

"Peace in a Week"

(November 10-17, 1995)

[British Prime Minister] Lloyd George is trying his hand at reaching a settlement with the Italians on the Adriatic Treaty. . . . They all sit round the map. The appearance of a pie about to be distributed is thus enhanced. Lloyd George shows them what he suggests. They ask for Scala Nova as well. "Oh, no!" says L. G., "you can't have that—it's full of Greeks!" . . . "Oh, no," I whisper to him, "there are not many Greeks there." "But yes," he answers, "don't you see it's coloured green?" I then realise that he mistakes my map for an ethnological map, and thinks the green means Greeks instead of valleys, and the brown means Turks instead of mountains. Lloyd George takes this correction with great good humor. He is as quick as a kingfisher.

—HAROLD NICOLSON, *Peacemaking 1919*

DAY TEN: FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 10

CHRISTOPHER AND HIS TEAM RETURNED TO Wright-Patterson at 9:30 A.M. on November 10, planning to announce the new Federation agreement that morning. But shortly before he landed, the Bosnian Croats told us they would not sign Steiner's agreement as scheduled because it did not give them enough power. "Blood pressure up"—Kerrick's laconic phrase—was an accurate description of our reaction. Once again, our game plan was scrapped, as we scrambled to prevent an embarrassing setback.

Christopher and I went immediately to see Tudjman, and asked him to get the Croats under control. Without apologizing for the delay, Tudjman said his problem was not with the Federation agreement itself, but with Izetbegovic's refusal to reserve one of the top three posts in the *central* government—president, prime minister, or foreign minister—for a Croat. Tudjman could be brutal at times, but he had a valid point.

We told Tudjman that we would insist that one of the three top posts in the central government be assigned to a Croat if he would support our Fed-

eration agreement. Tudjman assented, and the ceremony was rescheduled for the afternoon. Walking across the parking lot immediately to see the Bosnians, we urged them to accept a Croat as Prime Minister or Foreign Minister of the central government in order to save the Federation agreement. This was the essence of statesmanship, I said, a reasonable concession for a major gain. But this one would add to the tension within the Bosnian camp, already seething with intrigue, since either Prime Minister Silajdzic or Foreign Minister Sacirbey would have to step aside in favor of a Croat. Sacirbey was clearly upset. If anyone had to leave, he knew it would be him, and not Haris, who had a political base in Bosnia.

Less than an hour before the public signing of the agreement, Federation President Kresimir Zubak sent me a letter stating that he would neither attend the ceremony nor sign the agreement. Hill and I immediately went to see Tudjman, who read the letter and laughed. "If Zubak doesn't sign it," he said, "we'll get someone else to."

"That's not good enough," I replied. "Zubak must be part of the event, or else he should be replaced as Federation President. He cannot have it both ways, and we cannot allow him to wreck Dayton." We sent Hill and Menzies to see Zubak. A Croat distrusted by many of the Muslims, he worried that the new agreement would weaken him. We had not paid enough attention to the dapper and normally polite Zubak, partly because he did not speak English well, partly because he was overshadowed by extroverted people like Sacirbey and Silajdzic. He had become difficult, withdrawn, and sullen. Hill and Menzies said that if Christopher and I sat down for a few minutes with Zubak, the problem would be solved. And indeed it was. Flattered by the personal attention of the Secretary of State, who met with him for fifteen minutes, Zubak said he would attend the signing.

Still, the ceremony unveiling the new Federation agreement, while important to the future of Bosnia, was a sour affair. We met again in the B-29 Room, with the press allowed back into the base for the first time since the opening ceremonies. Izetbegovic and Tudjman barely acknowledged each other. (Since the agreement did not involve the Serbs, Milosevic, who mocked the whole process, was not present.) In his prepared remarks, Christopher gave the sort of upbeat speech that the event required. "Today's agreement will bring the Federation to life," he said. "It will create common political and economic institutions that will unite the two communities." He went on:

The agreement finally gives the Federation the authority to govern effectively. The central government of Bosnia and Herzegovina will keep the powers it needs to preserve the country's sovereignty, including foreign affairs, trade, and

monetary policy. It will transfer most of its other responsibilities, including police, courts, tax collection, health, and education to the Federation. . . . The agreement provides for the sharing of revenues and a joint customs administration. Internal customs checkpoints, which had marred the Federation before, will be removed. Finally, the parties have agreed to the reunification of the city of Mostar under a single administration.

Of course, this impressive agreement was on paper only. After watching the terrible body language between the two delegations, I was as worried about the Federation as about the negotiations with the Serbs. Events would bear this concern out. Two years after Dayton, much of what had been announced that day to make the Federation viable was still not implemented, and Mostar was only beginning to settle down.

A Semibreakthrough on Eastern Slavonia. Milosevic and Tudjman were still divided over the time for a transitional period prior to the reversion of eastern Slavonia to Croatia—a seemingly small issue, but one on which both men were dug in. After three meetings with each President, neither had moved an inch. We returned to our quarters to examine our choices. Christopher had to leave in two hours, and while we wanted his day to end with a breakthrough, none was in sight. “Chris, what about a two-phase approach—with certain specified events happening in each phase?” I said, adding, half-teasing, “You’re a great lawyer, can’t you think of something creative?”

Standing up, Christopher started writing rapidly on a legal-sized yellow pad. One rarely saw this side of Warren Christopher anymore, yet it was him at his best—the skilled lawyer drafting an agreement. “The transition period shall last twelve months,” he read, “and, on the determination of the Transitional Administration, may be extended for a second period not to exceed the duration of the first.”

It was simple. Christopher’s wording used only Tudjman’s number—twelve months—but in fact allowed up to two years, which Milosevic probably could accept, for eastern Slavonia’s transition back to Croatian rule. Tudjman and Milosevic could each present the agreement differently at home, and the length of the transition would be determined a year hence.

We almost ran to Milosevic’s room to present Christopher’s idea. Without hesitation, Milosevic said he would accept the proposal if Tudjman did. “Mr. President, let’s close this now,” I responded. “Let’s go to Tudjman’s room together and work this out before the Secretary has to leave for Washington.”

“No,” said Milosevic. “Let me see Tudjman alone. I’ll come back to you with a solution.” He was suddenly cocky, convinced he could deliver a deal, and get credit for it.

We returned to my room, where we waited anxiously with our colleagues. Through Milosevic's windows across the parking lot, we could see the two Presidents walking back and forth, gesturing and apparently yelling at each other. An hour passed. Finally, someone glanced out the window and said, in an almost awed voice, "Look at that!"

It was, indeed, an amazing sight. Milosevic and Tudjman were walking side by side, almost shoulder to shoulder, across the parking lot toward our building. The rest of our team quickly slipped out the door, while Christopher, Hill, and I awaited our guests. After a moment the two Presidents entered and sat down facing us on a small sofa. Seated so close that their knees were touching, the two men seemed like schoolboys proudly reporting to the teacher that they had finished their homework. "We have solved the problem, Mr. Secretary," Milosevic said. "We can agree to your formulation. However, we need a few days to work this out so that it looks like the issue was determined by the local leaders in eastern Slavonia." Tudjman nodded, but said nothing.

This did not seem specific enough; experience had shown that if there was an escape hatch, someone would use it. "Excuse me," I interrupted, "but the Secretary of State will return here Monday on his way to Japan. When he gets back, eastern Slavonia must be completed so that we can move on to our main work."

Looking straight at Christopher, Milosevic said, "The two of us pledge that it will be finished, completely finished, in seventy-two hours." Again, Tudjman nodded in agreement. As soon as the meeting ended, he sent one of his closest aides, Hrvoje Sarinic, back to Croatia to make sure everything went according to plan.

With the negotiations moving to a new level of intensity, I could no longer reserve an hour or more each morning for the daily Contact Group meeting. The less time I spent with the Europeans the more upset they became, but the more time I spent with them the less we accomplished. But we could not ignore the Europeans, so I asked John Kornblum, who had arrived with Christopher, to remain in Dayton. Although this left the European Bureau almost leaderless in Washington, it freed up a great deal of time for me to work directly with the Presidents, while John handled the Contact Group and other duties. We kept Carl Bildt closely informed of our activities, and left it to him to inform the other Europeans. We knew this would leave bruised feelings among a few Europeans, but there was little we could do about it.

The lesson from Christopher's trip was clear: he should visit Dayton only when a problem was nearly solved, so that he could push it across the finish line. Summarizing the mood in Dayton that day, General Kerrick discerned a

cyclical pattern in our moods that he jokingly speculated was "directly linked to tidal Potomac." "Every twelve hours [we are] sure we will fail," he wrote, "only to find real chances for success at next high tide."

When I called Kati late that night, I said that the next week would probably be decisive—but could go either way. "If these guys want peace, they can get it in a week," I said. "If they do not, we could be here for a year. We do not want to return to the shuttle, and I don't want to spend the rest of my life in Dayton."

DAY ELEVEN: SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 11

The weather was miserable. A sleeting rain came down intermittently during the day, and the wind made it feel colder. The short walk from our quarters to Packy's left us shivering and wet.

In the late morning, Tudjman placed a wreath at the Wright-Patterson memorial to the American war dead. Alone of the leaders present, he had remembered that November 11 was an American national holiday—Veterans Day, or Armistice Day to an older generation, which, like Tudjman, would forever know the eleventh day of the eleventh month as the day World War I came to an end. General Clark and I drove with him to the memorial, which was next to a replica of a briefing hut used by pilots during World War II. As we sat on wooden benches in front of an easel showing targets for a 1945 bombing run over Germany, Tudjman made an impassioned speech stressing his own role as a member of the anti-Nazi resistance in World War II. This was part of Tudjman's effort to emphasize that he had been an opponent of fascism, so as to counter widespread international criticism of him for rehabilitating the pro-Nazi Ustasha regime of 1941–45—an action he presented as nationalist but others saw as racist and anti-Semitic. His own television crews filmed the entire scene for home consumption, as the rain pounded on the roof of the small shrine.

Tudjman was feeling good—as Galbraith might have said, he was on "one of his highs." He sat in his room savoring his impending triumph on eastern Slavonia, which would complete his liberation of the territories lost during the 1991 war with Serbia. But reports from Galbraith were confusing; the local authorities in eastern Slavonia had apparently not received the order from Milosevic to sign the agreement, and Peter, shuttling between Zagreb and eastern Slavonia in bad weather, feared that the agreement being discussed in Dayton was not going to be accepted by the local authorities. When Hill and I complained strongly to Milosevic, he laughed at our concern. The deal, he said flatly, was done. Galbraith confirmed this by phone later that day.

For Milosevic, the key to the agreement was that it would be signed far from Dayton by a local Serb leader. While Milosevic wanted credit in Dayton for the breakthrough, he did not want his fingerprints visible in the region. For Tudjman, the results were spectacular: he would get eastern Slavonia back without a war. For the United States, it meant that we had successfully brought a part of Croatia back to its rightful owner without another war, one that had seemed inevitable only weeks earlier. In so doing, we had also settled an issue that was an absolute prerequisite to the broader peace.

The main beneficiaries of the agreement would be the Croats and a significant number of ethnic Hungarians who had lived in the area before 1991 and would now be able to return to their homes. But the agreement would not have been possible unless the Croats had also guaranteed the rights of the Serbs in the area, who feared, with reason, that they would be driven out once Zagreb took over. Given the brutal manner in which the Croats had treated the Serbs in the other areas they had "liberated," this was not an unreasonable concern. The problem was still alive in May 1997, when, during a trip to the region, the new Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, publicly criticized the Tudjman government for violating the rights of the Serbs of eastern Slavonia and other parts of Croatia.

The November 11 eastern Slavonia agreement gave Dayton instant credibility after eleven days of stalemate. We hoped it would stimulate a productive map discussion. But when the maps came out, we hit the wall again, just as we had during the six-hour map session three days earlier. There was no momentum—no carryover from eastern Slavonia, no value from the progress we had made on political issues.

Milosevic began what Kerrick called "the day of the maps" by presenting us with one that was ludicrous. When I showed Milosevic's map to Izetbegovic, he reacted badly, adding to the tension inside the Bosnian delegation, which seemed to be getting worse. Silajdzic sat in his own room, six feet across the hall, watching us come and go with maps, but he did not join us, so after the meeting with Izetbegovic I went to see him.

"What's going on here?" I asked. "Why aren't you in these meetings? We've started the map discussions and you are not even in the room."

Silajdzic was visibly depressed. His mood seemed to combine despair and barely suppressed fury. "You see what I'm up against! I don't know what's going on in there! You see what a terrible mess they are making of this?"

"You have to get back into this thing, Haris," I said. "Your country needs you, and so do we. In forty-eight hours Secretary Christopher returns here. If there is no progress, I am going to recommend to him that we close this down—"

"Suspend it or end it?" Haris asked, calming down a bit. It was the same question that our team had been debating.

"I think suspend. Maybe resume the shuttle. I'm not sure."

"That's wrong," Haris said emphatically. "Threaten to end the conference once and for all. That will get his attention."

Silajdzic's point made sense. I went directly to Milosevic's room and told him that unless he took the territorial issues seriously, we would consider closing down the conference.

"It's the fault of the Muslims," Milosevic replied. "They are pigheaded and stupid. They—"

"That's not the issue. We need to make progress, or else shut down. The time has come for private, face-to-face talks between you and the Bosnians. I suggest you start with Silajdzic. He's in his room. Will you see him right now?"

I went back to the Bosnians, dropping in on Izetbegovic to get his approval for the meeting. Izetbegovic, seeing the advantage to himself if Silajdzic took the lead—and therefore the risks—on the territorial issues, readily agreed.

As Silajdzic and I walked through the rain and sleet to the Serbian building, with the precious maps covered in plastic, I put my arm on his shoulder and said, "Haris, this may be the most important meeting of your life, and if it works, there will be more like it." He nodded silently. "I'm going to leave the two of you alone," I said as we reached the door of the building. "Just one thing, Haris. Please do not lose your temper. Hang in there. If it is anything like some of our sessions with Milosevic, the meeting may begin to get interesting just when you think it is over."

I went out for a rare treat—a relaxed dinner in town with some colleagues. When we returned late at night, we heard that the two men had spent over two hours alone together. It was too late to learn more until morning, but that, at least, seemed encouraging.

DAY TWELVE: SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 12

The day began with long-awaited news from Croatia: the fourteen-point agreement on eastern Slavonia had finally been signed. There was elation over the agreement in Washington, Zagreb, and Western Europe, and resignation among the Serbs. "I think we have experienced the start of the end of the war in the ex-Yugoslavia," said the tireless Thorvald Stoltenberg, who witnessed the agreement on behalf of the United Nations in the region. President Clinton called it "a major step toward peace."

A Visit from the Families. This particular Sunday would always remain special in our memory because of the visit to Wright-Patterson by the widows and children of Bob Frasure, Joe Kruzal, and Nelson Drew.

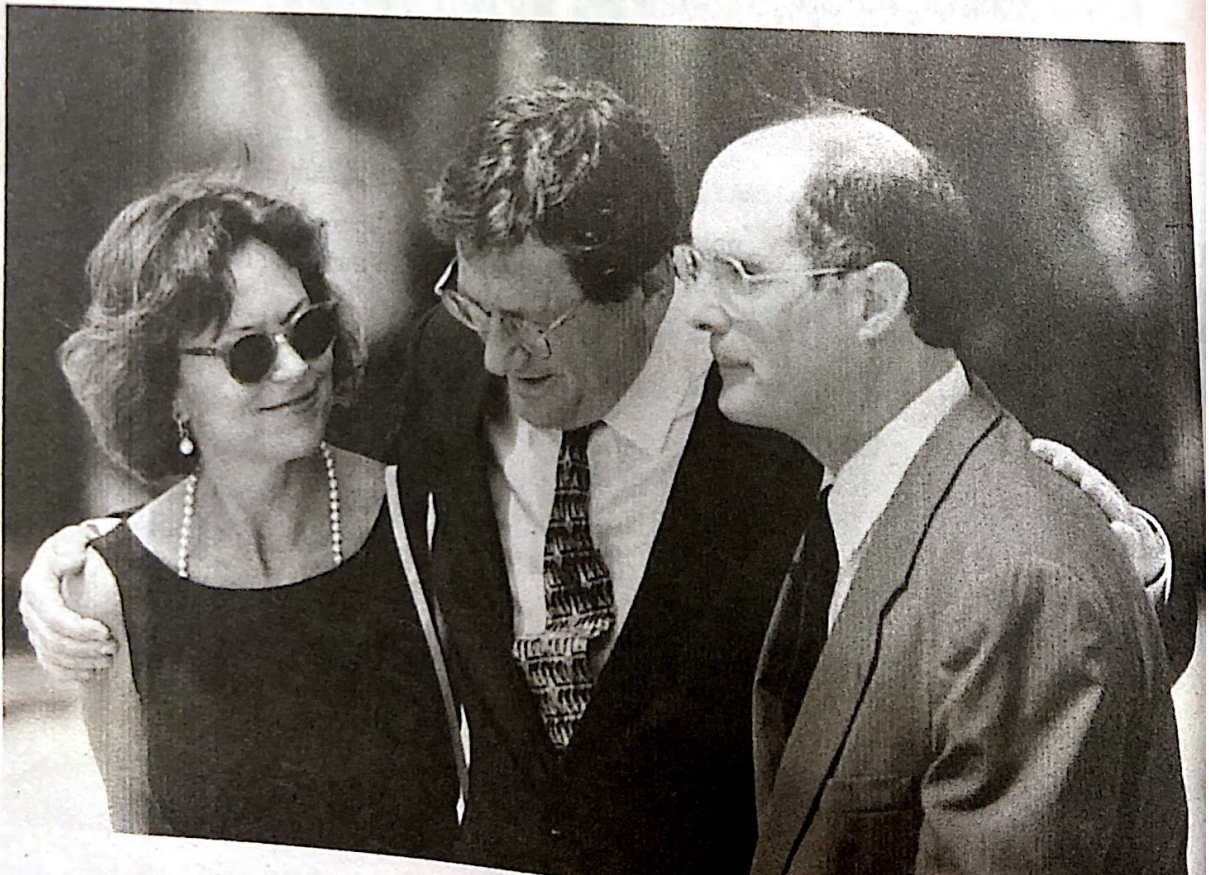


December 31, 1992. With Lionel Rosenblatt, president of Refugees International, in Kiseljak on the road to Sarajevo, just before entering Serb-controlled territory. In the background, a U.N. soldier heads for his compound.



September 1994. In Mostar, standing on the makeshift bridge that replaces the ancient one that was the city's symbol, with General Charles Boyd, Deputy Commander-in-Chief U.S. Forces Europe, during a trip just prior to becoming Assistant Secretary of State.

August 21, 1995. Andrews Air Force Base: Kati, the author, and Strobe Talbott. WASHINGTON TIMES PHOTO.



places the ancient one that was
1-Chief U.S. Forces Europe.

Talbott. WASHINGTON TIMES



August 21, 1995. A decisive moment: President Clinton pulls the government and the negotiating team back together in a dramatic meeting in a small room behind the chapel at Fort Myer immediately after the memorial service. *Clockwise from the President:* Tony Lake, General Wes Clark, Leon Fuerth (standing), Leon Panetta (partially hidden behind Clark), Warren Christopher, Chris Hill (standing), General Don Kerrick (standing), CIA Director John Deutch, the author, William Perry, Jim Pardew (standing), Madeleine Albright, General John Shalikashvili. Just out of camera range to the left were Sandy Berger and Strobe Talbott. WHITE HOUSE PHOTO.



August 28, 1995. With Bosnian Foreign Minister Muhamed Sacirbey in front of the Crillon Hotel in Paris hours after the marketplace bombing in Sarajevo. We are awaiting word as to whether or not there will be NATO bombing. In the background, Ambassador Pamela Harriman and, far right, Robert Owen. AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO.

The team on the plane. *Left to right:* General Kerrick, General Clark, Jim Pardew, Chris Hill. STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO.

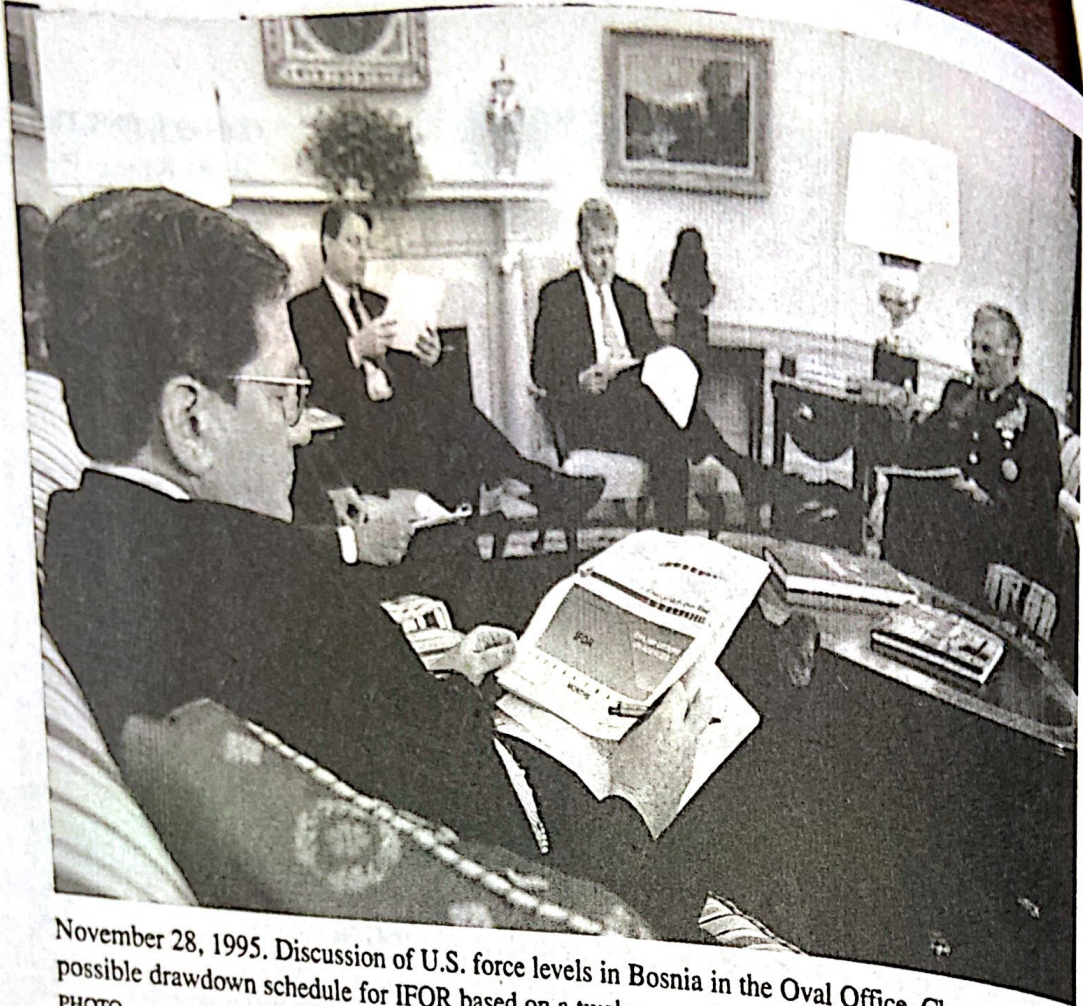




October 5, 1995. Outside the Bosnian Presidency in Sarajevo. Carl Bildt (behind author); General Clark and Jim Pardew (right background) conferring with Bosnian officials. REUTERS/DANILO KRSTANOVIC/ARCHIVE PHOTOS.

October 16, 1995. A typical scene during the shuttle, taken leaving the Quai d'Orsay after a meeting with French Foreign Minister de Charette. Left to right: Chris Hill, Lt. Col. Dan Gerstein (recovered from his injuries on Mt. Igman), the author, General Clark (on the phone), General Kerrick, Jim Pardew. AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO.





November 28, 1995. Discussion of U.S. force levels in Bosnia in the Oval Office. Chart shows a possible drawdown schedule for IFOR based on a twelve-month withdrawal plan. WHITE HOUSE PHOTO.

February 20, 1996. Reporting to the Principals Committee in the White House Situation Room, one day after the Rome compliance summit and one day before I left the government. *Left to right at the table:* the author, Deputy Director of Central Intelligence Admiral Dennis Blair, General Shalikashvili, Secretary of Defense Perry, Vice President Gore, President Clinton. *Left to right, behind the table:* General Clark, Undersecretary of Defense Walt Slocombe, White House deputy press spokesman David Johnson (standing). *Back to the camera:* OMB Director Alice Rivlin. WHITE HOUSE PHOTO.





April 4, 1997. Two guys on crutches, taken during a White House ceremony. (Paul Nitze is in center background.)
WHITE HOUSE PHOTO.

August 7, 1997. A meeting of the joint presidency in Sarajevo during a return trip as special envoy. *Left to right*: the author; Robert Gelbard, the implementation "czar" for the United States; and the three "co-Presidents": Izetbegovic, Zubak, and Krajisnik. This photograph was taken at the start of a ten-hour negotiating session that ended at 4:00 A.M. AP/WIDE WORLD PHOTO.





November 8: Milosevic and Izetbegovic lead a group from the barracks to the Hope Center to begin discussions of the map. The remarkable rapport the two men show—Milosevic laughing, apparently at a comment of Izetbegovic—will disappear within hours, and they will almost never meet face-to-face again. The author is far back, talking to Silajdzic. STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO/ARIC R. SCHWAN.

Warren Christopher meets with the Contact Group in Carl Bildt's suite. *Left to right:* Christopher, Jacques Blot, Wolfgang Ischinger, Igor Ivanov, Pauline Neville-Jones, Bildt. STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO/ARIC R. SCHWAN.





An American staff meeting over sandwiches and soft drinks at the Hope Center. *Left to right:* the author, Hill, Kerrick, Ambassador John Menzies, Rudy Perina, David Lipton (U.S. Treasury), Nick Burns, policy planning chief Jim Steinberg, Christopher, Chief of Staff Tom Donilon, Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck. Also present were Robert Owen, John Kornblum, and Wes Clark. STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO/S. SGT. BRIAN W. SCHLUMBOHM.

November 12: The core team meets in the author's suite as the map discussions begin. *Clockwise from lower left:* Pardew, Perina, Kerrick (leaning forward), Clark, Rosemarie Pauli, Owen, Hill, the author, Menzies. The issue is the width of the corridor linking Bihac and Sarajevo. STATE DEPARTMENT PHOTO/ARIC R. SCHWAN.

