The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training
Foreign Affairs Oral History Program
Dayton Peace Accords Series

JACK ZETKULIC

Interviewed by: Fran Leskovar
Initial interview date: February 25, 2025

Before Dayton, Jack Zetkulic served in Guangzhou, Munich, in the INR, EUR, and PM Bureaus, and in Warsaw, where he established the OSCE's Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. After Dayton, he served in Belgrade as DCM before postings in Stockholm and Bern. He was then ADST's Executive Director and later Associate Dean of FSI's Leadership and Management School. After retiring, he created and ran a diplomatic training program for the UAE and trained other Mideast officials, and was Diplomat in Residence and Adjunct Professor of Diplomacy at American University. He now is a State Department consultant. Since the invasion of Ukraine, he has partnered with fellow ADST alum Dan Whitman to teach online classes for Ukrainian students.

INTERVIEW

Q: All right, this is part one. Today is February 25th. All right, Jack, tell me a little bit about yourself. Where did you grow up? How did you end up in the foreign service?

ZETKULIC: Do you want me to give you the quick one?

Q: Yeah, the quick one.

ZETKULIC: Yes. Focusing on what I've done and leading up to the work that we're here to talk about, which is Dayton. I'll kind of go quickly through the whole career thing, but also some asides on Yugoslavia or former Yugoslavia. I grew up in New Jersey, traveled a bit with my family; loved to travel around. I went to Georgetown, School of Foreign Service, took the Foreign Service exam my senior year and I passed. Came into the service later than I would have liked to because there was a Reagan hiring freeze. I was a class of 1980 and then he got elected– so, bummer. So I took some classes, worked on a political campaign, and I joined the service in March of '82.

I came into the service speaking fluent German. So, naturally, I was taught Mandarin and I was sent to Guangzhou, China, where everyone speaks Cantonese. That was

interesting. Then the Department came to me and they said, “Hey, you want to go to Munich?” where I had actually lived and studied in Bavaria, learning my German. And I was sent to the consulate in Munich as the Political-Economic Officer, which also included responsibilities to be the number two person there responsible for liaison with Radio Free Europe [RFE] and Radio Liberty [RL], which were based in Munich at that time. And so I got to read all the traffic on Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, and also brief the people who ran RFE on a twice weekly basis. So, you know, I kept up to speed.

And then I started traveling East, which was fun. I'd go to Czechoslovakia, Poland, the Soviet Union, Hungary, etc.. I also had the opportunity to travel, just as a tourist, for my first visit to Yugoslavia, down in Croatia and Slovenia. I came back and did a third tour on the INR Watch

[Bureau of Intelligence and Research Watch]. And then my DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary of State], Dick Clark, Richard Clark asked me to become one of the analysts in INR. I was the Central Europe analyst. Then I was the UK desk officer. For just a year, I got pulled by Dick—when he became the Assistant Secretary for Political-Military Affairs—to be his special assistant—what they now call Chief of Staff—in PM [Political-Military], in the PM Bureau, during the Gulf War, which was a tremendously interesting experience.

That's when we get back into the Eastern Europe stuff. I was approached to be the new deputy director of the new OSCE [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe] office, well then CSCE [Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe] office, which was based in Warsaw. This was a regional office—the Office for Free Elections—to support the work of all the new democracies of Eastern Europe and the former Soviet UnionI arrived there in June of 1991. A fascinating time. It was the Office for Free Elections for only a couple months before it expanded its mandate to be the ODIHR, the Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights. Shortly after I arrived, I got to be at the famous Berlin ministerial of the OSCE when James Baker famously, or maybe infamously, said about Yugoslavia that the United States “ didn't have a dog in this fight.” And I said to myself, “Oh, this is not good.” Keep in mind the historical context. The Europeans were basically saying, “Hey, this is the first post-Cold War conflict in Europe; we can handle it.” President Bush was happy to let them have a shot at it. But we quickly learned that European political cooperation wasn’t very coordinated. Each country had its own agenda.

When I was assigned to Warsaw, I thought I would spend most of my time there. As it turned out, I spent only about half my three plus year tour in Poland. My colleagues joked that I quickly became the accidental tourist of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe. Early on I travelled down to Bosnia. My boss was an Italian ambassador. I remember him coming back from his first trip to Yugoslavia. And he said, “This is it; this is where it's getting bad.” I would travel frequently to Bosnia for things like conferences on civil society, on building NGOs, that sort of thing, including on

elections, although things were kind of frozen in time when it came to elections there.

In ‘92, the first Serbian elections took place. And this is where it gets interesting and fun. I was there first with two other very much more senior Western European diplomats to meet with all the political party leaders in Serbia to get a lay of the land and to provide whatever assistance might be needed. I was also there to set the stage for the international observation of the Serbian elections, which were scheduled for December of 1992. As in other countries, I would coordinate the observers from OSCE participating states and I’d be responsible for giving the organization’s initial report on whether or not the elections met our standards.

So well before the elections I and my colleagues met in Belgrade with the rather eclectic group of political party leaders – odd personalities like Vuk Draskovic and others. That was the first time I met Slobodan Milošević. It was interesting because he zeroed in on me as soon as he heard my name. He pronounced my name as a south-slavic name, with a soft “ch” instead of hard “k.” And he ignored the two more senior people who had ambassadorial titles.

He said, “Zetkulic, where are your people from?” I knew exactly where he was going because this is a part of the world where they genuinely believe that political loyalties are conveyed by DNA. And unfortunately, that's largely true. I said, “Well, from New Jersey, sir.” And he goes, “No, no, before New Jersey.” So I said, “Well, before New Jersey, it was New York.” And he goes, “No, where are your people from in Europe?” And I said, “Oh, I understand. Well, like many Americans, my blood comes from many different countries in Europe. From Germany, on my mom's side of the family. Switzerland, on my dad's side of the family. And where does my name come from? There’s a little town right outside of Prague.” Slightly exasperated, he just kind of mumbled, “Češko, u redu je”, which means “Czech, all right then.”

Of course, he wanted to make sure that I wasn't a Croat or, God forbid, a Bosnian. And the interesting thing is that later on—when we were doing negotiations over the years —there were a lot of times when he would talk about my name. I explained this all to Dick Holbrooke — when he was prepping to meet Milošević for the first time. You may recall that Dick had not met Milošević until after the London meetings. He was sort of pouting like Ulysses in his tent until the White House clarified his leading position as negotiator, which he deserved. But he had not yet met Milošević. So I spent a lot of time talking with him because I had actually spent quite a bit of time with the guy, first doing OSCE work and then as deputy to Charlie Thomas and later to Bob Frasure.

I told Dick: “There's this one thing that Milošević does. Like a good poker player, he can have a conversation with you or with other people at the table about any kind of topic that is well rehearsed. And he's not thinking about what he's saying. He's planning his next move. And one of the things he'll do is he'll talk about me, about my name, Zetkulic. And he'll say things like, oh, *kulik* is a Slav word for worker. He is a good worker. And *zet* is like a cousin or friend or brother.” And Dick said, “I get it.” I explained, “Dick, he's not thinking about what he's saying. He's using that opportunity to

plan ahead, to have a little mental break. Now, you can do one of two things. You can say, 'Shut up, I don't want to hear that, I've heard about Jack's name already.' Or you can say to yourself, 'Okay, I'm going to take that opportunity to think about my next move.'" So there were a lot of times in the conversation when Dick would say, "Oh really? Go on." And Milošević would go on with his talk about my name, or differences in Serbo-Croatian dialects, or whatever. And Dick would turn off his ears and use the time to plot and plan his next move. And other times Holbrooke would say, "I've heard that story before, let's get down to business." So this is how you have to really, really get to know someone and their little tactics.

Q: So what was that meeting like the first time? Was it in an official setting? At dinner? What was the setting?

ZETKULIC: We took over a suite at the Hyatt, which the Serbian police had wired for sound. The people would come in and talk with us. Then in other instances, if it was someone in government, we would go and meet them in their offices, which were very ornate. Rather like kabuki theater. Some of the opposition parties were just a cacophonous mess. And others were very stilted and others—they showed their personalities. Sometimes the group would fight with each other about who would get through the door first and tumble in and they'd all be talking at the same time. But when you talk to Milošević, from the first day I met him until when I was DCM [Deputy Chief of Mission] in Belgrade to talking to them about Kosovo for over eight-some-odd years, he was the only one that mattered. The other people accompanying him — they'd say things or he'd ask them to say something, but he was the only guy who counted. In all the other meetings, you'd have people talking among themselves. Well, at Dayton and in Zagreb Tuđman was kind of like that. Everyone would defer to Tuđman. But the Bosnians? Even when Izetbegović was in the room, other people would be chit chatting and talking over him and correcting him. But when it came to Milošević, he was the only one who mattered.

Q: Right. So that was like your first meeting with him?

ZETKULIC: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember afterwards, after you left the meeting, did you talk to somebody about what feeling you got or your take on Milošević ? Was there sort of "Oh gosh, he's a little bit weird or something?"

ZETKULIC: As an American diplomat seconded to OSCE, I had specific instructions not to seek or accept guidance from my home government. But I would always make a point to talk with whichever ambassador was in-country at the time who was the representative of the presidency, sorry, the Chairmanship and Office of the OSCE—if it was the Swede or the Swiss or whoever. And because I always had friends at the American embassies, I would always say hi and I would stop in and give them my impression of the meeting.

On a personal level, if I was going to Kazakhstan or whatever, I'd always send an O-I

cable, an official informal message, to anyone who was there saying, “Hey, do you want me to pick up anything for you?” You know, medicine, some chocolate, whatever. So there was a personal level, but on a professional level, I would say, “Hey, that guy was intense.” And with Milošević, he was always very focused. He had a very strange combination of both frailty and strength, because as a personality, he was very strong, but he never gave the impression of being physically well. He always had a throbbing vein in his forehead. He had back problems. He was not particularly healthy, but, but he always gave the impression of being someone who was very, very powerful and very robust. So, you know, his personality was strong, but his body, not so much.

Q: Let me ask you about the OSCE mission and those early days. Was there any involvement primarily regarding Bosnia or talks of what OSCE might do after the war concludes?

ZETKULIC: Yeah, that gets to the question that I focused on before, during, and after Dayton, which was the elections. OSCE, I think, had proved itself in a lot of small ways, especially regarding elections, which was my main focus, but also in preventive diplomacy, with the short and longer term missions serving as a safety valve, letting off pressure so that people could talk and, one would hope, find common ground. As a consensus-based international organization, it was not seen as intrusive – like an individual country or a bilateral embassy – or even like the United Nations, in some cases. And so OSCE was proving its worth from the time it became an “O”—an organization—in 1991 up through this period. And this was actually— Just last week I ran into a young diplomat who happened to be wearing a lanyard saying OSCE ODIHR [Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights]. And I said, “Oh, did you do election observation?” And we chatted. And I was commiserating with her how I did OSCE when it was fun.

In the time that I did it, at its very beginning, it was just kick-ass fun because we would go in and we'd see what was needed. People were helpful. Even the Russians—at that point—were appreciative of what we did. When we observed the Russian elections— I ran the international observation of the first Russian elections that were pseudo-democratic. They actually appreciated it, even the constructive criticism. Then very quickly, as we got into the late ‘90s, OSCE became hamstrung by the fact that it was a consensus-based organization. It was very, very hard to get anything done. The countries who wanted to hold the organization back were able to hold it back in committee meetings and with budget fights and at the higher political level as well. So it became less than it could have been, mainly because it couldn’t break away from its consensus based foundation.

Near the end of my OSCE tour, I met the United States Contact Group negotiator, Charlie Thomas, Ambassador Charlie Thomas. He had been our ambassador in Hungary. And I happened to have some meetings in Bonn, where he was visiting. And John Kornblum and others said that I should meet him there because he was looking for a deputy to come and work for him in the fall of ‘94—when I was scheduled to leave Warsaw. And it was kind of interesting because I got to meet Dick Holbrooke for the

first time who was then ambassador in Bonn. We went and chatted with each other. Charlie was there and we talked. He says, “Yeah, you're my guy. You know, come back in September and we'll get to work.” And I said, “What's our job?” He said, “I honestly don't know.” Because at that point, the Contact Group was expressing concern and gathering information and expressing concern again. It was driven by the Germans, the French, the Brits and us. They were trying to figure out what they could do to keep Bosnia from blowing up.

So in September of ‘94 I returned to Washington and jumped right into shuttle diplomacy. It's kind of funny, really, because over the next two years, I think I had three different job titles. First, I was what they called “Deputy Contact Group Negotiator,” which, I mean, there were only two of us and we had no direct-line staff. We had an office in EUR [Bureau of European Affairs] but I was traveling-–I mean, I was traveling like mad—with Charlie. And then Holbrooke made me "Coordinator of the Balkan Action Team.” He came up with that title on the spot. And then I became Deputy of EUR/SE [Bureau of European Affairs - Office of South Europe Affairs] once that office was created, working with Chris Hill. It was crazy.

Charlie and I traveled from September ‘94 and on, back and forth and back and forth. I mean, I'd go up to the security guy at Dulles and he'd say, “Did you pack your bag yourself?” And he'd look at me and go, “Oh, I already did you.” I said, “No, that was Tuesday.” You know, we would fly into Geneva and into Belgrade and into Sarajevo and then back to Paris and then to London and we'd go to all these talks— It was just months of jet lag. Charlie was a wonderful guy who was frustrated by the fact that he really had very little in the way of guidance. Because at that point, the United States had not yet made its genuine commitment to the diplomatic effort. And he was a sweet guy, a very smart guy. And interestingly, physically, he had some ailments. He couldn't taste or smell and he had a hearing aid too. His wife gave him a can in which there was a survival hood if you were in a fire. You pop it open and you have enough oxygen. She was afraid that because he didn't hear well and he didn't smell well, he would be stuck in a hotel fire somewhere. I used to joke with him, I’d say, “Charlie, if we're both in this plane crash and you're the only one with a can, are you the only one who's going to survive?” He goes, “Yep, that's it, I wouldn't want to get my wife mad at me.”

At that time, we would fly in and out of Sarajevo. We’d get shot at in helicopters. It was crazy. We were frustrated, as was everybody on the ground. We would see the extent to which the U.S. was not doing as much as it could, and how the international community was so hamstrung. I mean, I still remember seeing the United Nations representative, Akashi, hunched down in Sarajevo in the dirt—literally sitting in the dirt—trying to talk on a satphone, moving around the antenna to point it at the satellite saying, “Please, [whatever Serbian leader he was talking to or someone in Geneva or whatever saying], we really need to get to Belgrade or they're saying they can't guarantee our safety to get to the airport so can you please talk to someone?” And it was really embarrassing. Charlie segued out after a couple of months, and that's when Bob Frasure took over.

It was a really weird moment for me, because again, I'd been doing this crazy shuttling

with Charlie for a couple of months, and it was after eight o'clock at night, and Holbrooke had come in as the new Assistant Secretary. And he had these ideas about reorganizing the bureau. And of course, I'm in the office. It's eight o'clock at night, where else would I be? I got a call saying— Charlie was with me—he said, "Jack, we got to go up and see Dick." And I said, "Okay." John Kornblum was there, too. He was the PDAS [Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary] at that point. He was no longer in Vienna. He was back as the Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary. And the three of us, with me in the middle, walk into Dick Holbrook's office. The Lincoln Memorial's looking majestic and Dick's desk is still surrounded by all his still packed boxes. And as I walked in, I said, "Hello." And he goes, "Oh, Jack, nice to see you again"—because we'd met months before. He says, "Well I want you to know I really appreciate the work you're doing. I know you're doing really good work and I have every confidence in you in your new role." I'm not an idiot right? So I just said thank you and I kind of looked at John and I looked at Charlie and I said, "Thank you, thank you, sir. I appreciate your confidence in me."

We turned around and walked out the door and I looked at Charlie and John and I said, "What the hell just happened?" And John said, "You're the new coordinator of the Balkan Action Team." And I'm like, "What team? Who's on the team?" And Charlie, with a smile, says, "Well, right now it's just you." He said, "We're leaving on another trip in two days, and this will all fix itself up by the time we get back." And sure enough, we went off on another Contact Group negotiation. We were off in Bonn again, and when we got back a couple days later, Holbrooke had completely reorganized the Bureau and what was EUR/EEY [Bureau of European Affairs - Office of Eastern European and Yugoslavia Affairs]—Eastern Europe and Yugoslavia had been split up. Chris Hill, who had been one of the deputies in that office, had been one of the deputies in EEY, he was now the director of EUR/SCE [Bureau of European Affairs - Office of South Central Europe Affairs], South Central Europe, and I was his deputy. And also with the title of Coordinator of Balkan Action Team, whatever the hell that was. So I had to get a lot of business cards to hand out.

Very soon after that, I segued into mainly working with Bob Frasure, who had come back as the DAS [Deputy Assistant Secretary]. He had been our ambassador in Estonia. That's when I started traveling with Bob, mainly. And I just loved Bob. I mean, Bob was just the nicest guy, strong, a good diplomat. And the really cool thing is that he had worked in Africa. And he said, "You know, I understand tribalism." He had worked in places where people were killing each other, and he understood the depths of emotion that go into tribalism, and that's what he saw in the Balkans.

I'll just make an aside. There were so many people, so many American diplomats who had worked in the former Yugoslavia who were nostalgic for the former Yugoslavia and its independence, vis-a-vis the Soviet Union and were nostalgic for what it had once been. They were kind of like the people who didn't, who couldn't, understand that the Soviet Union fell apart when that happened. They were mentally stuck with all SFRY's history. And those of us who had not served in the former Yugoslavia, like Bob and some others, looked at it as a fresh and new challenge and we had no inspiration to try to

recreate something that existed before.

Q: Was there a clash between those two forces? Was it more the people influenced by U.S. actions during the earlier years or more younger people with different experiences coming in?

ZETKULIC: Yeah, There was a lot of reeducation of a lot of the people who had served previously in Yugoslavia, whose thoughts about the country and assumptions about the people that they were talking with did not coincide with the new reality of nationalism. And it's sad because Milošević effectively killed the old Yugoslavia, when he took advantage of nationalistic feelings after his *Kosovo Polje* speech— you know, "Never again, never again!"—and turned the country into the mess that it was. These nationalistic leaders made a series of short-term tactical decisions that met their short-term goals but, sadly, they had no long-term vision of their common future. You know, I think it could have been theoretically possible for the SFRY to stick together and even become the first former communist country to join NATO and the EU, but nationalistic leaders in ALL of the republics made bad decisions at every turn. And I think that those of us without too much experience in the old Yugoslavia could look at things through a more focused lens.

Q: Did you have to go through any training when you were moved into working on the Contact Group stuff and working with Holbrooke? Was there any training associated with it?

ZETKULIC: Zero. No, I mean, the fun thing is I have, since I retired, taught international negotiations. I've helped set up diplomatic academies overseas. I've taught at the university level. But in all my time in the Service no one ever taught me negotiations. This is the thing about the Foreign Service. I mean, if you go in the army, when you're not fighting, you're training and if you're not training, you're fighting. So you're training a lot of the time. The Foreign Service has traditionally been anti-training. And even in terms of languages, in some cases, they'll say, "Oh, you'll learn it at post." But, you know, FSI [Foreign Service Institute] is wonderful now at teaching languages, but it's— I was an associate dean at my last gig in the foreign service in the Leadership and Management School. And still it was painful to try to get bureaus to let someone be out away from the office for even a couple days to do training. I just jumped right in. And I had not studied the language of the region. I picked up some phrases here and there, and that certainly helped. I got to the point of being a successful tourist in Serbo-Croatian. But no, there was no training of any kind. It was like from one day to the next, you know, out of one job into the next.

Q: Do you remember when you arrived in Sarajevo for the first time during the war? What did it look like? What were your impressions?

ZETKULIC: Well, it was always an adventure. You would usually fly in. Sometimes in a C-130. Sometimes you'd go in with UNPROFOR [United Nations Protection Force] on one of their god-awful Ilyushins. Sometimes you'd go in on an executive jet, if we could pry one free from the U.S. military. Sometimes in a helicopter. Sometimes you'd be

wearing a helmet and a flak jacket, other times not.

The airport was surrounded by hills, as is all of Sarajevo. We learned to avoid flying in on weekends. It was especially on the weekends because the part-time Serb snipers would be out there on the weekends. If you're from New England, you'd say, "Oh, we go hunting on the weekend." But there, the Serbs would just go up in the hills, drink, and shoot at people from the hills. So the weekends were always a bad time for random shootings and sniping. Concerns about safety all the time, but that's what you do.

It's amazing when you'd see sometimes two, or even three, city buses piled up on top of each other—turned on their side and piled on top of each other by cranes—to serve as barriers against the snipers on the road into Sarajevo. It was hard. I mean, UNPROFOR was there but the mandate they had was so limiting. One time when I was flying in on, oh gosh, April? I do remember it, because it was April 19th, April 18th, of '95. I flew in with Bob Frasure and John Menzies. And we arrived in the afternoon and we were told that the Serbs had not, quote "guaranteed our safety into the city." Unquote. And the three of us ended up—and this is when John was arriving to be the ambassador—we ended up sleeping in a freezing shipping container in someone else's smelly sleeping bags overnight. We had to fly out the next day. We couldn't even go into town.

Q: So you were basically just at the airport, stuck there?

ZETKULIC: And John said, he pulled out the line, "I shall return." Which he did, eventually. But yeah, it was kind of embarrassing. Senior American diplomats who were not able to go and do their jobs. During that time, during that amazing two-year period, I would go to Sarajevo. Before I'd go there when I was doing OSCE work and when you're an international diplomat, it's not quite the same.

Q: Did you have problems with being an international diplomat and going there, Serbs, like saying, you're not an international, like questioning who you are?

ZETKULIC: Yeah. When traveling as an OSCE diplomat, they would tend to give us a little more respect. I wouldn't say respect. They were confused enough to be deferential. We had no security. I mean, when I was traveling as an OSCE diplomat, it was just a car, like a Lada Niva or an old Jeep or whatever. It would say OSCE on the side, and no one knew what that was. We'd go through a checkpoint, and at one point I remember one of the guards said, "You must be important. Yes, you must be so important that you don't need bodyguards." I would explain to them, I work for you as much as I do for any of the other member states of the OSCE. I work for everyone, like the United Nations. They'd say "Oh, okay, fine. Go."

During that, among the other duties that I had in the time that I was in EUR, I was sent multiple times out to post, to Sarajevo, to be the acting DCM. Even though I was the same age as some of the other desk officers like Phil Goldberg and Chris Hoh, I was higher ranking because I joined the service right out of college. And so at the time I was an FSO-2, a lieutenant colonel equivalent. As a result, when the desk officers would go out, they would be talking to people and they wouldn't get the same level of respect. So I

would go out when work needed to be done at a slightly higher level, and—it's a sensitive topic—but I would go out first.

I went out first as Acting DCM under Vic Jakovich, who was our first ambassador there. And it was an uncomfortable situation because—I think it was in February of ‘95—and EUR said, “Hey, Vic really needs some help.” It's a small embassy. They're quite literally living and working there, out of their offices. There's no housing or anything. Other people who visited there have said that he needs some help. I said, “Okay, fine. I'm happy to go and help.”

I flew into Zagreb, waiting to get an UNPROFOR flight to get into Sarajevo. Vic calls me up and says, “What the hell are you doing coming here?” I said, “Well, I'm coming in to be the acting DCM. I think you should have been informed about that.” He goes, “Well, no one told me.” I go, “Shit.”. I said, “Could you call Bob Frasure and he can tell you why I'm coming?” And then Bob basically said, “Just go.” He talked to Vic and said, “Listen, Vic, you know, it's a small embassy, you need help. Jack's coming in for a couple of weeks.”

The job of an American ambassador in Sarajevo at that time was mainly just being there. Being there and being a symbol and when needed passing information back and forth to the government. And at that point, again, we had not yet made the full commitment, the full-on, forceful commitment of diplomacy, which made work and life extremely frustrating. I shared Vic's frustration with that, as did we all, all of us who had been there on the ground. But again, coming from Washington, I understood why we had not yet made that commitment, and he did not. So I'd go there and the main work that I did when he was the ambassador there going into the early months of ‘95, it was mainly to be sort of a super-admin officer.

The first person that I met and I talked with was Pete Hargreaves. Pete was one of the guys who later rolled down Mount Igman, but he survived. He was the RSO, and he was at wit’s end. He said, “Jack, I'm really glad you're the acting DCM and not just like the acting political officer because I need help.” He said, “We need to build a bomb shelter. We get mortar shots here all the time and they're shooting at UNPROFOR next door and some of the stuff might hit us. We need a pre-det screen, you know, a pre-detonation screen over the part of the embassy where we live.” And I said, “Do it.” He goes, “What do you mean, just do it?” I said, “Just do it. Take the money. Do it.” He goes, “Well, no one's let me do it yet.” I said, “Just do it.” So I was actually out there helping the workers build a bomb shelter in the old downstairs garage of the temporary embassy building.

I was just someone to approve basic procedures that any embassy should have had in that awful situation. And on occasion, I would be the one to go and deliver a demarche or deliver an official communication to the government. And one of the most, I think it was probably one of the most illuminating conversations I had during that period was when— I forget why— At the time, we would fly back and forth, the people at the embassy in Sarajevo would be going back and forth to Vienna because it was such a

stressful experience. So they would work in Vienna for a week and a half and in Sarajevo for two or three weeks and then back and forth.

I think Vic was out of town at the time, and I guess you'd say that I was chargé, but I got a message from the Department to go in and talk with President Izetbegović. The message I was asked to pass along basically said, "Hey, listen, we have really, really good intelligence information indicating that the Serbs are going to go all in and take over the enclaves." This was TS codeword stuff. " So I went to see Izetbegovic. It was an evening meeting – as they often were. We'd often have late meetings. I went in and I laid it all out for him. Why? Clearly our goal in showing him that information was to get some flexibility from him and to find out where he might show some flexibility, or maybe compromise vis-a-vis the Bosnian Serbs, because the Bosnians were in an indefensible position, especially in the enclaves. And his response to me was chilling.

He just looked at this information. We're talking about 200,000-some-odd people who would be conquered. God knows what would happen to them in the enclaves. He said, "You know, Mr. Zetkulic, if a soldier loses an arm, he can still fight with the other arm." Then I realized, he is as much of a nationalist as Tuđman or Milošević or anybody else. This is a person who thinks of a people in national terms – not a nation made up of individuals to whom he is responsible as their democratic elected leader. It was scary and I reported it back to the Department saying, "He just accepted the information and didn't say much of anything else. That was it." It says a lot about that part of the world where you think in terms of groups. There's your group and someone else's group; you're a member of a group instead of individuals. That said a lot.

After the debacle of us sleeping in our sleeping bags at Sarajevo Airport when I flew in with Bob and John, John was the ambassador starting April 18th, April 19th, something like that in Sarajevo. And I flew in to be his deputy, his acting DCM, a couple times. And that was very different because again, you're getting into the springtime, and things were changing.

John understood: He was a symbol and he was a conduit of information. He was the senior reporting officer. He was not a cheerleader for the Bosnians. He did not commiserate with them. He was a symbol of American commitment. And he pushed the symbol thing, for sure. He would walk around town all the time, and when I was there I would walk around with him. Even if there were mortars coming in, he would walk around town. And it was funny, because John—I love the guy—his family was Mormon. So, no cigarettes, no alcohol, no caffeine. And he said, "You know, Jack, I got to tell you, in college I did all that stuff. But then, you know, I got married, I got out of school, I got married, had kids, and I don't do any of that stuff now. But here in Sarajevo, everyone's offering me coffee and everyone's offering me cigarettes and everyone's offering me *slivovica* or *rakija* or drinks like that." And he goes, "I talked to my elders and they said, coffee is okay."

I was with him the first time that he sat— You'd go walk down the street and the merchants would say, "Come into my house, come into my store, oh, here have some."

And they would give him these little—they would call it Turkish coffee—*Turska kafa*. And I was with him the first time he drank it. It was this powerful coffee, I mean, it's got a lot of kick. I love the stuff. I was with him the first time he had coffee in something like a decade. It was like seeing a heroin addict. His eyes lit up. He said, "Oh man, I'm going to get way too used to this."

But John would walk up and down the street and people would walk up to him and give him a hug. Because they knew that at that point, the U.S. was inching toward making a commitment. Of course, we didn't get to the point when we were able to do that until after the Mount Igman tragedy. But there were various other contributing factors.

It was a weird time to be at the embassy because, I'd be in my office and I would clear off my desk at night and I would blow up my air mattress. I'd put the air mattress on my desk and I'd grab my sleeping bag and I'd go to sleep. And then if there was an attack coming in, I'd go downstairs to the bomb shelter that I had helped build a couple months before. And John would be around the corner. We had one computer, like a big old fashioned Wang computer. Or no, it wasn't Wang, it was one step above Wang. And he—it was so hilarious–would play the game *Civilization*. Now think about that. Think about the juxtaposition. He's in a country that's being destroyed. And as he's playing this game, happily announcing that he had put in the sewer system in his computer town. It was how he would unwind at the end of a crazy day.

Q: Was the old embassy like containers? Because I heard stories that it was basically made out of containers and stuff.

ZETKULIC: Oh, no, no, no, no. It was an old building. We did have some containers on the side. But the challenge is that we were right next to UNPROFOR. And the building itself, we had a lot of— I can see how someone would think that it was containers because there were a lot of big metal shields that were put up around the outside. Then there were some shipping containers that were put into the garage around which we built the little bomb shelter that we had, and that everyone would go and hide in.

The place to hang out was the basement, because the basement was the most comfortable and most nominally secure place. So the DSS [Diplomatic Security] guys would be down there. They made up the majority of the U.S. staff. We'd watch videos. I think they watched that movie Groundhog Day 100 times on the VCR. They would just hang out in the basement because even though the roof and the third floor and the second floor probably wouldn't provide that much cover, you still felt safer in a basement. And that's where people would hang out.

Q: Were you guys afraid of walking on the street? Did you just avoid evenings? Or was it more like you would leave and then come back where it was more on a regular basis that you were free to move?

ZETKULIC: People had different approaches. There were some people who would— I swear the lady who was the PAO [Public Affairs Officer] never left the building and then

she would just go to the airport and fly out to Vienna and spend as much time in Vienna as possible and then fly in and then come back and just be in the building. Other people, like John and others, would walk around. You know, you would have to get out. Otherwise you'd go kind of crazy. You do take some risks that you would not take normally. But you can't just stay in your little hovel the whole time.

Q: So you were there when stuff started going bad, right? During Srebrenica summer? Meaning the marketplace shelling earlier that year.

ZETKULIC: Yeah, yeah. Well, the marketplace— Well, there were the two big marketplace bombings. Have you heard of the phrase "Sarajevo Rose"?

Q: Yeah, it's the shell stuff, right? The blood and it's still like right on.

ZETKULIC: I had never heard of the science of craterology before, but the UNPROFOR guys had a craterologist who would come when the mortar would hit and analyze what angle it came in at and they would figure out, "Oh, it came from the Serbs." Well, they always came from the Serbs. But the Serbs would say, "Oh, it was the Muslims who shot the mortar straight up and it came back down again." In order to be martyrs. Well, no.

The Sarajevo Rose is called the Sarajevo Rose because it actually looked like a flower. There were holes in the concrete spreading out which would fill with the blood of the people who had been killed or injured and it would be all red. And so the craterologist— The first market bombing and then the second one, the second market bombing was what really turned the tide. I think there were 37 or 38 people who died in that one.

I've been shot in four countries in the foreign service. In Kosovo, Bosnia, Tajikistan, and the Republic of Georgia. And in each case, I'm the guy who's walking around saying, "Hey, is something going on?" I have no situational awareness. I can't learn that skill. And others would be diving under the furniture, I'd be walking around going, "What's going on?" But you have to still do your job and you have to walk around and show the flag. Sometimes it can get kind of crazy, especially when there's nowhere to hide.

One time that I was there, the lady who was the chair of the National Intelligence Council had visited to share information with the Bosnian government and show the flag. Very smart, very nice lady. And she was scheduled to fly out the day after her meetings. And there was only one

flight that day. That was the flight that was a C-130. And, as chance would have it, that was the flight that I was also scheduled to fly out to Split, and then onward to Zagreb and Frankfurt and home. And crazily, the newspaper, the main newspaper, *Oslobođenje*, printed the fact that she had had meetings. The government was very proud of the fact that this high-ranking American intelligence official had been there to share information with the Bosnian government, and then they said, "She's leaving

tomorrow." Well, there was only one C-130 leaving that day. So the Serbs with their sniper rifles were very happy to just take pot shots.

We're all climbing onto the C-130, and we're strapped up. You know, you sit along either side of the fuselage. Then all of a sudden. I hear a "ch-ch, ch-ch-ch-ch, ch-ch-ch-ch." I said, "Oh, I guess the engines are shooting pebbles up at us or something." And meanwhile, I look up and everyone else is like crawling around the floor trying to hide—nowhere, because there's nowhere to hide. They're like, "Get down Jack, they're shooting at us." The pilot guns it and goes straight up as fast as he can to get away from them. When we landed in Croatia, we walked outside and, sure enough, there were bullet holes all over the side of the plane where we had been sitting. And that's the kind of thing, that's another thing I don't want to tell my family about having happened.

Q: So the Serbs didn't care that diplomats were on that flight? Meaning they were just shooting at people?

ZETKULIC: No, that was the goal. They said, "Oh, it's a senior American official. Let's kill her."

Q: Right. But would that trigger a response? Were they just trying to test the waters?

ZETKULIC: I think you're thinking of them being much more organized than they are or than they were. There was a lot of stuff there. There were a lot of awful things that happened there that just happened. There was no direction involved. The crazy snipers are crazy snipers. Mortars are a bit different because that's the actual military. But some of the guys were out there with just hunting rifles.

Q: So, it was a pretty dangerous place. You were basically living the same life as everybody else in the city. You were under siege. Regardless of whether you were a diplomat living under the protection of international law, it was hard.

ZETKULIC: Yeah. That creates a bond. Unfortunately, in some cases, it also makes you identify more than you should with a local population instead of having that professional distance like a doctor would have with a patient or a diplomat should have with a foreign government. When you're in that enclave and you're being attacked from the outside, you naturally have a sense of commonality with the people that you're living with.

Q: Was that hard? You had orders. You're saying certain things to the government, saying "We can't do this and that." You might have advocated for it or something. Was there a little bit of pushback? Would it change you as a person?

ZETKULIC: There was some anger. I know that Ambassador Jakovich was, to a certain extent, discounted by the U.S. government in the last few months that he was there. It was uncomfortable, for him and for everybody else. The thing is, he was right. But he was early. I mean, he was right in the fact that everything he felt about what was happening was correct. But his government in Washington was not yet ready to make a

commitment. There were things that had not happened yet that would allow us to do what we wanted to do. What many of us wanted.

I shared his frustration, but I also recognized that we had a government that was talking about the *peace dividend*. It's the end of the Cold War and we had a president who was focused on domestic stuff. But there were a bunch of things that had not happened yet. The most important were the things that led to Dayton and made Dayton possible that were not all from the United States. There were just things that happened in the region like the Croatian offensive.

Like when the Croatian forces overran Knin and created something like a hundred thousand Serb refugees. It was interesting because Milošević didn't do anything. We thought, hey, maybe Milošević does react to and does take into account force. And then there was the formation of the Federation, which was really, really important. On our part, on the US side, there was the realization that the Europeans weren't up to the job.

Then you get to domestic American politics. There was Clinton's concern that the peace dividend was going to be lost. He wouldn't be able to attain any of his domestic priorities if the situation would become so bad that the United States would have to go in on the ground. If you had this massive flood of refugees, it was better to get involved sooner rather than later because later would be much more expensive in terms of treasure, blood, you name it.

Then there was Mount Igman. And then there was the second marketplace mortar attack. This is where the simple, emotional factor of shame comes in. That's when the U.S. could not be seen as emasculated, or as unwilling to help others. When Mount Igman happened, our delegation had to travel by land rather than by air, because Milošević "couldn't guarantee" —that phrase I hear all the time in my head— "couldn't guarantee their safety." When we brought Bob Frasue and his colleagues back, when we brought their bodies back, and we had the—

Q: Were you a part of that? Meaning you were not on Mount Igman?

ZETKULIC: It was actually interesting. I was in the rotation to travel. I traveled with Bob quite a bit. I was in the regular rotation and I got pulled out of the rotation at the end of July, I think it was? Maybe the beginning of August? I'm not sure. I had a herniated disc because I'd been traveling around so much in armored personnel carriers and flying in helicopters that my back gave out and I had to have an operation. So I was out of the hospital, I was doing PT and stuff, but I was still going to work. I was in Washington when Mount Igman happened, which was awful. And we brought, I guess that was—trying to get my dates right—

Q: That was August. If I'm not mistaken, it was around August 20th.

ZETKULIC: I will tell you in a second— Wait— Yeah, yeah— It was August 19th. The shuttle, the real shuttle that Dick Holbrooke sent out, started on August 15th. Then August 19th was the accident. August 21st was when they flew back the bodies to

Andrews Air Force Base. August 22nd was when we had the memorial service at Fort Meyer. And I mean, I live a mile from Fort

Meyer. I still think about it when I drive by. When Bob Frasure's wife couldn't speak, their daughter, their young daughter, stood up in the church in front of the President, the Secretary of State, and the Secretary of Defense and all these other people and said, "My dad is never going to make happy face pancakes for me anymore. My dad is never gonna tuck me in anymore." This is a young teenage girl. She talked about all the things she loved about her dad. Then she looked right at the President of the United States and said, "If my dad died in vain, shame on you."

I mean, we were just sitting there saying, "You go girl." She was speaking for everybody. Because at that point, the U.S. had not pulled out the chocks and said, "Go, go." And that's when, after that, Clinton said, "Okay, guys." The team, the national security team, went into the pastor's office afterwards. Being a good political officer, I'm standing outside the door. And Chris Hill was in there—I'm sure you'll talk with him and others who are in the room.

Q: That's that famous photo of them?

ZETKULIC: The famous photo. Yeah, yeah. The conversation basically came down to them saying, "All right. We're done. We're in. We're in. We're going to make this happen." That is, I think— People don't, you know— When you teach international affairs, you think about logic, you think about economics, and you think about force projection, all these other things, but you cannot leave out the emotional factor. This was something that was deeply emotional. These were our friends, and they were State Department, they were Department of Defense, and they were good people who died because the United States was unwilling to push, to say, "Okay, no, we're gonna get in a helicopter, and if you shoot that helicopter, we'll shoot back." No, they were on that road and it was an unsafe situation.

Even after the fact there were a lot of people pointing fingers, I remember reading the draft report that the United Nations put together where one of the French drivers was complaining that Holbrooke was telling them to drive too fast. You know, "Vite, vite, vite," because Holbrooke spoke French. I'm like, "No. It wasn't because they were driving too fast. It was because it was an unsafe road that they shouldn't have been on in the first place." And people died. And then, you know, you had Fort Meyer, and six days later, Dick Holbrooke is on his way to the Balkans.

And again, I mean, within days, August 28th, you had the second marketplace mortar attack. Thirty-seven people died. And it wasn't self-inflicted by the Muslims. It was the Serbs who did it. Mortars are not controlled by individuals, they're not snipers. That's the military. Then, of course, NATO started bombing Serb positions and stores as a result of the marketplace bombing. They started bombing the Serb positions right after the marketplace bombing. I think it was within two days. That went on until the middle of September, I think September 14th. And that, I think, inspired the different sides to say,

okay, we're going to get serious about talking.

Q: Prior to that summer when you were in Sarajevo, were you guys working with the Europeans? Cy Vance, David Owen, did you see those guys walking in, walking out of the city?

ZETKULIC: Yeah, mainly the UN side. It was, like I mentioned, Akashi, who was singularly unimpressive. And the Europeans who we met looked like runners who had just about finished a marathon and were ready to just hand off the baton to us. They had reached the frustrating point where they were ready to be done.

Q: Right. There was that whole talking about pulling the troops out, meaning the UNPROFOR moving out of Bosnia prior to the summer. The French were saying it's over. There was a conversation about Americans going in. People were asking, "Do we go in and we try to help them move out so that they leave happily, basically without any attack."

ZETKULIC: Yeah, well, in going back, there were different phrases that you'd hear all the time. Like in the fall of '94, it was "lift and strike" as a possibility. And then it was "lift and strike and invade," basically. But there were very few options at that point that would be anyway, what you would call peaceful. It would be force projection.

Q: So were the Serbs already putting all those UNPROFOR forces, chaining them, around the military targets, poles, whatever they were using? Was that around that summertime or was it at a later point?

ZETKULIC: About the same time, I think. Yeah.

Q: Because that was the other thing they were doing, correct? They would kidnap people and just tie them around.

ZETKULIC: Oh yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

Q: So you were an acting DCM for how long?

ZETKULIC: Oh no, I was in and out. I'd go there for like two weeks at a time. So most of my time I was either in Washington or flying back and forth to Europe and occasionally in Sarajevo as acting DCM.

Q: So whenever you were there, you were an acting DCM and whenever you were in DC, you would be just a coordinator?

ZETKULIC: Yeah, the phrase "Coordinator of the Balkan Action Team" is kind of silly. I was Chris Hill's deputy. But the thing is that it was a traditional State Department office. We had John Burley, Phil Goldberg, Chris Hoh. We had desk officers, I was the deputy, and Chris was the office director. I always felt that it was, you know, a very horizontal team in that we would all support whoever was going on the next trip. It was very collegial. It was a really strong team and the people were all just really focused on

getting the job done.

Q: So we're now in August. The shuttle begins. Now we're in September. Were you part of those shuttles in September? Are you going with Holbrooke anywhere or you were primarily in Washington?

ZETKULIC: Both.

Q: So did you go to Belgrade in September? I think it was September 11th. ZETKULIC: I'm trying to remember. I'm going to scribble a note down to myself. *Q: Because I think it was September 11th when that famous meeting happened when the Bosnian* 16

Serbs emerged—they were at the same place where Milošević and Holbrooke were having a meeting— and they just emerged, they shuttled them over and they had that impromptu conversation and negotiation.

ZETKULIC: I do remember that. I don't think I was there for that. But what became very, very clear was that—and Holbrooke appreciated this very, very well—the Bosnian Serbs, when it came to the final negotiations, would not have a say. They would be along for the ride.

Q: Was that, did that change over the course of summer or was it like the same policy prior? Because my understanding was that until we took over, during those early days, there were negotiations with Bosnian Serbs and then Holbrooke comes in and says we're not negotiating with Bosnian Serbs. They are criminals. We're talking to Belgrade.

ZETKULIC: We're talking about the negotiations process and everything leading up to it. When I was in Belgrade as DCM, Dick Holbrooke came through. He started doing the Kosovo negotiations, which eventually ended up in us evacuating post after two drawdowns to essential staff. So he gave me a copy of his book, To End A War. I had to show you one thing to provide some validity to whatever it is I'm telling you. He wrote in the dedication, "To Jack Zetkulic, with my thanks for your assistance, service and friendship—to someone who knows the parts that we left out." So, it's like, yeah, there's a lot of stuff that happened that's not in the book. Of course, it didn't happen if it was outside his eyesight, but that's the whole megalomaniac thing with him.

Q: There is a lot of stuff that is unknown in that book…

ZETKULIC: Dick was a force of nature. There were things about him that people would find exasperating, but he was definitely the right person for this job.

Q: You said you met him when he was in Bonn while he was ambassador to Germany, right? So what were your impressions of him at that point? Can you describe that a little bit?

ZETKULIC: I think— I just— He's the kind of person—very smart, there was a physicality to him. I think that it was very helpful that he had been in the foreign

service, even though it was for a brief time, and he had seen negotiations upfront, especially in Paris. He, I think the phrase that he would always use, and I really learned a lot from that, was, “When it comes to negotiations like this, you don't dance to the words, you dance to the music.” There is a feel, when to hit it versus when to hold back.

He was not only negotiating with foreigners, he was also negotiating with his own government. And even with his own colleagues, simple things like with what I worked on, elections, Annex III. Madeleine Albright, who was at the UN, kept pushing to have the United Nations be the organizer of the Bosnian elections. And Dick was like, “No, it's going to be the OSCE.” And the US military was very reticent. They had no interest whatsoever in putting boots on the ground in the Balkans. They're like, “No way, we don't want to do that.” And they never really did until after they handed over the U.S. Air Force to Kosovo.

And in the White House— Early on there was this thing about, “Oh, is Tony Lake going to be doing the negotiations or is Dick?” I don't think there was really any question. He would push the issue or pull back or push or pull back to the point where he knew that he would have the

authority, that he would not only get the job, but he would have authority to make decisions on his own.

And when we were at Dayton, it was his show. We were told, “You don't talk to anybody.” I have people that still don't like me because I told them on the phone, “I can't talk to you.” They said, “What? We're friends.” I said, “I can't talk to you.” “We're colleagues.” “ I can't talk to you.” “ I'm higher ranking than you.” “I can't talk to you.” Because it was his show. And I wrote a lot of memos like, update on this, update on that, update on this, and I would give them to him, and then he would pass them along to the White House or wherever, but it was a very tight little organization that he ran. And the way he interacted—

He was able to project a level of strength and commitment to our international interlocutors like the Serbs, the Croats, whoever, that I don't think was entirely backed up by the U.S. leadership, especially when it came to ultimately the use of military force, a genuine commitment, economic commitment, and all the rest. These people, they sense weakness. They're very good at figuring out the chinks in the armor. They're diplomats in that region, political leaders in that region. They're used to punching above their weight in boxing terms.

Think of how the Yugoslavs were so good at balancing East and West for the whole Cold War. They were good at that. And all the people that they were going up against, the Soviet Union, were all bigger powers, but they were able to maintain a lot of their independence. Give a little, take a little, give a little, take a little, take a little more. But Holbrooke was able to project a feeling of power that wasn't always there and commitment that wasn't always there in Washington.

Q: Do you remember him during the shuttle? Was he pretty much just doing his theater, moving along? How was he negotiating with people? When he was going to Belgrade, when he was going to Zagreb, when he was going to Sarajevo, was he changing tactics? Was he engaging with the media? What was his style during that period of time?

ZETKULIC: Well, he was really good at working with the media, especially not telling them anything, but giving the impression that he had. He would walk into a gaggle of reporters and television cameras and they'd say, "What's going on?" And he'd say, "Well we just came from

Belgrade and we had this really important meeting with President Milošević in the presidential palace and today we're going to the presidential palace in Zagreb and we're gonna have these really important meetings." He would just talk all about the schedule and then walk away and they're like, "He didn't tell us anything. We already knew what the schedule was."

He would walk up to reporters and he'd say things like, "I read your report on such and such. That was really good." He was really good at sucking up. I mean, at flattering people who were surprised and would make sure to include that in their reporting. Then in the background, he would do a lot of backgrounders with George Packer. If you're from one of the outlets that he cares about, he would talk to you. On the understanding that if you ever let any of this out, he'll never talk to you again, that sort of thing. So he was very good at working with journalists. And then with talking to foreign leaders, there was a sort of a physicality of just grabbing a hand, good firm handshake, hand on the shoulder, and a directness that I think was very, very, very powerful.

Q: Do you remember him talking to Milošević during those shuttles at the palace? Do you remember him talking to Milošević at the palace over in Belgrade? He talks about in his book that always there was the same food, the same thing, the same type of a conversation spinning around and moving along.

ZETKULIC: Yeah. These were marathon sessions. If we were going to a 10 a.m. meeting, we would expect to be there for six hours. I mean, and it could be two, but it wouldn't be short.

Q: Was there substance at all? Were you talking substance for those six hours or was it just handshakes?

ZETKULIC: It would start with us walking into the room, you know, with cameras and lights, handshakes. We would know in advance, are we smiling today? Are we not smiling today? Usually we weren't. Then there was always, who'd you just talk to? What were they talking about? Oh, you just met with Izetbegović. And then Milošević would tell a story about something that happened fifteen years ago. Or Milošević would talk about something that happened when he was in New York as a banker. He called himself a banker. He was a politician, and he didn't know about economics, but he would talk like he did. Then they would exchange some stories. Then there was a back and forth.

Then he would talk about what was going to happen. Then they'd say, “Well, look at the time, you must be hungry.” The doors would open up and there'd be this table laden with Danube bottom feeding fish and big chunks of lamb. And we'd sit there and we'd have our meal. And then they would toast every now and then. The meetings would just go on and on. We’d just keep talking. The Milošević meetings would be three, four, five times as long as the meetings with Izetbegović or Tuđman? The Tuđman meetings were just kind of like, okay. Because Tuđman had already gotten everything he wanted on the ground with his soldiers. So he was just like, “I'm here to protect what I've got.” And with Izetbegović, there was always talk about history, talk about religion, talk about everything. And, “Oh, we're martyrs, please help us.” But the Milošević talks were really the center of any trip.

Q: So how did you get to work on election stuff? Was that because of your OSCE work? Or had you already started moving into that gradually?

ZETKULIC: It was as soon as we realized that— Oh gosh, when did I go up to New York? Dick sent me up to New York to meet with Haris Silaidjic and the Bosnians. I can get the date for you on that. He asked me to go up and see where they were. I came back and said, “They're nowhere. They're not ready.” When we knew that we were going to have a big negotiation, at that point we hadn't decided it would be Dayton, that's when we started to say, “Okay, we're gonna write the entire package beforehand: All the annexes, everything, tabs, and the constitution, the election, the military structures, local government, federal government structure is a confederation, is a federation.” We were going to put the entire thing together in this big thick document with lots of annexes.

We had to present it to the Bosnians beforehand and ask them what they wanted and show them because they were not ready to do that themselves. If we had started the whole negotiation without anything written down beforehand, we would, one, never have gotten to a conclusion, and two, it would have taken us a year to not get there. So annex three of the elections, we had several people who were elections experts—I was one of the people involved—putting together, in the case of elections, a relatively short annex, unlike, say, the constitution, which Roberts Owen and other people were working on and the governmental structures. And it very quickly, because I had helped, because I'd run the OSCE elections office and I had helped all these governments with elections, including in Bosnia beforehand and in Serbia, that I would be the one to focus a lot on annex three once we got to Dayton, or wherever the negotiations might be.

We knew from the very, very beginning, or I knew at the very, very beginning, what the big open questions would be. Would it be the OSCE or the UN? We figured out it would be the OSCE. And what would be the role? Would it be assisting and monitoring or would it be supervising? Assisting, monitoring, drafting, and supervising. And certifying. There's a spectrum of intrusiveness and we wanted it to be as intrusive as possible. And the other big issue was absentee voting. Early on we knew that the Serbs would be very much against the idea of absentee voting because potentially they could lose in a vote what they had gained on the battlefield. That people would go back, would

vote, in the towns that they had been in two years prior. Those were the two big issues and did not get solved until the day before the signing ceremony.

Q: So was there a decision meeting that had to be written before the negotiations? Did you guys say, "Okay, we're gonna do that earlier," and it was already known that the agreement was going to be negotiated during the shuttles and worked out before you got to Dayton?

ZETKULIC: As much as could be done during the shuttles was done before Dayton. There were huge chunks of the agreement that were agreed to effectively beforehand, but no, not officially. So much of the discussion in Dayton revolved around a map and then issues like elections and constitution and power sharing that had to go up to the very highest level.

Q: So do you remember when you went to Dayton? Did you arrive there on November 1st?

ZETKULIC: Yeah, we all went out together.

Q: You guys were all together and arrived at the same time. So you were not part of the advanced team going in?

ZETKULIC: No, no, no, no. You're familiar with the whole choice of Dayton thing. The driving factors were cost. It had to be on a military base because the U.S. State Department didn't have any money.

Q: Were there any other discussions regarding any other place in the world?

ZETKULIC: Yeah, no, the Europeans were talking about places like Geneva and Paris. We said, "Are you gonna pay for that?" But we didn't want that because we didn't want the negotiators to get comfortable. We wanted them to be in a moderately accommodating situation where they would not want to be forever. And if they were in Geneva, they'd want to stay for months. And so the things driving our decision on the location were cost, probably a military base because then you'd have security and you wouldn't have to have, you know, pay for hotels and stuff like that. And one roughly no more than an hour from Washington so you have flights being nearby the airport.

I had originally suggested Governor's Island in New York because it was separate from the city, it's on an island, and it was a then soon-to-be-decommissioned Coast Guard base. I had actually done training there years before when I was in the Civil Air Patrol and I knew it. I suggested it to Dick and he said, "No, no, we can't be in New York." I said, "Why? It's an island, you know, we'll have complete access, we'll control who comes in and goes out." He goes, "You don't understand, Jack. You know Milošević would swim through iceberg filled waters to get to Manhattan to get to a television camera and a good restaurant." I was like, "Okay, okay." And then John Burley, who was our Serbia desk officer, was originally from Dayton. And he said, "Hey, my brother is posted there. He knows it and he said they just went through a renovation." We sent John

out and he came back with a description of it and we're like, hey, perfect, that's it.

They had this wonderful square of four buildings around the parking area and then another building sticking out north and they were on two levels. Very modest. Cement blocks like a basic motel, you know, kind of a bachelor officer's quarters kind of a place. And you'd have an American building, a Bosnian building, a Serbian building, a Croat building, and then the building sticking out sort of geographically, but also, you know, politically separate, the Europeans and the Russians would be in that. And they started it up just fine. The Air Force did a great job. And they fixed it up very quickly for us. So that's why we ended up in Dayton. It was just slightly more than an hour flight. So it was perfect.

I flew in at the very beginning to set things up, to help set things up. That's when we realized— I mean, there were, on the very first day— This is where I give Warren Christopher a great amount of praise, because on the very first day, we thought that there were two things that would indicate the level of seriousness of the negotiators. The first one was, they always would fight about the

fact that they spoke three different languages when they didn't. You know, they say, I speak Croatian, I speak Bosnian, I speak Serbian. It's the same language. I mean, there are a couple words that are different. Like “bread” in each dialect is different (“kruh” versus “hleb”). But it’s the same language. They all get along fine, linguistically. When the group walked in and they looked over at the translation booths and they saw “English” and then “BCS,” whatever, English and Serbo-Croatian, they did not complain. Because they could have used that as an excuse, saying “I'm offended by the fact that you're saying I'm speaking Serbian when I'm really speaking Croatian.” And each one of them looked over at the translation booths and kind of went, “Yeah, whatever.”

The second big question up front was: are they gonna shake hands? And they walked in and they sat down. And Warren Christopher, little teeny tiny Warren Christopher. You know, I mean, the exact opposite of Dick Holbrooke when it comes to physicality and negotiating style and everything else, he pulled the three presidents together and physically urged them: “Come on stand up, come on stand up, shake hands.” I know for a fact that that handshake picture saved lives because people I knew on the ground in Bosnia were saying, “We're not getting shot at as much now.” Once the talks started, once that picture of the handshakes at the beginning on the first day was seen in the region and around the world, that really meant a lot because it said, “Hey, these guys are serious. We might actually end this war.” It was not a certainty, but it was hopeful. And I think that was, you know, that was greatly to Christopher’s credit.

Q: Do you remember when you arrived there, the sense there was? I heard from people that were Air Force people that were on the base that said, “Oh, it was an impossible peace. It's probably not going to happen.” People were a little bit depressed. Then things started changing and it became more possible. Was there something behind all that?

ZETKULIC: It was so protected and it was so separate from the outside world that I couldn't even tell you what other people were thinking. We heard, but we didn't experience it. We were so focused on what we were doing that the outside world almost didn't exist for us.

Q: So you were optimistic? Pretty much like, we're gonna get this done. We're gonna get to the finish line.

ZETKULIC: I think that the general feeling was we were gonna get something, but we didn't know what. And that's why up until the last minute, they were drafting a failure statement.

Q: Can you talk a little bit about how the negotiations were going on throughout? At Dayton, what was the schedule? Where were you guys? What were you guys doing? Who was doing what? What was sort of a typical day?

ZETKULIC: Gosh, the days were long. I did not—did I ever leave? I think I left the compound, the negotiating compound, twice. One night we went bowling at the base, and it was in the base. We never left the base. And once I went to the PX [Post Exchange], and that's where we found the members of the Serb delegation buying rifles. We reported that and said, "Nope, give them back. We're not going to do the opposite of lift and strike." Some of the senior people, like Milošević and others, would go into town. There was an Italian restaurant that they went to once or twice, but most of the time we were just in the compound. The only time that we— I went out once at Dick's request to say hello to a couple of the Albanian-American protestors who were there complaining about Kosovo. I said hello and chatted with them briefly as I think a couple others did too. And basically we said, "We understand what you're here for. We're solving Bosnia now. We'll get to you." But that was about it.

I went swimming. I swam at the pool twice. Wes Clark would go swimming every morning early. Even if he hadn't slept that night, he would go swimming. I did laps with, I think, Wes, once. But that was it. Most times it was really first thing in the morning until you go to sleep at night. Each of us had a different role. Again, my specific role was: I was helping John Kornblum handhold the Europeans. I was working a little bit with Michael Steiner, but not much, because the Federation stuff was pretty much done. I was working on elections and Annex 3, and then doing everything else that just popped up. I was like a utility infielder.

Our people were focused very much on— The desk officers would work with their respective countries. Our ambassadors who were there, like Peter Galbraith and John Menzies and all, would spend a lot of their time sort of chit-chatting with the different delegations. They had very different personalities. Talking with the Croatians, it's like, man, you know, Tuđman was himself and happy and didn't have much to say. The Bosnians, they were just jabbering all the time talking about a million different things in a completely uncoordinated way. And the Serbians, they were just pretty much: "Oh, what's the boss say?" That's how they referred to Milošević, as the boss. I don't know,

whatever the boss says is what the boss says.

Peter Galbeth spent time with Tuđman when Tuđman was there, because Tuđman went back and forth. We had military guys there. We had this wonderful two-star general from the Defense Mapping Agency who brought in this massive—now you could probably fit it on a chip—but it was a computer brain the size of a refrigerator laid on its side. And that's where we had the three dimensional maps that we were looking at, the fifty-one/forty-nine split of territory. You could actually have a little joystick and fly over the roads and see which hill is going to be Serbian and which hill is going to be Bosnian.

Q: Was Milošević the one who enjoyed that? I think that was in Holbrooke's book.

ZETKULIC: Yeah, he thought it was the coolest thing. And there were times when it didn't, there were times when that awful man, Koljević, would say, "This is important, this is important, this is important, this little piece of territory is important." I said, "That's where his farm is." We're like, "We don't care about his farm, and neither does Milošević." Because Milošević, his disregard, his dismissiveness to the Bosnian Serbs became so apparent over time. Let's just say without, you know, divulging any secrets, we knew how he talked to them. And it was not in a respectful way. He was totally dismissive of them. Knowing that was very helpful when we got to the discussions that I was involved in on elections. I can go into that now if you want.

A lot of this is in the Dayton history project, but some is not—the two issues, the OSCE's role, and absentee voting. I was going back and forth with the Bosnians, especially about absentee voting. I'd talk to them just about every day. I sent a status report to Dick on the 16th and then another status report that Jim Pardue passed to Secretary [William] Perry, I guess, on the 17th. And then Warren Christopher came into town. He stopped briefly on his way to Osaka and then came back three days later on the 17th. He came in the evening of the 17th. And then that wacky guy, Chris Spiro, who had the lobster dinner, the famous lobster dinner with the Tomahawk missile pointing at Milošević. You've heard that story. He gave another lobster dinner, a smaller version, for Milošević, that evening. And then on Saturday, November 18th, we were shuttling back and forth. Christopher himself was shuttling back and forth between the delegations to talk about elections. And then through the day, we came to no agreement on absentee voting.

On Sunday, November 19th, that's when Dick had his whole packing the bags thing. You've heard about that, right? He told everyone to pack their bags and lay them out like we're going to leave in disgust. All the Balkans realized that was just a show. But that's when, I mean, it was a fascinating day for me because I had passed along where we are as far as where we could get on elections. You know the famous Ambrose Bierce line that "A diplomat is an honest man sent abroad to lie for his country"? This was honestly the only time, I think it was the one time I lied as a diplomat.

We went into the meetings and we knew that the Bosnian Serbs hated the idea of absentee voting because they didn't want to lose territory that they had won on the

battlefield. We also knew that Milošević did not give a shit about the Bosnian Serbs. But he was the one who was going to decide for them. He was kind of looking for a reason or an excuse that would allow him to show flexibility at the last stage of the negotiations. I'm in the room with Holbrooke and Christopher, and I'm the elections guy. There was a pause in the discussion. Things seemed a bit stuck. I said to Milošević, "You know, I understand your concern, sir, but you know our Intelligence and Research Bureau at the Department of State has for decades done public opinion polling all around the world. And we've been doing a lot of polling in Bosnia and in both the Federation and in the Republika Srpska. And people are very open about their views." The questions that we've asked have led us to conclude that the vast majority, more than two-thirds of Bosniaks who have been displaced from Republika Srpska, will probably vote where they are, that is, where their future is, as opposed to where they were, where their past is.

Milošević kind of drank that in. He was like, "Oh, really? Well, that's interesting. Okay, I did not know that. Okay, well, yeah, we'll allow, in the first round of elections, we'll allow absentee voting." And I looked over at Dick, and Dick motioned me to get out.

So I had done my job and I left the room. I walked outside and I waited. Christopher walks out, smiles at me, and he goes to the next meeting, and Milošević walks out. Dick Holbrooke walks up to me and says, "Jack, did you just pull that out of your ass?" And I said, "No, some of what I said was true." And he said, "What of it was true?" And I said, "INR does do polling overseas." He just kind of laughed, he just kind of smiled, and he kind of put his arm around my shoulder, and he said, "Well, it worked, get the hell out of here. Go write it up." And I wrote it and I went immediately to the office where I was working and I changed the language in the annex to include absentee voting and that's what was signed.

The interesting thing is that, although I thought I was lying at the time, in fact, I was right without knowing it. Because in the elections that occurred over the next year, about two thirds of the Bosnians voted where they were physically and not where they had lived prior to the elections—but less so in the national elections than in the local elections. No one ever called me on it. The interesting thing is that, in Dick's book, the *How to End a War* book, and also in Warren Christopher's book, when they mention absentee voting and Annex III, both men just say, "A compromise was reached." I suppose it's safe for me to say now just how this "compromise" was reached.

Q: It's interesting that you basically provided a fact that changed his perception and he was like, "Yeah, okay, okay, I'm going to go for it."

ZETKULIC: Again, we had learned enough about his dismissiveness of the Bosnian Serbs, his disdain for the Bosnian Serbs. There was no love lost, really, but they recognized that he was their king, effectively, and they had to obey him.

Q: My impression from Holbrook's book is that Milošević was trying to get a deal. He was desperate. He was just trying to get there. He didn't care. He just wanted to sign it and move on. It appears to me it was because of sanctions. There was a fear that he

was going to lose power. He was done. He couldn't do it anymore.

ZETKULIC: I think Milošević, much more than Izetbegović, could have survived without a deal. I think he recognized that his country, which was Serbia—not necessarily thinking of him as the leader of Republika Srpska, but of Serbia, the FRY [Federal Republic of Serbia], as we were then calling it—could have survived because they'd been living under sanctions. They continued to live under sanctions for quite a while. In his view, if he survived and if he was still the boss of the country, that's all that really mattered. He didn't care about his people that much. If the economy was doing poorly, it wouldn't be the end of the world. If the economy was destroyed, yes, it would matter, but it wasn't going to be destroyed. I think that Milošević could have walked away from Dayton without an agreement. Izetbegović , I think, recognized that he could not. We had made it clear enough to him that we weren't going to save him if he couldn't come to a conclusion,

Q: Which is quite interesting because in Holbrooke's book, Izetbegović is essentially the last person who's signing the deal; he is the person that has to be convinced, rather than the law, which would be more logical. It would be more logical for it to be Milošević rather than Izetbegović.

ZETKULIC: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What about the Russians? How was that? I know from Holbrook's book, but also from the tapes that he recorded, that Russians were basically just sitting there and kind of just nodding.

ZETKULIC: Think of the time. Their country had just fallen apart. What, for me, is dramatic is the difference between my experience with the Russians doing Contact Group and Dayton, and then my experience with them just, my gosh, three years later in Belgrade. I saw Russian armored vehicles traveling down the highway towards Kosovo when I was in Belgrade because they had suddenly realized, oh, well, this Kumbaya stuff, we're done. Yeah, no, the Russians were just there. They contributed, I think, little, if anything, to the negotiations apart from their presence, as opposed to the Europeans who did have expertise. The Europeans also offered the promise of money. The Russians had nothing to offer.

Q: Alright. So I think, Jack, let's maybe stop here. Yeah. Then we can reconvene.

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Q: Today is October 20, 2025 this is an interview with Jack Zetkulic part two. All right, Jack, let's talk about some lessons learned. Looking back to all those days and dating and negotiations that happened, what are some of the lessons learned from that process that you think would be valuable for diplomatic practitioners dealing with peace processes in the Western Balkans or anywhere else today?

ZETKULIC: First off, I think I mentioned this in the first interview: No one in the American delegation in Dayton had any training in negotiations. I asked around about this while we were doing prep work for the event. I thought about this often during my last two gigs in the Service. After I came home from Switzerland in '04 – in fact to come back here and actually work at ADST -- I knew at that point, as an OC, I was almost certainly going to TIC out (Time In Class) in four years unless. To get one rank higher, I'd probably need an ambassadorship, which I was not going to get from the Bush administration. So, I said to myself, I know I want to go back to academia. It's what I've always wanted to do. It's time to segue out. So I ended up doing two years here at ADST and then two years in LMS, the Leadership and Management School, as the Associate Dean. Picking up all the pieces after the Senior Seminar had been cancelled by Colin Powell, and putting senior training back together again in little bits and pieces. One of the pieces was a negotiations class. I talked to a lot of people about the best models for training. We ended up using a variation of the Harvard Business School model. We also brought in practitioners to share their experiences. Creating something new was really quite fun. My other big project was putting together the National Security Executive Leadership Seminar, which still exists. I started it with a grand total of an annual budget of $800. Fortunately, people were supportive and we got a lot of great speakers. But when it came to our class on negotiations, we had an awful time just getting trainees into the seats. The Foreign Service mentality is just so anti-training -- then more than now, I hope. And I think that it is appalling when you consider that just about any other country of stature in the world, if you're a German diplomat, a British diplomat, a French diplomat, a Japanese diplomat, you're going to have gone through an extensive program, sometimes a several year training process, before your first posting. And you will definitely have had negotiations training. I mean, you will know what a reserve position is, you will know what an anchor position is. At least the basics. This commitment to training is especially important now because FSOs today come from such diverse populations and backgrounds. Many haven't studied international relations at all. Anyway, at Dayton and pre-Dayton, I think that it would have been more helpful if some of us had actually had more training or experience in this. We were very much flying blind.

Now, Dick was a master negotiator, of course. He had some experience in Paris as a young diplomat. And he certainly honed his skills in the private sector. I loved his line about negotiations: "You don't dance to the words, you dance the music." For him it was a matter of feel. But of course the words do matter, the details matter, and you also have to do your research. But I wish that in the future, we should have that topic in training here at FSI and expanded training at FSI.

As far as other lessons learned… I think we would have done a better job -- and we would probably have had an easier time with implementation -- if we had been a little bit more open to including people who we considered to be on the outside of our team, specifically people who worked in the military and people who worked in international organizations. Of course we had Wes Clark there, and we had some other military officers on site, but most of them worked on the technical side, most

notably with the map discussions. And there was a huge amount of Air Force personnel, but they were just helping us out with the administration of the facility. But it's important to understand that so much of implementation came down to the military. Yes, we had to keep the place hermetically sealed, but a few more people on the inside would have helped. Also, we could have used some people who had a deeper understanding of international organizations, because the IOs would be doing a lot on implementation. But I think that when it came to implementation, our basic attitude was kind of a Field of Dreams approach: "If you build it, they will come." To a certain extent, that did in fact happen, as far as a general willingness among all the institutions to be supportive, but it didn't help much on the resources side -- you know – coming up with money and personnel. I'm thinking of how, for instance, during arms control negotiations in Geneva, where you've got a congressional person there, a staff member, who is on the team. Not at all the case in Dayton, of course. Immediately after Dayton, we had to get Congress on board, because there was money involved, and they were going to have to support us. And so we had these flights filled with congressmen going to the region. We all took turns escorting the CODELS. I think I may have had the first group. We flew Milair first to Naples, where they got a military briefing, and then on to Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Belgrade. The message all along the way -- from the escorts, from our embassies, and from the national leaders we met – was that the peace deal needed U.S. support. The Congressmen were generally receptive. As always with CODELS, some members were thoughtful and engaged, really impressive, and others were just along for the ride and for the photo op. I remember we had several members who were intent on getting their pictures taken near destroyed buildings. And we had one Congressman who got so drunk in Zagreb that one of the military escorts had to manhandle him into a cold shower to wake him up enough to make our flight. Several didn't know what countries they were visiting. When we were in Sarajevo, we had an evening meeting with President Izetbegovich. That evening, like every day, young people would gather outside his office and chant "Alia, Alia, thank you!" for bringing them peace. The Congressmen assumed that it was their delegation that was being cheered. I probably shouldn't have corrected them on that.

On the general question of implementation, well it's a tough nut. So much of our focus was on ending the war, on attaining the possible. In the years that followed Dayton, I've been to repeated events that focused on the process, usually focusing more on its weaknesses. One year, two years, five years and ten years after -- seminars and events that seemed to conclude that for every achievement of the Dayton Accords there was some resulting subversive mitigating element. In the sense that the elections solidified the country's differences, especially the geographic ethnic split. And how the power sharing institutions that worked the best were the ones that were nationality based, and the parties would cut deals, one against the other, zero sum, and in most cases, the refugees or the internally displaced persons did not return to their original homes, so that the lines that we drew on the map became the dividing lines between where people settled. So, should we have done it any differently? I mean, if I were there back again, I think probably not. As far as Annex III goes, I think we got as much as we could possibly get. I mean, yeah,

you can learn lessons. We might do something differently in the future, in some future negotiation, but you can't say the next negotiation is going to be just like this one. Just as Dick Holbrook researched Camp David prior to Dayton, but recognized the differences between the two situations. Maybe we can use some lessons learned in Dayton for Gaza? Probably some. But it will be different.

About international organizations and their role in implementation: It's important to understand that you can't blame an international organization for not doing what you want it to do if you don't give it the resources, both political and financial, and a strong mandate. That's simply unfair. It's like blaming your car for running out of gas, or for it hitting a tree when you're driving. But, clearly, implementers on the ground could have done a better job. There were a lot of financial challenges, organizational challenges, organizational weaknesses of both the UN and the OSCE on the ground. There were some confused instructions and unclear and conflicting mandates. Both sides took advantage of these weaknesses, but by far it was mostly the Serbs who engaged in obfuscation and backsliding – without a lot of pushback by implementers. This was also the beginning of Russia deciding to not play nice – something I saw up close in Serbia and Kosovo just a few years later – with the Russians always leaning toward the Serb side. I think that the one thing that we couldn't solve in Dayton , the status of Brcko, actually worked out better than everything else. And if we could have used the Brcko model, with a real controller, for the entire country, a real controlling force at the center, an international arbiter of one kind or another, I think we would have been better off, but of course there was absolutely no appetite anywhere for that level or depth of international involvement. And we had to give these people back their country. It was theirs in the first place. There was no appetite for international administration of a sovereign state. So we were, how big was Brcko? 1% or 2% of the land? International administration worked well in this little enclave, but we could never have pulled that off in the rest of the country.

Q: So let me ask you this, given that you pretty much wrote the election part of the agreement. Yeah, what were some of the strengths of that portion, that annex, and, like, sort of, like, you know, analyzing whether it was successful, whether it was workable, whether there were some, you know, things that you know that didn't work. Can you talk a little bit more about, sort of the implementation of your annex, and how the theory that was put in a paper as far as the annex, actually worked in practice.

ZETKULIC: It was really interesting. In most cases, the IDPs ended up following the lie that I told Milosevic, which was that something like 75% of them asked to have their vote counted in the location where they were then residing and not where they were originally from. So, I guess, retroactively, I became not a liar. I guess the best way to describe it is this: The first elections there were generally peaceful and well run, there was very little in the way of Election Day violence, and I think that's mainly because of that fact that people were not crossing lines of demarcation set in Dayton. There were many voting irregularities, and part of that is because of the region, which, as I saw firsthand during my three years with ODIHR, are pretty

typical. They were the kind of irregularities that we would see in every country in the region: family voting, several people in the voting booth at the same time, some unsupervised travelling voting boxes for shut-ins, that sort of thing. But that's okay. They're usually allowed by law and are part of the culture. You know, you go in with grandpa and you help grandpa vote. You tell grandpa how to vote and maybe you write the "X" for grandpa. That's okay. But at the same time there was a good amount of multiple voting, where people who wanted to could vote several times in several different locations, and that's because of the challenge of names and IDs and lack of oversight. We could have had more observers on the ground, and part of that was just a matter of security. There were a lot of potential international observers who just did not want to go there. When I did election observation for the OSCE, I think the most international observers we ever had in an entire country was about 180 to 200. That hardly covers a country but it's a good enough number to keep election officials and political parties on their toes. Most serious election fraud takes place during the reporting phase anyway. But the first election in Bosnia was not as well covered because of security concerns. Later, there were fewer problems -- technical problems and registration problems and irregularities -- in the second round of elections. There was about 70% turnout, I think, which is pretty good. We had good coverage of international observers, but the first municipal elections, I think, were postponed, if I recall, in the end. Again, people voted where they were. And so the weakness of the agreement was that it, well, I don't know if it's a weakness, it's a flaw, but it's a fact. We solidified the lines of control between the Republika Srpska and the Federation.

Q: So did you work with Bob Frowick?

ZETKULIC: I knew Bob Frowick. I talked with him often, It was mainly by phone because I was already someplace else by then. We would mainly talk about election procedures but also about some of the personalities in B-H. I loved the guy. He did a really, really good job, but I think that a lot of his work was hamstrung by a lack of staff or unhelpful staff -- both American and international.

Q: So can you walk me through the room when, you know, you guys got an agreement. What was sort of a sense, you know, feeling in that room, but also thinking about Kosovo and, you know, what is sort of a next challenge, what was sort of going through people's heads?

ZETKULIC: Which room are you talking about?

Q: You guys got an agreement. Finally.

ZETKULIC: Well, when Izabegovitch made his famous statement. You know, it's not a just peace, but my people need peace…. We all said: Okay, let's get the hell out of here before anyone changes their minds. And it was the most hastily organized ceremony. I mean, the people we had, we had someone who actually flew out from Protocol to help us through it, and Laurel and Miriam and Chris and I were absolutely exhausted. I wasn't even supposed to be in that famous photo, but Phil Goldberg had been pulled away by a family emergency, so I was asked to step in. I'll do it. What the

heck? And we were zombies at that point, so much so that when everyone stood up and applauded after the first of two signatures, everyone stood up and started shaking hands and walking out. I'm like, mumbling to myself, “No, no, there's another, there's another, there's another, another thing to sign…” So, we hastily set things up at a side table for more signatures at the little champagne reception afterward. And then we just bolted. I don't think there was any great jubilation on the part of the other delegations. I think the Bosnians were kind of like, okay, we got it done. I’d say it was like waking up after a difficult medical procedure, as far as they were concerned. I think Milosevic was thinking about his next challenge. And Tudjman certainly got what he wanted.

Regarding Kosovo, well, we forced ourselves not to think about it. We were focused on Bosnia. We all knew that Kosovo was where the breakup of Yugoslavia had really begun, with Milosevic’s speech in Kosovo Polje, and we knew that it was unfinished business. During the talks, a few of us had been asked to go out and say hello to some of the Albanian-Americans and others who were demonstrating about Kosovo in front of the Base. They were polite and we were polite. I’d say that we all recognized the reality of the moment. But I had no idea at that point that I would end up being enmeshed in Kosovo affairs for the next several years. I just thought they were just nice people who had something to say, but that their issue wasn't our job at the time. And they were, well, they were happy to have been, you know, noticed and had their voices heard.

When talking to anyone outside the base we were always careful not to give any information about what was going on inside. Our European partners were good about this too, as were even the national delegations. Dick was the only person who would speak to anyone, and he didn’t say much either. It was tough, because we were under a lot of pressure. I think Beth Jones is still mad at me for not giving her an update on the talks when she called. She was back in EUR, basically running the bureau in everyone’s absence and she got a call through to me and asked me for a rundown. I told her, simply, no, and she didn’t appreciate that at all. But those were my orders direct from Dick. I know others in the delegation got calls from outside as well and everyone kept their mouths shut. It’s a good thing we didn’t have iPhones back then.

Why was I asked to be DCM in Belgrade? Dick Holbrook said he wanted someone there who he knew and who knew Dayton and Dayton implementation, to help the process of improving relations. The expectation was that we would soon have a normal relationship with Belgrade, with full diplomatic relations. I had actually not been planning on going to Belgrade. I had been offered a job in New York at the UN and my soon-to-be wife was working in New York. So, a perfect fit. But then I got promoted to O-1 on the first try, which was totally unexpected, and the first thing Dick said was, congratulations, I'm gonna send you to Belgrade, because we need a good DCM there. I think he wanted someone there he knew and trusted.

The expectation at the time was that while we did not have full diplomatic relationships with what we then called the “FRY,” the “Federal Republic of Yugoslavia,

Serbia/Montenegro" (a very long and unwieldy name), that we soon would. It was certainly an odd situation. For instance, our new Chief of Mission, Dick Miles, couldn't be called "Ambassador" even though he had been an ambassador before in Azerbaijan. But he rolled with it. He had served in the old Yugoslavia. He had the language, while I would only have "Turbo Serbo." He was deeply knowledgeable about the region. So, he was called only "Chief of Mission" until whatever time we'd have full diplomatic relations, something that was expected, we thought, within maybe half a year, or maybe even less. But that didn't happen, because within half a year, Kosovo reared its ugly head, and we started running into the same kind of awfulness on the ground that we'd seen in Bosnia a few years before.

One very helpful thing: In the immediate afterglow of Dayton, we got permission from the Serbs to set up a very small U.S. office down in Pristina, with one American diplomat, a USIA officer named Mike McClellan. It was not a consulate. Mike quickly became something of a canary in the coal mine, our eyes and ears in the province. We would talk regularly. At the beginning, I would go down there about once a month. I'd meet with Ibrahim Rugova. Of course I could not under any circumstances call him "President" Rugova, just "doctor" or "professor." Our message was simple: Okay, we're keeping an eye on things, we're keeping an eye on the increasingly oppressive Serb administration of the province. And that's when the situation became really, really bad, and the thought of us eventually having full diplomatic relations with Belgrade went out the window, and it was like Deja Vu me.

I think I may have mentioned in my first interview: Michael Steiner, who was the wonderful, absolutely wonderful, German representative in Dayton, He had done such a phenomenal job helping to set up the Bosnian Federation. He was there, and, you know, we talked to him, I think, more than we talked to the other Europeans, because we respected his earlier work in the field. He knew the region, he knew the people. I also like to practice my German. Of course, like the other Europeans, he was not an integral player in the negotiations, he didn't have an active hands-on role, but he was definitely a presence, and we probably bounced ideas off him more than the others. And I remember him talking about, there was this moment when we're in discussions with the Europeans about something that was the difference between a "genocidal act" and "genocide." Of course, we have the legal obligation under the Genocide Convention, if we recognize a genocide, we must get involved. And that's why the Clinton administration had waited till forever to recognize what was happening in Bosnia was actually genocide, until well after the fact. I mean, all the awful things that happened there. Those of us who were on the ground said, for Christ's sake, it's genocide. But, you know, Washington would say, oh no no, because, we don't want to trip this wire. And I remember Steiner saying, as this discussion flowed on, in a pause, in a quiet moment, he said, "Speaking as a German, I will say that I know what genocide is when I see it, and this is genocide." Boy, that just shut everybody up, the Europeans in the room, the Americans in the room, everyone.

And then we saw the same thing was happening in Kosovo, and we had a situation where, I mean, I saw horrible, horrible things near the end in Kosovo. By then we had

set up the KDOM (Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission), and in that process we did use some lessons learned from Dayton. But when we were down there with the KDOM, I remember, seeing bodies, you know, mutilated corpses on the side of the road. I remember driving past this one farm where you had cows that had been shot and were blowing up, you know, because they were bloating and with their gasses and legs all sticking out, it was horrible. And then there were a couple people who had been killed, farmers, shot in the back of the head, the kind of stuff the MUP (police) or Serb Army would never admit to. And I remember seeing this old man just dead in the middle of his field, still holding his walking cane, right next to one of these dead, bloated cows. And I thought for a second, Gosh, this is the frailty of human existence. Here's this man. He's obviously, at least in his 70s. He's got a walking cane, and he's lying there. And I saw that he had dyed his hair because his hair, the top of his head was black, but then I realized, Oh, that's not dyed black hair. The top of his head had been lopped off with some kind of weapon, probably a bayonet, and the flies were feasting on his brains. When you see that kind of thing you have a hard time listening to your government back in Washington wink wank around about what is and what is not "genocide." We talked earlier about the frustrations of our first ambassador in Sarajevo, Vic Jackovich and his so-called "premature" statements about Bosnia, because he had seen these things, awful things, on the ground, that Washington was not yet ready to hear about, or at least act upon. The same thing was happening again. Those of us who are on the ground, like, for instance, our KDOM observers or, most notably, William Walker, who saw young people, old people, children, killed in a gully in Racak. Déjà vu. But while Walker was an American ambassador, he was working, at least nominally, for an international organization. So, he just said, "This is genocide." And he still got in trouble for that.

I think there has always been a disconnect between the people in the field and the people in Washington. That's natural. Some folks have blamed that distance for the policy disconnect. Now this distance problem has been alleviated somewhat by better communication technology. But I think that on this side, on the Washington side, people are always going to be overly cautious about what they know and what they're willing to recognize publicly.

Some more lessons about Kosovo. Things really started looking awful, and we recognized that the chances were the Serbs were going to go in heavy in the spring of '98. We saw the handwriting on the wall. And throughout the summer, we were negotiating the establishment of what was then called the Kosovo Diplomatic Observer Mission. Now here's a classic lesson learned about implementing an agreement, especially an agreement with people who we know will take advantage of every opportunity to backslide and slow roll the process. The Serbs finally said, okay, you can go down there with your international mission. So, we set up shop. For the U.S. team we rented a small hotel outside of Pristina. We got a lot of great volunteers from the Foreign Service and Civil Service and a mixed bag of U.S. military. I was happy to see some friends and former colleagues of mine volunteer. It was a really interesting mix of people who were down there. And of course there were observers from other countries, all helping each other out. We ran into one big glitch early on,

something that we should have anticipated. This gets into the question of who's in the room with you when you negotiate things. You see, Holbrook came in, engaged in his usual arm twisting, and we got the agreement signed. The Serbs agreed to allow in international observers. Dick then got on his plane and flew away. So the first big problem was: What license plates do you put on KDOM vehicles? And can the Serb authorities inspect this crazy collection of vehicles (we had Land Rovers, Humvees, Broncos, Jeeps, even Lada Nivas) to ensure safety? Who inspects them, who makes sure they're safe? You can't just drive around. I had diplomatic plates on my car, but these are not American vehicles. They're not embassy vehicles, they're not international organization vehicles. What are they? So, our deployment was delayed because we didn't think about basic Vienna Convention requirements, and we didn't have anyone on our team who was trained to think about such things. Would our observers have full diplomatic immunity? Would they be issued MFA ID cards? All our vehicles ended up getting stuck at Customs or in Belgrade because they lacked proper documentation. Our observers could enter the country just fine, but we couldn't send them south without proper documentation and transportation. Some were stuck in Belgrade for a few weeks, so we turned lemons into lemonade by setting up a comprehensive training program for them: first aid, basic Serbian and Albanian, a primer on the geography and politics of the province. And it took weeks of additional arm twisting to get the Serbs to take down the bureaucratic roadblocks. During this time, we had hilarious conversations with my colleagues in Washington. I'm saying we can't drive the vehicles to Kosovo. And they're saying, Well, why don't you just drive them anyway? Because they will be stopped on the highway. They'll be pulled over on the highway. They're driving without any documentation. But, basically, this whole problem could have been avoided with a little attention during the original negotiations.

Ultimately, though, KDOM met, I think, the limited expectations we had for it. It was the social science application of the Heisenberg Principle, just as we applied it to politics doing election observation: a phenomenon is changed when it is observed. We ended up having a ton of observers in Kosovo. Imagine sitting parked in a Humvee with the engine rumbling all night long, looking out at a valley, looking at nothing happening. What were you accomplishing? Well, the reason nothing was happening was because you and the Humvee were there, just being there.

The old hotel in Pristina became quite an odd place. We had piles and piles of MREs, which unfortunately, many of the team ate every day instead of restaurant fare because they wanted to save their per diem. So naturally many of them got horribly constipated. But really, some of the observers were absolutely phenomenal. I was happy to see one of my dear old friends -- and old boss from my second tour in Germany -- Todd Becker, who had been our first CG in Leipzig. He came and I said, Todd, you're not going to Pristina, you're staying here because you have to help me with this. Our Management Councilor was overstretched. Getting everyone down there was a huge job. Everyone was stressed. One of the surprising challenges was that many of the military guys were unprepared for the environment. Many had not served before outside the U.S. They had volunteered to burnish their resumes. We had

Air Force meteorologists, logisticians from all branches, admin types and several of them were not ready for the place. And all of the military guys were accustomed to much more support overall. The FSO's were much more prepared and flexible. We had several military officers leave earlier than planned. We had one psych evac. I actually accompanied him out. He was basically catatonic until I told him we had crossed the border into Serbia proper. He said, "So, I'll be home soon?" And he went to sleep for the rest of the ride to Belgrade.

In the end, KDOM fulfilled its mission. We kept some bad things from happening and, most important, we helped delay open hostilities through the fall and winter and into the spring. Imagining how awful it would have been for refugee flows out to Macedonia and Albania to take place in the dead of winter. Tens of thousands of people would have been at risk. That was, that was, that was KDOM's accomplishment.

Q: Was it awkward being in Belgrade after you were part of a negotiations team, and, you know, suddenly your DCM over there, and you're dealing with the same, you know, politicians again, and sort of now you're in the field?

ZETKULIC: No, no, not at all. Actually, it was quite helpful, because I knew a lot of these people already. It's why Dick Holbrooke wanted me in Belgrade in the first place. I had spent so much time over a number of years dealing with Milosevic and that I had developed some understanding of him and his team. But there were times when it wasn't easy for me to deal with him. I remember vividly one time, having just come back from the trip I mentioned earlier, where I saw the old dead man in the field on his farm. And it was the very next day I had to deliver a demarche to the presidential palace. And Milosevic, I mean, it's not easy for me to talk about. Slobo's aide de camp escorted me in and left us alone. And Milosevic sits on his little couch next to me. I give him this piece of paper. It is another one of our bullshit warnings about Kosovo. You know: We're keeping an eye on you, blah, blah. And he knew it didn't amount to anything, and I knew it didn't amount to anything, but I had to deliver it and get his reaction, ranging from Yes, I have received this and I will give it all due consideration to Hey, Up yours. There was a spectrum of possibilities. And so I sat ready to take notes as he sat there, reading the demarche rather slowly, as he usually did, thinking about how best to react. And I'm sitting there next to this guy who was responsible for the death of my friends, who was responsible for the death of the little old man on the farm, who had been responsible for so many horrible crimes. And I realized something that was very hard for me. I was genuinely, for the first time in my life, hating another human being, and I wanted to kill him. My mind was clocking away. I thought, you know, he's not that well, he's in terrible shape. There's no one around. I could kill him in a minute. I mean, I could, I could physically do it. I actually hate another human being enough to want to kill him. No, of course, I also knew that I wasn't going to do this. Quite apart from the political and diplomatic ramifications, I didn't want to deprive my wife of her husband and my kids of their dad. And I held onto the hope that, sooner or later, Slobo would end up dead in a ditch or in the Hague, which is where he eventually did end up. But it was very

disruptive for me, deep down inside, to know that I could hate someone enough to want to kill him. I was ashamed.

Q: *Were you blaming him for the death of Bob Fraser?*

ZETKULIC: Oh, absolutely. Oh, absolutely. There's no question about that.

Q: *Did he ever acknowledge any of that?*

ZETKULIC: No, he played it up, in fact. Not only did he never take responsibility, he would make himself out to be Bob's friend. He would try to give Bob's widow a hug, which was disgusting. He was responsible for so many horrible things, and I'm sure he went to his grave thinking he was a national hero. You know that garbage line about the Igman road, about not being able to guarantee the safety of air travel. We heard that line so many times. Oh, you can't travel from the airport into town today because we can't guarantee your safety. Oh, you can't fly on a helicopter today from here to there, because we can't guarantee your safety. And they would always point to the Bosnian Serbs or their militia as being unreliable or even uncontrollable, as if the Serbs didn't know that we knew the score because we had them all wired for sound. Slobo was the boss.

Q: Right? Yeah, was he serving you food or anything?

ZETKULIC: No, that was a, that was a quick cup of tea, because when you're just delivering the mail, it's not a negotiation.

Q: He was not trying to get you kind of on his side.

ZETKULIC: No, no, no, he knew. I mean, he knew who I was.

Q: But meaning they were following you, right? You were, you know, everything was bugged.

ZETKULIC: Oh, my house was wired for sound. We found out later that right behind my office in the embassy, there was a big pipe going from the embassy next door, down, across the under the road, and, you know, up the, up the back of the embassy, we found tons of listening devices in the embassy and in our homes. Occasionally we would have the security guys come in and sweep the Embassy. They would find maybe half the bugs at any one time. Sometimes we would use this to effect, sometimes we would have fun with it. Holbrooke used to open and close the door of the STU-III phone booth in our front office, theatrically complaining about how stuffy it was when he wanted the Serbs to hear his end of the call. Once Ambassador Gelbard, before his arrival for a Milosevic meeting, complained to me on the phone about the variety of food that was served at the Presidential Palace, which was almost always lamb or Danube bottom-feeding fish ("Why don't they ever serve beef?"). A few hours later, when our morning meeting with Milosevic broke for lunch, Slobo's aide-de-camp flung open the doors to the dining room next door to show a table laden with Beef Wellington. And we had fun at home, too. At my house -- we had this big

monster house at 5 Pushkinova Street -- my wife and I would often take our little kids (our toddler son and our twin baby girls) out for walks around the neighborhood. So we would put on a compact disc with Barney songs on the stereo at high volume then go for a walk for two hours, and we'd make the Serbian police listen to Barney the whole time.

Q: Were you at any point afraid that they might attack you or anything?

ZETKULIC: Me personally? No. I mean, I did have gunfire hit very near my car in Kosovo once or twice but it wasn't directed at me personally.

Of course, we had two drawdowns to essential staff and then our final evacuation.nThe first one was political theater, the second one was more serious. The final evacuation was a bit harrowing. Did I mention how in the first drawdown my family ended up on the front page of USA Today? I don't know if I mentioned this last time.

The assembly location for the column of cars that was going to drive from Belgrade north to Budapest under police escort was the Ambassador's residence, a huge estate with a big fence around it. Of course, we didn't want to publicize where we were meeting. But our great public affairs officer came to me and he said, "Oh, shit, you've got to talk to the CNN people." I was worried about the safety and privacy of the families. The so-called "non-essential personnel," which is a phrase we don't use anymore, comprised the vast majority of Americans at post, everyone except the skeleton crew: all the family members, the wives or husbands of the officers and all and all the kids. And there were a lot of kids, a lot of families, and the CNN guy gets to me and says, "Hey, we think you're we're planning on leaving from the ambassador's residence, right? And we want to be there, too." And I said, Okay, here's the deal. I will confirm where we will be on the following conditions: You don't tell anyone else. You'll get an exclusive and you can set up across the street from the entrance to the estate for a shot of the column of cars driving out of the compound. They did, in fact, get pictures of Dick Miles waving goodbye to the cars. But we didn't get the privacy we hoped for because of telephoto lenses. The next day on the front page of USA Today there's a picture of me kissing my two-year-old son goodbye and my wife piling our twin baby girls into the back seat of our SAAB, right under the American flag in front of the residence. Very photogenic. The crazy thing is that, several years later, we found out that that was my son's first living memory. We were unpacking after our move to Switzerland and I pulled the USA Today out of a box of old papers. Matthew got real quiet and said, "Daddy, I remember that." I was surprised. I mean, I have very early memories. And I guess he does, too. But I wanted to be sure. So I asked him what he remembered about the day. He said that was when all the daddies stayed and the mommies drove away, which is, of course, an oversimplification, because there were plenty of women who stayed and plenty of men who left. But that was his take on it. Then I asked what else he remembered that day? He said it was raining, because in the car they were singing "the wipers on the bus go swish, swish, swish." Then I asked if he could remember anything else, and he

goes, Well, it's kind of dirty. I asked, what do you mean dirty? I said, Well, it's not nice. I said, What do you mean it's not nice? He said, well, all the people on the side of the road were waving at us, but with just that one finger. Okay. My son's first memory on the planet Earth is of angry Serbs giving him the finger.

Q: Wow, yeah, that's so. Were you there when NATO began?

ZETKULIC: We left. We left. I should say that to this day, I am thankful to the folks in the Department who listened when we asked them for a second plane. I called up EUR/EX and said, We need two planes. Dick (Holbrooke) has a plane here, and you know what he's going to do. If the negotiations fail, he's going to make his statement in front of as many cameras as he can find, and then he's going to head for the airport and fly away, and he's going to leave us here. But we can't just jump in vehicles and head for the border. We have a five hour burn time. We've got to close the embassy, we've got to destroy everything, and we'll need another plane. And, to their great credit, they sent us another plane. And that's exactly what happened. When the negotiations went south, Dick made his statement for the cameras and he flew away. Later, the second plane flew everybody else up to Budapest. Our personnel in Kosovo, bolted to Macedonia. Our FSNs got out any way they could, to Romania, to Hungary. They were worried, especially the draft age men, which was most of the men.

Q: What was the mood before the bombing, when he knew that it's going to happen? What was sort of---

ZETKULIC: We were tired. We're just exhausted.

Q: No meaning. Was there any warning to the Serbian government at that time?

ZETKULIC: They knew what was going to happen. And the interesting thing is that this goes way beyond anything Dayton related. I can talk about it in another interview, but when I came back to Washington with my family, I had something like two hours off, and then EUR made me director of the Kosovo Task Force. Most of the e Embassy folks just dispersed, splintered up, going on to their other assignments, because we all knew we wouldn't be going back to Belgrade anytime soon. And we had left all of our belongings there, but we had only shipped out a little air freight, not much. And we had tried, I had tried to get us a protecting power. I went to the Swiss who said, No. I went to the Swedes who said, maybe. But by then, the Serbs had said we were not going to allow you to have a protecting power, which of course was just completely against international law. But hey, who cares, right?

When we knew we were leaving Belgrade for good, I called my housekeeper Sneza. I called her mobile phone. I said, go to the house. We're not coming back. Get all the food you can. It's going to be a long, tough, tough couple months. Take whatever food you can and if you can please do me a favor and put away a couple of things we care about. And she said, I'm standing across the street from the house now the MUP are here. They're

ransacking the place. I just saw one of them walk away with your wife's ball gowns over his arm. Well, so much for diplomatic immunity!

You asked earlier about if I ever felt unsafe. Well, as I was talking to Sneza, our neighbor from across the street, who had been in our home, had dinner with us, had a high school age kid who liked to play with our kids, had come to our parties and had said how much he appreciated that we were the first American family to invite him to the DCM's residence. An educated guy. He walks up to Sneza and says, You tell that bastard that if he comes back to Belgrade, if he and his family come back here, I'll kill him after I kill his children in front of him. Wow. Welcome to Serbia. Since then I haven't set foot in Serbia, except to change planes at the airport once when I was doing inspections – making the connection between Skopje and Podgirica. I did have enough time to go into town to look around, but I decided to hang out at the airport instead.

Q: Wow. Interesting. But what was sort of, you know, what about the Russians and all that stuff, you know, when stuff was going, you know, they, you know, they were still involved. But, you know, kind of everything started going south.

ZETKULIC: Yeah, you see the arc of Russian involvement in the region. Having been involved in the planning for the first Gulf War. That was when I was working in PM as Dick Clark's chief of staff. Of course, the Russians were basically not involved. The first post-Cold War international crisis. And the Russians were absent. And then we had Bosnia starting to fall apart in 1993-1994. The Russians really wanted to be part of the process but they just weren't capable. Then we come to 1998-1999 and the Kosovo crisis and so much had changed. Before that both sides gave every impression of trying to be friends. The Russians are still a bit discombobulated, but they were starting to feel their oats. So in 1998 in Belgrade I saw Russian armored personnel carriers driving from the north down the highway to Kosovo to be "peacekeepers" and we all knew they were there to only be on the Serbs side.

So, a last bit about lessons learned. You know the old line from Eisenhower: plans are useless, but planning is essential. And I think inclusiveness in having people from different agencies involved and reaching out -- to the extent that your own concerns about information control will allow -- you help to get the right collection of people on board. Also, the personal touch is crucial. And I think that when Dick Holbrooke was waiting to be anointed as the lead negotiator, some said he was pouting but others said he was taking a strategic pause, waiting for unchallenged White House approval, I think he was doing the right thing. and he came out much stronger as a result. He was exactly the right person for the job. He had the physicality and a personality. The arm squeezing and back slapping and arm twisting. He also gave the impression – to our foreign interlocutors -- that there was more behind him, in terms of political and bureaucratic support than there really was. Our military was not ready. Keep in mind that this was the Clinton administration. Peace dividend, not overseas deployments. And after that George W. Bush came in and he said the U.S. military is made up of warriors, not peacekeepers, and the U.S. military would never be engaged in nation building. Well, that all changed after

Afghanistan, right? But up until then, our military was just unwilling to do the kind of blue helmet stuff that could have been tremendously helpful in the Balkans, including things like we later did with provincial reconstruction teams in Afghanistan, Iraq, and all the civilian outreach that we do now.

Q: Any lessons from Dick Holbrook, that you learned any qualities that he---

ZETKULIC: He knew what not to care about. What to ignore. He had an ability to not notice things that he thought would distract or get in the way. I think he would probably have been terrible at, say, telecommunications negotiations or arms control negotiations. But he was right for Bosnia.

Q: And let me ask you a final question, which is, what is the legacy of the Dayton Accords, looking 30 years back? What is, how would you define them, and what is their meaning of those accords for American diplomacy, and whether they're important?

ZETKULIC: They're still very important. Just look to Dick's book. It's funny, of course, because lots of things happened during the period of time covered. But if he didn't do it or if it didn't happen right in front of him, then it's not in the book. And that's okay. That's why we do projects like the one you're doing now, to fill in other important parts of the narrative. And did we miss a lot? Of course. But, again, what's the title of his book? To End a War. We did that. And if you look at what has happened since, people have blamed Dayton for many, many things, and Dayton was not perfect, but it did end a war.

Phil Goldberg joked to many after Dayton, "You know, we didn't really make a peace, we made a long-term management problem." And I think Chris Hoh added, "…and full employment for diplomats." Well, that's not all that bad given what had come before and the political environment that existed at that time, both domestically and internationally.

Also, you have to keep in mind that the most important implementers of Dayton were the Bosnians themselves, of all ethnicities. There still exists the tribalism that Bob Frazier understood. To a large degree, the Bosnians let themselves down. Much of the former Yugoslavia remains the hole in the donut of Europe. They're just going to be, you know, the poor, dumb yokels living in the mountains who never quite fit in. I feel bad about that. It's been 30 years now. It could have worked better, but it was their call. It was their choice, right? And you can't force people to be different from who they are.

I don't object to a long-term management problem. Some people who study Conflict Management say there's no such thing as the end of conflict, just the management of conflict. I remember Ralph Dahrendorf who wrote that the difference between Americans and Germans is that Germans solve problems and Americans manage

them. We, as Americans, we're awfully good, because I think we're a multicultural society, at managing our differences. We don’t really have an alternative.

End of interview