carved these with a piece of broken glass while I was at Manjaca prison camp," he said, "to show how we had to stand during the day, with our heads down and our hands tied behind our backs." The small figures seemed to burn in my hand with their pain and intensity. Mumbling something about their power and beauty, I started to hand them back. "No," he said. "Please take them back to your country, and show them to your people. Show the Americans how we have been treated. Tell America what is happening to us."

When I returned to New York a week later, I took the wooden statues with me to an interview on the Charlie Rose show, and showed them on camera. Within days, the editor of *The New York Times Magazine,* Jack Rosenthal, asked to print a full-page color photograph of one of the statues, along with a short description of how I had received it. In 1993, the IRC reproduced it on a bronze plaque, which they gave annually to someone who had made a contribution in the field of refugee relief. The baker got his wish—and in 1995, the IRC honored me with the award.

Sarajevo. After the visit to the refugee camp, Stephanie and I flew to Split, staying with the IRC field officer there, then set out, on December 30, for the interior of Bosnia. We spent the day driving through the steep and rocky ravines that had always made Yugoslavia such difficult terrain for military operations, stopping frequently to talk to international relief workers—an inspiring group of men and women from many lands—and listen to stories of families torn apart by the war.

As dusk fell, we drove on to Vitez, where we planned to spend the night, look at refugee operations, and return to the coast. Once again, however, chance changed my plans. When we arrived in Vitez, there was a telephone call waiting from Lionel Rosenblatt, who by coincidence was at that moment only one hour away in Zenica, and had discovered that we were headed in his direction. Lionel was traveling with Sylvana Foa, the press spokesperson for the UNHCR. They were going to try to get into Sarajevo the next day, and asked if we would like to join them. Of course, we said yes.

Rosenblatt, the most dynamic person I knew in the refugee field, had ranged across the globe over the previous two decades, going wherever the problems were greatest—Cambodia, the Turkish-Iraqi border, Somalia, and now Bosnia—trying to rally public attention and support for the plight of refugees. His small nonprofit humanitarian organization, Refugees International, had made a name for itself by pressuring—or, not to put too fine a point on it, harassing—governments around the world into doing more for their unwanted refugee populations.*

* Full disclosure: after leaving the government in 1995, I became [illegible] International.

In order to get to Sarajevo the next day, we had to drive to Zenica that night. Under a moonless sky, on a sharp curve on the road between Vitez and Zenica, our vehicle hit a sheet of ice, spun a full 360 degrees, and finally bumped up against a dirt embankment only inches short of a twenty-foot drop into an icy stream. Catching our breath, we drove on to Zenica, where we found Lionel and Sylvana dining at the grimy International Hotel, seated among assorted military personnel and civilian aid workers.

To get into Sarajevo, we would have to travel through Serb-controlled territory in United Nations armored personnel carriers. Under the agreement reached between the U.N. and the Serbs, who controlled the road, we needed U.N. accreditation papers. Everyone else in our group had such papers, but I did not.

With his usual ingenuity and bravado, Lionel solved the problem. From his bag, he fished out a motley collection of mug shots and, after some deliberation, picked one out. Lionel, it turned out, carried a collection of pictures for just such an occasion. "This ought to do the trick," he announced as I looked in astonishment at the photograph, which I did not think looked at all like me.

In the morning, Lionel obtained a blank U.N. identity pass from another one of his many friends—he seemed to know everyone—and created a U.N. identity card for me, using a cigarette lighter to seal some plastic he had found. Watching Lionel's performance with a combination of admiration and apprehension, I thought of Milo Minderbinder, the character in *Catch-22* who sold eggs to both sides during World War II.

Equipped with this highly dubious identification, we drove to Kiseljak in our own vehicle. This was as far as we could go without U.N. authorization; the final stage of the trip, which crossed Serb lines, would be in a U.N. armored personnel carrier. After buying food at a store near the U.N. base, with the thought of giving it away in Sarajevo, the four of us jammed into a Danish armored personnel carrier; I sat in front, under a huge helmet, trying to look invisible. Four or five times as we proceeded toward the Bosnian capital we were stopped at Serb checkpoints, where men and women—some heavily made up for New Year's Eve parties—poked rifles around the inside of the APC and inspected our IDs. It was only much later that I realized how dangerous the trip had been.

The Danes dropped us off at the Post Office Building in Sarajevo, where the press and most international aid workers worked. As we climbed out of the APC and blinked into the weak afternoon sun, a black limousine passed slowly by, followed closely by a U.N. tank, painted white, and hordes of journalists. Looking through the heavily tinted windows of the limousine, I saw, but only for a moment, a tired-looking Cy Vance staring straight ahead on one side of the car, and U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali on the other. Vance did not see me through the dark tinted glass, nor would he have

recognized me, in my heavy flak jacket and helmet, bundled up against the biting cold and caked in dirt. It was a strange feeling to see my old boss behind the plate glass of an armored car just as I arrived in Sarajevo in an APC—so close, yet so far away.

Two days in that hellhole left impressions for a lifetime. That winter, people burned their books and furniture (usually starting with the closets and bookshelves) to keep warm. Some food was reaching Sarajevo, but it was poorly distributed, especially to the outlying areas. The cold was biting and debilitating. It sapped one's strength so quickly that every other activity, such as collecting food from a distribution center, was extremely difficult. The shooting (small arms, machine guns, mortars, snipers, artillery) was almost continuous, and had a destructive effect even on the extraordinarily brave people of Sarajevo. The international community of relief workers and journalists was huddled in three miserable locations—the Post Office Building, the shattered and grotesque Holiday Inn, and the airport, all of which were under frequent sniper fire. Every street was littered with destroyed vehicles, lying on their sides and blown apart, and I saw not a single building that was not damaged. There was no running water anywhere except at a few outside locations, some of which were sniper targets. The Serbs had destroyed several parts of town, the Muslims others; in some areas the two sides were separated by only a block.

In the midst of this inferno, the U.N. agencies, including the U.N. military (known as UNPROFOR, or United Nations Protection Force), negotiated the content and size of each relief convoy with the Bosnian Serbs, who permitted about half of what was needed to reach the city, just enough so that the world did not demand decisive military action. It was as if the U.N. were negotiating with the city's executioners as to whether Sarajevo's death would be by starvation or freezing, slow or fast. By allowing the Bosnian Serbs to determine what got in, the U.N. had, in effect, become an unintentional accomplice to Serb policy. In its press releases, the UNHCR boasted about the amount of food it had brought in, not the inadequacy of the system or the rising death toll.

From my journal:

1 A.M., January 1, 1993, Sarajevo—As this strangest New Year's Eve reaches its end, I am in an ice-cold room at the Holiday Inn, with no water, one small electric light that goes on and off without warning, listening to the sound of sniper fire (or is it celebrating?).

This Holiday Inn has to be one of the most peculiar hotels ever. Its cavernous lobby/atrium is freezing cold, dark, and dismal. The upper stories are shot to hell, with gaping holes to the outside world. The upper stories are closed to guests, since the fighting inside the Inn left them in shambles, and there is still blood all over the rooms.

No elevators or service, obviously. We carry our bags up to our freezing rooms. We eat in the hotel dining room with John Burns of *The New York Times,* the very essence of the old-time foreign correspondent. I first knew him in Asia. He is courageous, maybe even slightly crazy-courageous, and just the man for a New Year's Eve in Sarajevo. Other reporters pour in, and the room gradually fills with a noisy, smelly crowd of smokers, universally criticizing Boutros-Ghali for his press conference performance today. He actually said he could think of at least ten places on earth that were worse than Sarajevo—a very peculiar and ill-advised statement to make anywhere, but especially here.

After dinner, Burns invites us to go with him to a local New Year's Eve party. Thus ends 1992, in a crowded, noisy, and very smoky place called The Hole in the Wall—because to reach it one has to walk through a hole in a wall made by a mortar round. It is crammed with young people dancing, shouting, drinking, and trying to forget the nightmare around them. A mixture of reporters, U.N. people, and young Sarajevans who work with them or know them. They dance feverishly to the Rolling Stones, throw beer at each other at midnight, and hug each other continually. . . . The girls are beautiful, but the whole thing feels hopelessly melancholy. Was this how the Spanish Civil War felt, a romantic lost cause?

Midday, January 1, 1993—At 7:30 we rise, don't bother to dress since we slept fully clothed; don't bother to wash since there is no water; and go down for breakfast—an excellent cup of tea, some stale cheese and two awful slices of bologna. A big storm is forecast. I debate leaving early, can't make up my frozen mind, and, after checking out of the Holiday Inn (cash only), drive in an armored car to the PTT, where we can see children foraging through the debris and begging in the freezing cold. . . . Automatic weapon fire can be heard frequently as we cross the city. We pass the newspaper offices, once a proud tower, now reduced to almost total rubble. But from the basement people are still putting out a daily paper.* A man sits in the debris of the one of the public buses, holding his head in his hands, presumably drunk from the previous night.

In a "soft skin" (an unarmored vehicle) we race to the airport, weaving across the bridge where sniper fire has killed so many people, snaking through checkpoints, past overturned trucks and buses, and over icy roads.

2:30 P.M.: We are still at the Sarajevo airport, waiting amidst growing confusion and tension. In the last hour, the British and Canadian planes have been cancelled; a U.S. Air Force plane refused to take us out; there are reports that the Bosnians are massing in the hills around the airport, and that the UNHCR has ordered the evacuation of all of its personnel from Sarajevo immediately.

As in Vietnam, much of war is mindless waiting, but waiting in wartime is strangely paradoxical. One's senses are sharper because of the heightened sense of danger, but at the same time, there is an extraordinary waste of time and effort.

* The story of this brave newspaper, *Oslobodjenje,* is told by its former editor, Kemal Kurspahic, in *As Long As Sarajevo Exists.*

Zagreb, later: Weary almost beyond description, we get out of Sarajevo, just ahead of nightfall. Our Canadian plane crew, obviously in a great hurry to leave, shovels us aboard. The crewman in the belly of the C-130 yells at us, "O.K. Hold on. We're going to do a zoom takeoff!" and quickly buckles himself in. The plane leaves the ground quickly but does not rise at first, hovering about six feet off the ground until almost reaching the end of the runway. Then, with a tremendous thrust of power, it seems to go almost straight up in the air, soaring over the hills filled with Serb snipers and, perhaps, massing Bosnian troops.

Landing in Zagreb, we head directly for the Inter-Continental Hotel. Never had a shower seemed so wonderful. I turn on the television and hear CNN proclaiming the start of a major offensive.

I returned to New York full of a sense that something had to be done rapidly. I turned for advice, as I had done so often in the last twenty-five years, to my friend Les Gelb, then a columnist for *The New York Times,* who warned me that Clinton's team, in the midst of a delicate minuet over their own interrelationships, did not want to hear about Bosnia. Earlier, as I sat freezing at the Sarajevo airport, I had written in my journal: "If I don't make my views known to the new team, I will not have done enough to help the desperate people we have just seen; but if I push my views I will appear too aggressive. I feel trapped."

THE 1993 MEMORANDUM

On January 13, 1993, one week before they were to assume office, I sent a long memorandum to Warren Christopher and Tony Lake. It began:

> Bosnia will be the key test of American policy in Europe. We must therefore succeed in whatever we attempt. The Administration cannot afford to begin with either an international disaster or a quagmire. Despite the difficulties and risks involved, I believe that inaction or a continuation of the Bush policies in Bosnia by the Clinton Administration is the least desirable course. Continued inaction carries long-term risks which could be disruptive to U.S.-European relations, weaken NATO, increase tension in Greece and Turkey, and cause havoc with Moscow. . . .
>
> No one with whom I talked last August expected the Bosnians to last this long. . . . An important reason the Bosnian Muslims are surviving is that they are beginning to get significant weapons shipments from Islamic nations, apparently including Iran. These are coming through Croatia, *with Croatian complicity.** . . . Four key points about these *not-so-secret* secret shipments to the Muslims:

* All italics in the original memorandum.

—first, the Croats, who do not want to let the Muslims become too strong, have not allowed them to include heavy weapons or artillery;
—second, every weapons shipments has a Croatian "weapons tax"; that is, the Croats siphon off some of the weapons for their own army and for the HVO [the Bosnian Croats] in Bosnia-Herzegovina;
—third, there is now strong evidence that small but growing numbers of "freedom fighters" or mujahideen are joining the Bosnian forces, although, as one might expect, the strict fundamentalists from the Mideast and the loose, secular Muslims of Bosnia do not understand each other or mix well;
—finally, these shipments will continue—and they will increase.*

I suggested four objectives for the new Administration: first, "to save as many lives as possible in Bosnia"; second, "to make containment of the war a top priority"; third, "to punish the Serbs for their behavior . . . and to brand certain individuals war criminals"; fourth, "to use this crisis as an opportunity to strengthen the U.N. system." We should act, I added, "in concert with other nations," even creating "some sort of ad hoc military coalition, [but] avoid getting dragged into a ground war in the region."

At the time the incoming Administration was trying to decide whether to support peace proposals put forward by Cyrus Vance and David Owen, the former British Foreign Secretary who had replaced Lord Carrington as the European Union negotiator. The Vance-Owen plan proposed dividing Bosnia into ten "cantons," some of which would be Muslim-controlled, some Serb-controlled, and some Croat-controlled. It had been attacked by many American commentators as a sellout, another Munich, and a precursor to the breakup of Bosnia.

* When I wrote these paragraphs in January 1993, no one could have imagined that this matter would re-emerge four years later as the subject of numerous journalistic inquiries and six congressional investigations, and become a major issue again during Tony Lake's attempt to become CIA Director.

These investigations were premised on the theory that secret arms shipments to the Bosnians from Iran had *begun in 1994,* and that the Clinton Administration had somehow acted illegally in not stopping them. It is especially noteworthy, therefore, that the activities in question were already taking place two years earlier, during the Bush Administration, with the clear knowledge of American Embassy and U.N. officials in Zagreb, and were even mentioned in newspaper stories at the time.

The events that were investigated took place in April 1994, when I was still Ambassador to Germany, but in late 1996 I was asked to testify several times as to my subsequent knowledge. The United States had played no role in the covert assistance to the Bosnians and the Croatians, but when asked for his views by President Tudjman, Ambassador Galbraith, under instructions, had not objected. This was the correct policy decision, although it was sloppily executed. As I stated in sworn testimony before the Senate Intelligence Committee, the "covert" support given to the Bosnian Muslims by Islamic nations (including Iran) had helped keep the Sarajevo government alive at a time when its survival hung by a thread. For the United States to have continued to object to such assistance without providing something to replace it would in my opinion have been unconscionable.

Scanned with CamScanner

There was already deep division within the new team about Bosnia. The Joint Chiefs of Staff, led by its formidable Chairman, Colin Powell, was especially opposed to American involvement. The Vance-Owen plan was flawed, but if the United States killed it without coming up with a plan of its own, the consequences would be far worse, so I recommended that Washington give qualified public support to their plan:

> If Vance-Owen leads to a temporary cessation of fighting and relief to the Muslims, and offers the new Administration some breathing room to put a [full-fledged] policy into place, it should be welcomed. It will not solve the problem, only perhaps let the world think it is solved for a while. If the Vance-Owen plan is rejected, we must face the fact that the negotiating track is effectively dead—and that using it as an excuse for inaction or insufficient action is no longer acceptable.

I ended the memorandum with a series of specific recommendations, actions that the United States should consider, especially if the Vance-Owen plan was either rejected or if it failed. This was the most provocative part of the paper:

> LIFTING THE ARMS EMBARGO TO BOSNIA: I favored lifting the arms embargo to the Bosnians before I visited the region, and am still in favor of it, if it can gain UN Security Council approval. But this might be difficult to obtain (and create strains with Moscow). . . .
>
> I would therefore [also] recommend consideration of something that I know will cause many people heartburn: that we allow covert arms supply to the Bosnian Muslims, *so that Bosnia's outside support no longer comes solely from the Islamic nations*. Such a policy requires sophistication within the USG, including Congress, and, if it involves the US directly, a legal finding. It would undoubtedly leak, as our support to the Afghan resistance leaked long before it was openly acknowledged. But this might be the best way to help the Bosnians *quickly* without provoking a new round of escalatory steps from the Serbs. It does, however, carry the serious drawback of showing the United States evading a Security Council resolution that it previously supported. This concern could be lessened if our actions were accompanied by public efforts at the UN to change the embargo, or if *we acted only through third parties*, as we did in Afghanistan.
>
> DIRECT USE OF FORCE AGAINST THE SERBS: Bombing the Bosnian Serbs and even Serbia proper if necessary would send the proper message. However, the actions must be effective, both militarily and politically! . . . If done only to show the world we are "doing something," minor bombing—like the enforcement of the no-fly zone—might be a quick public relations success, but it would be followed by a long-term disaster.

Scanned with CamScanner

ESTABLISH AN AMERICAN DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN SARAJEVO: This would be a dramatic step to show the world where we stand. An American Embassy can be very small; symbolism counts.

KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON THE WAR CRIMINAL ISSUE: This policy, while belated, is useful. Name more names. Set up a separate staff to create more pressure on this front.

As Gelb had warned, the memo was not welcome; in fact, I got no reply. Finally, some weeks after the Inauguration, I called Lake to ask if he had received it. Yes, he said, they had gotten it; it was "useful," but it contained some suggestions that would "undercut us at the U.N." We argued the issue briefly, but hopelessly. I told Tony again of my interest in special duty on Bosnia, but he did not respond; a few weeks later the Administration appointed Reginald Bartholomew, the former Ambassador to NATO, as special negotiator on Bosnia.

Scanned with CamScanner