

'London, Moscow and Beijing back the UN plan' from L'Humanité (6 February 1993)

Caption: On 6 February 1993, the French daily newspaper L'Humanité discusses the ill feeling among the Member States of the UN Security Council caused by the peace plan for Yugoslavia proposed by Cyrus Vance, United Nations Special Envoy, and Lord Owen, representative of the European Community.

Source: L'Humanité. 06.02.1993. Paris. http://www.humanite.fr/1993-02-06_Articles_-Londres-Moscou-et-Pekin-soutiennent-le-plan-de-l-ONU. "Londres, Moscou et Pékin soutiennent le plan de l'ONU", auteur:F.G.-R.

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London, Moscow and Beijing back the UN plan

Washington rejects the proposals for an agreement put forward by Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen and already signed by the Croatian side. Bill Clinton is drawing up a counter-proposal. Britain and Russia are expressing their displeasure.

There is considerable ill-feeling among the UN Security Council's member countries, as negotiations on peace in Yugoslavia resumed in New York yesterday. The United States has bluntly repudiated the plan drafted after five months of work and consultations by the two co-chairmen of the Geneva conference, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen.

Britain has announced that, 'like the other EEC countries', it still 'unreservedly supports' the plan and calls on the United States to do the same. China also supports the Vance–Owen plan.

Russia has not hidden its displeasure. 'The Vance–Owen plan needs additional support,' declared the Russian Foreign Ministry spokesman yesterday. 'It is important that there should be no let-up in the peace efforts. We are not aware of any American programme at the moment. We are waiting for such a programme to be submitted so that we can study it and give our views.'

Last night Paris had still not said anything.

In New York, Cyrus Vance and Lord Owen have re-embarked on their consultations with the warring sides, but they have still not drawn up a timetable for the actual negotiations. The two men are obviously taking the American statements very badly. Rumours that Cyrus Vance may resign have not been officially denied. The conference spokesman, Fred Eckhard, has pointed out that the former US Secretary of State had only given a 'temporary' commitment to act as co-chairman of the conference on peace in the former Yugoslavia, and that he could decide not to go on doing the job 'full time'. The American position, he felt, 'illustrates the eternal problem of the chicken and the egg', but complicates matters because 'two of the main protagonists, the Serbs and the Muslims, whom we are trying to bring together round the table, perhaps see some advantage in not reaching agreement for the moment.'

This is apparently true of the Bosnian Government, whose Foreign Minister, Haris Silajdžić, has once again rejected the Vance–Owen plan: 'Not only does it contain no real promise of peace, it contains the seeds of a return to violence and terror.' President Izetbegović, who has not even seen fit to come to New York, launched a fresh appeal for Western military intervention from Sarajevo on Friday.

The Serbian leader, Radovan Karadžić, said again that he was 80 % in agreement with the idea of a division into provinces which was put forward in Geneva. 'But,' he added, 'Sarajevo is a problem. It should be put under UN administration.'

The leader of the Bosnian Croats, Mate Boban — the only faction 'leader' to have signed the Vance–Owen plan — took issue with the governments which do not support the plan after meeting the two co-chairmen yesterday, Friday. 'They will make themselves responsible for the continued fighting,' he said, deeming the American attitude to be the result of a 'lack of information' on the part of the new Administration.

On the ground, sporadic fighting continued on Friday, both in Croatia and in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In Sarajevo, where intensive bombing resumed during the afternoon, 9 people were killed and 34 others wounded, including a French UNPROFOR soldier.