREPARED PURSUANT
TO RESOLUTION 1160 (1998) OF THE SECURITY COUNCIL

Addendum

Annex

Information on the situation in Kosovo and measures taken
by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in
Europe, submitted pursuant to paragraphs 13 and 16 of
Security Council resolution 1160 (1998)

General situation

1. The past four weeks have been characterized by a sharp escalation of military operations in Kosovo, as a result of an offensive launched by the Serb forces against armed groups of Kosovo Albanians in the central, southern and western regions of the province. A number of armed clashes have also been reported along the Albanian-Yugoslav border.
2. In August, the Serb forces went on the offensive after the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) seized control of a part of Kosovo in July. The Serb army regained control of the principal roads of Kosovo and captured a number of towns previously viewed as KLA strongholds. Many KLA fighters discarded their weapons and escaped to Albania.
3. Continued efforts of the international community aimed at a cessation of the hostilities and for resumption of the dialogue between Belgrade and Pristina have not resulted in any breakthrough. In early August, a document of the Contact Group, featuring options for a future status of Kosovo, was transmitted to the two belligerents. No binding opinions in respect of the said proposals have so far been forwarded by either of the opposing parties.
4. Although the invitation of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia to start the negotiations over the future status of the Kosovo province have been submitted to the Albanian leaders in Kosovo, no substantial talks have begun, mainly because of the continuing military offensive in Kosovo.

5. Militants of KLA continue to operate in some towns and villages. Many cross the border into and out of Kosovo, with recent evidence pointing to substantial numbers withdrawing into Albania.

Situation of the civilian population

6. The hostilities triggered a dramatic exodus of the civilian population from Kosovo. According to statistics of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of refugees and displaced persons in the province amounts to 230,000 people, 60,000 of whom have chosen to leave Kosovo. Under considerable pressure brought to bear by the international community, the Serb authorities have taken action to attract the refugees back to their permanent places of residence, offering them material aid. However, this has elicited a tepid response from the Albanian population, which is suspicious of Serb guarantees. Humanitarian aid deliveries to Kosovo have so far been unequal to the situation on the ground.

Political scene in Pristina

7. The international community has been making efforts to talk the Kosovo Albanians into setting up a joint negotiating team, complete with a common agenda for talks with Belgrade. The first negotiating team, originally established by Dr. I. Rugova no longer exists, having decided to disband. The new one does not include representatives of KLA, which decided to establish the so-called political wing.

International presence in Kosovo

8. The Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission, made up of several representatives from the United States of America, the Russian Federation and the European Union, and permanently posted in Kosovo, runs several score patrol missions weekly in the province's trouble spots. It submits reports on these missions. Kosovo has also been toured on a regular basis by diplomats from other Belgrade-based embassies, as well as politicians and diplomates on visits to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, such as the United States President's envoy, Mr. Charles Hill, the Russian Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr. N. Afanasyevski, the political directors of the German and French Ministries of Foreign Affairs, and the OSCE mission, run by Mr. H. Eiff, and falling into the latter category.

Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe analysis of the spillover potential of the Kosovo conflict

9. The strip of land along the Yugoslav/Albanian border has continued to be a scene of armed clashes between the Serb army and police forces and armed Albanians attempting to establish a two-way cross-border traffic.

10. Recent military activity has intensified, causing an ever-increasing number of internally displaced persons in Kosovo. The inflow of refugees into Albania has shown a sharp increase again, with thousands of new refugees registered in the past month. Unknown thousands are assumed to be roaming the forests awaiting help in the form of aid and assistance. Their passage to safety is

hampered by the threat of military action and the placing of mines along the border area by Federal Republic of Yugoslavia forces.

11. The refugees moving into Albania are facing many difficulties, especially with regard to finding accommodation. In the past, host families have come forward to assist, but this capacity is all but exhausted. The continued burden on the host families is starting to create resentment and rejection.

12. The continued violence across the border has again "spilled over" in the form of an increasing number of incidents of shooting, airspace violations, cross-border bushfires, etc. Generally, however, the forces on both sides are showing restraint and seem keen to avoid escalation.

13. The dangers of "spillover" from the current crisis in Kosovo onto Macedonian territory remain real and pressing, although hitherto, the effects have been contained. There are no officially registered refugees in the country from Kosovo, and observation of border traffic has not shown any unusual increase attributable to the deteriorating situation in Kosovo. Nor has there been any observable change in the pattern or activity in the days following Yugoslav security force operations on 9 August in villages south of Urosevac as close as 15 kilometres to the Macedonian border. Any worsening of the security situation in or around southern Kosovo towns, such as Urosevac or Kacanik, which have hitherto been relatively stable, could however be expected to put additional pressure on the Macedonian border.

14. Persistent reports of the laying of anti-personnel mines by Yugoslav security forces on their side of the border have disturbed the relative calm that has characterized the northern border in recent months. The Macedonian authorities have categorically denied that any mines have been laid on Macedonian territory.

15. Although there are no officially registered refugees from Kosovo, the smaller humanitarian organizations based in Skopje and the principal centres of the ethnic Albanian population have increasingly been reporting requests for assistance from Kosovars staying privately in the country with friends or relatives. Such individuals, for the most part, wish to return to Kosovo as soon as they judge it safe to do so, prefer to avoid officialdom, and are reluctant to approach the authorities with a formal request for asylum, wishing to keep their options open. The numbers of such people staying locally and asking for help are certain to grow if the Kosovo crisis continues to deteriorate. By their nature (they wish to remain out of public view), it is difficult to estimate their numbers, but currently it may be assumed that they amount to some hundreds.

16. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, there are anywhere between 3,000 to 6,000 Kosovo Albanian refugees. Their influx to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina is approximately 50 per week. A small number (100-125) of Croatian Serb refugees in Kosovo are fleeing to the Republika Srpska. Resentment and animosity may result between Kosovo Albanian refugees, displaced persons in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosnian refugee returnees to majority areas in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. It may also have repercussions beyond the

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receiving entity. Recently, one political party in the Republika Srpska voiced criticism about Kosovo Albanian refugees being settled in pre-war Serb villages.

17. The Bosnian authorities have not considered this issue a priority. Pressure had to be applied by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and UNHCR in order for the relevant Bosnian and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities to address the issue. A policy of non-refoulement and protection has been adopted. There is no doubt that Kosovo Albanian refugees in Bosnia and Herzegovina create social and economic strains, especially in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina. If the number of Kosovo Albanian refugees increases significantly, political repercussions can be expected.

Measures taken by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe

18. In his statement of 30 July, Professor B. Geremek, the Polish Minister for Foreign Affairs and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office strongly urged the cessation of hostilities and exploration of existing avenues of political dialogue. He expressed the view that such dialogue was a prerequisite for finding a solution to this dangerous conflict.

19. A second round of exploratory talks between OSCE and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia was held on 4 August in Warsaw. The representative of the Chairman-in-Office, Ambassador Jerzy M. Nowak, headed the OSCE delegation, while the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia delegation was led by Assistant Foreign Minister Ambassador Branko Branković. The objective of the meeting was to continue the exploratory talks initiated in Belgrade on 3 July 1998, which preceded the OSCE technical assessment mission to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia carried out from 14 to 22 July 1998, to facilitate the mission of Mr. Felipe González as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and to seek ways and means to begin a process of a comprehensive resolution to issues of relevance to relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and OSCE, including the return of the long-term missions, in particular to Kosovo, in accordance with Permanent Council decision No. 218 of 11 March 1998.

20. The OSCE delegation opened the meeting by expressing the Chairman-in-Office's deep concern over the continued violence in Kosovo. It further expressed disappointment with the lack of follow-up on promises made by President Milosević to the European Union Troika regarding the cessation of the use of force. Such development of events did not favour improvement of the relations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and OSCE.

21. The Federal Republic of Yugoslavia delegation responded by reiterating its well-known positions. It stressed that the role of the police action in Kosovo was to restore law and order. Ambassador Branković said that the police would be able to do away with "terrorist elements" within a period of a few days.

22. The talks led to further clarification of positions between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and OSCE, but did not result in any breakthrough. The discussion focused on possible conditions, as well as ways and means, that should precede a decision on the participation of the Federal Republic of

Yugoslavia in OSCE, in the light of Permanent Council decision No. 218. The Yugoslav side has not demonstrated any flexibility in terms of accepting the OSCE requirements for the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's membership in OSCE.

23. In a letter to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, Mr. Zivadin Jovanović, dated 6 August, Minister B. Geremek shared the view over the creation of appropriate conditions for dialogue, which should include cessation of hostilities and withdrawal of special police units. He stressed that the crisis in Kosovo could not be overcome by force. Mr. Geremek reiterated OSCE's readiness to assist in a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Kosovo within the framework of OSCE Permanent Council decision No. 218 of 11 March 1998, and on the basis of Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe/OSCE principles and documents. He explained that this decision in practical terms meant, in particular, efforts to facilitate the missions of Mr. Felipe González (as Personal Representative of the Chairman-in-Office for Yugoslavia) and the re-establishment of the Long-term Missions in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Minister Geremek stated that there were no signs of improvement and that the situation in Kosovo was deteriorating further, in particular, in the border region between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Albania. The escalation of violence and bloodshed, from whichever side it came, was estimated by Minister Geremek to be both deplorable and inadmissible.

24. In response, Minister Z. Jovanović, in a letter dated 17 August, expressed his view over the humanitarian disaster, which in his opinion had resulted from actions taken by the "band of terrorists belonging to the so-called KLA". According to Jovanović's opinion, the refusal of the Albanians in Kosovo to cooperate with KLA had resulted in killings and kidnappings.

Summary and conclusions

25. Since the last days of July, the escalation of the conflict in Kosovo has reached a phase that can be surely described as an apogee of violence and may seriously affect the neighbouring States, burning fragile peace in the Balkans.

26. Advancing humanitarian disaster can foster destabilization in the region of conflict. Furthermore, the lack of credibility of the threat to use international forces caused the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia's continuation of the military offensive resulting in egregious humanitarian abuses in Kosovo.

27. The recent successes of the Serbian security forces in Kosovo seem to be short-lived and do nothing to address the fundamental source of instability there. The refusal of the Belgrade authorities to allow the Kosovo Albanians to play a meaningful role in governing their own affairs, and ongoing abuses of basic human rights are pushing member States of OSCE to accept any kind of solution to the conflict which will assure the end of violence and prevent a possible spillover of the conflict.

28. The Chairman-in-Office's assessment is that the only hope for a peaceful solution is an immediate cessation of the Serbian military offensive and

initiation of unconditional negotiations between the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia authorities and widely represented Albanians from Kosovo.

Chairman-in-Office of the Organization for
Security and Cooperation in Europe

Warsaw, 20 August 1998
