

Every detail had been choreographed carefully by Donilon, Burns, and myself. Christopher and I entered first. Tudjman, Izetbegovic, and Milosevic came next, escorted by Galbraith, Menzies, and Perina to their seats at a small round table—a duplicate of the one we had used in Geneva and New York. Then came the most hotly debated and closely watched moment of the day—the handshake among the three men. Christopher and some of his staff feared that they might refuse, embarrassing us in full view of the world's press. I felt a handshake was essential as a symbolic act before we disappeared from public view. After some discussion, we decided to stage a handshake, but when the critical instant arrived, there was, in the words of *The New York Times*, an “awkward” pause. After a moment Christopher rose and asked the three Presidents to shake hands. The photographs—almost the last that would come out of Dayton for three weeks—sent the right signal around the world: the three Presidents were finally in one room and talking, however hesitantly, to one another.

“We are here to give Bosnia and Herzegovina a chance to be a country at peace, not a killing field,” Christopher said. He laid out four conditions for a settlement: Bosnia had to remain a state with “a single international personality”; a settlement must take into account “the special history and significance” of Sarajevo; human rights must be respected and those responsible for atrocities be brought to account; and, finally, eastern Slavonia must be resolved. When Christopher had finished his remarks, we adjourned immediately, without letting the warring Presidents make public statements. Nick Burns took a heavy assault from several reporters who understandably wanted more than a short and well-staged public event. But that would have started us off on a contentious note, and we had enough problems already.

Tudjman and Eastern Slavonia. Christopher originally planned to return to Washington soon after the ceremony, but in the first example of a pattern that would emerge at Dayton, we changed the schedule at the last moment so that he could attend a hastily arranged meeting between Milosevic and Tudjman on eastern Slavonia. We met in a small VIP cottage about a mile from the Hope Center. The two Presidents sat opposite each other, while Christopher and I sat side by side on a couch between them; Hill and Galbraith also participated. Their greeting was far warmer than their performance for the press; Milosevic jovially hailed Tudjman as “Franjo.” Tudjman called Milosevic “Slobo.”

Ambassador Galbraith started by saying that he believed the solution to eastern Slavonia, on which he had worked tirelessly, lay in the resolution of

* Carl Bildt suggested that we redesignate the rooms with more peaceful names for the duration of the conference, a proposal that was impractical.