

Bosnia would eventually divide into three parts, after which the Croat and Serb portions of Bosnia would join their neighboring "motherlands." We could not ignore the possibility that this might eventually happen. But not at Dayton—and not under American leadership. We would not legitimize Serb aggression or encourage Croat annexation. Furthermore, such an outcome might unleash a new round of ethnic and border conflicts in Central and Eastern Europe.

To reach our goal required agreements on many issues: eastern Slavonia, the Federation, a constitutional framework, elections, a three-person presidency, a national assembly, freedom of movement and the right of refugees to return to their homes, compliance with the International War Crimes Tribunal, and an international police force. Finally, we would face our most contentious task: determining the internal boundaries of Bosnia, those between the Serb portion of Bosnia and the Croat-Muslim Federation.

Our governing principle for this daunting agenda was simple: what we didn't get at Dayton we would never get later, so we would try to put everything on paper rather than settling for the sort of short and vague (and ultimately ignored) agreements that had been the products of all previous peace efforts. Better a high benchmark than a weak compromise. Despite the difficulties that implementation was to encounter, this approach proved to be correct. Any lesser goal at Dayton would have resulted in larger problems later. While some people criticized us for trying to do too much at Dayton, my main regret is that we did not attempt more.

The Compound. The size and diversity of Wright-Patterson impressed the participants. We wanted them to see this physical symbol of American power. But the small inner compound where we lived and negotiated was a different story. We placed the American, Bosnian, Croat, and combined Serbian-Bosnian Serb delegations in the four nondescript visiting officers' quarters that faced each other around a drab rectangular parking lot. The Europeans occupied a fifth building off the quad, but only thirty feet away. To emphasize Europe's co-chairmanship of the conference, we gave Carl Bildt a VIP suite directly above mine in the American building. The Bosnians were to our left, the Croatians to the right, and the Serbians and the Bosnian Serbs directly opposite us. The ground-floor windows of my rooms looked straight into those of Milosevic across the parking lot, about sixty yards away, thus allowing us to see if he was in his suite. The buildings were adequate, but hardly elegant. Our rooms were small, sound carried through the thin walls, and the corridor was only about six feet wide. During a preview tour of the facilities for journalists before the talks began, someone compared them to college dormitories. Sacirbey thought they looked like a Motel 6.

These were true "proximity" talks; we could walk from President to President in about a minute. On some days we would visit each President in his