Rivals Debate U.S. Role in Balkan Crisis, Call for Support of U.N. Plan

By Byline: Christine Spolar

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On the eve of a series of talks among Bosnia's Muslims, Serbs and Croats, the leaders of two of the three groups have put pressure on the Clinton administration to support a peace plan or to intervene in the fighting.

In Sarajevo, the besieged Bosnian capital, President Alija Izetbegovic told reporters Thursday that "we want air strikes" as a "more speedy way" to end the conflict.

But Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic, serving at U.N. headquarters in New York, called for a diplomatic solution that would "open all of its options" and he called for a "more speedy way" to end the conflict.

Izetbegovic argued that the design of "side-saddle" fuel tanks was hazardous.

"We believe the verdict is incorrect. "We were not allowed to present certain evidence in the case. We can prove that this truck performed well for a truck that was struck at 70 miles per hour."

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Some of these cases might now be reopened, in light of the Atlantic verdict, according to Clarence Dallas, a former major of the G.M. court. GM officials Thursday declined comment on the specific number and cost of those settlements.

However, the Washington-based Center for Auto Safety, a consumer group that has demanded a recall of the 1973-1987 GM pickups, contends that GM officials were forewarned at least 20 lawsuits involving fiery crashes of those trucks.

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