CROATIA

COUNTRY READER
TABLE OF CONTENTS

RONALD J. NEITZKE
Principal Officer/Deputy Chief of Mission
Zagreb (1992-1996)

Ronald Neitzke was born and raised in Minnesota and educated at Sts Thomas College, the University of Minnesota and Johns Hopkins University (SAIS). Entering the Foreign Service in 1971 he served in Oslo before studying Servo-Croatian, the beginning of his career as specialist in East European Affairs. In Washington, Mr. Neitzke served on the Policy Planning Staff at the State Department and was Country Director for Czech and Albanian Affairs. In London he was Deputy Political Counselor, and in Zagreb he served as Deputy Chief of Mission during the conflicts of the split-up of Yugoslavia. He also had several assignments in Washington in the personnel field. Mr. Neitzke was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 2006.

Q: Well then, you got out there when, and what was it like when you arrived?

NEITZKE: I went out in July of '92, a bit early. This is generally not done, but because of the staffing situation in Zagreb – it was a skeleton crew to begin with and almost all of them would be departing soon - I wanted some overlap with my predecessor, Mike Einik.

I recall landing in Zagreb with my wife and children on a nearly empty Croatian Airlines flight from Frankfurt, on one of the three or so planes they then had in their new fleet. The military situation was still sufficiently tenuous that very few other airlines were flying into Zagreb. The airport was eerily quiet, virtually deserted. Zagreb itself looked more or less normal at first glance, although it was already home to tens of thousands of displaced Croats and Bosnian refugees, housed in camps and various public buildings in and around the city.

I spent a week with Einik, learning as much as I could about ConGen operational and staffing issues and combining some of his farewell calls with my introductory calls. Washington had recognized Croatia and Slovenia in April but had held off on establishing diplomatic relations with either, so for the moment I also covered Slovenia and did a round of calls with Einik in Ljubljana as well. It turned out that that would be the only time I ever dealt with Slovenia.

Q: What was the relationship like at this point between the Consulate General and our Embassy in Belgrade? Or was there any relationship at all?

NEITZKE: Warren Zimmerman, our Ambassador, had been withdrawn from Belgrade in early May 1992 to protest Serbian actions in Bosnia. The Charge was Bob Rackmales. Though operationally cut off from Belgrade – to travel between the posts one had to take a long, circuitous route through Hungary – we were nonetheless still technically subordinate to them. Contact between us was limited: the odd phone call, info copies of each others' cables, an occasional TDY-er traveling up from Belgrade to help out. We were, in effect, on our own, but as a ConGen still lacked certain authorities. The only friction in this several week period was over which of us should get the additional reporting officers the Department was considering sending out in response to pressures to get more reporting on Bosnia.

Q: I do not quite understand. I realize this is sort of an amorphous thing, but there you were in Croatia, and things were happening in Bosnia, and you are suggesting there was doubt about who should cover that. What exactly was your responsibility for Bosnia?

NEITZKE: Fair question. Let's address that now, then, because, as you'll see, much of my time and energy in Croatia was in fact devoted to Bosnia. But I'll need to digress for just a minute and recall the old days – I think we talked about this much earlier, regarding my Belgrade tour in the mid-1970s - before Yugoslavia's disintegration. Embassy Belgrade then covered Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia itself and Bosnia for the purpose of political and economic reporting, consular services, and so forth. The ConGen in Zagreb covered Croatia and Slovenia. The lines were clearly drawn; Belgrade covered Bosnia.

As the situation in Bosnia rapidly deteriorated in the spring of 1992, however, the Embassy began severely restricting official travel into the area, so much so that nearly all Belgrade reporting on what was happening in Bosnia from the spring of 1992 onward resulted from sporadic phone calls to Bosnian contacts or debriefings of UN, other international, or NGO aid workers returning from the area. By the time I arrived in Zagreb, even that reporting had slowed, as the balance of useful Bosnian reporting contacts had swung heavily in our direction. UNPROFOR had moved its headquarters to Zagreb after the Serbian siege of Sarajevo made it problematic to remain there and after a brief, abortive attempt to set up shop in Belgrade, of all places. UNHCR's Special Representative for the Former Yugoslavia was headquartered in Zagreb, out of which they ran the largest part of a growing Bosnian relief operation. A rapidly growing number of aid organizations were also doing most of their runs into Bosnia from Croatia. Nearly all air access to Sarajevo – under UN auspices – was out of Zagreb. And, at any given time, half of the Bosnian government was in Zagreb, as Croatia temporarily became home to hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Muslim refugees.

Yet amid this incredibly rich reporting environment, especially compared to Belgrade at that time, Zagreb had only a couple full-time reporting officers. Even so, Embassy Belgrade was extremely reluctant to surrender its prerogative, either its right to render the definitive field judgment on what was happening in Bosnia, or even to acknowledge that our comparative reporting potentials regarding Bosnia had changed dramatically. We were asking for more

reporting officers and Rackmales was insisting that whatever additional staff were sent out should go to Belgrade. But, as I mentioned, that situation was short-lived. Within weeks of my arrival, we announced our intention to establish full diplomatic relations with Zagreb – and Ljubljana – and to establish an Embassy, which we did in late August of 1992. Our subsequent contact with Embassy Belgrade was minimal, although tensions arose, fairly sharp, open disagreements in a few cases, once we then began ratcheting up our own reporting and analysis on what was happening in Bosnia.

Q: But what about Slovenia? You weren't ever going to be dually accredited, or were you?

NEITZKE: No. As I said, I had only one, introductory round of meetings with government leaders in Ljubljana. Once diplomatic relations were announced, Washington handled Slovenia directly; we weren't involved, except to render occasional TDY assistance to our Embassy there.

Q: Did we have anything there to build upon?

NEITZKE: We had a USIS (United States Information Services) reading room there. This was a holdover from, well, from way back. In the old days we had covered Yugoslavia not just from Belgrade and Zagreb but with reading rooms, small libraries, American centers in all of the republic capitals, terrific bang for the buck investments. So that USIS facility in Ljubljana was the nub of what would become a small American Embassy.

Q: Well, when you got to Zagreb, how good would you say the Consul General's relationships were with the Croatian Government?

NEITZKE: Einik was personally respected around town. Since he represented the United States, he had to be taken seriously. But up until Zimmerman's departure in May 1992, he, Zimmermann, was the senior American official in the country. Zimmerman had visited Zagreb a number of times and both he and Einik had made clear to everyone that America wasn't coming to Croatia's defense; they were on their own as far as we were concerned. So there was a somewhat stiff formality to the relationship, because in Einik's last year there these people had at times been in a nearly life and death struggle from which we were standing aside. And Tudjman had a pretty good idea how he personally, and Croatia's cause, were regarded in Washington. Still, and notwithstanding all the Germans were doing for them, the U.S. was the Western power they most looked to, they wanted to be close to, whose long-term support they needed most. So they were generally friendly and solicitous.

Q: What was your impression of how the Europeans, their Ambassadors by that time, I suppose, were regarded? And how did they treat you?

NEITZKE: Having taken the lead in the EC's recognition of Croatia in early 1992, the Germans were obviously popular in Zagreb. But even the Germans didn't have that large an Embassy, and most of the other European embassies were very small. The Croatian Government treated them all with the utmost courtesy; they were at pains to get the diplomatic formalities correct, to be seen as a real, functioning government. Most of the Western Ambassadors struck me as competent, astute observers, not overly sympathetic to the Croats but not exhibiting the trained-

in-Belgrade perspective either, although several of them had, as I had, served earlier in Belgrade. I had a lot of contact with them, especially in that first year, and came to regard a number of them as friends as well as colleagues. And they tended to search me out for information that they weren't getting, or for my assessment of this or that, which partly reflected, I'm sure, the disproportionate amount of contact that I had with Tudjman and other senior officials. In fact, recognition of our, let's say, comparative advantage in knowing what was going on only grew with time. But it was a good group of Ambassadors, all in all, and, my title notwithstanding, they dealt freely and often with me as a peer.

Q: Well, how did you find Tudjman at first?

NEITZKE: In my initial conversation with him, one of the first things he said to me was, in essence, I'm sure you must have heard a lot of bad things about me in the halls of the State Department. He was half grinning, but only half. Of course, I said he was mistaken, but we both knew where things stood. In fact, his Defense Minister, ex-Canadian businessman Gojko Susak, whom I met early on and had frequent dealings with, used to recount how, in one early meeting at the State Department, he had been shouted at by an irate, finger-waving, senior official, swearing that only over Washington's dead body would Croatia ever become independent.

In personal terms, Tudjman didn't fit the image of him that I'd gained in Washington. That image was based heavily on Zimmerman's read of Tudjman from their several meetings. Warren described Tudjman not only as an ardent nationalist, which he was, but as an almost buffoon–like character, temperamental, humorless, racist toward Serbs, probably anti-Semitic, given to pomposity, and often poorly briefed. Although I could see a couple traits in Tudjman that may have given rise to some of that, and Warren's read may have better captured Tudjman earlier, in Croatia's pre-independence phase, it was not an accurate depiction of the Franjo Tudjman I got to know during dozens of encounters. I spent a lot of time with him, making demarches, escorting delegations to meetings and dinners with him, or being pulled aside to speak with him at events he would host. It wasn't me per se; there was no question he placed the United States in a special category and wanted our respect.

Tudjman, as I said, was an ex-communist general, a historian of sorts, a Croatian nationalist to the core, 70 years old when I first met him. He could be prickly, he could be overly blunt, but more often he was charming. Above all, however, he could be worked, or, as Thatcher once famously said of Gorbachev, you could do business with him. I know what his critics say, the accusations of Holocaust revisionism – his underestimations of Serbian and Jewish victims, of the total killings at Jasenovac, and so on. And there is cause for concern there, though, from what I've read, not as much cause as his harshest critics allege. And as for his supposed anti-Semitism, yes, I know about the remark concerning his wife's not being Jewish, although most of his critics quote that one way out of context. But I never saw it or heard it from Tudjman, anti-Semitism, even in credible anecdotal form, and one heard all kinds of rumors about the man and his past when I was there.

I recall a meeting I later had with the Agency's bio folks who were taken aback by my insistence that Warren, and consequently they, had gotten Tudjman wrong, had substantially underestimated him. I'm not saying Tudjman didn't have serious flaws; clearly he did, including

his conception of democracy and his view of Croatia as mainly for the Croats, as though Croatia's Serbs ought to content themselves with second-class status. I know from Croatian-Serb friends and contacts something of what it felt like to be a Serb in Tudjman's Croatia. Apart from the Krajina and other areas of active, early conflict, it wasn't so much a fear of physical harm – although there was some of that --as an acute anxiety about jobs, opportunities, and social standing, areas in which some Croatian Serbs faced active discrimination or worse, again, especially early on. And Tudjman could be exceptionally thin skinned, especially when mocked or ridiculed in the press, for example in numerous, biting, but often hilarious photomontages in Feral Tribune. I recall intervening in one such case, urging him just to take it, as the necessary cost of a free press in a budding democracy. I'm not sure how much progress we ever made on that front, though.

Q: We know Milosevic was playing the nationalist card, playing up hatred in order to gain his objectives. How about Tudjman? Were these two guys playing the same game or was Tudjman a different type?

NEITZKE: It always amazed me that Warren and others seemed to cut Milosevic, a pathologically duplicitous, first-order war criminal, so much more slack, at least on a personal basis, than they did Tudjman. Was it because Milosevic sometimes behaved better in person than Tudjman did? I've heard that people who met with Milosevic often came away with the image of a polished sort of Western business type, and that he spoke decent English. Tudjman's English, on the other hand, could be halting, and he preferred to use an interpreter when conducting serious business. Yet Milosevic calmly, methodically went about trying to realize his dream of Greater Serbia through sheer butchery, mass rape, and mass murder, whereas Tudjman did not, and personally was far more reactive. Tudjman may once have dreamed of hiving off at least the Croatian inhabited parts of Bosnia. We all heard the rumors – never substantiated, as far as I know -- about a pre-war deal struck with Milosevic at Karadjordjevo to divide Bosnia between them. But by 1992 Tudjman had his hands more than full with devastation and Serb occupation in Croatia and concern for the very survival of some Croat-dominant communities in Bosnia. The contrast with Milosevic could hardly have been sharper. For all of Warren's concern for the plight of Serbs in Tudjman's new Croatia – and, as I indicated, on the whole I shared those concerns – he showed precious little understanding of why so many average Croats might not have wished to remain in Milosevic's Yugoslavia. And on that score, I think, unfortunately, Warren accurately reflected the studied biases of Washington's other senior Yugo hands.

I recall another, later meeting I had at the Agency with a couple of fairly senior people. When I expressed frustration about why they were continuing to get it wrong in terms of the balance of who had done what to whom in Bosnia, one of them bluntly said to me, we've known all along who the bad guys were, but we were not about to "help make Yugoslavia ripe for Croatian hegemony." I couldn't believe it. Was this 1943 or 1993? Croatia was then more or less on its back, sheltering hundreds of thousands of displaced persons and Bosnian refugees while Serb forces continued to run amok. And here was the Agency couching its analysis to fit, what, their own badly dated biases. So, no, Tudjman and Milosevic were not actually playing the same game. And I said so, openly and clearly, in a number of cables.

Q: Back to the handoff in Zagreb, what advice did your predecessor give you, how did he see your priorities?

NEITZKE: Einik basically said, intending no offense, that I'd been handed a job that couldn't be done. I soon came to understand what he meant. When I arrived the ConGen had five or so seasoned officers, nearly all of whom were set to depart soon and were anxious to leave. The local staff was stressed out from the war and lingering ethnic tensions within the ConGen. The old, rickety, but beautifully situated ConGen building was essentially unsecured, other than with basic locks and keys. It had been abandoned altogether when everyone left Zagreb amid the JNA bombing raid the previous autumn. In its day to day operations, the ConGen had not yet returned even to the tempo of the pre-war days; they did some reporting but were essentially in a holding pattern pending an uncertain future.

Regarding Mike's counsel on priorities, most of that too had to do with ConGen operational issues, managing some difficult personnel problems, things of that sort. The mindset was still one of subordination to Belgrade, with Belgrade having the call on virtually all things Bosnian. Reporting on the burgeoning Bosnian refugee situation in Croatia, including in and around Zagreb, let alone systematically tapping into those refugees, learning what they had experienced in Bosnia, did not appear to be a high priority. What I later found troubling was that in the weeks prior to my arrival, when some of the worst of the Bosnian horrors were taking place, the Bosnian Government had held conferences in Zagreb through which they were trying desperately to alert the international community to the breadth of what was happening in Bosnia, providing data on reported killings, rapes, ethnic cleansing, and so on. One could, of course, dispute the accuracy of what any Bosnians might have been putting out at that point, given their desperation. But, as best I could tell, and I looked into this, these early Bosnian Government pleas for help in Zagreb were not reported on, at least not at any length. That would, of course, have comported with both Washington's limited interest and the Embassy Belgrade-ConGen Zagreb jurisdictional understanding regarding Bosnia.

There was something else about that, too, about why there seemed to have been so little reporting on a security and humanitarian situation that was, not very far from Zagreb, precarious. I don't want to overstate this, but these guys had been alone for six or seven months, their families evacuated. Some of the families had just returned in May. I sensed a reluctance to, let's say, over dramatize the security situation lest the families' hard-won return prove short-lived. This isn't something unique to that war or that post; no one wants to see families jerked around. And I benefited from this as well, being able to take my own family to post in a situation in which, by some measures, that might not have been warranted.

But getting back to the handover, I think Mike perceived, as did I, that nearly everything in the ConGen's small, comparatively ordered world was about to change.

Q: Did you feel that you were on a tight leash from Washington?

NEITZKE: Not really. As I indicated, our policy toward the Yugo mess in the early summer of 1992 lay just to the active side of indifference. It's not our problem. We're not going to let it become our problem. We'll help out where we can, mainly on the humanitarian relief side,

without becoming entangled in the conflicts. We'll participate in diplomatic initiatives aimed at halting the violence, but we're not about to get out front. Those were our basic objectives. And, of course, keep an eye on Tudjman and the Croats, and try, as best we could, to urge things along in a democratic direction. There was no specific charge to me as far as reporting was concerned. On that score, frankly, I don't think they expected much. I'd have a tiny staff, most of whom would be new to the area, one communicator. And again, at that time, the ConGen was still technically subordinate to Belgrade.

Q: Well, what did you set out to do, to change? What did you set as your priorities at first?

NEITZKE: There wasn't much time for formal strategizing, setting goals and objectives and all that. I don't recall having much discretionary time at all in those early days. It was more a blur of events, meetings, other obligations. But out of that initial blur of activities, I did in fact frame a game plan for myself and the mission. The first such activity began about three hours after Einik and his family departed, when I welcomed my first CODEL, John Murtha.

Q: Representative from Pennsylvania.

NEITZKE: Yes. House Defense Appropriations heavyweight. But he was only the first of an onslaught of Congressmen, Senators, Congressional staffers, senior U.S. military, aid groups, and assorted other official delegations that descended on us during that first year. A fifth or more of the U.S. Senate came out, for example, most of whom I had the opportunity to speak with at length. We had on average a new official delegation arriving every six days or so that first year, in addition to swarms of journalists, NGO representatives, and third country diplomats requesting briefings. Although the mission was growing rapidly - mainly by adding TDYers - we were still comparatively small, with limited personnel, office space, vehicles, and so forth. Many of these visitors required tending from wheels down to wheels up, and the largest of them, the six Senators who attended our formal Embassy opening, for example, required my full-time attention. So it was a hectic pace, we were stretched thin, but it was exhilarating too. And early on, in part because of some of these visitors, I got up to speed on what was really happening in Bosnia more quickly than I probably would have been able to otherwise.

But back to Murtha. He came out because he, like many others on the Hill and in the Administration, felt pressure from the increased press reporting on events in Bosnia and was concerned that this could lead to calls for U.S. military intervention. There was a test of wills building in Washington and in other Western capitals not only over whether the reports were accurate but also over whether there was anything we could or should do even if they were accurate. The first place I took Murtha was a converted gymnasium in central Zagreb, one of many places the Croats were sheltering Bosnian refugees.

Q: Well, what was your impression of them, of the refugees?

NEITZKE: Washington Post correspondent Peter Maass said in his Bosnia book, "Love Thy Neighbor," that what first strikes you on encountering a large refugee population hastily settled in a confined space is the overpowering smell. You feel ashamed to notice it, but it's there, it's striking. The people, each family limited to a few square yards of space on the gym floor, looked

grim, sad, hopeless. Yet most of these people were, in a sense, lucky, having avoided becoming ensnared in the Serb-run network of concentration camps - starvation, torture, rape, and murder camps, in effect. These people had at least escaped that.

Murtha walked around with an interpreter and spoke to various people, trying to get a sense of what was really going on in Bosnia. What he heard, partly because many had escaped early and partly because of the difficulty of getting much detail out of traumatized people in a brief encounter, was mostly indirect evidence. He didn't get the kind of shocking, graphic accounts that I would soon be exposed to, credible, eye-witness testimony of public rapes and mass murder. Murtha did not get that. What he heard was more nuanced, or second-hand. Murtha would have been justified in coming away from that and saying, well, you know, it's bad but it's on the understandable side of the spectrum of what happens in all wars.

I'm not sure whether I took Murtha over to UNPROFOR, commanded at that time by an overwhelmed but very professional and likable Indian General named Satish Nambiar. I took many CODELs for UNPROFOR briefings, however, and UNPROFOR's unwavering line was, in essence, they're all bastards, the Serbs, the Croats, and even the Muslims; the international community handed us too few people for an undoable task in a situation that would only be made worse by Western military intervention. What I came to sense after a few of these briefings, comparing what I heard UNPROFOR say with what I knew from other sources was going on in Bosnia, is that something akin to Stockholm Syndrome was setting in at UNPROFOR, especially among their forces in Serbian-besieged Sarajevo.

Q: Any other early impressions, others who helped shape your, I mean, you mentioned…

NEITZKE: Just after Murtha departed two articles by Roy Gutman appeared in Newsday. Roy, as you may know, won the Pulitzer Prize for his early reports on the Bosnian genocide. His pieces were notable for their eye-witness accounts of death camps and for his straightforward use of Holocaust imagery. He had already written a less-noticed piece with Auschwitz in the title, about how Serbs were packing Muslims, including women and children, into cattle and freight cars, without food or water, and shipping them off to unknown destinations. But these two pieces, in very early August 1992, had an explosive impact in Washington, as did, shortly thereafter, the first televised footage of camps showing throngs of emaciated men, some looking almost skeletal, behind barb-wire fences. According to Department officers who personally witnessed this, even Eagleburger's office was in close to full-blown panic, fearing that these reports might force the Administration's hand on intervention. So when the Department spokesman appeared the next day to confirm Gutman's allegations of death camps, Eagleburger's office had EUR Assistant Secretary Niles publicly walk it back, denying the Administration had any confirmatory evidence of death camps, in the heated exchange with Representative Lantos that I referred to earlier.

The day after Gutman's pieces appeared, he called on me in Zagreb. We spoke for a long time. He told me more of what he'd heard about the camps. He was quietly incensed that the U.S. Government wasn't sounding the alarm. He was convinced that we must have satellite imagery that could help confirm the existence of the camps. He said a colleague of his had raised this matter directly with Secretary Baker. I could do little more than listen at that point. I did not have

independent evidence to confirm the nature of the camps; nor was I yet aware that imagery did in fact exist to buttress his claims. Nor did I yet have Gutman's confidence, but that meeting proved to be the beginning of a long and useful association.

Then, within a day or two, if I recall correctly, Peter Galbraith arrived, a STAFFDEL of one from the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. That too was the beginning of a long association, as you know. Unbeknownst to either of us, Peter would become Ambassador in Zagreb a year later and I'd stay on for two years as DCM. Peter had done acclaimed investigative work for the SFRC on Saddam Hussein's gassing of the Iraqi Kurds.

Q: What was your first impression? I mean, you two would end up spending a lot of time together. How did he strike you?

NEITZKE: No lack of self-confidence, and a tinge of early Charlie Wilson. But also smart and determined to ferret out evidence of what he too had heard was happening in Bosnia. It took a while for us to get on the same wavelength, but eventually we did, pretty much. On that first trip – he came back a couple times, I think - I accompanied him on most of his calls and on a trip out of town that we'd arranged. A few of these may be worth including.

Q: Okay.

NEITZKE: First, our call at UNHCR revealed the strain and suspicion already taking hold of that organization. These were the people, the only outsiders early on, who had witnessed some of the worst of the worst in Bosnia. At the senior working level, they were clearly afraid that Western military intervention, if it came, would worsen the humanitarian situation and make it impossible for them to do their jobs - essentially helping care for refugees and delivering food to embattled communities. So they were loath to sound alarm bells about mass murder or death camps. Later, when the full dimensions of the genocide became clear, some at UNHCR backtracked, claiming that they had duly reported what they saw all along but no one had paid attention. Journalists found that there had been some early UNHCR field reports, and that some had made their way, perhaps through USUN, to the State Department. But neither State nor UNHCR publicized them at the time. By the summer of 1992, UNHCR was already functioning in something of a twilight zone of horror. As the killing and "cleansing" in Bosnia generated some million and a half refugees, UNHCR had, in a sense, to blind themselves to the atrocities generating the refugee flows while attempting to feed as many victims-in-place as possible until many of those victims too became refugees.

When Peter and I met with the UNHCR's Tony Land in early August, the only alarm bell Land sounded was over the possibility of Western military intervention. Land was at pains to downplay the difficulties they faced and the atrocities they had witnessed. Two months later, however, their message had changed, as UNHCR Special Envoy José-Maria Mendiluce – one of the most decent, impressive individuals I met during my three years there – told me over dinner, and soon thereafter publicized, his estimate that some 400,000 Bosnians were at risk of dying in the coming winter of starvation, disease, and exposure. With fresh UNPROFOR troops then deploying in Bosnia, the Security Council's command that relief be pushed through by "all means necessary" appeared initially to have welcome teeth in it.

Q: But we, I mean UNPROFOR, did not use all means necessary, did they?

NEITZKE: In retrospect, it's clear that we never expected them to. The U.S., the State Department mainly, threw a monkey wrench into the process early on by leaning heavily on UNHCR to establish its base for supplying the most endangered Muslim areas – areas in Eastern, Northeastern, and Northern Bosnia threatened with Serbian ethnic cleansing – in, of all places, Belgrade, from which UNHCR would have to run convoys entirely through Serb-controlled territory. I don't know what State's thinking was on that. Looking back, it seems almost pernicious. In any event, that was the genesis of another tragic farce. A persistent pattern quickly emerged whereby Serbian forces would endlessly harass relief convoys escorted by UN troops who, in the event, proved unwilling to use force.

Let me stop for a moment to note that there was one brief period in which force was used. That was shortly after the British UNPROFOR forces deployed in the fall of 1992. Heavily armored and well led, they actually fought their way into a couple towns, going right through Serbian forces. All that earned for them, however, was a panicked reprimand from the UN military command that if the Brits kept that up they'd quickly endanger many other, less able UNPROFOR forces. So even the Brits were compelled to settle into a timid approach to aid delivery, under which the Serbs would typically allow to pass what were in effect starvation rations to encircled Muslims. In return, the Serbs alternately ripped off the convoys on the spot or demanded and got blackmail aid, part of which was sold on the black market and part of which was delivered to heavily non-refugee Serb populations, sometimes in Serbia itself. Whenever senior UNHCR officials would approach the point of throwing up their arms and screaming "this has to stop, we cannot do this anymore," the international community would, in essence, force them to keep going. At all costs, the pretense had to be maintained. A high-profile relief effort to which we could point, and contribute, had become a vital part of our limited engagement policy. We were, in effect, feeding Bosnia to death.

But getting back to my calls with Peter in August 1992, our stop at the ICRC's office in Zagreb was also interesting. Rather than express concern that the camps might be as brutal, and the atrocities as widespread, as was then being reported in the press, the ICRC Representative repeatedly challenged the credibility of Gutman's reports, suggesting that his witnesses had been coached. Strangely, Peter seemed to share her skepticism. A few days after that I was asked privately by Senator Carl Levin's office to vet one of Gutman's sources, whom the Senator wanted to bring to Washington to testify before a Senate Armed Services Subcommittee. We weren't ultimately able to say authoritatively whether the guy was legit, only that he sounded credible. So we helped him get on a plane to Washington. But getting back to the ICRC Rep, her attack on Gutman struck me, even then, as extraordinary. She was much less concerned about not having a firm grip on what was going on in Bosnia than about the embarrassment Gutman's and others' reporting was causing them. ICRC's hyper-defensiveness persisted as the conflict progressed.

Q: ICRC is supposed to be neutral, is it not, to do its job of aiding POWs and such?

NEITZKE: They try not to alienate any of the parties to a conflict, lest their access be compromised. And to be fair, they did some good work, doubtless saving many lives. The question was whether ICRC, if it had opted to push the limits, even within its traditional constraints, aggressively tried to gain entry into the camps earlier, might have saved many more lives. As it was, they were scrupulous about not apportioning blame, and they were not very pushy, especially at the height of the slaughter. But like UNHCR, if ICRC had not already existed, we'd have had to invent it. Because every time a mass atrocity report arose, a report that in the absence of ICRC might have compelled Washington and others to engage more directly, we hid behind ICRC, declaring that we'd urge ICRC to investigate, aware that ICRC's ability to do so was often extremely limited. In mid-August, for example, we sent Washington a detailed, albeit second-hand account of an animal slaughterhouse in northeastern Bosnia converted to the task of mechanized human killing. The Department's nervous response was to ask ICRC to look into it immediately. There was no reason to believe that ICRC could even get close to that area at that time and, as far as I know, they didn't.

Peter and I also visited UN Sector West, where we saw the mutual, Serb-Croat devastation of a formerly inter-ethnic town, mostly laid waste. And there, I'll never forget, we had this utterly weird sighting. The town lay virtually in ruins. The Orthodox church had been blasted, defaced, and desecrated and so had the Catholic church on the other end of town. And there was not a soul in sight, until, as though out of a Fellini film, this young boy emerged from behind a battered building and crossed the street in front of us. He stopped, turned briefly, and on the back of his tee shirt were the words, "shit happens," and he quickly disappeared into another shell pocked building. That was it; a perfect scene; so apt, as you stood there looking around and wondering what in god's name had gotten into these people.

Our visit to a Bosnian refugee camp in Eastern Slavonia, however, made the most lasting impression. There we were able to interview many eye-witnesses to atrocities, from whose graphic accounts Peter compiled the bulk of a report that the SFRC issued shortly after his return to Washington, adding to the accumulating evidence of genocide.

Q: Well normally in a case like this, particularly in a country that is relatively easy to get to and all, it is not like a Sudan or something, you would have the American and European press all over the place. This is the sort of situation that would excite a media person.

NEITZKE: There were journalists covering some of this in the late spring and early summer of 1992, but not yet in the numbers that we would later see. Several journalists had been killed covering the Croatian war, and moving around Bosnia once the killing started there was extremely dangerous. I'm not sure whether the press at that point had full access to the Bosnian refugee camps in Croatia. One could fly into Sarajevo on a UN flight to get the story of the tightening siege, the sniper killings, the shelling, the increasing hardships, the latest "bread line massacre." But journalists couldn't get near the death camps early on, not until late summer, when, under growing international pressure incited mainly by such press reporting as there had been up until then, the Serbs allowed a few journalists into a couple camps that they mistakenly thought had been sufficiently cleaned up to permit this. That's when you got that initial video of the emaciated prisoners milling about. That upped the number of journalists dramatically.

We finally managed to get an Embassy Zagreb officer, John Zerolis, into one camp, Manjaca, in early September on a CSCE fact-finding mission. He saw no evidence of executions, obviously, but reported seeing hundreds of desperate looking Muslim men and boys held in sort of pens in pig or cattle sheds and, for food, run through a slop line. He said most of them didn't look as though they were going to make it. Before these limited visits to certain camps, however, a journalist had to be pretty determined – as only Gutman, Ed Vulliamy and a few others were - to get credible details about what was happening. Another early source that some journalists tapped was the Zagreb Mosque, which became a haven for some of the worst-affected victims, rape victims, for example. My initial call on the Imam there – later the ranking Muslim cleric in Bosnia - was another eye-opener - as he detailed the kinds of trauma that the many Muslims seeking refuge there had experienced.

But, as I mentioned, by late summer 1992, increasing numbers of journalists were showing up. Rarely did a week go by when I didn't give several background briefings for journalists. For the most part these were not second stringers, but some of the bigger names from some of the most influential U.S. and other Western papers, periodicals, and television networks. I was pretty candid with them, but none ever violated the ground rules or betrayed my trust.

Q: Well there you were talking to all these journalists and, I would presume, defending a policy that it sounds like you did not have much faith in. How were you able to do that?

NEITZKE: I was rarely in a position of having to defend our policy, explain it, yes, often, but very few ever personally challenged me to defend it. I didn't believe then that the U.S. stance on Bosnia – under Bush or Clinton – even constituted a policy in the true sense of the word. We wished to stay out militarily, we urged the parties to come to terms, we contributed to the relief effort, we participated in efforts to broker a peace. But, with rare exception, our overriding objective until the summer of 1995 was to keep our engagement in every facet of the Bosnian mess limited, not to get out front. We succeeded so well in that endeavor, limiting our military engagement largely to a little-used MASH hospital at Zagreb airport, that by the end of 1994 NATO, most of whose other members had troops in harm's way in Bosnia, was splintering, mainly over our stubborn refusal to join in and lead.

There were others who did push me on policy. Dick Holbrooke comes most readily to mind. He visited a number of times, under IRC auspices, I believe. And I eventually discussed with him a list of specific policy recommendations. This was in December 1992 or January 1993, as the new Clinton team was getting up to speed. Dick later phoned me to say he had incorporated a number of my recommendations into a memo he'd sent to my old boss, then National Security Advisor-designate Tony Lake – although to no evident effect.

Q: I want to hear about that, but I think first we need to back up. We have not discussed the opening of the Embassy. I think you said you had a group of Senators there.

NEITZKE: It was a minor miracle that we pulled it off with as much dignity and fanfare as we did – amid a large CODEL – given the small staff on hand. Much credit for that goes to a young TDY Management Officer we got from London, John Dinkelman. But let me just back up a bit further, to the day, the night actually, when we announced our intention to establish full

diplomatic relations with Croatia. It was mid-August 1992. I got a call at home from Eagleburger's office informing me that the Department was going to announce shortly our intention to establish diplomatic relations with Croatia and open an Embassy. I phoned Tudjman and gave him the news. There was a pause, in which I presume Tudjman was conveying this to those in his office, and then I heard muffled cheers and shouting in the background. It's clear they considered our action a major, long-awaited step toward legitimacy. Tudjman warmly thanked me. They were happy; they had a long way still to go, but in a sense, they seemed to feel, they had made it.

We set the date for the formal Embassy opening to coincide with the visit of a six-Senator CODEL headed by Majority Leader Mitchell in late August. The others were Rudman, Pell, Sasser, Lautenberg, and Jeffords. We took them to what were by then becoming the usual stops: a destroyed town in Sector West, UNPROFOR, UNHCR, and lunch hosted by Tudjman with members of his government. We also took them to a Bosnian refugee camp in Zagreb, paired each with an interpreter, and gave them plenty of time to sit and chat with some of the victims. From the quiet on the bus as we pulled away, it appeared that most of the Senators were genuinely moved.

The Embassy opening ceremony was in two parts, the first inside, televised, in which I, Prime Minister Sarinic, and Senator Mitchell made brief remarks. I spoke partly in Croatian, comparing what Croatia was going through with our own long struggle for independence and asserting – in an obvious stretch – that the U.S. government, from President Bush on down, sympathized with Croatia's plight and suffering. We then proceeded outside to the front of the building – all traffic having been stopped on neighboring streets and a huge crowd having gathered – for the presentation of the colors – we had flown in a Marine color guard from Germany for this purpose - the playing of the national anthem, and the formal ribbon cutting.

In our ride to the airport, Mitchell and I continued our discussion of the previous evening. He wanted to know - leaving aside the question of military intervention - specifically what he should recommend that the U.S. do. This was still early days for me, but opportunity rarely comes calling when you're ready, so I told him what I thought.

Q: Which was?

NEITZKE: The question was, what could we do – that Washington might at least be willing to consider doing - to get the camps opened, the prisoners released, and the cleansing, killing, and raping stopped. Milosevic had the power to stop it. How could we get his attention? At that point I had not yet come around on the idea of arming the Bosnian Muslims. I said that, strategically, we should focus less on the dim prospects for quickly altering the balance of power on the ground in Bosnia – that could be very problematical, even counterproductive, in the short run - and more on bombing Serbian artillery emplacements, logistical facilities, and power centers, including in Serbia. I believed that air power could be used, not to clear and hold terrain in Bosnia, but to force the Serbs to the negotiating table. Air Force Chief of Staff General Merrill McPeak also argued the feasibility of air power in 1992, to take out Serbian artillery surrounding Sarajevo, for example, but was shortly thereafter replaced on the JCS by an officer more willing to toe the line, that is, that the only military option was committing a politically inconceivable

number of ground troops to Bosnia. In the end, we did bomb the Serbs to the negotiating table in Bosnia and we did – over Kosovo – bomb Belgrade. I believe to this day – and Holbrooke indirectly acknowledged as much at the time -- that our bombing of Belgrade sprang not just from events in Kosovo but in part from the Clinton Administration's deep frustration, its sense of guilt over its prolonged moral impotence, its refusal to get serious about Bosnia.

But getting back to what I advised Mitchell, my strongest actionable recommendation to him was that we close Embassy Belgrade, that we withdraw our legitimizing diplomatic presence from that regime of butchers, or butcher-facilitators. I also recommended opening an Embassy, even if it were a one-man post, in Sarajevo and raising the American flag there as high as we could as a symbol that we were standing with those beleaguered people. And finally, I recommended an all-out U.S. effort to document the war rimes occurring in Bosnia.

When Mitchell got back to Washington he did publicly advocate breaking relations with Belgrade, and I believe he said he discussed it with Eagleburger. That would no doubt have been a terribly difficult recommendation for Eagleburger, or anyone who had warm memories of serving in Belgrade, to ponder. Whether Mitchell also mentioned to Eagleburger my advocacy of this idea, I don't know.

Q: Well, sure, Larry Eagleburger was not going to be very enamored of that. I mean, he was really Mr. Yugoslavia. But I was wondering, did you ever put that advice in a regular front channel telegram, to close Embassy Belgrade and all?

NEITZKE: Not at that point. And as time went on, I concluded that the best hope I had for altering our policy was simply to report the facts, to describe as vividly, as graphically as possible what was actually happening in Bosnia and, of course, Croatia. This led to a virtual flood of Embassy Zagreb reports of grisly crimes committed by Serbian forces in and around the various concentration camps. Many of these were based on debriefings of camp survivors released into a special facility in Karlovac, Croatia, beginning in the fall of 1992.

Regarding Embassy Belgrade, however, our having kept it open, near the end of my year as chief of mission, Embassy Belgrade asked the Department for permission to establish direct contact with authorities in the Serb-occupied area of Eastern Slavonia. In response to that I sent in one of the more scathing cables I'd ever drafted, attacking both the propriety of such contacts, which would tend to legitimize these thugs, and the proposal that contact be made by officials of a U.S. Embassy in a capital run by these thugs' war criminal sponsors. Belgrade's proposal was so beyond the pale that I took the opportunity, in essence, to denounce our having even maintained an Embassy in Belgrade during that long first year of genocidal slaughter. In policy and moral terms, I asked, had it been worth the candle? Had our presence not helped to legitimize Milosevic? Had the additional intelligence we may have gained by remaining in Belgrade actually informed our policy in any demonstrable way? I argued it had not. My friends in Belgrade were not happy about that one, but they did not appeal. The matter was dropped.

As for Eagleburger, apparently he did consider, or at least said he had considered, closing Embassy Belgrade, breaking diplomatic relations, but declined to do so. There were two events around that time, late summer 1992, that even more clearly illustrated Eagleburger's thinking

about Belgrade. The first was his speech to the London Conference in late August. That was the meeting hastily staged by British PM Major, with Washington's blessing, to try to blunt the call for Western military intervention over the initial death camp reports. At the table were not only Western government officials but Milosevic, Tudjman, and Izetbegovic as well. In his speech Eagleburger stressed the theme of Serbian victimhood, that history hadn't begun yesterday, that Serbs were among World War II's primary victims, and that memories of that were still fresh. Or so he maintained. He said the U.S. valued its long "special relationship" with the Serbian people – not Yugoslavia, but the Serbian people. Turning to the ongoing conflict, he declared all the sides guilty before acknowledging, barely, that Serbs were the most guilty. But then, rather than expressing sympathy for the real time, mainly Muslim victims of Serb-perpetrated horror, Eagleburger intoned, more in sorrow than in anger, that what the Serbs were then doing was mainly wrong because it violated the sacred memory of past Serbian victims. To anyone aware of what was happening in Bosnia at that moment, Eagleburger's remarks were literally breathtaking.

The other noteworthy event, or action, around that time which sheds light on Eagleburger's view of Belgrade was the Panic-Scanlan charade.

Q: You are speaking of John Scanlan, himself a former Ambassador to Belgrade?

NEITZKE: Jack had been Ambassador in Belgrade just before Warren Zimmerman. He was close to Eagleburger, and, as I think I mentioned, I had worked with him many years earlier, in the early 1980s. Here's what happened. In mid-summer 1992, Milosevic acquiesced in – or may have helped concoct - a plan whereby Milan Panic, a wealthy Serb-American businessman, became Prime Minister of Yugoslavia, with an ostensible mandate to stop the killing, respect Bosnia, and end what he termed the disgrace to the Serbian nation. Although Milosevic quickly marginalized him in Belgrade, Panic became a hyper-active visitor to Western capitals, pleading for restraint in dealing with Serbia. Panic's "Counselor" in this enterprise was Jack Scanlan. Panic and Scanlan would almost certainly have had to receive Eagleburger's blessing for this initiative, since they would presumably have required Treasury licenses exempting them from the sanctions and the currency control regime then in place on Belgrade. Throughout the fall and early winter of 1992, as the siege of Sarajevo and the killing elsewhere in Bosnia continued, the Department Spokesman kept lending respectability to the Panic experiment, expressing hope that Panic would be able to ameliorate the situation and speaking expectantly about the possibility of real change in Belgrade through elections scheduled for the end of the year. In the event, of course, those elections were yet another Milosevic-engineered farce, and the Milosevic-controlled Parliament sent Panic and Scanlan packing. All in all, the experiment had served mainly to help divert attention from what was happening in Bosnia, while providing Milosevic some Western "cover" during six critical months of slaughter.

Q: So you think this Panic thing, experiment as you called it, was all more or less a put up job by Eagleburger or…

NEITZKE: I can't prove it, but, as I indicated, the U.S. Government had to have approved it, at least tacitly. Eagleburger's intentions may have been more innocent, you know, we're not going to intervene no matter what, Bush and Baker have already decided that, so let's give this a try.

Maybe that was the motivation. But I think there was more to it than that; I suspect Washington, and Eagleburger personally, may have helped orchestrate this attempt to bail out the Serbs. Here's how bad things got, though, just one example of what can result from that kind of desperate, sloppy policy-making. In October 1992, Washington decided to protest formally an egregious Serbian action in Eastern Slavonia, part of Croatia. I think it had to do with their harassment of efforts to secure the mass grave at the Ovcara pig farm into which the Serbs had dumped the 200 or so patients they had dragged out of the Vukovar Hospital a year earlier and summarily executed. In any event, now this is October, the midpoint of Panic's celebrated tenure as Prime Minister in Belgrade. The Department calculated, however, that Panic was already so marginalized that it was pointless to protest to him. So, what did they do? They instructed Embassy Belgrade to lodge this supposedly stiff protest of Serbian actions with their very own ex-Ambassador, Jack Scanlan. How perverse is that? It should have gone to Milosevic, and on the end of a spiked pole. Instead, they delivered it to the ex-U.S. Ambassador "Counselor" to the Serbian-American fake Prime Minister. I'm sure there have been even stranger moments in U.S. diplomatic history, but probably not many.

Q: What were they thinking? I suppose there just was no one… Anyway, let us again go back to where you were talking about after the Embassy opening. How did that change things for you and your staff? And also, how were you evaluating the Croatian reaction to persecution of the Bosnian Muslims? There was no love lost between these groups

NEITZKE: When we became an Embassy, we were obviously on our own, but we'd been virtually on our own anyway. And given the lag time to increase staffing, we became heavily dependent on TDYers from various agencies and other posts. Again, however, there wasn't a lot of time to sit back and plan things.

Croatian-Muslim relations in that period were a key issue. Tudjman occasionally spoke disdainfully about Izetbegovic, though not in ethnic or religious terms – at least none that I ever heard -- but rather in terms of Izetbegovic's ill preparedness to lead, decisions he had supposedly bungled, that sort of thing. And whatever Tudjman and Milosevic may have discussed or agreed at Karadjordjevo, if that meeting ever took place, it didn't manifest itself on the ground in Bosnia in any sustained way. Yes, as the conflict wore on, especially into 1993 and 1994, there was the odd tactical Serb-Croat alliance at the local level. There were even a couple of odder local Serb-Muslim tactical alliances. None of that endured, however, and none of what little there was operated by strategic design or direction; there was just no compelling evidence to support that claim, no matter how often Serbian sympathizers trotted it out. And throughout this early period, Croatia, with much of its outlying infrastructure destroyed or badly damaged from its own war with Belgrade, was inundated with hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Muslim refugees. Despite the obvious destabilizing aspects of such a mass movement, there were very few instances of significant Croat-Muslim tension in Croatia.

Let me tell you about something that happened over Labor Day weekend 1992 that puts some of this in perspective, the issue of Croat-Muslim ties in the early phase of the conflict. I had been there only about a month and a half. I received word from Rick Herrick, our military attaché, that an Iranian 747 had landed at Zagreb. We suspected it was loaded with arms.

Almost immediately, Tudjman called me in. Although there may well have been Iranian flights before my arrival, perhaps landing elsewhere in Croatia, Tudjman knew we were now watching things more closely. I think he suspected we were already on to this. When I sat down with him and Susak, they volunteered that the plane contained arms, ammunition, chemicals of unknown composition, and an unspecified number of mujahideen fighters of unknown origin. I later learned from Susak that these were not the first mujahideen to attempt to enter Bosnia through Croatia. Croatia had set up training camps to get their own men quickly trained during the Croatian War. Susak implied that some of these foreign fighters had later spent time in Croatian training camps. Although I couldn't get a number from Susak, my sense was that mujahideen entering up to that point could be counted in the hundreds rather than the thousands. Regarding the mujahideen on this Iranian flight, Susak said they'd already taken off. They'd left for Bosnia, I presumed.

Tudjman asked me almost plaintively whether, if the arms couldn't be transshipped to the Muslims, Croatia couldn't just keep them. I told him no. I thought they'd have to be impounded under some type of international control.

I contacted EUR to talk about how this should be handled. It was a Saturday and I got Assistant Secretary Niles or one of his deputies. The response I got was, in essence, what's the big deal, why are you bothering us, it's not a U.S. problem. They first said that I needn't respond at all to Tudjman's request for guidance but then allowed that, if I felt compelled to, I could tell Tudjman he might order the Iranian plane to leave, with the arms.

This was the same nonchalant attitude I'd encountered in EUR on going out to Zagreb. This was nuts. An Iranian 747 loaded with arms, mujahideen, and chemicals had landed, and why was I bothering them? There had been fears for some time that the Bosnian Muslims might resort to some form of chemical warfare to try to halt the Serb advance. And here was clear evidence of mujahideen entering the fight. I don't recall exactly how this happened, but in short order EUR was all but shunted aside and I was dealing, and would continue to deal for the next couple days, with the office of the Acting Secretary, Arnie Kanter, Under Secretary for Political Affairs. Eagleburger must have been traveling. I became sort of a clearinghouse over the next 48 hours, taking calls, making suggestions, and conveying understandings among Tudjman and Susak, the UNPROFOR commander in Zagreb, the UN Secretariat, USUN, and Kanter's office. The solution was to let the Iranian plane go but seize and sequester the arms under UNPROPOR control. And that was done, although to this day – UNPROFOR was swamped and a blur of other events followed – I don't know where those arms ended up. The chemicals turned out to be non-threatening, medical supplies apparently.

The point is, getting back to your question about Croatia's attitude toward the Muslims, the shopworn charge that from the outset they were just as bad as the Serbs is absurd on its face. In addition to admitting the Muslim refugees, the Croats - with Iran and other suppliers - were running a military supply line to the Muslims when nobody else was doing so. Admittedly, this was not altruistic. The Croats were taking some of the arms for themselves and the Croats in Bosnia stood to benefit from almost anything the Muslims could do to help slow down the Serbs. And, too, this arrangement didn't last far into 1993; it began to break down seriously by the late spring. And we can get to that later, because it's also part of the backdrop for the secret 1994-

1995 Iranian arms pipeline fiasco that PFIAB, or I guess it was the Intelligence Oversight Board, and several congressional committees later investigated and that I was called to testify before.

Q: Yes. I do want to cover that.

NEITZKE: But I found myself having to fight repeatedly, often in sharply–worded cables, the notion that the Serbs and Croats were acting indistinguishably badly toward the Bosnian Muslims. I typically did this by challenging an Embassy Belgrade or U.S. military report, or a Department tasker perhaps, but my real target were higher-ups in the Department who were wedded to this, what I once called in a cable, "policy-stultifying myth." I wasn't just challenging this notion out of the blue, we were going all out to record and report testimony from Muslim survivors of Serb-run death camps, grisly, graphic, gut-wrenching, credible, eye-witness evidence which, taken in its entirety and viewed against the backdrop of everything else we knew, made a mockery of the contention that the crimes of Serbs and Croats in Bosnia were anywhere near equivalent. In the most biting of these, essentially protest cables, which I titled "The Ugly Virus of Moral Symmetry," I pretty much just let them have it, slamming the outrageous inaccuracies in an Embassy Belgrade assessment of Croatian strategy in Bosnia. I think it was for that cable that I got a call from EUR DAS Ralph Johnson warning me to knock it off, because I would never, Ralph flatly stated, never convince Washington that the Croats weren't as god awful as the Serbs in persecuting Muslims. They just didn't want to hear it. Their minds were made up. A policy of limited engagement depended critically on a view that all sides, or at least the Serbs and Croats, were nearly equally guilty. So reports indicating that the vast preponderance of the killing, raping, and ethnic cleansing was being done by one side were unwelcome.

Q: So you had to be careful, I take it, from then on, I mean with the warning…

NEITZKE: I was already being careful to hew to the facts as we could document them, and as much as possible to let those facts speak for themselves. But no, it didn't stop me from challenging what I thought Washington was getting wrong. And a couple times I guess you could say I tempted fate, once directly challenging the Serbo-philia of senior Yugo hands in Washington as well as their long-standing anti-Croatian biases. I think it was a cable in early 1993 addressing whether Tudjman should be invited, along with other heads of State, to the formal opening of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. I didn't recommend for or against, only that the issue be weighed objectively, indicating that it was clear that objectivity would be extremely difficult for some in the Department. I later learned, I think Reggie Bartholomew told me, he was then Special Envoy for the former Yugoslavia, that that cable had been carefully read at senior levels and had had an impact. No one offered a mea culpa – Eagleburger and Scowcroft were by then out of the picture, but Tudjman was invited and did attend the ceremony, where, as it turned out, he was roundly condemned by Elie Wiesel.

Earlier, on the eve of Clinton's inauguration, I had weighed in on the broader dimensions of our Bosnia policy, criticizing Washington's readiness to impugn the cantons plan that David Owen had painstakingly fashioned without offering any credible alternative. This marked the culmination of a period in which the Bush Administration – although this was carried over into the Clinton Administration – constantly nitpicked and undercut the efforts of Owen and his co-

negotiators. There was this incessant criticism of whatever the negotiators came up with – as though we knew that the Muslims deserved better, even if weren't actually willing to put any U.S. assets on the line to achieve that.

Q: Well, a couple things. Here we have high-level officials in Washington trying to keep a lid on things, at least to pretend that the killing and ethnic cleansing are balanced, so the United States would not feel forced to intervene. And there you are, not a very senior officer yet, charge, or chief of mission, in a new country and all, screwing it up with your reports. I would think the knives would be out for you. And why…

NEITZKE: How did I survive?

Q: Exactly. How did you survive? Why were you kept there instead of being pulled out and replaced with a more compliant officer? I mean, that is how it is usually handled.

NEITZKE: It often felt like a high-wire act with no net. And I haven't yet mentioned some of the other things we were doing. On what and how we reported, however, I never considered changing course. State would obviously have welcomed reports that could have helped buttress a policy of limited U.S. engagement, shown that the slaughter was not as one-sided as it was. Mere silence from us would have been appreciated. But it wasn't my job to manufacture policy-supportive data to document the supposed amoral symmetry of the so-called conflicting parties. From everything I was hearing and reading, from all the information pouring into the Embassy, and it was considerable, in all channels, it was clear that what was happening in Bosnia, essentially on our doorstep and on my watch, was genocide. Despite differences on nuance, and varying degrees of sympathy for the Muslims, that was a view shared, without equivocation, by every element in the Embassy.

Were the knives out? It felt that way from time to time. But nearly everything we were doing, however unwelcome some in Washington might have found it, was unimpeachable from a professional standpoint. In my demarches and discussions with Tudjman, I was executing our policy and my instructions to the letter. I remember one very frank exchange with Tudjman, in which I, reflecting Washington's views, essentially called him a liar. In light of what I later learned, I'm not sure that what I said to Tudjman in that exchange was warranted, that what we were alleging he was up to was grounded on hard fact; it later appeared not to have been. But whether or not I was being appropriately tough with Tudjman, if someone high up in Washington wants you removed, you're gone. I did get a couple warnings, essentially to tow the line or else. And a couple of officers who came out challenged me, shouting, in one instance, that they knew I didn't support U.S. policy. But the call you're talking about call never came. One well-placed friend in the Department, who was reading everything I was sending in, told me he just couldn't figure it out, why I hadn't been yanked in favor of, as you put it, a more compliant officer.

Q: Did you feel that you had any allies in Washington, if not covering your back personally, at least sympathetic to the policy points you were making?

NEITZKE: Not personal allies, exactly, but those who were sympathetic on the policy front, sure. Nearly everyone beneath the EUR front office and the 7th Floor at State who knew anything

about Bosnia was sympathetic. Our death camp survivor accounts were being widely read, and they, along with everything else, had an effect. Some, I was told, found the graphic nature of our reports so disturbing that they had to stop reading them. But handling the stress was different for those of us in the field. I could give a background briefing to The New York Times or CNN, or send in a tough cable and feel at the end of the day that I'd done some good, spread some truth. Or my wife could load up our car and take fruit or something out to the refugees and she could feel good about having done something tangible. We were right there. But for those in Washington working directly on this at lower levels it must have been harder, because they knew the truth and there wasn't much of anything they could do to make themselves feel better, let alone to change policy. Four young FSOs did resign in 1992-1993, however. And a group of 10 FSOs in Washington formally dissented in mid-1993 and met with Christopher – for which I heard one EUR DAS refer to them disdainfully as "wayward children." That was the attitude. Some who were troubled by our stance on Bosnia asked to be reassigned to other jobs. And some plodded on, not liking the policy but accepting that, at the end of the day, it's a paycheck.

Q: Well do you know whether any of your reports directly affected any of the officers who resigned, did you ever hear?

NEITZKE: I don't know. As I said, I know they were being read, so I have no doubt that they were affecting people's thinking to some extent. But whether they actually pushed anyone over the brink, I just don't know. Other than George Kenney, briefly, who was the first to leave, I didn't know any of the officers who resigned. George was our desk officer when he resigned. He was among those whom the 6th and 7th Floor accused of seeking to change U.S. policy through their inputs into the daily press guidance. You know, try to get the spokesman to confirm on the record that we did know about the death damps and so forth. But he was just doing his job. All of these guys I guess felt increasingly marginalized and concluded that resignation was the only honorable option available to them.

But getting back to your earlier question, how I survived bureaucratically, some of what I was sending in doubtless fell beneath the radar of the most senior officials. Bosnia may have been on the front page every day, but it wasn't the only issue Washington had to deal with. The transition in late 1992-early 1993, from Bush to Clinton, would have been a huge distraction for senior officials, including FSOs, worried about their futures. And it probably didn't hurt that my old boss, Tony Lake, was the new, incoming National Security Advisor.

Q: So you felt protected?

NEITZKE: No. Not by Lake, at least as far as I'm aware. In fact, I never communicated with Lake, except that one time through Holbrooke.

Q: Lake never came out?

NEITZKE: No. I wondered whether, ironically, it wasn't Eagleburger himself who'd cut me some slack. But I don't know. Anyway, I too was to have been transitional. An ambassador was to have been appointed after we established formal relations with Zagreb, but that came undone after Bush lost, so I ended up running the place for a year.

Q: And you never felt like resigning, giving up, maybe making a public splash and leaving? I mean, I can still hear the frustration in your voice even after all these years.

NEITZKE: Actually, Stu, long periods now go by when I no longer think about all this. But it was frustrating, and I learned that a few of my Washington colleagues more than once thought I might be on the brink of a pubic resignation. Galbraith mentioned that concern to me shortly after his arrival. The only time I gave any thought to that, and only very briefly, was near the end of 1992, but I opted not to. It might have been cathartic for me, but it wouldn't likely have helped anyone else. I decided it was important to keep doing what I was doing.

Q: Okay, I want to get to another subject we have only touched on. That is the role of the U.S. military. But first, you mentioned other things you were doing that might have gotten under Washington's skin. Like what?

NEITZKE: Well, before we go there, I should say something about the primary source that informed our perception that what was happening in Bosnia was not a civil war, let alone a reemergence of age old ethnic hatreds, as some in the Administration alleged, but genocide. I mentioned that in early August we began sending in reports of alleged atrocities in Bosnia, but there weren't that many that were detailed enough or sufficiently corroborated. But that situation changed. The media had increased their focus on the Serb-run death camps – that, by the way, was a term Eagleburger hated and in late August was still disparaging; he set the death camp standard explicitly at the "Bergen-Belsen" level and referred to the Bosnian camps as "unpleasant conditions." In any event, as a result of the media's focus on the camps and the ICRC's belated attention to them, Serb leaders decided to close some of the camps, sanitized parts of others for Western inspection, moved some prisoners to less lethal facilities, and generally slowed the intake of Muslim prisoners. Then in September, this is still 1992, the Serbs decided to turn over to the ICRC an initial group of 1,000 or so survivors to be taken to the holding facility I mentioned in Karlovac, Croatia, a little over an hour southwest of Zagreb.

From that point on, I sent anyone we could spare down to Karlovac to interview these men. The most prolific contributor to this effort was a young TDY FSO from Embassy Bonn, Dubravka Maric, who spoke Croatian, or Bosnian, with near native fluency. Dubravka and other Embassy Zagreb FSOs, and two other female FSOs we later brought in specifically to interview rape victims, produced a steady stream of reports to Washington and our regular European embassy and military command addressees detailing multiply-corroborated, eye-witness accounts of mass executions and some of the most sadistic barbarities you could imagine one human being inflicting on another.

Well, I take that back. Actually, it would be all but impossible for you to imagine some of these crimes, some of the torture and killing techniques in the camps, they were so gruesome, unless you were a full-blown psychopath, which I suspect some of the worst perpetrators were. In all cases reported by the Karlovac survivor group, the perpetrators were Serb and in nearly all cases the victims were Muslim. These Embassy Zagreb reports, combined with those from a few other U.S. Embassies in countries to which some of these survivors were eventually moved, constituted a substantial portion of the eight compendia – brief summaries of which the State

Department made public contemporaneously - that the U.S. forwarded to the United Nations between September 1992 and May 1993.

Q: This was because the UN was asking for these, or why send it to them?

NEITZKE: The Security Council had passed resolutions calling on member states to report information of this sort about what was happening in Bosnia. These reports, many of the reports we sent in, served as a key part of the initial data base for the UN Bosnia War Crimes Commission. Formally it was called the Commission of Experts, the Kalshoven Commission. It was set up in October 1992 and, after months of dithering, and worse, ultimately did contribute critically to the establishment of The Hague Tribunal.

Q: Well, Washington, the U.S. Government supported all that, did they not?

NEITZKE: Yes, but there's a caveat. While the U.S. took the lead on the war crimes data collection effort, the Commission, and eventually the Tribunal, and became the single largest source of funding for this effort, and at times had to drag other governments along kicking and screaming, our own initial impulse on this front was not as straightforward as it appeared. Throughout this early period, when we were sending in these grisly reports of Serb torture and killings, the State Department remained obsessively fixed on the idea of striking a balance, on the notion that there was in fact a balance to be struck, between Serb and Croat and, to some extent, Muslim-committed crimes.

I recall appeal after appeal from the Department to posts in the area for more evidence that all sides were engaging in ethnic cleansing and atrocities. They argued in one cable that unless we could provide more evidence of Croatian and Muslim excesses the credibility of our reporting of Serb crimes might be fatally compromised. In desperation, the Department began tossing into the mix, into the published compendia of war crimes testimonies to which I referred, uncorroborated second and third-hand reports of crimes committed against Bosnian Serbs, some from highly questionable Serb Orthodox Church sources. I sent in a protest of this apparent effort to cook the books, chiding the Department for resorting to notoriously unreliable sources in its quest for artificial balance, and arguing that we needed to let the chips fall where they may. For that, I finally got, if not quite an apology, at least a muted acknowledgement of my point. And they stopped including these suspect reports.

Then at the end of 1992, Eagleburger, speaking at a Geneva conference on the former Yugoslavia, delivered a quasi mea culpa on the war crimes issue, declaring that the West had an obligation not to stand back a second time in that century while a people faced obliteration – which was of course almost exactly what the Bush Administration and he, Eagleburger, up to that moment, had done. Eagleburger then named names, mostly Serbian, including Mladic and Karadzic - still at large 14 years later, by the way - and acknowledged that we knew who had committed the crimes and who had given the orders, who their political superiors were. On the eve of Eagleburger's speech, however, I had received an urgent call from a senior officer in EUR requesting names of suspect Croats whom Eagleburger could list alongside the Serbs to balance things out. I had no comparable names to give them. If I had, I'd have long since reported them.

But this idea, that while the Serbs might have behaved worse in Bosnia than others, they hadn't behaved all that much worse, simply would not go away; it was too deeply ingrained.

Q: How did you know what the breakdown was? I mean, you were reporting from your side on what the Muslim and Croat victims said, but, as you say, there were Serb victims also.

NEITZKE: Yes, there were Serb victims. But while we reported anything we picked up on Croatian Government mistreatment of Croatian Serbs, and, to the limited degree possible, on conditions in the Serb-occupied Krajina, we weren't in a position to interview Bosnian Serb victims; they weren't fleeing towards Croatia, they weren't accessible to us. So the Department kept exhorting Embassy Belgrade to do more of this reporting, but very little was forthcoming. I'm not sure what the problem was. One Embassy Belgrade officer told me that early on they were subject to almost insurmountable corroboration requirements on the forwarding of atrocity reports that were coming in mainly telephonically from contacts in Bosnia. I understand that the media in Serbia at the time were full of graphic Serb victim reports; Serbs as perpetual victims was, after all, one of the central themes of Milosevic's propaganda machine. But, for whatever reason, Embassy Belgrade sent in comparatively few cables reporting the first person testimony of Serb victims. One obvious reason may have been the simple fact that there were incomparably fewer Serb than Muslim or Croatian victims.

Q: But again, how did you know that? I see that that was your impression, but…

NEITZKE: From everything that I was seeing and hearing. Our war crimes reporting effort, mainly the reports from the Karlovac holding facility, indicated early on that Serbs were perpetrating something akin to genocide against the Bosnian Muslims. And some of these cabled eye-witness reports we were sending in quickly became public. Washington became sufficiently concerned that by late 1992 they had authorized a parallel, secret Bosnian war crimes reporting operation, which ultimately harvested many hundreds of overwhelmingly Serb perpetrator-Muslim victim testimonies. These, however, although they may at some later point have been handed over to the UN or the Tribunal, did not see the light of day at the time. I saw many of them, and I urged that they be declassified and immediately made public, but they were not. I even prompted one non-governmental congressional witness to demand the disclosure of these reports, but nothing happened. So, as lopsidedly Serb perpetrator-Muslim victim as was almost everything that did publicly surface, it was, to some extent, only the tip of the iceberg of similar evidence that the public was not seeing.

Q: Wait. Washington was trying to keep as much of this as possible secret because…

NEITZKE: My guess is that it was for the same reason that they'd pleaded ignorance of what was going on in Bosnia in the first place, because they feared it might generate more public pressure on them to do something. At the time they set up the secret mechanism, there was talk of greater efficiency. But rather than send us more TDY personnel to interview death camp survivors – a task at which we were demonstrably proficient – Washington wanted to use an existing operation, standing teams that, with the Cold War all but over, had time on their hands. In any event, this decision had the effect of shunting a huge number of war crimes reports into controllable, classified channels.

And it wasn't just the separate, secret harvesting of so many atrocity accounts. There was the long hiatus after the UN established the Kalshoven Commission before anything serious was done to bring heat on the Serbian leaders directing the slaughter. In early 1993 even Kalshoven complained privately that he was being pressured to drag his feet and, specifically, not to finger Serbian leaders with whom Vance, Owen or others might need to negotiate a peace settlement. That pressure appears to have come from a senior British official in the UN Legal Department, the same guy who later sought to ensure an artificial balance – between Serbs and others – in the first tranche of Hague Tribunal indictments. But it's likely there was sympathy on both counts, respectively, from the Bush and Clinton Administrations. So while it's fair to say that the U.S. was the strongest backer of war crimes data collection and prosecution, it would be wrong to conclude that we went all out to ensure that the process proceeded as swiftly and in as straightforward a manner as possible.

In the end, the secret set-up may not have mattered, at least in one sense, since Washington's appetite for the kind of reports we were sending in, even on the human rights side of the house, was waning, especially as we moved into 1993. The Clinton State Department abruptly halted publication of the UN-bound compendia of such reports in June or July of 1993. That was about the time that the Clinton team, including Lake and Christopher, went into a pox-on-all-their-houses, full-court press to try to get Bosnia off the front pages.

But getting back to your central question, how did we know who was doing what to whom in Bosnia overall, and in what proportion, by far the most authoritative analysis of that issue was completed by the CIA in late 1994. As described in The New York Times in early 1995, the Agency study was a long, exhaustively thorough, and highly classified all-source analysis of that very question. It concluded that Serbs were guilty of at least 90 percent of the ethnic cleansing, killings and atrocities up to that point, that, overwhelmingly, Muslims had been the victims, and that this activity had almost certainly been orchestrated by Serbian political leaders. That was quite a contrast with what I'd heard out at Langley in the summer of 1993, in the conversation I mentioned earlier.

Q: So you felt vindicated by the CIA study?

NEITZKE: The CIA's conclusions were almost exactly those that I had offered in front channel analyses two years earlier. Some of the language they used was nearly identical to what I'd sent in. But so many more victims had been killed in the interim, and the U.S. in early 1995 was still sitting, actually by then squirming nervously, on the sidelines, that any sense of vindication wasn't terribly sweet.

But for anyone involved in Bosnia policy, or anyone who followed the debate on what to do about Bosnia, or anyone who may have been confused about what actually transpired in Bosnia, the CIA study stands, as closely as anything can, as an unimpeachable judge of the facts. It makes nonsense of Serb apologists' claims of equal guilt, of American policymakers' evocations of ancient ethnic hatreds, of the EC's suggestion that Croatian crimes in Bosnia in 1993 surpassed anything the Serbs did, and of the countless other insulting lies told to justify our own policy of abject cowardice. No other document has come out of the war or its aftermath, even

from The Hague Tribunal, that provides such an unambiguous and damning apportionment of guilt for the mass crimes committed in Bosnia.

Q: Well, I am curious about something you said, to back up just a little. I believe you stated that someone in Washington, you seemed to imply that this was someone on the intelligence side, in effect took over a large part of the effort to collect eye-witness reports of atrocities and killings in Bosnia. You described this as a secret program. How was that possible? Most of these victims were in Bosnia or Croatia, were they not? How could it have been secret, without the involvement of your Embassy or the Croatian Government?

NEITZKE: It wasn't. We were both involved, the Embassy and the Croatian Government. But I have to tread a bit carefully here.

Q: Can you be at all more specific?

NEITZKE: As I said, when this issue arose, I argued that any additional personnel to be devoted to harvesting what was, in effect, war crimes testimony, should be assigned to our Embassy, that they should work openly on this as other Embassy officers were then doing, and that whatever they produced should be included in the published compendia that State was periodically forwarding to the UN. I thought we in the Embassy could do the job more efficiently. But it wasn't just a question of efficiency. To do this secretly would require our establishing a working relationship with elements of Tudjman's security apparatus not known for their devotion to democratic ideals. Establishing those ties at that time, I argued, would send the wrong message to Tudjman.

I made my case to Washington but was overruled. They were determined to set up this new link. My job, I was told, was to make sure it didn't backfire. So what we did was to first ask Tudjman to clean house, as it were, to replace certain people. The key individual replaced later publicly condemned Tudjman's even entertaining our request, but Tudjman himself was receptive. Actually, receptive barely describes his reaction. He was virtually ecstatic over the prospect of this new sphere of cooperation with the United States. So we went forward. Although this hadn't been Washington's, certainly not Eagleburger's, intent – they did this mainly to get a better grip on the reporting of Serbian war crimes – this new engagement with Tudjman made him less receptive to our and others' later calls for greater respect of democratic rights. And it gave others direct access to Tudjman's inner circle in a way that didn't always support the message that I was trying to get across. I did my best to stay on top of it and protested a couple times when this new tie threatened to get out of hand, but the effect of this move on Tudjman was not helpful on balance.

Q: Okay, I think I know what you are alluding to and I guess we should leave it at that. Now, getting back, you suggested that you and the Embassy were doing a number of things in that first year, in addition to the atrocity reporting, that may have gotten on Washington's nerves.

NEITZKE: When the first group of death camp survivors arrived in Karlovac, and it appeared that subsequent releases would depend in part on the speed with which these men could be moved on to third countries, I sent in a message – the idea came from a Econ Officer Tom

Mittnacht -- proposing that the U.S. quickly admit some of them, as something we should do for its own sake and as an incentive to other Western countries to do the same. Shortly thereafter, the USG itself estimated that there were up to 70,000 prisoners in 45, nearly all Serb-run, camps in Bosnia. The ICRC said nearly all were in unheated buildings facing "Siberian-like" conditions. Yet the Department all but shot down our proposal, citing a host of bureaucratic reasons, behind which clearly lay the message that Washington really, really, didn't want to take these people.

Q: So, what happed to them, the former prisoners in Croatia, and those still held in Bosnia?

NEITZKE: We and a few other, mainly European, countries, did eventually admit some of these men for resettlement. But most of the initial tranche of released prisoners languished for months in cramped, fairly squalid conditions in Karlovac. There was heat, food, and health care, but it was still pretty grim. I visited a couple times. It was important to try to move these people along if one were to press the Serbs to release more prisoners. But, seeing that very few of these men were moving onward, out of Croatia, the Croats eventually balked at admitting many more, which played into the Serbs' hands. By then they had their own reasons to drag their feet on more releases. Some well-documented camp populations in Bosnia seemed to disappear. Others, with a bad winter setting in, presumably died from the effects of their mistreatment while waiting, against the odds, for their own release.

Here's another example of what we tried to do. An Embassy officer brought me what appeared to be reliable reports that women and girls being held in one particular mass rape facility could be gotten out for a specific per-head ransom. I appealed to the Department for a small amount of funds to explore this, to see whether we could get some of these women and girls out, again, a gesture for its own sake but something that also might help shed light on this widespread atrocity. My proposal was not well received, but they couldn't just reject it. Instead there began a lengthy runaround, with numerous requests for more information, which they knew would be tough to get. Finally, Washington asked ICRC and UNHCR to confirm the location of the alleged rape facility, as though they'd be able to drive right up and check it out, which of course they would not do and could not do but were reluctant to acknowledge. So, in the end, after all the foot-dragging, nothing came of that effort either.

Q: Anything else, other things you attempted?

NEITZKE: We were looking for leverage wherever we could find it, to try to get Washington to do the right thing, or – let me be precise -- at the very least to begin telling Congress and the American people the truth about what was happening in Bosnia. Then, if the President chose to do nothing, so be it. That's his prerogative. But let's at least start with the truth; this is genocide in Europe, within shouting distance of the Holocaust. We'd all mouthed the words "never again," yet here we were, watching genocide in Europe yet again. Our leaders knew full well that in this case the truth was less likely to set them free than to force their hand, so they fought it hard, as I've said, portraying Bosnia as a recurrence of age-old ethnic hatreds and arguing there was nothing we could do until these people tired of killing one another. In mid-1993, Secretary Christopher termed Bosnia "the problem from hell," before trying, to the extent possible, to wash his hands of it for two years. He made much of the fact that Muslims too had committed crimes – as it turned out, only perhaps one percent of the murders and ethnic cleansing vs. the Serbs' 90-

plus percent. But in Christopher's calculus, even the Muslims couldn't lay claim to the moral high ground.

Throughout this period, I was meeting with various journalists, including a producer for NBC's "Today Show," who asked to film a segment with me on what I'd learned about the atrocities being committed in Bosnia. That required Department permission, and it took them about a minute to send me a curt, hell-no message. As I've mentioned, I also had the chance to chat at length with most of the Senators, Congressmen, and staffers who came out.

Q: Are any of those particularly notable, I mean, Senators, for example?

NEITZKE: Biden's visit was interesting. It was in the spring of 1993. I laid out for him over dinner – it was just Biden, me, and a few of his staff -- what I thought should be done. Then I tried to dissuade him from traveling on to Belgrade for what I argued would be seen as yet another legitimizing meeting by a prominent Westerner with Milosevic. I said that, if he were intent on going, I hoped he'd issue a public statement branding Milosevic a probable war criminal. At his request, I produced a draft. This was at a point when Serbian forces were rampaging through Eastern Bosnia, vastly swelling the populations of the Muslim enclaves. Biden read my draft the next morning, appeared uncomfortable with its bluntness – he said, for example, that he didn't personally know whether Milosevic was a pathological liar, as I'd claimed -- and he did travel on to Belgrade to meet with Milosevic. When he came back through Zagreb, he told me that he'd called Milosevic a war criminal to his face. His staff told me later, however, that that wasn't quite what had happened; Biden had merely commented to Milosevic that others said he was a war criminal. Ultimately, however, Biden backed forceful action against Belgrade. There were many others, many other discussions, with Warner, DeConcini, Moynihan, Specter, Levin, Hutchison, Lantos, Leach, and so on.

Q: Well, did this, I will not say deluge, but steady parade of CODELs and what not keep you from other, more important work, did you ever feel?

NEITZKE: Trying to get the Congress' attention on this was a pretty high priority. And, as I told Congressman Leach when he asked me that question, Zagreb wasn't exactly the Paris Air Show. No one came out in those years for the fun of it, or the shopping. I wanted to get everybody out there we possibly could.

We would take some of them down to Karlovac to meet with death camp survivors. Others came with their own priorities. Some were focused on getting into Bosnia, Senator Moynihan, for example. His planned flight into Sarajevo aboard a U.S. C-130 flying under UN relief auspices was quietly nixed by the Pentagon at the last minute, only they didn't tell him. Instead, they had the pilot tell him that flights into Sarajevo that day had been grounded for security reasons. When I informed the Senator that this was not the case, that planes were taking off even then for Sarajevo, he was furious. He sent off an angry cable to what he called his friend, then-Secretary of Defense Cheney, suggesting he'd been deliberately lied to. On returning to Washington he reiterated the charge in a speech on the Senate floor, mentioning my name and what I'd told him. Moynihan eventually did get to Sarajevo, accompanied by Galbraith. But, as with so many others

who got in, he did so with assistance from us in circumventing Pentagon roadblocks and getting them on other Allied aircraft assigned to the UNHCR airlift.

Q: Anything else?

NEITZKE: Maybe just one more. This had to do with the DART, the Embassy's Disaster Assistance Response Team, a USAID group, tireless, incredibly resourceful, mostly contractors, if I recall, whose job it was to anticipate emerging relief needs in Bosnia and propose quick action to address them. This work required them to travel into Bosnia, often with UN convoys of one sort or another, usually to places which were reasonably safe. On occasion, however, they would come to me – I had to exercise go/no-go authority over all their trips into Bosnia - with a proposal that entailed significant danger. We knew generally where the front lines were, but we also knew that those lines could change rapidly. There was no question who'd be held to account if DART members were seriously injured or killed, but I don't think I ever denied a DART travel request into Bosnia. We may have delayed a couple trips briefly, but I don't think I ever denied one. I thought that their work was some of the most important that anyone was doing in the area.

Once, however, Tim Knight, the DART leader, asked permission for their most fearless member, Bill Stuebner, a wonderful guy, a hero in my view, to travel essentially through and behind Serbian lines to check out reports we were all receiving of extremely dire, possible starvation conditions in one or more of the eastern enclaves. Stuebner might face significant danger, yet, if he were willing to attempt it, I thought it worth the risk. When I asked, this one time only, for the Department's concurrence, they refused. They didn't say no, and they didn't question the evidence I presented of apparent conditions in the enclaves. They simply replied, gutlessly, that the decision – and, hence, the responsibility – would be mine alone.

I gave Stuebner the go-ahead. Eventually he and the Merhamet – Muslim Aid -- group he was traveling with made their way into Gorazde, I think it was, and he gathered the information he needed. Then, when Stuebner's return was briefly delayed, Embassy Belgrade panicked. They'd had no role in the Stuebner trip. They knew, however, that Stuebner was traveling, in a sense, incognito and that if the Serb forces encircling the enclave got wind of his presence there they'd be incensed and Stuebner could be in danger. Nonetheless, our Belgrade Charge, who I was later told had complained bitterly to a group of Embassy subordinates that Stuebner's "cowboy adventure" threatened to derail his own long career, notified UNHCR Belgrade and asked that they check on Stuebner when they were next in that area. Of course, if UNHCR Belgrade had been doing its job, supplying the Muslim enclaves, a trip like Stuebner's wouldn't have been necessary. Instead, they often delivered much of their food to Serbia proper, or to Serb-held parts of Bosnia, with only a comparative trickle finding its way to Muslim areas. UNHCR Belgrade was notorious both for knuckling under to the Serbian goons manning the checkpoints that were strangling the Muslim enclaves, and for leaking sensitive information to the Serbs, which it appeared they quickly did in this case as well. In the end, Stuebner was able to exit the enclave in the same surreptitious way he'd gotten in, but not before the danger level had been jacked up needlessly by Embassy Belgrade's gratuitous action. We let them know just how grateful we were for their intervention.

Q: Well, I am sure you did.

NEITZKE: I mention this case for a couple reasons. First, to give more of the flavor of what it was like, of what we felt ourselves up against, in trying to get what was happening in Bosnia taken more seriously. And secondly, to highlight, as we moved into 1993 and later, the growing attention that we, UNPROFOR, UNHCR, and not least the U.S. military, would be forced to pay to the plight of the eastern enclaves. These are areas into which we ended up airdropping food, if you recall, and one of these, Srebrenica, was the scene in 1995 of the largest single mass murder in Europe since the Holocaust.

Q: Let's return to that, but maybe this would be a good point to talk more about the U.S. military. You said that you found their role in all this intriguing, if that was your term. What sort of contact did you or others in the Embassy have with our military during this period?

NEITZKE: From the onset of the ethnic cleansing in Bosnia in March of 1992 until the end of the Bush Administration, the military, the JCS, were more than willing to follow the White House and State Department lead. The policy, at all costs to limit our involvement as much as possible, was exactly what the JCS favored. If that required distorting the truth, misleading Congress and the American people, so be it, the JCS would gladly play their role.

Q: How so, exactly?

NEITZKE: When the press got into a couple Serb death camps in August 1992 and their reporting and video footage began rousing the American people to demand that something be done, the Pentagon went all out to counter this pressure. In mid-August testimony before the Senate Armed Services Committee, Pentagon International Security Affairs Assistant Secretary Hadley called Bosnia a "blood feud" dating back centuries that threatened to suck us into an endless guerilla war. General McCaffrey, speaking for the JCS at that hearing, claimed it would take 400,000 troops to halt the violence in Bosnia. 400,000! He pointed out that Bosnia was even larger than South Vietnam and, lest anyone miss the point, some four times larger than Northern Ireland. For good measure, he hauled out the bogey of the Wehrmacht's troubles in wartime Yugoslavia. Plainly, Bosnia was way too tough for the U.S. even to consider doing anything about militarily. This was part of what prompted even Warren Zimmerman ultimately to condemn the JCS's anti-interventionist excesses as "disgraceful, cowardly, and insidious."

I remember a discussion at the Embassy with General Jim Jones…

Q: James Jones, Marine Corps Commandant and…

NEITZKE: I think he was a one-star then, 1992, but yes, he went on from his Bosnia watch job with EUCOM to a series of rapid promotions that ultimately took him to the JCS and Supreme Allied Commander. He came through from time to time for a chat and once showed me contingency plans for safeguarding a potential relief corridor from the Bosnian port of Ploce up to Mostar. This was clearly not something the military wanted to do. That task alone, the plan estimated, would require some 25,000 troops – which meant, he and I both knew, that it was effectively off the table; the Administration would not even consider it. And that, of course, was the point. The JCS were careful never to say outright that any given task in Bosnia couldn't be

done, they'd simply attach a troop requirement to the task that was wildly beyond anything politically acceptable.

Q: You are saying it was all negative, our military's role, attitude, and…

NEITZKE: Not at all. As far as I could tell, our military, our soldiers and airmen, and women, did every task assigned them in the Balkans with the utmost professionalism, and, when required, bravery. The MASH field hospital at Zagreb airport, for example, technically part of UNPROFOR, was a thoroughly professional operation, albeit badly underutilized because of how far it was situated from UNPROFOR troops in the field. Our pilots, who flew into Sarajevo under UNHCR auspices, did a great job, repeatedly risking ground fire to get the planes in, as did the small team of U.S. military material handlers, I believe, at the Sarajevo airport. Our pilots who flew the airdrop flights over eastern Bosnia also performed well, even though they were directed to fly so high – for security reasons -- that many drops fell far from their targets.

Q: So you blame the JCS for our reluctance to take any real risks at all?

NEITZKE: I do. I agree with Warren on that point. Here's another example of how the Pentagon's extreme aversion to risk-taking on Bosnia played out on the ground. When the decision was made to send UNPROFOR into Bosnia, and the Brits, the French, and most of the rest of our NATO allies started ponying up ground forces, in the fall of 1992, we held back, committing only the MASH hospital, which was to stay in Zagreb, and a tiny group assigned to UNPROFOR Sarajevo. As pressure built up on us over time to commit at least some ground forces somewhere in the area, the Pentagon finally agreed to send 500 or so U.S. troops to comparatively safe Macedonia, to help man border checkpoints as part of the so-called sanctions regime that had been imposed on Serbia. This deployment was intended to free up some of the Scandinavian forces already in Macedonia, who were redirected to more dangerous duty in Bosnia. Only that wasn't the end of it. After awhile, the Scandinavians remaining in Macedonia began complaining to the UN, and the UN began complaining to Washington, about the refusal of U.S. commanders on the scene to allow their troops to man even a few of the more challenging border-monitoring posts. That's how determined the JCS were not to get involved. The United Nations and the Nordics – the Nordics! -- were complaining about our timidity. That's the sort of thing that contributed to the virtual blowout in NATO in late 1994 and early 1995 over the U.S.' refusal not only to lead in the Balkans but even to participate meaningfully alongside our NATO Allies.

Q: Well, that does sound bad…

NEITZKE: Ignominious.

Q: Taking it from the Scandinavians and all.

NEITZKE: In one respect it might have been better, cleaner, if we'd just steadfastly refused to deploy any troops anywhere in the Balkans, because the manner in which we did deploy the few that we eventually sent only further undercut any U.S. claim – moral, military, or otherwise – to leadership. I recall watching a TV interview of Defense Secretary Perry in mid-1994 in which he

was at pains to make clear that the few U.S. troops being deployed would have absolutely nothing to do with peacekeeping; their work was to be purely humanitarian. Yet not too humanitarian. They definitely would not, for example, be exposed to mass graves, a Pentagon spokesman pointed out, lest that subject them to undue "psychological stress." What a contrast this earlier, frankly humiliating period constitutes alongside the forceful, self-confident manner in which our forces did ultimately deploy in implementing Dayton.

Q: You referred to the so-called sanctions regime on Serbia. What did you mean "so-called?" There were sanctions, were there not?

NEITZKE: There were sanctions. And by all accounts, they inflicted hardship on the average Serb and on some of Serbia's neighbors. But they never demonstrably inhibited Belgrade-backed Serb military depredations in Bosnia. And, from the reports I read, sanctions-busting evolved to a very high and profitable art form in Serbia. Despite a lot of to-ing and fro-ing by Western sanctions enforcement monitors, the West, including the U.S., knowingly permitted massive sanctions violations across its southern border with Macedonia. Why? Mainly because we wanted to prop up a very fragile Macedonia but without having to take on the Greeks directly, and their politically potent supporters in the U.S., over Athens' effort to strangle Macedonia at birth because of its name. During some months, according to reports I saw, thousands of railway freight cars and large trucks passed virtually unimpeded over the Serbia-Macedonia border in both directions. And this was happening as the killing in Bosnia continued and as we publicly touted the sanctions regime on Serbia as a strong response.

But let me get back to our earlier discussion…

Q: Yes.

NEITZKE: Our discussion of how far the Pentagon was prepared to go to counter any call for more direct U.S. involvement in Bosnia. The endless debate over Bosnia policy created far and away the dirtiest, most no-holds-barred analytical environment I'd ever worked in. Here's another example. In early January 1993 we, Embassy Zagreb, started getting second-hand reports – including direct ham radio reports via the Mosque in Zagreb, or perhaps it was Merhamet, about extremely dire conditions in the Serb-surrounded Eastern enclave of Zepa. We already knew that Zepa was near the top of both UNHCR's and the Bosnian Government's list of most desperate locales. Our best information was that no aid convoy had ever reached this area, whose population had by then swelled to an estimated 30,000 by the arrival of Muslims from ethnically-cleansed neighboring areas. The reports we saw alleged large and rapidly accelerating numbers of deaths, principally of children, due to severe malnutrition, even starvation. While we had no means of independently evaluating these reports, the conditions they described were consistent with what Stuebner, the DART rep I mentioned earlier, had picked up in Gorazde in late December. I sent in what we had in a front channel cable, appropriately caveated as to sourcing, but calling it an apparent final plea from the largest standing deathwatch in Bosnia, or something close to that. I added that, based I think on what Stuebner had heard, the Muslims in Eastern Bosnia were convinced that only massive air drops could save them.

I sent that report in more out of frustration than in anticipation that it would actually light a fire under anyone – this was the comparatively dead Bush-to-Clinton transition period – but apparently it did; it was read. The subject of how to keep alive the most vulnerable Muslim populations in Bosnia, endangered by bitter winter conditions and the continuing Serbian blockage of relief convoys, was already under consideration in Washington, including the possibility of initiating airdrops to those areas. The JCS had been holding the line against airdrops, but our report apparently helped tip the balance in the other direction, and the JCS went into overdrive to counter it. Two steps they took of which I'm aware were: the redirection of a satellite to photograph Zepa, and EUCOM's dispatching General Jones to Sarajevo to extract from UNPROFOR any information he could regarding convoys to the eastern enclaves, or anything else that could be used to blunt pressures building for U.S. intervention or airdrops. In the event, satellite imagery of Zepa showed a moving vehicle or two and heat emanating from a couple buildings, which the JCS reportedly argued was a clear indication that the starvation reports were unfounded. And from Sarajevo…

Q: And you know this how? How did you know this was the Joint Chiefs specifically, and what they were doing, the satellite and all?

NEITZKE: The JCS representative on a high-profile U.S. relief survey mission that came out in early 1993 told me, accused me actually, that my report had forced them to redirect a satellite, and I saw the report of what the satellite had picked up. But before I get to what UNHCR actually found in Zepa when they finally got in, let me tell you what General Jones found out in Sarajevo. And here too, before you ask, I know what he reported because a thoroughly disgusted member of his team privately briefed us and I saw a copy of Jones' close-hold brief to EUCOM on the results of his Sarajevo meetings. His report said nearly all one needed to know about the extent to which senior U.S. military had swallowed hook, line, and sinker UNPROFOR's pox-on-all-their-houses perspective. More to the point, Jones' report indicated clearly how far the JCS were prepared to go to win the Bosnia information war, or disinformation war. It said, most egregiously, that relief convoys were in fact getting into the eastern enclaves, including Zepa, and that there was no evidence of starvation there.

Despite our differences, I had respected Jones and I was disappointed that he'd become an even larger part, indeed the focal point, of the JCS' determined disinformation effort, in this case, regarding relief convoys to the desperate eastern enclaves. The officer who briefed us, who had accompanied Jones to Sarajevo, told us how his phony convoy report had been concocted. Amid a strange joviality, he said, UN personnel had lightheartedly responded to Jones' query about convoys to the affected enclaves, that, "sure, that's on our list for every Tuesday," or words very close to that. The UN didn't want the U.S. military to get involved any more than the JCS wanted us to get involved, hence the reported semi- conspiratorial atmosphere at the meeting. On the basis of this UN wink-and-nod, Jones reported to his superiors, and they to Powell, that the convoys were getting in, including to Zepa, although everyone in that briefing, we were told, knew that they were not. But Jones didn't stop there. He went on to provide chapter and verse of what I earlier referred to as the virtual Stockholm Syndrome perspective of the UN, especially in Sarajevo.

Q: Meaning what? Stockholm syndrome? You have mentioned this a number of times.

NEITZKE: The term is derived from a famous hostage case in Stockholm. In essence, some persons held hostage in time take on the perspective of their captors, identifying with them, seeing outsiders, even potential rescuers, as threats to their well being. So, with Serbian artillery shelling Sarajevo, with Serbian snipers picking off civilians, with Serbs in control of virtually all routes into the city and able to close the airport at will, whom did UN Sarajevo consistently portray as the worst of the bad guys? The Muslims, of course. In UN eyes, the Muslims were not the principal victims of the Serbian siege, they were the principal culprits; they even shelled themselves to curry Western sympathy. I remember later seeing a U.S. military cable – a classic, from SHAPE I believe -- that baldly declared that Sarajevo was not, after all, a city under siege but simply a venue for "exchanges of fire between conflicting parties," of which the duplicitous Muslims were obviously more guilty. We passed that one around. Utterly laughable, but for the tragic fact that it represented what a lot of the U.S. military apparently thought and were determined to have others think.

In his report, Jones gave full credit to the recurring UN charge that Muslims were orchestrating a sophisticated PR campaign to dupe the Western press, playing on our sensitivities with reports of starvation, that the Muslims were nearly as guilty as the other parties of mass murder, rape, and other atrocities, and that it was the Muslims who were shelling UNPROFOR to try to make the Serbs look bad, that the Muslims were responsible for every UNPROFOR casualty, every one. As for the possibility of airlifts to feed the eastern enclaves, Jones reported the UN's recommendation against doing so except under permissive conditions. Permissive conditions meant that the Serbs would have to be fully on board; so they wouldn't shoot surface-to-air missiles at the flights.

Q: Well, could you not have challenged Jones on his report?

NEITZKE: Not without getting our source canned, but later I did challenge most of what he'd said in his report.

Now two things. First, when a UNHCR convoy, with UNPROFOR escort, did push its way into Zepa, what they found – in a very brief, almost drop-and-run visit – were in fact horrible conditions – many fresh graves, people eating bread made partly of sawdust, virtually no medical supplies, and a large, desperate, weakened, panic-stricken population. Actual starvation? The UN claimed not, but in light of what they actually saw, they didn't push the point. What I learned as an aside from this incident is that it can be all but impossible to prove death by starvation. Technically, one doesn't starve to death; rather, one's severely malnourished, weakened body, facing severe winter conditions, little food, and no medicine, in time simply succumbs to any of a host of other problems.

Secondly, when, rather than take on the Serbs directly and force through convoys, we opted in late February 1993 to begin airdrops into the eastern enclaves, we did so under Kafkaesque restraints. This was part of Operation Provide Promise. Most such U.S. flights – several countries eventually participated – took off from Rhein-Main in Germany, but not, in most instances, before Serbs – on the spot, invited there by us – had inspected the pallets, the items to be dropped, eliminating anything and everything which in their opinion did not constitute

humanitarian relief, such as sleeping bags and plastic sheeting, for example, to help keep people from freezing to death. Just think about that. The Serbs are doing all they can to strangle the Eastern Muslim enclaves, and here Serbs are dictating to the U.S. military, on a U.S. military base, what we may and may not drop to their beleaguered victims. And we bless the whole exercise. And then when we actually made the drops, we do so from 15,000 or so feet rather than the preferred 10,000 or lower, because we still fear that the Serbs might try to bring down our C-130s. Dropping from that altitude in frequent high wind conditions – often at night - caused many of the drops to drift far from their target areas, and endangered the desperate Muslims who ran out to get the stuff, MREs mainly, sometimes under Serbian fire. Again, I have nothing but praise for the men and women who flew these flights; they were not easy, and the food that they were able to deliver on target, despite the constraints, saved lives. But this was not a glorious chapter at the command level.

Q: Well, why was there such a fear of the Serbs? Was it not at all justified? And were there not in fact threats also from the Croatian side, and even the Muslims, I mean, Bosnia was a very dangerous place, was it not?

NEITZKE: There are several aspects to that. And they're critical in understanding both what was going on in Bosnia and Washington's reaction to it. When it became clear that Yugoslavia was going to come apart, with the first serious fighting and substantial casualties in the Croatian war, in mid-1991, the Bush Administration, though loath to intervene under any circumstances, began to do contingency planning. And they didn't like what they saw.
Among the "Yugo hands" at State as well as Pentagon planners, it was axiomatic that the Serbs could not be stopped, let alone rolled back, merely by air strikes. Fighting on their own mountainous terrain, Partisan-style if necessary, they might prove a very difficult adversary. Only the intervention of a large, U.S.-led ground force might suffice, and casualties could be high. Clearly, they feared an escalatory ladder of actions that could lead to a quagmire.

Who would have led the Bush Administration to that assessment of Serbian strength and determination? Who would have provided their most authoritative reading of the Serbs? Of how hard they'd fight and how hard it would be to force them to the table? My guess would be Eagleburger, and perhaps Scowcroft, old Belgrade colleagues. Eagleburger was, unquestionably, de facto dean of State's Yugo hands. And when he stated, as I assume he would have, with conviction and emotion, that this is what you'll face if you go in, this is how hard the Serbs will fight, this is how hard it will be to defeat them, there would have been nobody in the government able credibly to challenge him.

Eagleburger used to say, including to the media, what if the U.S. did try thus and such to stop the fighting and it didn't work, then what? We'd have to escalate. And where would it all end? I understand, from a Kissingerian, realpolitik perspective, that great powers on ill-considered moral crusades can do much harm to themselves and others. But I always favored a different answer to Eagleburger's quandary, that at least you'd have tried, at least you wouldn't have stood by, our nation's highest recognized authority on Yugoslavia, cynically dissembling amid a prolonged genocidal Serbian rampage.

Q: Well now let us take this head on. You keep going back to Larry Eagleburger's role in all of this. Obviously you think he screwed up. But are you saying that he deliberately lied about what was going on in Bosnia, about the genocide?

NEITZKE: I can't prove precisely what Eagleburger knew at any given time. But his various statements, describing the death camps as merely unpleasant conditions, saying there was nothing the U.S. could do until "these people tired of killing one another," delivering a blatantly Serbo-philic speech to the London Conference, and insisting that the Croats' hands were as dirty as the Serbs' all mocked what was happening in Bosnia at the time that he made them. I think he knew essentially what was going on. Certainly he knew more than he was comfortable knowing. One of his aides told me that early on – around the time of Slovenia's breakaway – Eagleburger quashed his own impulse for the U.S. to get more involved when he was told categorically by Baker that U.S. intervention was out of the question. As Baker famously said, "we don't have a dog in that fight;" the U.S. would stay out no matter what. But Eagleburger didn't just march out and defend the Bush-Baker decision like a good soldier, he clearly relished the role. That was obvious in how tenaciously he went about dampening the early public outcry for something to be done to stop the killing. Some of this was just bizarre. You may remember his claim that if we couldn't quell the violence in Los Angeles, referring to the Rodney King riots, then there was little hope of our doing much about Bosnia. And he had to have played a role in that long, critically attention-diverting Panic-Scanlan charade in Belgrade. Provable lies or not, the totality of Eagleburger's actions and public statements during this period were, well, …

Q: A disappointment?

NEITZKE: No. They were a disgrace, amid an otherwise remarkable career. And instead of later expressing regret or remorse about the role he'd played on Bosnia – when his errors of analysis and judgment had become crystal clear -- Eagleburger stubbornly kept up the fight. When the Clinton Administration finally did bomb Belgrade over Kosovo, for example, there was Larry Eagleburger protesting that the move smacked of a "racist" approach to intervention. No apparent shame whatsoever. Yet that bombing was at least partly a consequence of Eagleburger's own earlier efforts to limit and control information about Serbian crimes in Bosnia that might have further galvanized public opinion behind getting tough with Milosevic early on – a move that would not have left even educated Serbs wondering eight years later why the world had "suddenly" turned on them.

Q: Okay, then getting back.

NEITZKE: I was saying how wildly off the mark our Yugo experts' analysis of Serb strength and fortitude was. From the hundreds of eye-witness victim testimonies that I saw, it was clear that the Serbs doing most of the killing in Bosnia were not the giant, hardened, fight-to-the-death Partisan warriors of Balkan myth and Partisan lore. Instead, cast together with JNA regulars and their Bosnian Serb henchmen were an amalgam of common criminals, punk wannabe gang-leaders, and former soccer fan clubs morphed into doped up weekend rape and execution squads. Even Karadzic later remarked, I believe, that 5,000 American troops on the ground early on would have caused them to stop.

Q: This is the thing that struck me at the time. It sounded like a bunch of, well, a bunch of guys with big beer bellies sitting around with artillery going after people who couldn't defend themselves.

NEITZKE: Most of these were very nasty types, not courageous, but capable of inflicting horrific brutalities on innocent people. One reason the Serbs suffered very few military casualties in Bosnia were the consistently cowardly tactics they employed – heavily shelling a village from afar, traumatizing the residents. Then they would enter the village or town and start rounding people up. Then, to focus everyone's attention, they might behead a few community leaders on the doorstep of their homes, or rape to death a young girl or two in front of her siblings, parents, and townsfolk in the local square. The point was to desecrate the place, so that the people, once banished, would never wish to go back. And then the men and boys would be marched or trucked off to concentration camps where many of them would be starved, sadistically tortured, and killed, and the women and older girls would be hauled off to holding facilities where they were likely to be gang raped. In late 1992 the EC, I believe, sent out a team that estimated there had been some 20,000 rape victims by that point. And after the killing, raping, and roundups were over, the Serb looters would show up, stealing nearly everything removable, from toilets to wiring to doorknobs.

Q: Okay. But the Croats too…I mean I find it difficult to believe that the Croats, that this particular leopard had completely changed its spots from World War II. I assume there was some nastiness on the part of the Croats also.

NEITZKE: As I think I noted earlier, there were also some nasty Croatian elements – I'm thinking here especially of HOS and Paraga's gang – but some in the HVO too, and Croats did commit atrocities on a number of occasions. For example, in April 1993, in the Lasva Valley, in Vitez, in Ahmici and other villages, and in October 1993, in Stupni Do, Bosnian Croat forces committed crimes as heinous and unforgivable as nearly anything – except Srebrenica – that Serbs did, albeit on a vastly smaller scale. We'll get to what happened between the Bosnian Croats and Muslims in 1993 in a moment. But keep in mind the key finding of the comprehensive CIA study: Serbs did at least 90 percent of the killing, raping, and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. And that figure was pre-Srebrenica. This while Croatia was inundated with hundreds of thousands of Bosnian Muslim refugees, and while hundreds of thousands more sheltered in Bosnian Croat-held territory in Bosnia.

As potential threats to any would-be Western military peace-making forces, the Serbs, although a genuine threat, were vastly overrated, and the Croats, even most of the Bosnian Croats, were far more likely to be welcoming than threatening.

Yet this very clear distinction was for a long time all but lost on both our military and UN commanders and officers. There was a peculiar tendency by the UN and Western uniformed military in Bosnia to show, if not quite comradely respect, at least undue deference to Serbian officers. This was separate from the Stockholm Syndrome aspect. One obvious reason is that some of the Serb officers looked and acted the part. There was, I was told, a sense that you could deal with them officer to officer, in contrast to some of the less-disciplined, occasionally more ragtag looking Bosnian Croat and Muslim military leaders. As I mentioned earlier, no one

embodied this sentiment more clearly that the initial UNPROFOR Sarajevo Commander, Canadian General Lewis MacKenzie. MacKenzie dealt often with Serbian officers, reportedly showing them great deference, placed most of the blame for Sarajevo's situation on the Muslims rather than their Serb encirclers, said as late as August of 1992 that he knew nothing of any death camps, said he thought the international media were part of a sophisticated effort to exaggerate such atrocities as there were, was invited repeatedly to testify before the U.S. Congress, and, as I noted earlier, on leaving the Balkans, embarked on a paid speaking tour for Serb Net, a pro-Belgrade organization.

Even U.S. officers occasionally succumbed to the professional attraction of dealing officer-to-officer with the Serbs, including with blood-on-their-hands Serbian war criminals. As late as August 1994, for example, I along with most other Western diplomats in the region was dumbfounded to learn that General Wesley Clark…

Q: And future Presidential candidate.

NEITZKE: Clark, then JCS Director of Strategy, Plans, and Policy, had traveled deep into Serb-cleansed territory to meet, over State Department objection, with no less a war criminal than Ratko Mladic, the Serbian General -- still on the run – who engineered the Bosnian genocide. In what a straight faced Pentagon flag officer spokesman termed a customary feature of such "military-to-military meetings," Clark was photographed accepting from a beaming Mladic a hat, pistol, and bottle of brandy. When a U.S. diplomat in the press the next day accurately likened the meeting to "cavorting with Hermann Goering," posts in the area were all quickly told by the Department to shut up about it, since Clark, it turned out, was an Arkansas, Rhodes Scholar friend of the Clintons. Clark later said he'd been misled into meeting with Mladic. That may be true, but those misleading him either knew better or, more likely, had fallen totally for the UN-propagated myth that all sides were equally guilty and that Serb officers in Bosnia were more like uniformed officers anywhere; they were disciplined; you could deal with them.

Apart from deference to Serb officers, however, there was this tendency I've alluded to, especially early on, for U.S. military visitors to the area to view all sides as almost indistinguishably threatening to any forces the U.S. might eventually decide to send in. This mindset led to a bizarre incident near the Split Airport in March 1993, in response to which I sent out another sharp front channel protest, this time to EUCOM, I think. Without anyone's notifying the Embassy, a U.S. Naval ship off the coast had sought and obtained permission from local Split Airport authorities to land a few men for a brief Search and Rescue practice drill. What they then proceeded to do, however, was to land way more than a few armed troops and essentially secure all of Split Airport. We got a call from Defense Minister Susak, I believe, a guy who would do pretty much anything for us that we asked – if we asked him – wondering just what the hell we thought we were doing around Split Airport. So I sent my cable calling the incident an outrageous violation of Croatian sovereignty. Then I took the opportunity to blast a U.S. military mindset so out of touch with Balkan ground truth that it apparently couldn't differentiate between potential threats to U.S. forces. I suggested that the Public Relations and PSYOPS strategy the U.S. military had insisted upon for Operation Provide Promise - that is, out of concern for Serbian sensibilities to publicly portray all sides as equally threatening to our airdrops, a ludicrous proposition – was being badly confused with the reality of the situation in

Bosnia, which was, I said over and over, that the Serbs were incomparably more hostile to the prospect of U.S. intervention than the Croats were and incomparably more guilty of raping, killing, and ethnic cleansing.

That cable too was read in Washington and EUCOM, and I got a call shortly thereafter from General Jones asking - for the record, I suppose, since he knew me fairly well by then – why I had reacted so strongly, as if that weren't obvious. But he acknowledged that the Split SAR exercise had been a mistake.

Again, it's interesting to contrast that U.S. military mindset, the one that prevailed in 1992 and 1993, with where we ended up in 1995, looking at the then beefed-up Croatian forces in a sense as a proxy in pushing back the Serbs in Bosnia. That warming military-to-military relationship would ultimately see Secretary of Defense Perry deliver an amazingly effusive eulogy at Defense Minister Susak's 1998 funeral. The transformation was profound.

Q: Okay, well, you have provided, you have laid out some serious charges and, I must say, some compelling evidence to back them up. Is there anything else you want to say about the U.S. military at this point before we move on. I mean, I want to get back to Croatia…

NEITZKE: There's just one more point I'd like to make here. I don't cut U.S. military leaders any slack at all for their dissembling, foot-dragging, and use of every other tactic they could find to keep us on the sidelines during the worst of the Bosnian genocide in 1992. But in doing so, in that period, they marched in lock step with the civilian side of the Administration, with Bush, Baker, Eagleburger, Scowcroft, and others.

I think a different framework, or metric, as they would say, for judging U.S. military leaders needs to be applied once the Clinton team came in. I'm not excusing the stance senior military leaders took in the new Administration – Powell was still CJCS and still dug in up to his eyeballs in opposition to deeper U.S. involvement in Bosnia.

Q: But it was not just General Powell, as you said…

NEITZKE: Not at all. Opposition in the military was wide and deep. Just as an aside, I remember once briefing visiting Army Chief of Staff Sullivan out at the MASH at Zagreb Airport, describing the complex of death camps, the one-sidedness of the carnage, what I saw as our interests in the conflict, how most of our NATO Allies were there and badly floundering under UN leadership, the whole thing, I laid it all out. For a long time he just looked at me, as though to say, or so I thought, I hear you, I feel for your having to deal with this mess, but there is literally nothing you could tell me that would alter my opposition to our getting more involved here. Another time I heard a U.S. Army colonel – he was accompanying a U.S. UN Association group, in a Zagreb meeting with Croats and Western Europeans present – stand up and pronounce that even the prevention of 20,000 rapes in Bosnia wouldn't have been worth endangering the life of one American soldier. It was embarrassingly clear that he'd gotten the memo. So, yes, although Powell was the most formidable U.S. military opponent of intervention, he was hardly alone.

But getting back to the early Clinton White House, some were reportedly so disrespectful toward the military, toward their professional concerns and even the military as an institution, that you have to ask yourself honestly whether you, if you were a commander, would want to risk your soldiers' lives in the Balkans or elsewhere under Clinton's leadership. Then, of course, Clinton's early decision on gays in the military alienated senior officers even more. So, despite then UN Permanent Representative Madeleine Albright's famous NSC challenge to Powell, "What's our army for then," I could understand their aversion to going into Bosnia at that point under Clinton's shaky leadership. But did that justify their, in effect, lying about genocide, distorting Bosnian ground truth, endlessly regurgitating UNPROFOR inanities, to counter pressures on the U.S. to intervene? I don't think so; you have to draw the line somewhere; you don't lie about genocide. In any event, the realization that senior U.S. military officers felt profoundly alienated from the Clinton Administration, and that Clinton had no intention of making good on his campaign pledge to get tough with the Serbs, deepened the already acute frustration one felt on the ground in the former Yugoslavia as the tragedy continued.

Q: Just to clarify, you did or did not want the U.S. military to intervene, I mean even after President Clinton came in, because it sounded as though that was what you were advocating, intervention?

NEITZKE: I wanted the administration, both administrations, civilian and military sides, to stop trying deliberately to confuse, to stop lying to the American people about what was going on in the former Yugoslavia, Bosnia especially. And while I thought it extremely shortsighted for the U.S. to stand aside while most of the rest of NATO sent forces into Bosnia in the fall of 1992 under UN auspices, I never advocated or thought necessary a massive U.S. ground force. Even a small U.S. force, comparable to what the Brits and French sent in, would have transformed the mission from the outset. Under the Powell Doctrine, of course, we don't do token troop presences. But had we been willing in the late summer and fall of 1992 to commit a U.S. contingent to UNPROFOR, one way or another the situation would quickly have come to a head. We would have brought it to a head. With U.S. soldiers at risk, we would not have tolerated that flaccid mess of a command structure. More likely, if we'd been willing to consider going in early, we'd have insisted up front on a U.S.-led NATO force, which – as even Karadzic attests -- needn't have been all that massive. And the Bosnians would have been spared three years of UNPROFOR dithering, and worse. Underlying that preference was my view that there was a good deal less to the Serbs than met the eye and that air strikes, including against Serbia itself, could play a critical role in bringing them to heel, forcing them to the negotiating table. Admittedly, in January 1993, on troop deployments and other options, Clinton faced tougher choices than Bush had in the summer of 1992. Still, I hoped that on Bosnia Clinton would be as good as his word. Few of us realized then just how feckless his Administration would prove to be early on. I think some in our military saw all of that earlier and, while they'd been opposed to going into Bosnia all along, their opposition was redoubled by Clinton's early missteps.

Q: Okay. I see.

NEITZKE: If I could add just one other point here, I think it's important, about a power shift toward the Pentagon under Clinton. Through the end of the Bush Administration, Eagleburger, as I mentioned, with Scowcroft, would typically have been deferred to in weighing the Serbs'

political will, what kind of force it might take to bring them to heel. Powell and senior Pentagon officials would have found little in Eagleburger's analysis to disagree with. But when Eagleburger and Scowcroft left, and in light of Clinton's weak standing with the military, and Christopher's early souring on Bosnia, the recognized analytical authority on this issue changed. The Clinton team began deferring almost reflexively to Powell and the Pentagon on the question of what it would take to break the Serbs' will, or at least get them to the table. And within the Pentagon, this issue would typically be worked by planners and analysts with little or no Balkan experience. They nearly always presumed unyielding Serb political will unless confronted with a Western ground force so large that Clinton would never agree to it.

But the larger question here is key. When the U.S. is contemplating military engagement, it now seems to fall naturally to the Pentagon to assess what kind of force will it will take to break an adversary's will. But why? This is a political analytical judgment at least as much as a military one. It's something for which State and CIA will likely have at least as good a feel as the Pentagon. I understand that with "their" men's lives on the line, the Pentagon won't easily yield to State or the Agency on this judgment. But the balance now has swung very heavily toward the Pentagon. And on Bosnia it did so with the incoming Clinton Administration. They were afraid to challenge the generals on virtually any front, except briefly on the treatment of gays. And that extreme reticence explains some of the policy fumbling and muddling that took place on this issue until the summer of 1995.

As time went on, however, into late 1994 and 1995, the U.S. military itself, even if not always self-consciously from the top down, began to see the handwriting on the wall, the eventual inevitability of their being drawn in in some substantial fashion. And, working with the Agency, they were gradually coming up to speed on what they would need to know when that time came, on the capabilities they might want to have. The Predator and pre-Predator test reconnaissance missions over Bosnia that were being run quietly from, I believe it was Krk Island, off Croatia's coast, were one element of that. And the sophistication of their threat analysis began to improve.

Q: Just a minute. These are the Predators now being used in the Middle East and Afghanistan?

NEITZKE: An earlier version. They were experimenting with them, flying them over Bosnia and producing real time video. They're a very dangerous weapon, and not just for taking out one's enemy at little risk. If a nation has this in its arsenal, it could be nearly impossible next time to say that we can't get any real time intel about, say, concentration camps and mass murders. Just send a few Predators over the area in question. It could enormously complicate deniability.

Q: Well what about the Europeans? How would you rate their performance overall?

NEITZKE: I think we covered part of that earlier. Generally terrible, but at least they tried, at least they showed up. So did the Canadians. Until Dayton and late 1995, ours was the most glaring absence. But even before UNPROFOR's crippling inadequacies became apparent, it had long been clear that the Europeans were not up to the task. This should not have surprised us; there was no basis for believing that they could do this on their own, no historical precedent. Their assertion of a prerogative to handle this situation had all but evaporated in 1992. By then no one was in charge, no Western military force at least.

Q: Well you say they were not up to doing this. I mean, looking at it as a practical thing, here are powers, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, they certainly had a huge array of military might, and they were smart people. Was it a matter of will or what?

NEITZKE: Political will was sorely lacking. But they did have substantial military forces, except for the Germans, who were not there for understandable historical reasons. What they lacked most critically is any prior collective military engagement which might have helped them resolve some of the questions of mutual trust and confidence that plagued even the more formidable European forces in UNPROFOR. And the UN itself, Akashi most notably, but the whole UN chain of command, made effective military action, even by the Europeans, all but impossible. The French contingent was certainly capable of executing a forceful military action, as were the Brits, as were some others. But each distrusted the UN chain of command and routinely sought guidance and confirmation from their own capital before attempting anything. Each had its own interests in the former Yugoslavia and was considering options to safeguard its own forces should things turn truly ugly and they have to get out quickly. Was the French public, even concerned as it was about the humanitarian catastrophe, prepared to accept French casualties as the result of decisions made by, say, British officers, let alone by a UN civilian? Maybe a few, but not many.

Now you could say that none of this was our fault, that we had no moral, legal, or political obligation to be there, let alone to lead. But you cannot say, looking at history, that the Europeans' behavior was surprising. There was no basis for believing that they were going to shed much blood, jointly, in this kind of endeavor, in the absence of the U.S.

Q: You know, it keeps coming back to what many of our colleagues have observed in various situations, that like it or not, the United States is the indispensable country.

NEITZKE: That was proven by our three-year absence in Bosnia.

Q: Okay, let us turn back to the Embassy, to your role in running that. You were Charge, or chief of mission, I guess, for quite a long period. How did that come about?

NEITZKE: After we established formal diplomatic relations with the Croats and opened the Embassy in late August 1992, the Bush White House, reportedly hoping to curry favor with Eastern European ethnic voters, nominated a Croatian-American, Mara Letica, to be Ambassador in Zagreb. I'm not sure whether her papers ever got to the Hill, however, before Congress adjourned for its long campaign recess. I heard at the time that the nomination may have been slow-tracked in State, that there was opposition to sending a non-professional out at that point. So there may have been some foot-dragging. With Bush's loss, it became moot; the nomination was dead. In January, the new Administration had a full plate of more urgent business and, for that matter, more senior ambassadorial appointments to make. It was late spring 1993 before they got around to nominating Galbraith as Ambassador. And, although Peter's friends on the Foreign Relations Committee rushed through his papers, his hearing, and confirmation, it wasn't until the very end of June that Peter arrived.

Q: We'll talk about Ambassador Galbraith's arrival later. First I would like you to talk a little more about how the new Administration handled the Yugoslav problems and how the sides there reacted to the new Administration. How did the Croats react, for example?

NEITZKE: Clinton had strongly attacked Bush for his failure to take on the Serbs, to halt the killing in Bosnia. So hopes were high after the election that he meant what he'd said. The Croats stood back, as did the Muslims, and to a certain extent, even the Serbs, watching to see what the new administration would bring. Surely the timidity and occasional sloppiness that had characterized the previous 18 months of U.S. Balkan policy would give way to something more forceful and coherent. In retrospect, it seems hopelessly naïve to have believed that. I understand that the Clinton team did ask for a fresh reading from the intelligence community on what it might be possible to do short of full-scale intervention. I heard that Lake, for example, asked the community specifically for a study of the feasibility of liberating one or more of the death camps. Powell alone probably could have blocked that, but there was another problem. It would take months before new officials were confirmed and in place in all the critical subcabinet intelligence and national security policy jobs. In the meantime, the fresh look Lake wanted would come from holdover, mid-senior level career officials who had been defending our limited engagement policy and its flawed analytical underpinnings. Needless to say, they concluded that little could be done at even remotely acceptable risk.

Add to that the widely-reported disarray in the early Clinton White House, the narrowness of Clinton's victory, and Clinton's strong inclination to spend his limited political capital on domestic initiatives. It soon became clear that we weren't going to get a more potent policy on the Balkans and that it might even get worse. I recall reading that State Department Under Secretary for Political Affairs Peter Tarnoff told Elie Wiesel in April 1993 that failure in Bosnia would destroy the Clinton presidency; the Democratic Party constituted too fragile a coalition to risk it. I also recall reading that Hillary Clinton advised her husband that taking on Bosnia could cost them health care reform and argued strongly against it. Any lingering doubts were resolved by Secretary of State Christopher's disastrous trip to Europe early in the Administration aimed at selling the Europeans on "lift and strike," that is, lift the arms embargo on the Muslims and strike the Serbs from the air.

Q: Well it was considered at the time that we were keeping the Bosnians, the Muslims, from protecting themselves while the Serbs had an abundance of arms.

NEITZKE: That's correct. But Christopher hit a brick wall. Not only did Clinton – who grew nervous, or so it was said, after reading Kaplan's Balkan Ghosts -- pull the rug a bit out from under Christopher in mid-trip, but the Europeans already had men on the ground in Bosnia, some in vulnerable situations. It was all well and good for America, refusing to send troops of its own, to say we'd like to start dropping bombs from 15,000 feet. We saw in 1995 what that initially led to; the Serbs took UNPROFOR troops hostage, tied some of them to bridges, gun emplacements, anywhere where they'd likely be among the first to die from any bombs we dropped. So in the spring of 1993 Christopher's lift-and-strike proposal got a resounding "hell no" from the Europeans. Then Clinton reacted huffily, saying well, I tried, I just couldn't persuade the Europeans, completely ignoring the elephant in the room of our own refusal to send troops, to lead where it mattered.

That episode not only soured Christopher on Bosnia pretty much for the duration – it was, as I mentioned, his "problem from hell" - it also led directly to the toothless, ultimately calamitous "Safe Areas" agreement which provided largely fictitious UN protection for the remaining six largest concentrations of Muslims in Bosnia. You saw the last vestige of that policy copout when the Dutch "peacekeepers" in Srebrenica lamely surrendered to the Serbs in the summer of 1995, allowing them to haul some 8,000 men and boys off to be slaughtered. Now let me go back and say something about how the Croats, how Tudjman, was reading all of this.

Q: Please.

NEITZKE: Tudjman had come a long way in 1992, or so it seemed, from the erratic, ultra nationalist greedily eyeing Bosnia that Warren Zimmerman thought he was dealing with, to the more measured and reserved man I found on my arrival, to the Tudjman as self-perceived statesman following the London Conference of August 1992, where he had first tasted international respectability – and liked it. By the end of the year, with a quarter of Croatia still in Serbian hands and an unstoppable tide of Bosnian Muslim refugees swamping parts of the country, Tudjman found himself under increasing pressure – particularly from restive Croatian communities displaced from the UNPAs - to begin pushing back. He believed that the longer the Serbs' occupation of the UNPAs went unchallenged, the more likely it was that the UNPAs, or at least large parts of them, would never be fully integrated into Croatia.

Tudjman too had noted Clinton's tough campaign rhetoric on Bosnia. And with Clinton's victory, Tudjman hoped for a change in U.S. policy. But, as all the signals out of the early Clinton Administration pointed to continued U.S. reluctance to get involved, Tudjman was quicker than many to see that those hopes were misplaced; Croatia was going to have to take the initiative. And, by late 1992-early 1993, it was better prepared militarily to do so.

Q: So what did Tudjman do, I mean about these UN areas?

NEITZKE: The four UNPAs constituted the quarter or so of Croatian territory, or territory that Croatia considered theirs, that was seized and occupied by Belgrade-backed Serbs in the Croatia War. What to do with them, especially after the fighting there had been largely halted, was an issue on which the civilian side of UNPROFOR had the lead, at least for a time. That was headed by Cedric Thornberry, an earnest and interesting, and ultimately very frustrated, guy. Thornberry's view, and that of UNPROFOR, and technically it could be argued, that of the international community, was that the UNPAS were not integral parts of the Croatia that we and many other nations had recognized by the spring of 1992, that their status was unresolved pending final negotiations between Zagreb and Knin, the so-called capital of the Krajina Serbs. Thornberry's job, against huge odds, was to bridge this gap while helping see to the well being of those who remained in the UNPAs, nearly all Serbs except for a few tiny, surrounded enclaves of Croats, mixed-marriage families, and others.

Thornberry made no bones of the fact that he saw the UNPA Serbs as the underdogs, the past, current, and likely future victims of an ultranationalist Zagreb regime.

Q: Well, were they not, was that an inaccurate assessment?

NEITZKE: At a minimum, it was way overdone. Serbian leaders in Belgrade and in the JNA had anticipated early on that if Yugoslavia came apart Serb-dominant areas in Croatia would need help to remain in Yugoslavia, in effect in a Greater Serbia. These traditionally Serb-dominant areas in Croatia included large parts of Sectors North and South, and smaller parts of Sectors East and West, as the four UNPAs, respectively, were designated. Small-scale fighting for control of these areas broke out long before Croatia formally declared its independence. Belgrade had been shipping arms and other military supplies to the Krajina Serbs for some time. And the Croats in these areas had similarly been mobilizing. During the six months or so of the most intense fighting in the Croatian war, the latter half of 1991, all but a few Croats fled these areas, remaining for several years in Displaced Persons camps around Zagreb, living pretty dismally. But all was far from well with the Krajina Serbs too. They found themselves even more isolated, cut off from the nearby Croatian communities with which they had traditionally traded and at the end of a very long supply line from Belgrade. Life in much of the Krajina at that tense time was truly grim. I later visited there. Many of these people were living in wretched conditions. And as Croatia became better and better armed, a deep sense of gloom and foreboding settled over the place, notwithstanding occasional bombastic rhetoric from Krajina Serb leaders.

Thornberry had UNPROFOR civilian teams living in the UNPAs, and many became very sympathetic to the Krajina Serbs' cause, seeing Zagreb as a huge threat. And Thornberry's own attitude consistently reflected that sympathy. As he got nowhere fast in his efforts to resolve the status of the UNPAs through negotiations, he heightened his appeals to the local representatives of Western governments, including me, to put pressure on Croatia.

Throughout this period, the latter part of 1992 and early 1993, there were provocations on both sides of the tenuous Krajina Serb-Croatia line, both sides probing the other for local advantage. By early 1993, however, Tudjman was ready to bring things to a head, by upping the ante with the first credible threat of a Croatian military move to liberate UNPA territory. In January 1993, for example, the Croatian army moved near Maslenica to open a secure land corridor to Dalmatia.

Q: How did you, how did the U.S., react to that threat?

NEITZKE: The European bureau at State reacted with near-hysteria. This was still very early in the Clinton Administration, but they had already figured out that they didn't want the Croats stirring things up, rekindling another hot front, as it were. So there were threats from Washington of sanctions against Croatia. Merely for reporting why the Croats said they had undertaken the move, I got another warning from EUR. They didn't want to know why; they didn't care why; they wanted the problem to go away. That was about the same time I got yet another threatening call from EUR, from the East European affairs office, this one suggesting that our whole effort to report atrocities in Bosnia was aimed less at documenting human rights abuses than at forcing the Administration's hand. They suggested that henceforth I just send in the raw data, sort of field reports, and not in widely-distributed, finished, cable form. Not very respectfully, I'm afraid, I declined.

The new administration was already tilting toward a pox-on-all-their-houses rationale for non-engagement, and a get-tough action against the Croats would have comported well with that. To this day I don't think most Croats know how close their country came on several occasions to getting slapped with sanctions. And there were still a lot of career Bush Administration holdovers around who would gladly have clamped sanctions on Croatia because of what they were convinced Croatia was doing in Bosnia. Serbia, of course, was already under the leaky sanctions regime that I discussed earlier. I delivered that unwelcome message to Tudjman, about the threat of sanctions. His response was, essentially, what would you have me do, how long must we wait, I have the displaced persons on my back, this is sovereign Croatian territory being held illegally through the long hand of Belgrade, and UNPROFOR and the international community just dawdle.

What happened in short order surprised me but stunned Thornberry. We flipped. The UN Security Council in March 1993, at the strong urging of the United States, if indeed it wasn't our initiative, adopted a resolution, 815 I believe, summarily declaring the UNPAs, all of them, to be integral parts of Croatia. That was it. The matter over which Thornberry had labored so hard and with such frustration was resolved. Tudjman, with this victory to point to, this tangible backing by the international community of Croatia's right to reintegrate all UNPA territory, was temporarily mollified. I don't think Thornberry ever recovered.

What this episode signaled to me was that Washington – which knew well the legal merits of the UNPA issue – was so determined to keep the lid on at least one Balkan problem that they were willing to go from threatening sanctions on Zagreb to endorsing the Croatian position nearly in the blink of an eye. This was a dance that would be repeated several times in the following two years – Tudjman saber-rattling and threatening to move if the international community didn't do something to get him back the UNPAs – and we or the UN giving him enough, just enough, to get him to stand down for awhile. Ultimately, in May 1995, the game was over; the Croatian military moved in and took over Sector West and then in the summer, in an operation it called Balkan Storm – an allusion to Desert Storm – the Croats retook Sectors North and South. We should talk about that later.

Q: How did you rate Tudjman's diplomacy in all of this, this dance you called it?

NEITZKE: Tudjman's decisions and actions when the chips were down did not, let's say, jibe with the caricature in Zimmerman's, and the CIA's, bio notes of a year earlier. He may not have been a master tactician, but he was plenty able. He read the situation correctly, took major but prudent risks, and in the end got most of what he wanted. He certainly read us right, what he could and couldn't get away with. I spent a fair amount of time with him and I thought I understood him about as well as anyone outside his inner circle. It's clear that at times he was making things up as he went along, getting conflicting advice from subordinates, and keeping his own counsel. His decision-making seemed more like that of a general, which he had earlier been, than a politician-President. You can say and think what you will about Tudjman – and many do, and a lot of it, especially from his political adversaries in Croatia and from Serbia and its sympathizers, is pretty vile – but Tudjman deftly steered the young and fragile Croatian state through some very dangerous waters.

Where Tudjman very nearly got it very wrong, however, was in Bosnia in 1993. And that, I believe, came about for a couple of reasons. The Bosnian Croats had generally – I say generally, not everywhere, Prozor in the late autumn stands out – behaved themselves in 1992. But by early 1993, waves of mainly Bosnian Muslims fleeing the largely unchecked Serbian onslaught were seriously undermining what had always been a tenuous Croat-Muslim balance in various parts of the country, including the southeast. Earlier Croat-Muslim cooperation in certain areas further north had been replaced by open friction and occasional fighting in south-central and south-eastern areas. Nearly always it was the Croats who were taking it to the Muslims. A lot of this fighting was spontaneous, loosely directed by local or regional Bosnian Croat leaders, and not – at least I never saw convincing evidence that it was -- directed by Tudjman.

Q: Do you think Tudjman did not know about it, did not follow this closely, did not authorize the Bosnian Croats to go after the Muslims?

NEITZKE: Well, I'm speaking here about the early days of this Croat-Muslim tension and fighting. Susak was himself a proud Herzegovinian, and he kept a close eye on Bosnian Croat interests. When Susak perceived Herzegovinian interests threatened, he was not averse to straying from Tudjman's guidelines; initiatives that he may have authorized on his own, or authorization that he too liberally interpreted, got Tudjman in trouble a couple times. Tudjman too cared about the Bosnian Croats, no question, but not to the extent Susak did.

Let me digress here to introduce another player, Mate Boban, the Bosnian Croat leader. I met Boban just once, in January 1993. Vance and Owen were then pushing for Western support for their cantons plan in Bosnia, and Boban and the Bosnian Croats stood accused of jumping the gun and beginning to take control in certain areas that the Vance/Owen plan envisioned for eventual Bosnian Croat dominance. When I met him in Zagreb, Boban was seething with anger, directed mainly at critics of his premature move. At that moment the Bosnian Croats were the only Bosnian party unequivocally supporting the Vance/Owen plan. The Serbs didn't like it because it would mean surrendering large chunks of territory they'd seized and cleansed. Izetbegovic didn't like it for a host of reasons. And Washington didn't like it, but offered no alternative. Boban reserved most of his wrath for Izetbegovic, although he hurled no ethnic or religious epithets. Rather, he attributed the Bosnian Croats' increasingly desperate situation to what he saw as Izetbegovic's unwarranted rush to Bosnian independence and bungling of Bosnia's defense when the Serbs made good on their pre-independence threats. Boban contended that no one in the West cared a whit about the Bosnian Croats; they would, I recall his saying, just as soon see the Bosnian Croats flushed into the sea. Boban was not a pleasant man; he played a lot of angles during the war and was said to have engaged in more than his share of corruption. But, while I strongly challenged what he'd said, on his central point he wasn't altogether wrong. The Hercegovinians had always stood at the bottom of the Bosnian pecking order. Boban argued they were on their own and would have to do what they'd have to do to defend themselves.

I took the opportunity in reporting on this meeting - this was just about at the Bush-Clinton handover in January 1993 - to critique the outgoing Bush Administration's stand on Vance/Owen, tacitly supporting the so-called Geneva peace process that had produced the plan, yet constantly nitpicking and undermining their efforts while declining to take the lead ourselves

or suggest a viable alternative. I recommended that Washington get off the fence and either support Vance/Owen as the best that could realistically be achieved, and try to end the bloodshed, or openly abandon Vance/Owen and Geneva and pick up the baton ourselves. I also pointed out that while Washington's deep sympathy for Izetbegovic and the Muslims was laudable, the Bosnia of the past and the future was not theirs alone.

Q: Any reaction to that? I mean that was, that sounds like a dissent message to me.

NEITZKE: One former boss sent me a congratulatory message saying it was the damnedest cable he'd ever read, or words to that effect, but no, I heard nothing directly from Washington. It was the eve of the inauguration, for one thing; I'm not sure who was minding the store.

But getting back to Boban and the growing Croat-Muslim tensions, in January tempers had not quite yet boiled over in most Croat-Muslim areas. By April, however, the situation had grown much worse. That was the month when Bosnian Croat forces committed the Lasva Valley massacres to which I referred. And it was the month before Bosnian Croats in and around Mostar began driving Muslims out of West Mostar, mostly to the East Bank, and rounding up thousands of Muslim males and confining them in ad hoc camps set up around the area. But strangely, it appeared that as late as that same month, April, Croats were still transshipping Iranian arms to some Muslim forces.

Q: How do you know that?

NEITZKE: Our Special Envoy for the former Yugoslavia, Reggie Bartholomew, stopped in Zagreb in April, along with Barry McCaffrey. They met with Tudjman and in a private exchange between Susak and Bartholomew the next morning, Susak asked Bartholomew whether the USG wanted Croatia to continue moving Iranian arms to the Muslims.

Q: But I thought you said that all of that had been halted the previous autumn during that episode with the Iranian 747 at Zagreb Airport and all.

NEITZKE: Well, I thought so as well, and I was taken aback by Susak's question. Could it have been a feint, to cover up what he must have known the Bosnian Croats were about to undertake against the Muslims? I don't think so; that wasn't Susak's style; it wasn't how he'd operated with us. Or was it anticipatory, was Susak even then envisioning the larger Iranian role that still lay a year off? I doubt that as well. So I assume there must have been at least a modest continuing Iranian arms flow at that time, so modest – unlike the Iranian 747 the previous fall -- that we hadn't detected it. I recall this episode vividly because it was part of what I later had to testify on during the various investigations of how the Iranians had gotten so deeply involved in Bosnia. What was most interesting here is that Bartholomew in April 1993 told Susak that the USG could not be in the position of approving Croatian transshipments of Iranian arms.

Q: Well, that sounds like a very weak no.

NEITZKE: Bartholomew's response was clear enough: we would not approve or in any way be a party to the introduction of more Iranian arms into the conflict. And that position jibed with the

one I had taken in September 1992. Did Reggie's response to Susak lead to a halt in any Iranian arms flow still underway at that point? I don't know, but I'm confident that there was no significant uptick in Iranian arms shipments following the Bartholomew-Susak exchange. We and others would have noticed it.

Twelve months later, however, in the spring of 1994, Galbraith and then Special Envoy Chuck Redman – on wink-and-nod instructions from Tony Lake – gave Tudjman a precisely opposite answer in response to essentially the same query. Redman then told Tudjman that the USG was not in a position to tell Croatia not to engage in Iranian arms transshipments. That was the Clinton Administration's supposed "green light" to an alleged undisclosed covert activity and to Iran's deepening involvement in Bosnia that prompted the various investigations. And that was followed by a surge in Croatian-Iranian relations on several fronts, a large increase in the Iranian presence in Croatia, and, of course, large-scale Iranian arms deliveries. But returning to the Spring of 1993, the Susak-Bartholomew exchange seemed to indicate that as late as April of that year Croat-Muslim relations were still holding in some areas. That, however, was about to change.

Which brings me to the second factor – in addition to the cumulative destabilizing effects of the Serbian onslaught -- that contributed to the outbreak of more widespread Croat-Muslim hostilities in mid-1993. That was the lesson some Croats derived from the West's de facto acquiescence in Serbian genocide in the previous year. My guess is that some Croat leaders – possibly Tudjman but more likely Susak, along with Bosnian Croat leaders -- calculated that, with relative impunity, they too could forcefully strike the Muslims, especially in areas where they felt Muslims were encroaching, and in addition could begin seizing areas in which, if the Vance/Owen plan were implemented, Croats would be accorded dominance. One thing I heard around this time from an angry Susak was that some Muslim elements had begun using against Croats the very guns that Zagreb had been funneling to them. Yes, that sounds a bit neat, but that's what he said.

I very strongly doubt, however, that either Tudjman or Susak authorized the cleansing of the Lasva Valley, let alone the massacres in late April. By the same token, it's difficult to believe that what briefly transpired in and around Mostar in early May, which was widespread and obviously coordinated, could have taken place without some kind of nod from Zagreb. There, Bosnian Croats, as I mentioned, drove nearly all Muslims from the Western part of the city and began rounding up large numbers of Muslim males and holding them in buildings or improvised camps throughout the area. Those who believe that, notwithstanding the CIA study, Croats treated Muslims just as badly as the Serbs did, often point to those camps around Mostar as proof of their contention.

I can only guess what might have become of these Muslims had the Croat roundup and imprisonment effort continued unimpeded. The Serbs did not have a monopoly on sadism. Fortunately, it didn't continue unimpeded. We, UN personnel, and others were on the Croats' case virtually from the outset. By chance, our military attaché and his assistant were in this area at the time. We had them seek entry to some of the holding facilities, and they got in. With their eye-witness accounts we were able to correct wildly overblown reports that the Croats had set up a system of brutal concentration and death camps similar to what the Serbs had established a year

earlier. But, more importantly, we were able to confront the Croats early on with the disturbing details of what we had seen and demand that the process be halted and those detained freed. With pressure from us and many others, nearly all the roundup activity was halted and nearly all of the prisoners were eventually released. For a brief while, however, there was severe mistreatment, even torture of some of these Muslims. And there were a small number of now-documented killings.

Although this bold Bosnian Croat move had essentially been nipped in the bud, a line had been crossed; Croat-Muslim relations in these areas would never be the same. The Bosnian Croats had been reined in, but not completely. Incidents of Croat persecution of Muslims continued to accumulate, and East Mostar became a hell hole, especially for the many displaced Muslims swelling the population there. UN and Embassy DART officials visiting East Mostar reported the most god awful conditions. And then Stari Most, the beautiful old, medieval bridge, the symbol of Mostar, and to some extent, of Bosnia, was deliberately destroyed by Croatian forces.

Q: Well, again, how do you draw such a moral distinction between what the Croats were doing, or at least tried to do, and what the Serbs did? And also, is Tudjman himself, even if he didn't order it, not responsible for what happened around Mostar?

NEITZKE: On the first part of your question, drawing moral distinctions between what the Serbs and the Croats did to the Muslims, I'm reminded of the line that MacKenzie used, the pro-Serb Canadian UNPROFOR general. He compared the situation in Bosnia to that of three serial killers, one of whom had brutally murdered 15 victims, one 10, and the other 5. Do you really want to help the one who has only murdered 5, he would ask. His point was that all three parties were indistinguishably evil. But the best analysis of who did what to whom, of who killed whom, the comprehensive CIA study I've mentioned, destroys MacKenzie's contention. It was nothing like 15-10-5; Serbs were guilty of 90 percent or more of the killing, raping, and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia. The Croats came in second at a few percent, and the Muslims a distant third, and much of that was probably retaliatory. So, yes, the comparative guilt of the parties is absolutely distinguishable, morally and in nearly every other way, and we do a great disservice, it seems to me, in fuzzing that over or failing to recognize it.

Now on Tudjman and the events around Mostar, yes, I blame him, as we did at the time. Whether or not he had personally authorized this roundup -- I was never able to establish that -- he had to have known about it almost immediately. At a minimum he failed to stop it right away. So, yes, I do blame him. Some will forever believe it was part and parcel of his long-held design to carve up Bosnia. I've already suggested several reasons why I don't think that was the case, that Tudjman had, or at least ever attempted to execute, any such grand plan. But there's another factor worth mentioning. The expat Hercegovinians played an outsized role in Croatia's defense effort and were disproportionately represented in Tudjman's wartime Government. When threats arose to their kin in Bosnia, Tudjman tended to give them more rein than he should have, and wasn't as quick as he should have been to enforce discipline, because these guys were a significant part of his political base. Even if the Bosnian Croats initiated the Mostar actions more or less on their own, however, Tudjman should have immediately done whatever was necessary to stop it, no excuses.

I should add here that this effort, to get Tudjman and Susak to rein in the Bosnian Croats, continued apace through Galbraith's arrival at the end of June 1993. Peter made this one of his earliest priorities, and stuck with it, telling Croatian audiences they couldn't have it both ways – if they wanted the West's sympathy as a victim of Serb aggression, they couldn't be beating up Muslims around Mostar.

Peter subsequently wrote, after his falling out with Tudjman and his departure from Croatia, that long after his arrival in 1993 we continued to receive numerous reports of horrific atrocities perpetrated by Croatian forces against the Muslims. Peter cast this as part of what he says was Tudjman's determined effort to carve out a Greater Croatia by hiving off large parts of Bosnia. With due respect to Peter, and in light of what I've already explained, I have to say that the part about a sustained, calculated Greater Croatia land grab by Tudjman is ex post facto; it's not at all how he or I saw it at the time. And it's just not warranted. And on the incoming atrocity reports, Peter may be confused as to timing; most such reports came in before Peter even arrived in Croatia. There was the Stupni Do massacre in October 1993, I believe, but I don't think we had confirmation of Croatian responsibility for that in anything like real time. And I don't think there was anything else nearly that egregious in that period. Yes, the Bosnian Croats and Muslims continued to slug it out at a lower level even after the worst of the Mostar area camps episode was wound up, and Croats were far more often the ones behaving abysmally. And it wasn't just or even mainly killings; it was conditions in East Mostar and increasingly indiscriminate convoy blockages that troubled us.

As for Peter's additional suggestion that it was mainly his own dogged efforts throughout this period that brought about, or laid the groundwork for, the Washington Agreement of March 1994 that nominally ended Bosnian Croat-Muslim fighting, well, that's quite a stretch. It's funny. I recall Peter's once joking with several of us, apropos of the Washington Agreement, reminding us that history is ultimately determined by those who write it and adding that he'd learned a thing or two about divvying up historical accolades. I want to be clear about this. Peter did some excellent work as ambassador, for which he deserves much credit. But the suggestion that he was the key player in achieving the Washington Agreement, and that he worked against the backdrop of many months of continuing Croatian atrocities as Tudjman sought to carve out a Greater Croatia, is way over the top. Peter did have a small but important role in the Washington Agreement, however, which I guess we'll come to.

Again, as to who ordered those initial Croat actions around Mostar, I don't think it has ever been firmly established. Some saw Tudjman's hand in nearly everything, but Tudjman's grip on things wasn't always that tight; his operation was heavily ad hoc.

Q: What do you mean?

NEITZKE: Here's an example that I shared years later with the Chief Prosecutor or chief investigator for The Hague Tribunal and a couple of his staff. He was trying to establish chain of command for some of the worst crimes committed by Croatian elements in Bosnia. He asked me about a couple cables I'd sent in at the time describing an occasionally semi-chaotic Tudjman office and senior government apparatus in Zagreb. That did not jibe with the smoothly-running, top-to-bottom, Tudjman-led operation that he was hoping to prove had dictated virtually every

action undertaken by Croats in Bosnia. I wasn't happy to have to disabuse him of this notion, because some of the people he was going after were truly rotten. But in fact, the early Tudjman government was anything but an all-knowing, well-greased machine. To illustrate, I told him that once, just minutes after the Serbs rocketed Zagreb's outskirts in the fall of 1993, I had received two calls in rapid succession from Tudjman's closest aide. The first conveyed disorder bordering on pandemonium in the President's office. The second call was to reassure me that, whatever I might think I'd just heard, in fact there had been no panic whatsoever. That was one of the strangest, best insights I got into how close a run thing Tudjman's early operation really was.

Q: Did Washington's view of Croatia change when they took after the Muslims around Mostar? Did we threaten them in any way?

NEITZKE: The sanctions option was again on the table, as I recall, and that, at least the threat, was certainly warranted. But I saw a different side of that whole issue when I went back to Washington for consultations that summer. By then NSC staff and State were desperate to move beyond Bosnia, to make it appear as though in their initial six months in office they hadn't botched the issue; they'd taken a tremendous amount of heat in the press. They sympathized deeply with the Muslims' plight, as most all of us did. But that, and a reluctance to do anything tangible, let alone risky, to actually help the Muslims, seemed to be about all that passed for policy at that point. Their take on Bosnian ground truth seemed to me naïve at best, which was strange given all the information to which they had access.

When larger-scale Croat-Muslim fighting erupted in the late spring and continued into the summer, Muslim forces also mustered the strength to push Croats out of a few areas in which the two communities had coexisted. One NSC official I called on in Washington shortly thereafter strongly backed these Muslim actions, suggesting that they were all legitimate GOBH activities and thus enjoyed USG support. She spoke as though she were unaware that Croats were even a constituent people of Bosnia. I interrupted her to ask what she found noble about rousting out women and children – of any national group -- in the middle of the night and driving them away, perhaps forever, from their ancestral homes. Wasn't that exactly the kind of activity for which we had roundly and justifiably condemned first the Serbs and more recently the Croats? In any event, that was the caliber of ground truth awareness and policy thinking that underlay Washington's renewed threat of sanctions against Croatia in mid-1993.

A year later, in the summer of 1994, when I again came back to Washington briefly I found pretty much the same pathetic policy, or policy avoidance, situation. When I raised the possibility of military action against the Serbs – who were again on the rampage – a senior NSC official told me that, while some in the White House wanted to hit the Serbs hard, no one in the White House had been able to convince the JCS to use "their army" – those were his words - to do so. So, after eighteen months in office, that's where Clinton stood vis-a-vis the military, the idea of his getting the military to do anything to which they objected was all but inconceivable.

While we're on it, there was another aspect of how Washington, and Brussels too, NATO, dealt with Bosnia that was always frustrating. It seemed that for them Bosnia was often essentially a bloodless paper exercise, an issue for endless debating, negotiating and drafting. You'd get cables exuding pride at their having arrived at some accord following what had to have been a

laborious, word-smithing exercise. They'd present this document, this plan or whatever, as though it were a genuine accomplishment, something real, when often you knew it would have no significant effect on events on the ground or would go unimplemented altogether. Yet these drafting successes too were an essential component of our timid, minimalist policy, providing a measure of self-delusion that the process was moving forward when in fact it wasn't.

Q: Okay, let us turn to Ambassador Galbraith's arrival. The end of June 1993, I think you said. How did that go, I mean as far as your position was concerned? It's not normal. Usually someone who has been chief of mission or charge for a long time and has established himself on the local scene and all, well, might wish to leave when the new guy came. But you did not. You stayed and became Galbraith's DCM. Why? And what kind of adjustments were necessary in how you did business, your role in the Embassy and with diplomatic colleagues in other Embassies?

NEITZKE: You're right. Normally one would have left on Peter's arrival. But this wasn't a normal situation, even a normal lengthy charge situation. I'd been chief of mission, the senior American there for a year. And I probably had closer ties and more contact with senior Croats in that year than all but a few other foreigners in town. Not just with Tudjman, but with Prime Minister Sarinic, Susak, Foreign Minister Granic, and various others. So yes, the handoff to Peter, with my staying there, was a little strange.

If things hadn't worked out between us, obviously I would have left. But things did work out. First, although the ConGen-then Embassy had been tiny when I arrived, it had grown rapidly that first year and in the summer of 1993 was still growing. Sections of one officer when I arrived were now sections of three or four. New sections had been added. New agencies had arrived. We were doing democracy and rule of law promotion through USAID and others. Lots of new initiatives. The old Con-Gen building was bursting at the seams, even as we sought to shore it up physically. We were acquiring additional office space around town. So by then, long before then actually, there was a serious DCM job to be done. Secondly, Peter and I saw essentially eye to eye on the issues, those confronting both the Embassy and the U.S. Government, although that changed toward the end of our two years together, especially regarding growing Iranian influence in Croatia and Bosnia. So there was no clash of viewpoints. Thirdly, Peter had his own agenda, his own initiatives, but beyond those he let me, wanted me, to run much of the show day to day. And he traveled a lot, in and out of the country, so there was quite a bit of de facto and real charge time those last two years.

In my dealings with other diplomats, it was occasionally a bit awkward but not overly so. I'd established good relationships with many of the Ambassadors and most of those continued to invite me to events they hosted, or speak freely with me, even seek me out, at other events, even as they were getting to know Peter. This sounds strange from a strict protocol standpoint, but somehow it worked. It would probably have been a lot more difficult to manage had another FSO come out as Ambassador instead of Peter.

Q: What about your wife, your children, how were they getting along? Did they want to stay on?

NEITZKE: From a family standpoint, wartime Zagreb turned out to be a good fit. The kids were healthy and thriving at the American School of Zagreb. ASZ was a great place, with probably 15 or 20 nationalities represented. In addition to caring for our kids, my wife had carved out a niche for herself, working sometimes alone and sometimes with the wives of other Ambassadors on practical ways to help refugees in the Zagreb area. There was the large annual party at our house hosted by my wife and other Ambassadors' wives for refugee children. On some days my wife would load up the car with apples, or powdered milk, toys, or other goods in short supply in the camps and drive out there and distribute them. Despite the language barrier, she connected with a number of these people. One family I recall in particular, who have since returned to Vukovar and are still struggling to rebuild their lives, lived at that time in a camp out by Zagreb Airport. They still send my wife cards and letters on the holidays. When my family was ultimately evacuated on short notice during the Serbian rocketing of Zagreb in 1995, it fell to me to go around later and say goodbye to some of the refugee and displaced families with whom my wife had become close. Some wept openly as the news that she'd had to leave and probably wouldn't be back. She also helped found the Zagreb International Women's Club, which also had assistance to refugees as one of its earliest projects. So she was busy too.

While we're on this, there's one other aspect of the transition from me to Peter. By the end of that first year, I had pretty much exhausted Washington's tolerance. I had crossed swords with so many people that if Peter hadn't come out, I'd almost certainly have had to leave. So I was relieved by Peter's arrival. The gorilla climbed off my back, at least partly. And I got my first real break shortly thereafter, a couple weeks back in the U.S.

Q: You mentioned your family's evacuation from Zagreb in 1995. We can get to that later, but how did you find the security situation there, from a personal standpoint?

NEITZKE: Surreal at times. Shortly after we arrived an undetected land mine at Zagreb Airport exploded, badly injuring a heavy equipment operator. We lived on the edge of a war zone, within range of Krajina Serb rockets, in a city inundated with displaced persons and refugees. The Serbs fired rockets onto the city three times when we were there; once in the fall of 1993, hitting a suburb, and twice in early May 1995, with cluster bomb warheads, striking throughout downtown Zagreb – quite close to the Embassy -- and killing a number of people. Guns were ubiquitous. Every New Year's Eve at midnight there was the most amazing city-wide sound and light show of guns being fired. We had a great view of it from our house on a hill above the city. The same day as the bombing of the World Trade Center in late February 1993, a bomb that apparently had dropped from a passing vehicle came to rest outside the main door of the Embassy. As best we could tell, it wasn't intended for us; apparently attaching a bomb to the underside of an enemy's car happened with some frequency; the streetcar tracks outside the Embassy had evidently jarred this one loose. At home we had a 24-hour armed guard provided by the Croatian Government. Some of these men were more professional than others. I remember my very young sons telling me how neat they thought it was to be learning soccer moves from a guy toting a loaded machine gun. Yet life went on, and one didn't often feel much of a sense of danger. There was an almost cocoon-like sense of security to the place, false security perhaps. And by the spring of 1995 that had changed entirely, as some of our personnel came under active surveillance by Iranian-backed terrorist groups and we geared everyone up for possible

evacuation. And we did eventually evacuate all families and non-essential personnel after the first rocketing of central Zagreb in early May 1995.

Q: Alright. Well, it is the end of June 1993. Peter Galbraith appears on the scene. I am just guessing that he was the sort of Ambassador who would have wanted to make his presence felt in short order. Is that correct? Talk a little about his priorities and about changes, if there were any, in how the Embassy dealt with the, I guess, policy vacuum that you have described in Washington.

NEITZKE: Peter had a politician's feel and a politician's thirst for the public aspects of the job. He wasn't publicity shy. In one of our first discussions he asked what he might do, within policy constraints, to try to win over the Croats, the man in the street. I suggested he travel out to Eastern Slavonia and tell them that Sector East is illegally occupied territory, that it's part of Croatia and that the U.S. strongly supports its reintegration into Croatia. Peter made that trip early on, spoke out forthrightly, and his stock soared. It wasn't quite Brzezinski at the Khyber Pass, but the Croats loved it. Then, having won over much of the public with his pitch on Sector East, he began telling audiences that their Bosnian co-nationalists' mistreatment of the Muslims was unacceptable. That was an inspired move on Peter's part, great work, and it had an effect.

While I think of it, however, I remember another trip nearly two years later that Peter and a few other Ambassadors, I believe, took out to Slavonia, after Zagreb's liberation of Sector West. They accompanied Tudjman on what for Tudjman was a triumphal journey. Peter recounted the ecstatic reception that Tudjman and he had received from the crowds that greeted them, calling it a virtual John and Bobby (Kennedy) experience. That's the only time, by the way, that I ever heard anyone anywhere in any respect liken Franjo Tudjman to President Kennedy.

As it happened, the peaceful, negotiated reintegration of the UNPAs into Croatia became a focus of Peter's and the Z-4's efforts in late 1994 and into 1995, as pressure was building and Croatia was preparing to move against Sectors North and South.

Q: What was the Z-4?

NEITZKE: It stood for Zagreb Four. It comprised Peter, the Russian Ambassador, and representatives of the European Union and UN. This was a group that sprang to life, or at least assumed its formal shape, largely at Peter's initiative. It aimed at fostering negotiations between Zagreb and the Krajina Serbs on reintegration of the UNPAs. At the time, most international attention on the Balkan peace-seeking front was focused on Bosnia and the efforts, feeble though they were, of the Contact Group. Meanwhile, UNPROFOR's efforts to keep peace in and around the UNPAs and to get Zagreb talking to the Croatian Serbs were going nowhere. So Peter saw an opportunity, and the Z-4 was the result. My impression was that Washington didn't take the Z-4s' efforts terribly seriously, and some sniggered at its pretensions, but neither did they oppose this effort. And from time to time they were forced to pay attention to it.

The main problem that anyone faced trying to broker a deal between Zagreb and Knin in the late 1994-1995 timeframe is that, as I earlier mentioned, the Security Council had already resolved the central issue; the UNPAs belonged to Croatia, period. That fact was already reflected in

Croatia's constitution. And that was unacceptable to Knin. So any effort, such as the Z-4's, to carve out a measure of autonomy for the Krajina within the Croatian state was going to face tough sledding on both sides of the line. In addition, many of the Serb leaders in Knin were wanted on criminal charges in Croatia and their fortunes depended on Belgrade's increasingly tenuous backing.

Q: Why do you say tenuous? These were all Belgrade's men…

NEITZKE: Ostensibly, but most were homegrown Krajina Serbs, armed by and celebrated in Belgrade at the war's outset, but as time passed increasingly seen as burdensome, socially backward, distant relatives, more trouble than they were worth.

The other thing that made negotiation of a Zagreb-Knin deal so difficult is that even as conditions in the Krajina deteriorated, Zagreb was engaged in a large military buildup. And Tudjman's rhetoric was becoming more bellicose; the handwriting was on the wall.

Q: Well now, how closely did you monitor this, Croatia's getting hold of all these weapons. This was all in violation of the arms embargo, was it not?

NEITZKE: We tracked it, but not all that aggressively. Our military attaché reported on various aspects of the buildup, and I suspect that the Pentagon knew pretty well what was going on – at least until the Iranian pipeline phase began in late spring 1994. In that regard, we'll need to discuss the role of MPRI, but later.

Q: MPRI? That is…

NEITZKE: Military Professional Resources Incorporated, a private – well, at least technically, legally private -- group of ex-U.S. military officers and senior enlisted men, whose leadership included former JCS members. They entered into an agreement with the Croats to provide professional training – supposedly non-tactical – to classes of Croatian military officers. MPRI has often been cited by Croatia's critics as the architect of Storm, the operational name for the Croats' military retaking of the Krajina in 1995.

As far as I know, Washington was never even close to making Croatia's arms buildup a bilateral issue. On the contrary, at least by mid-1994, Washington tacitly accepted the buildup and by the early summer of 1995 had all but embraced it. A lot of it, the arms acquisition that is, was done very quietly, not so quietly that Belgrade wouldn't notice, of course, but not so blatantly that Western governments would have to address it. In retrospect, as I'm sure Holbrooke would agree, the Croatian buildup and military offensive in 1995 were critical in laying the groundwork for Dayton.

But, getting back, Peter's Z-4 was on a different track altogether. To an extent, Peter tried to use Zagreb's threats and militarization to focus minds in Knin. He traveled to the Krajina, including Knin itself, at least a couple times to meet with Krajina Serb leaders. I accompanied him on one trip, coming away with the impression that this was a beautiful - especially Plitvice Lakes - but wretchedly poor area and that prospects for getting this bunch ever to agree to anything

acceptable to Zagreb were nil. Once, Peter even brought in Roger Fisher from Harvard, the author of "Getting to Yes," to sit down in Knin with Serb leaders to instruct them in the technical skill of negotiating. A fairly audacious effort. Pure Peter. But I don't think even Fisher had imagined as tough a sell as the Serbs in Knin. Peter got a lot of mileage out of all of this, however; the Z-4 got a lot of local publicity. When the Croats finally moved militarily, however, beginning with Sector West in May 1995, and then Storm in August, Peter and the Z-4 ran out of time, although that effort contributed to the later Erdut Agreement on Sector East.

Q: I must say, you do not sound as though you were personally sold on the Z-4.

NEITZKE: He was the Ambassador, so I supported him, but frankly I saw most of the effort as futile and to some extent as a distraction. It seemed to me most unlikely - no, impossible - that the Croats could ever be induced to come to terms with what they viewed, with some justification, as the hoodlums in charge in Knin. In fact, by late 1994, we began hearing from Tudjman intimates witheringly dismissive characterizations of the Z-4's efforts, of the specific ideas they kept pushing for bridging the chasm between Knin and Zagreb. This wasn't going to fly and the Croats were using the illusion of a peace effort to ready their forces for military action that they had long decided was inevitable. Peter, on the other hand, appeared to believe that he was making progress, that he was building up significant capital in Knin. But the two times that I recall he tried to use that capital, during the Bihac episode and amid the rocketing of Zagreb during the liberation of Sector West, they ignored him. I'm not saying that the Z-4 effort, right from the get-go, was much ado about nothing. But there came a point when it had clearly run its course, when larger forces were taking hold. The deal just wasn't going to happen and, notwithstanding the separate and belated Erdut Agreement, it didn't. I personally…

Q: Excuse me. Okay, you said futile. I can understand that, but why was it a distraction, a distraction from what?

NEITZKE: A distraction from where our attention and limited assets might otherwise have been focused. My own modest efforts to induce the Clinton Administration to get serious about Bosnia had had no visible effect. But I'd hoped that with Peter's arrival – and his Washington connections -- we could redouble those efforts. I thought we had to keep trying, even though the task had become more complicated by the Croatian-Muslim tensions. I continued doing what I could – with high-level visitors and journalists, and by pushing our continued atrocity reporting. But Peter had other priorities. His Ambassadorship was the high point of his professional life up until then, and he wasn't going to risk it with quasi-dissent cables or anything else that irritated officials in Washington. He was determined to make his mark, however, and if he couldn't do that through high-profile work on Bosnia – and he couldn't, that arena was already occupied -- he would do it through the Z-4.

I recall, just as an aside, that on my last day in the office, after we'd been together for two years, Peter came in with the "gift" of a copy of a cable he'd just sent the Department, essentially blasting our policy of endless dithering on Bosnia. In response to that, Peter quickly got a call from Holbrooke, then EUR Assistant Secretary, saying basically, well, that was nice, but do you want to stay in your job or not? And later, in his toast at my farewell party, Peter quipped that

he'd assiduously followed every piece of advice I'd given him except all of those which would probably have gotten him fired.

Part of my reserve concerning the Z-4 effort lay in the fact that for over three years there had been non-stop negotiating activity; there was always a peace process one could point to. But most of this was so divorced from on the ground realities that when it did take substantive form it was dead on arrival. What it accomplished, however, what part of its purpose was, was to provide the illusion of a serious international effort to stem the killing while that killing continued apace. The Z-4 was hardly the worst offender in that regard. But as the Z-4 effort came to occupy ever more of Peter's and the Embassy's time, yes, I felt that we – in terms of Embassy Zagreb's focus -- were treading water on Bosnia. And I worried that Peter was getting too close, too chummy, with Tudjman and Susak.

Q: How so?

NEITZKE: Well, for example, vacationing alone with the Tudjmans, the whole Tudjman family, at Tito's old villa on Brioni, an intimacy that Peter reveled in, and his using a Defense Ministry villa on the Adriatic for private getaways. This sort of thing could obviously make it harder for one to get tough with Tudjman when need be. I imagine Peter would say that he didn't think a "get tough" approach with Tudjman would have worked in any event. And on this, we strongly disagreed.

I had watched Tudjman's evolution from an ultranationalist all but ostracized by Washington, to a leader whom we not only recognized but helped win greater international respectability, to a man who, by early 1995, in his latest threat to seize the UNPAs by force, acted as though he could with impunity blow off a personal appeal from the President of the United States. Enough was enough. Tudjman was gaming us. We seemed to have lost all perspective on the man and on who owed what to whom. I advocated – with Peter and with several high-level visitors, and at the NSC and elsewhere in Washington -- a much more direct, confrontational approach. Tudjman and Susak were gearing up for war. I understood their frustration, and I sympathized with their goal of reintegrating the UNPAs. But it was clear there would be major problems in their doing so. I took one of Tudjman's closest advisors to lunch in early 1995 and told him we didn't think Croatian forces had the professional discipline to take back the Krajina without committing massive violations of human rights, atrocities, and killings. He listened to what I said without disputing it and no doubt passed it on. It was a concern some Croat leaders also had, not something strong enough to deter them from moving on the UNPAs eventually, but something they knew they'd need to be careful about. MPRI was to have helped out, at least on that aspect.

Q: Yes, well, but let us return now to the situation during Ambassador Galbraith's first year, that would be the summer of 1993 to the summer of 1994. You have mentioned the Croat-Muslim fighting and the Washington Agreement, but what led up to that?

NEITZKE: The heightened Croat-Muslim tension in mid-1993, and the various, mainly Croat attacks that that spawned were complicating Washington's standoff policy. As ugly as the situation in Bosnia had been up to that time, it threatened to get even worse. That's when Chuck Redman, who had replaced Bartholomew as U.S. representative on the Contact Group, began his

prolonged effort to quell the Croat-Muslim fighting and reconcile the two groups. He didn't have much to work with. One thing he did have working in his favor, however, was the aftermath of a summer 1993 marketplace massacre in Sarajevo. That particular massacre was followed by a burst of U.S. and Allied indignation and the shooting down of several Serbian aircraft for violating no-fly restrictions. The impact of that incident has always been underestimated; it was the most significant use of Western force against the Serbs until the summer of 1995 and for a moment put the fear of god not only into the Serbs but into the Croats and Muslims as well. It appeared briefly as though the U.S. were about to get serious. Other than through Chuck's initiative we didn't exploit that fear, but to me it always stood as a clear indication that at virtually any point a forceful expression of U.S. determination to halt the killing could have brought the Serbs to heel.

Redman's effort, which produced the Washington Agreement of March 1994, was one of the very few energetic, disciplined U.S. diplomatic undertakings in the whole ex-Yugo mess prior to Dayton. But in retrospect it was akin to a number of brief surges of activity on Bosnia by the Bush and Clinton Administrations, each of which proved to be less than met the eye and saw little or no serious follow through. This one was largely a product of Chuck's effort; from what I could observe – and Chuck was frequently in Zagreb during this time -- no one high up in the Clinton Administration was willing to risk much of anything to help him. So Chuck deserves great credit.

Q: But, and you have already referred to this, Ambassador Galbraith did at least help with that negotiation, did he not?

NEITZKE: He did. I think he provided Chuck some critical assistance at a couple points.

Q: Okay, then, the Washington Agreement covered what?

NEITZKE: It was actually two agreements, reached after a few days of indirect talks conducted by Redman in Washington between Croatian Foreign Minister Granic and Bosnian Prime Minister Silajdzic. One agreement created a nominal federation of Croat and Muslim-held areas in Bosnia. The other created, I think it's accurate to say, a notional – since it never got off the ground -- confederation between Croatia and the Bosnian Croat/Muslim federation. At the time, I didn't give Redman's effort much of a chance, in part because he was relying so heavily on Granic.

Q: The Foreign Minister.

NEITZKE: Yes. Granic was always personable, pleasant to deal with, and very bright. But he wasn't a Tudjman insider, at least not in the sense that Susak and others were. Granic was not one of the HDZ, the ruling Croatian Democratic Union, hard-liners. There were times when Granic seemed a bit too ready to please, appearing to support positions that didn't quite reflect Tudjman's, and certainly not Susak's, views. So I thought Chuck had to be careful to see that Tudjman would back up what Granic agreed to in this closeted Washington back and forth deal making. But to Chuck's and Granic's credit, they got it done. And with Tudjman and Izetbegovic

in attendance, Clinton presided over the signing ceremony. For the moment at least, we were peacemakers. It was a welcome respite from the Clinton Administration's Bosnia nightmare.

But these were skeletal agreements, aimed mainly at getting the two sides to stop fighting one another. The ink was barely dry before the question arose of who was going to put meat on these bones. Both parties wanted arms with which to push back the Serbs. Unless someone provided weapons, gave them some tangible incentive to cooperate, they'd be back to fighting one another in short order. Yet it seemed at the time as though no one in Washington had anticipated this problem.

Q: The arms embargo was still in place.

NEITZKE: Yes. And Washington balked. Attempting to lift the embargo at the UN would have met opposition by UN officials and most of our NATO allies, who had troops on the ground in Bosnia. Since we still lacked the political will to join them, a U.S. attempt to lift the embargo faced no better prospects than it had a year earlier on Christopher's failed mission to sell "lift and strike." Nor were we prepared to circumvent the embargo surreptitiously, although that would have been my preferred option.

Q: Well, was this ever considered in Washington, do you know, trying to get arms to the Bosnians secretly somehow?

NEITZKE: I once had a brief exchange on this possibility, no specifics or anything, with Charlie Wilson, when…

Q: The Texas Congressman who helped in our arming the Afghans.

NEITZKE: Yes, when he visited Zagreb. But as far as I know, our circumventing the embargo to get arms to the Muslims was never seriously considered. Well, let me modify that. After meeting with Clinton at the UN in November 1994, Tudjman claimed that he'd been asked for and had provided a commitment that Croatia would funnel arms to the Bosnians. But that didn't appear in the memcon of the meeting and we could never nail it down. Of course, by then Croatia was already funneling in Iranian arms, so perhaps Clinton had simply sought reassurance that Croatia would continue doing so. Or perhaps thought was being given to different or additional sources of arms. It was around this time that we heard rumors that senior U.S. officials had earlier convened in Washington and considered a substantial arms deal for the Croats and Muslims, and that the several hundred million dollar value of such a package had been mentioned to at least one Croat official. But I never saw any tangible evidence that those rumors were accurate. In any event, going back to the end of April 1994, we had done nothing at that point on the arms front, and that's when the Iranians again came calling.

Q: Well, let us get into that. The Iranian arms deal eventually caused quite a bit of embarrassment for the Clinton Administration, did it not?

NEITZKE: You might put it that way. As I've already mentioned, the Iranians were shipping arms into the area from very early on, well before the Labor Day 1992 747 incident. And they

were evidently still moving some arms in via the Croats during the spring of 1993, when Susak raised this issue with Bartholomew. But all of that was minor compared with what was about to happen.

This strange episode began, for us at least, with a meeting in Foreign Minister Granic's office in late April 1994. Redman was calling on Granic to discuss implementation of the Washington Agreement. I accompanied him. Peter was out of town. At the end of their discussion, Granic, pointedly directing his remarks more toward me than Chuck, said the Iranians had been pressing Croatia to agree to receive and transship weapons to the Bosnian Muslims. The implication was that this was going to be something on a very substantial scale. Granic said Tudjman would call in Peter the following morning and ask how the U.S. wanted Croatia to respond to the Iranians. This was a heads up. He indicated that he personally hoped the U.S. would encourage Croatia to resist this pressure.

Granic, whom I'd gotten to know well by then, was aware of how Washington regarded Tehran. He didn't want to see his government become closely allied with the Iranians, and he didn't want to see power within the HDZ shift even more toward less democratic elements. He knew that there were others, closer to Tudjman than he was, such as Susak – who had visited Tehran in November 1993 -- who were willing to risk closer ties with Iran in hopes of obtaining weapons of strategic value for Croatia vis-à-vis Belgrade.

Q: What sort of strategic weapons? Why?

NEITZKE: Tudjman and Susak knew by then that if they were ever to get the UNPAs back they'd have to do it themselves, militarily. But they weren't sure where, in that looming fight, Belgrade's tipping point lay. As Zagreb fought Belgrade's henchmen for control of these areas, Belgrade, the remnant JNA, might throw everything they had into the fight. Tudjman wanted something with which to deter Milosevic when that point came. And he and Susak hoped that they might find that deterrent in or through Tehran, or at least create in Milosevic's mind the fear that they had obtained such a deterrent. As to what that deterrent might have been, I don't know.

But again, although Tudjman himself doubtless wanted any weapons they might be able to obtain from Iran, there is no way he was going to risk getting closer to that regime without U.S. concurrence. First, he knew we'd find out if did it behind our backs. Secondly, the intense carrot-and-stick negotiating process by which we had just gotten him to sign on to the Washington Agreement left Tudjman wanting to be stay close to us and thus leery of making any major move regarding Bosnia without first speaking with us. Tudjman knew that an Iranian arms pipeline through Croatia would allow Zagreb to rake off some of the more interesting of these weapons and to monitor and control the buildup of Muslim arms better than would be possible if suppliers dealt directly with Sarajevo. And, using the pipeline relationship as cover, the Croats could look into acquiring "strategic" weapons that might be available through Iran. Again, however, Tudjman at this time was very sensitive to Washington. There's just no way he'd have gone ahead without our approval.

Q: Well, after that meeting with the Foreign Minister, I take it you sought instructions?

NEITZKE: We did. Now, again, this is the end of April 1994. Peter came back that evening. I briefed him on the Granic meeting, and he immediately asked Washington what he should tell Tudjman the next day. To describe what happened next, how the Clinton team handled this, as sloppy and amateurish scarcely does it justice.

Peter strongly recommended that the U.S. not object to Croatia's agreeing to the Iranians' proposal. Rather than a cable, however, Peter got a call from Jenonne Walker, the senior NSC European staffer and an old colleague of mine from Policy Planning. Jenonne told Peter that Tony -- Tony Lake, the National Security Advisor -- had said to tell Tudjman that he had "no instructions." Jenonne added that Tony had winked when conveying the term "no instructions." Peter wasn't happy with that response, believing that it wouldn't satisfy Tudjman's need for U.S. concurrence. And it didn't. Peter met with Tudjman the next morning, used his "no instructions" response, and came back and told me that it hadn't worked; Tudjman had appeared to want a clear go-ahead from Washington.

Peter reclama-ed the "no instructions" instruction, arguing, correctly, that it would cause the Croats to balk and, incorrectly – and utterly without foundation – that the U.S. stance on the Iranian arms shipment intercepted over Labor Day 1992 had led to the Croat-Muslim fighting in 1993. Peter told me he had the clear sense from his first meeting with Tudjman that our position would be determinative and that no new Iranian arms flow had yet begun. So Peter pleaded with Washington for "no objection" instructions. He got nothing in response and was troubled going into a dinner meeting with Tudjman and Redman that night. In that second encounter on this issue, Peter urged Tudjman to weigh carefully what he had not said that morning, i.e., he had not said that we objected. Evidently Tudjman still did not have what he needed because, while walking in to dinner, Tudjman said to Redman within earshot of Peter "what do you want us to do?" According to Peter, Redman responded, "we don't want to be in the position of telling you not to" say yes to the Iranians. This was in stark contrast to the answer Bartholomew had given Susak on this issue a year earlier and to what I had told Tudjman during the Iranian 747 episode on Labor Day 1992. Other sources subsequently confirmed that Redman's response is what Tudjman took as our "green light."

Redman told Peter not to report that exchange by cable. Antsy about not reporting so consequential an exchange, however, Peter spoke with Deputy Secretary Talbott shortly thereafter. Talbott too told him not to report the exchange with Tudjman by cable. He said he'd get right back to Peter on this, but he didn't. At this point Peter and I both wondered – and discussed – whether he was being set up to take the fall if this whole thing blew up in the Administration's face. I recommended, and Peter agreed, much to his later regret, since this document added to the Administration's embarrassment, to record all that had happened in a contemporaneous memorandum that I would sign as a witness to what he said had transpired.

Peter's fears of being set up were soon borne out. The CIA and Pentagon were dead set against what Lake had tried to finagle. So when CIA and the Pentagon asked State and the NSC whether anyone had given Croatia a go ahead to begin transshipping large amounts of Iranian arms, they were told that no such approval had been given. In one of apparently several such denials, a senior State or NSC official, I don't recall who, said that Galbraith had botched his instructions and may inadvertently have led Tudjman to conclude that he could go ahead with the Iranians.

Galbraith, he said, was being reprimanded, "having his hands slapped." They claimed that Tudjman was then no longer in doubt where we stood. That was just one of many lies told; no one ever attempted to walk this back with Tudjman, nor did Washington want to walk it back, since it was still unwilling to offer any alternative to the Iranian option. Peter then got a call from EUR DAS Sandy Vershbow -- my colleague from London days who would himself shortly head over to the NSC to replace Walker – for the purpose, as Sandy jokingly put it, of "slapping (Peter's) hands."

Peter was pissed off, and justifiably so, by Washington's crude distortion of the professional manner in which he'd carried out his instructions, by Sandy's joking pro forma reprimand, and by the fact that Washington's contorted cover story had apparently leaked. A British paper asked Peter to comment on the "Galbraith screw up" explanation they had heard from Washington to explain rumors of an Iranian arms deal. Peter was able to get that story killed, but he was incensed. Unfortunately, he couldn't adequately vent on Washington, because the senior officials in Washington who were "hanging him out" might prove critical for his further service in this or future Democratic administrations. The only consolation Peter received was an eventual admission by Talbott, in a grotesque understatement, that the "home office" had perhaps not handled this affair as well as it might have.

I was reminded of all this years later during the post-9/11 brouhaha between ex-National Security Advisor – and another former S/P colleague -- Sandy Berger and the CIA over whether Sandy had or had not authorized the Agency to take out Osama bin Laden when they had the opportunity. Sandy's posture was classic Clinton. Equivocate, put nothing in writing, preserve deniability, protect your political flank at all costs. That's certainly how they had handled the "green light" decision on Iranian arms.

Q: Well, what about the President? Was this decision Lake's or Clinton's?

NEITZKE: I notice that Peter now maintains it was Clinton's decision, and an excellent one at that. The wagons have now been fully circled in defense of the "green Light" decision; it's portrayed as an almost ingenious stepping stone to Dayton. But at the time we didn't know for a fact that the President had been consulted, although we assumed he must have been. Shortly thereafter we were told that Lake had gotten through to Clinton, who was flying somewhere at the time, and that Clinton had approved this course of action. My guess, however, is that the wink-and-nod aspect of this, the no instructions, no written reporting, originated with Lake.

In the wake of all that followed, several players tried to amend the record. Granic, I am told, did not remember indicating a personal opposing view on the pending Iranian offer. But I remember distinctly, and told Peter at the time, that Granic did express such a view and that he implied the Croatian Government was divided on the question of entering into this arrangement with Iran. I think all of that was in the contemporaneous note we made that I referred to. And I covered this in my later Congressional testimony, as the committees looked into whether Washington's "green light," or any follow up to that decision, had violated U.S. statutes governing reportable covert activities. Various Administration witnesses, Holbrooke most notably, later testified – as the Clinton Administration was being pilloried for facilitating Iran's entry into Europe -- both that the Iranian arms pipeline had kept the Croat-Muslim federation intact and thus contributed to

Dayton and that Tudjman would likely have proceeded with the deal regardless of what we said. On the manner in which Washington had handled the "green light" decision, some senior Administration witnesses gave answers under oath so blatantly at odds with one another that their cases were referred to the Justice Department for possible prosecution for perjury.

Q: Did you have a personal opinion on the Iranian arms at the time, do you recall?

NEITZKE: I did. I thought we should have told the Croats no, and made it a very firm no. I couldn't see much good coming from inviting a terrorist-sponsoring regime like that in Tehran to establish a major toehold in Europe. That we at least tacitly did so stands, in my mind, as one of the worst decisions that any U.S. administration made in the former Yugoslavia. And we did so at a time when Secretary Christopher and other senior U.S. officials were rightly condemning Iran as a state sponsor of terrorism. To what level, exactly, had my country sunk in its determination to avoid joining in the fight to halt genocide in Bosnia? This episode made crystal clear that there was no limit, literally no limit, to the Clinton Administration's cowardice on this issue. As for Peter's and Holbrooke's and others' wildly strained rationalizations of the "green light" decision, the best that can be said is that they knew very well by then what kind of people they were working for, yet they were determined, at all costs, to stay in the game, to remain in the good, employable graces of the Clinton team and the Democratic Party. So they defended the course we had taken, not as the least bad option available, which it wasn't, but as a genuinely smart move, one that allowed arms through to the beleaguered Muslims while limiting Bosnia-related strains within the NATO Alliance.

Q: You called this decision cowardly. But these Iranian arms did help, did they not?

NEITZKE: I've seen speculation that this Iranian "green light" decision was in fact part of a clever, new, extremely close-hold strategy concocted by Lake at Clinton's behest aimed at eventual rapprochement with Tehran. I think that's bunk. The reason we gave the Croats the go ahead was not that we'd suddenly re-thought the nature of the Iranian regime. It was that we had no intention ourselves of arming the federation and something had to be done. If we had told the Croats to say no to Iran, possibly Tudjman but certainly Izetbegovic would have been on our doorstep the next day insisting that we, then, supply them arms, a complicated, NATO-rattling step which, as I've said, still lay well beyond the limits of our willingness to get involved.

Did the Iranian arms help? Viewed narrowly, yes, of course. They and other, smaller flows of arms did help. I doubt, however, that, given what they'd already been through, the Muslims would have succumbed without Iranian weapons. And ultimately it was the Croatian, not the Muslim, push back against the Serbs that began to tip the balance from a strategic standpoint. The "green light" decision did, however, allow the Clinton Administration, for a while longer, to remain on the sidelines. But at what cost? It wasn't just the broader, strategic implications of providing the Iranians, their terrorist cohorts, and their virulent anti-Americanism, an approved gateway into Europe. For those of us on the ground, and our families, this decision would soon have grave consequences.

Q: How so?

NEITZKE: Shortly after the "green light" decision, Croatia's relations with Iran took off. There were frequent high-level delegations between Zagreb and Tehran. Deals of all kinds were being struck and publicized. There was a massive increase in the Iranian presence in Croatia, especially Zagreb. Their Embassy suddenly bristled with antennas. There were Iranian cultural exhibits and celebrations. The works. And within a year of the "green light" decision, Iranian-backed terrorist cells were conducting active surveillance and planning operations against the official American community in Zagreb.

Q: Well, what sort of threats, operations, exactly?

NEITZKE: Okay, but before we get to all that, and to put it all in context, we need to catch up a bit, to say something about the overall deterioration in the Embassy's security situation beginning in late 1994 and heading into 1995. I had a growing sense in this period, as did many others, that various aspects of the ex-Yugo problem were coming to a head. Croatia was clearly preparing for war. Tudjman's threats to move on the UNPAs were becoming bolder and more dismissive of the international community, even, as I've said, playing the U.S. tougher than he had earlier. There wasn't much left to offer him on that front, and our threats to retaliate if he weren't patient were less and less credible. In the Krajina there was a growing air of desperation, as they too issued their threats to respond -- including with rocket attacks on Zagreb and other cities -- if Croatia moved militarily.

Another example is NATO. By the end of 1994, nearly two years of Clinton Administration denial and dithering on Bosnia had created a deep rift within the organization. NATO was splintering essentially over our continued refusal to engage – on the ground – and lead on Bosnia, even as we pushed for bombing that would endanger our allies' UNPROFOR contingents. The Bihac episode probably saw the worst of that.

Q: Bihac? That was at the intersection of...

NEITZKE: Bihac was both a town and the name given to a large Muslim enclave, one of the so-called UN-designated Safe Areas, in northwestern Bosnia. It was surrounded by Serbian forces throughout the war, but it managed to survive, barely. It had food and some capable military forces, but most importantly it had a charismatic, renegade Muslim leader, Fikret Abdic, who had broken with Izetbegovic, and who was good at cutting whatever deals were necessary – with Serbs and Croats -- to ensure his people's survival. In late 1994 Muslim forces tried to break out of the Bihac pocket. After some initial successes they faced a massive Serb counteroffensive. That confronted the UN formally, and NATO and Washington informally, with the question of how to prevent a humanitarian disaster.

Both the civilian and military command sides of UNPROFOR by then were nearly useless. Akashi, the civilian head of the whole operation, reflexively urged extreme caution regarding the use of force; he was convinced that that was the not the way to deal with the Serbs. He once compared Serbia with 1941 Japan, nations, he said, encircled by hostile forces and compelled to fight; and he claimed a special ability to understand the Serbs as fellow "orientals." With rare exception, UN military commanders, when not openly faulting the Muslims, prided themselves on their "complete impartiality and evenhandedness." And both Akashi and the UN military

insisted, in a couple instances when force was used against Serbian targets, that Serbian commanders be warned well in advance. In September 1994, a senior UNPROFOR commander even issued an after-the-fact apology to Mladic for the shooting of a Serbian tank. It was pathetic. Getting the UN to agree to do anything involving real fore was virtually impossible.

But getting back to Bihac, within NATO, that crisis further heightened an already bitter debate between Washington and its UNPROFOR-participating allies over bombing as an option. There were some extremely nasty sessions in Brussels, with the U.S. on the hot seat, and recriminations flying. The MASH was even pulled into the fray at one point.

Q: The U.S. military hospital at Zagreb Airport?

NEITZKE: America's underutilized, all-but-token contribution to UNPROFOR. By intention, the MASH was situated too far from the action in Bosnia ever to play more than a tangential role. And this irritated some of the UNPROFOR contingents. To make their point, the French, for example, once dropped five badly injured Bosnians off at the door of the MASH. Treating Bosnians, or Croats, for that matter, was not within the MASH's limited mandate, but in this case the French left them no choice. And around the time of the Bihac episode, the UN appealed to Washington to allow MASH medical personnel to helicopter into the edge of the conflict area. You'd have thought they were asking for human sacrifices the way the Pentagon nitpicked this request and heavily caveated their strictly one-time approval.

All of this rankled within NATO, contributing to the crisis of confidence in U.S. leadership in late 1994 and early 1995. This was at a point when NATO was drifting anyway, still looking for a clear, galvanizing, post-Soviet strategic perspective. On the ground in Bosnia, the UNPROFOR contingents of certain of our NATO allies were quietly laying plans and cutting deals – with the Serbs mainly -- to facilitate their withdrawal if the situation deteriorated much further. Meanwhile, in the Senate, efforts to force a unilateral U.S. lifting of the arms embargo on the Bosnian Muslims were beginning to pick up steam, which was feeding our allies' unease.

Q: The way you describe it it sounds like the United States is caught out there huffing and puffing and doing nothing while our NATO allies were doing the heavy lifting. But at the same time it sounds like our NATO allies got themselves into something, they got in way over their heads and they were not really doing much except to provide targets.

NEITZKE: Well, that's largely the case, except that it's not fair to say that the British and French UNPROFOR contingents, for example, and a few others were merely targets. They helped keep a lot of people alive. But UNPROFOR overall was clearly not up to the task. Some contingents were just along for the ride, others – some of the African units come to mind – were there for the pay, the money, and others, such as the Russians in Sector East, acted as though they were in cahoots with the Serbs. It was a motley crew, many of whom were essentially hostages in waiting. But go back to 1991 when the Croatian War broke out and the Europeans insisted on taking this on without U.S. leadership. As I've said, there was no historical precedent to suggest they could do so successfully. But that didn't bother us. We wanted to stay out. And we stayed out. But as the situation got worse in Bosnia, yes, we were huffing and puffing and pontificating about the desirability of bombing, but still we refused to join our NATO allies on the ground and

to lead. And we were grateful that UNPROFOR, including Allied contingents, was there. It gave us an out.

But by late 1994 European attitudes on Bosnia had changed. One began hearing strained rationalizations for the looming fiasco. I recall a couple of dinners late that year in which I got into somewhat heated exchanges with several European Ambassadors. A couple spouted the UNPROFOR line that Muslims had been shelling themselves in Sarajevo and deserved no sympathy. One commented that Bosnia's demise was perhaps for the best because if it survived it would likely become a Muslim state, which was not in Europe's interest. Another argued that Bosnia had never really existed at all, hence trying to hold it together was a fool's errand. He said that Serb-cleansed parts of Bosnia should be allowed to confederate with Belgrade. Another claimed it was "pretentious" even to suggest that Yugoslavia's breakup could have been prevented. They were saying, in essence, we came, we did our best, we gave these people better than they deserved, and they blew it, all of them. It's not going to be on our conscience.

At this same time, late 1994 and early 1995, there was a steady drumbeat on the front pages and op-ed pages of major American papers that Clinton basically had no policy on Bosnia. The Clinton team's hope, illusion really, that they could preserve at least a modicum of alliance solidarity while strengthening the Bosnians, through Iranian arms deliveries and so forth, and keep the Serbs at bay, through sanctions enforcement and other means, had met the reality of our allies' raw anger over U.S. hypocrisy and the Serbs nearly complete sway over UNPROFOR on the ground. One could, and did, counter European criticism of our absence in Bosnia by noting the many other areas of the globe where we, but not they, were committed. But it was clear to everyone in that period that the alliance was in trouble.

Moreover, Bosnia was undermining perceptions of Clinton's foreign policy and national security competence more generally. This period is reportedly when Clinton began leaning heavily and angrily on Lake to come up with new options, options for asserting U.S. leadership, for getting the Serbs to halt their ethnic cleansing, and for getting the Allies and U.S. editorial writers off his back. One effort, which had been percolating for awhile, was to try to get Milosevic to seal off the border between Serbia proper and the Serbian-held parts of Bosnia in exchange for a gradual lifting of sanctions. Ultimately, despite persistent, dubious reports by some UN and even U.S. border monitors that the Serbs were complying, this effort came to naught.

An offshoot of the Administration's flailing about for a new direction on Bosnia was the sending of Bob Frasure -- my London predecessor, then an EUR DAS under Holbrooke -- to Belgrade for extended talks aimed at inducing Milosevic to rein in Karadzic and Mladic. Again, the only real carrot Bob had to dangle was an amelioration of the sanctions regime, but Milosevic refused to bite. Think about it, though. So morally contorted had our search for an "out" on Bosnia become that we were willing, even eager, to paint Milosevic, a first-order war criminal, as a potential good guy, a peacemaker. Bob spent countless hours in Belgrade negotiating, if you could call it that, with this megalomaniac, a doomed assignment that Bob confided he loathed. When Bob would report that his effort was going nowhere, however, and would recommend he be recalled, he'd typically be told no; he had to stay and try to bring Milosevic around. Again, it was critical to our non-engagement policy always to have an ongoing peace effort to point to. And for much of early 1995, along with the floundering Contact Group, Bob's was that effort.

Q: Meeting with detestable people is what diplomats sometimes have to do, I mean…

NEITZKE: Of course. Occasionally dealing with thoroughly disgusting human beings is part of the job. But such dealings shouldn't be indiscriminate. And they shouldn't be used mainly as a smokescreen for a policy devoid of political will. What's the foreseeable end of such dealings, how likely is a beneficial outcome, with whom is it worthwhile meeting, when, and for how long? These questions matter. And how should you comport yourself when dealing with a guy responsible for the deaths of tens or hundreds of thousands of people? This aspect of many of our half-hearted, sporadic diplomatic bursts on Bosnia always troubled me. The endless, fruitless, humiliating hours that U.S. diplomats spent chatting up Karadzic in gilded salons in Geneva early in the war, as his henchmen were butchering, literally butchering, and raping thousands of Muslims. The countless trips by Western or UN supplicants up to the Serb stronghold of Pale outside Sarajevo, pleading for this or that concession from Karadzic or Mladic. The ordeal Bob was put through with Milosevic. Is there a moral or psychological or practical cost to that sort of diplomacy? Even Holbrooke was apparently bothered enough by this aspect of the job to let his negotiating team decide for themselves whether to shake hands with these criminals, saying that he personally preferred not to. He made a curious distinction, however, between Milosevic, on the one hand, and Karadzic and Mladic.

I should mention, in this regard, the trip that ex-president Carter made to Zagreb, Sarajevo, and Pale near the end of 1994. I attended a tense lunch that Peter gave for the Carters and their entourage during their brief stopover in Zagreb. Ex-Ambassador Harry Barnes was Carter's main staffer for the trip. The tenseness arose over the question whether Carter ought to undertake the effort at all – he was not doing this at Clinton's behest; I think he'd been put up to this by American friends of Serbia. Peter questioned whether it might not undermine Administration efforts to isolate Pale and whether Karadzic wasn't likely to use Carter for his own propagandistic ends. I described the kinds and scale of crimes for which Karadzic and his men were personally responsible. Carter replied that, whatever the outcome of his effort, he would not excuse or exonerate potential war criminals. But he wouldn't be budged on his trip; he was going no matter what. It was clear in Barnes' separate exchange with me, however, that Carter had no real game plan, no set objectives. Barnes kept asking me what I thought Carter could realistically hope to accomplish. So, did Carter's effort meet, say, the test of dealing directly with war criminals only if there were a reasonable expectation of a substantial, positive outcome? At the time, Washington itself was so brain dead on Bosnia that to suggest Carter was interfering with Administration strategy was a huge stretch. In the event, the Serbs did use his visit for propaganda and although Carter made much of the supposed ceasefire commitment he'd won, which did dampen tensions for a moment, Serbian forces began violating it almost immediately. So was his trip worth the effort?

Q: Or Ambassador Frasure's approach to Milosevic also, I take it you would question.

NEITZKE: Yes, well, Bob did his duty. And it was around that time, in early 1995, that the exhaustive, definitive CIA study, the one that said the Serbs were guilty of at least 90 percent of the killing, raping, and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, surfaced in the Times. Clinton himself publicly bridled when journalists then juxtaposed his effort to woo Milosevic with the CIA

study's damning implication that Milosevic was the father of the Bosnian genocide. For Bob, as you know, it ended tragically later that summer, when he died in an accident trying to get into Sarajevo in a UN convoy after we'd failed again to persuade Milosevic, this time to get his Bosnian Serb friends to grant them, the Holbrooke-Frasure party, safe passage into the Bosnian capital for talks.

Apologists for the early Clinton Administration stance on Bosnia, the two and a half years from January 1992 to the summer of 1995, occasionally portray this late 1994-early 1995 period as the belated genesis of a clear, comprehensive Bosnia strategy that ultimately led to Dayton. But anyone who knew what was happening on the ground, was reading the cable traffic, and was talking with senior visitors from Washington knows that that take on history is fantasy. The Clinton Administration had no policy on Bosnia worthy of the name until mid-late-summer 1995, after the Serbs' humiliation of UNPROFOR – tying members of UNPROFOR contingents to bridges and other potential bombing targets around Sarajevo. After the UN's criminal failure at Srebrenica and the resulting execution of some 8,000 Muslim men and boys. After the especially traumatizing deaths of Frasure, Kruzel, and Drew on Mt. Igman. After it had become plain that Senator Dole had the votes to override a threatened Clinton veto of arms embargo-lifting legislation. And after Clinton had taken fully on board the political implications of his earlier pledge of up to 25,000 U.S. troops, if necessary, to facilitate the withdrawal of UNPROFOR. So Clinton faced the choice of either finally getting serious with the Serbs or dispatching 25,000 U.S. troops to help with a dangerous and ignominious UNPROFOR extrication amid an imploding Bosnia. That was it. That's when he finally got serious, when getting serious at last became his least inexpedient option.

Q: You were speaking about the kinds of threats you all in the Embassy faced. Talk about that, what you were doing about them and so forth.

NEITZKE: As we moved into 1995, those of us responsible for the security of the Embassy community and other Americans in Croatia began to consider even more seriously what we'd need to do under different scenarios. The Embassy had been growing by leaps and bounds. We had official Americans in several locales around the city. We spent a lot of time nailing down the details in our evacuation plan and dry running it. It's a lot more complicated than one would have thought. The U.S. military collaborated with us on some of this, even planning contingency helicopter evacuations out of Cmrok, the large park that lay between the Ambassador's residence and mine. And I briefed the Embassy staff, dependents, American School staff, and others on how we saw the situation, the security threats facing us, and the kinds of events that might trigger a partial or complete evacuation. The latter was bit tricky because I was limited in what I could say about the growing threat we faced from Iranian-supported terrorist groups. Most people were focused on the danger of renewed fighting between Zagreb and the Krajina Serbs. Only over time was I able, obliquely, to raise their awareness of this other, potentially more acute threat.

Q: And the nature of that threat was, again?

NEITZKE: Surveillance, including filming, and advanced operational planning for attacks on official Americans. We had some rare, sensitive, multiple source information on this in very

nearly real time. One of these, for example, confirmed surveillance of the vehicle, the mini-bus, that transported our kids to and from the American School, a vehicle, by the way, nearly identical to one that affiliated terrorists had recently blown up near the American Consulate General in Karachi. That sort of warning gets one's attention, makes things a bit personal, since I had two kids on the Zagreb school bus. But that was only one of several warnings, all among the less heralded consequences of the Iranian "green light" decision.

Q: Well, were we approaching the Croatian Government to say watch these guys, the terrorists, because, you know, you have your relationship with Tehran, but do not let them…

NEITZKE: Kill us? Yes, we were asking for this and that additional protection from the Croats, but we weren't addressing the root of the problem.

I recall that Dick Holbrooke, confronted by a Congressional Committee Chairman with a breaking LA Times story about the dangers the "green light" decision had forced on official Americans in Croatia, nervously sought to downplay it, disputing the report's allegation that the threat to those of us on the ground had increased exponentially. He acknowledged that the heightened Iranian presence in Croatia had increased the threat to Americans there. But he argued that we'd taken measures to meet that threat. Well, yes and no. To the limited extent we were able – we were very exposed in Zagreb -- we did take additional steps, we scrambled. I immediately terminated bus transportation to our kids' school, for example. As I said, I briefed the community, albeit in elliptical terms due to the sensitivity of the information we had. We began to limit the movements of various officers, including the Marine Guards. We posted extra security, or got the Croats to post guards, on various residences. We sent at least one officer under acute threat out of the country. We got the Croats to ratchet up security on Peter and his residence. And we did other things, but still, most of us most of the time were sitting ducks.

Q: But you say this did not address the root of the problem.

NEITZKE: The terrorists themselves. What were they doing there? Why were we tolerating it? Why weren't we demanding, that the Croats kick these guys out of their country, or else. Peter said he feared – and assumed Washington would fear -- that taking that step might lead to disruption of the Iranian arms flow. For me this was beyond the pale. How low had we sunk as an Embassy and as a government if we were afraid to take eminently sensible measures to defend our own people because that might offend an anti-American, terrorist-backing Tehran regime whose arms flow made it possible for the Clinton Administration to stand aside watching genocidal slaughter? Near the end, in April 1995, with Peter out of town and barely acquiescing, I laid out all my concerns, and the specific intelligence to back each up, in a cable to the Department, stating that unless they gave us orders for a forceful demarche to Tudjman, we would have no alternative but to withdraw all official Americans from Croatia. I got the instruction I wanted and made the demarche with Tudjman, who had all of his key security officials present. I insisted that he rein in the Iranians and their terrorist buddies before something god awful happened for which we would hold him and his government responsible. I said that, in the absence of effective Croatian action to safeguard us, all official Americans would have to be withdrawn. Tudjman got it. He knew we were serious. But still, he didn't want

to rock the boat with the Iranians; the arms flow was benefiting Croatia itself as it geared up for Operation Storm.

Before much of anything changed, the Croats moved militarily to retake Sector West – this was in very early May 1995 -- the Serbs began rocketing Zagreb, and we quickly evacuated all family members and non-essential personnel. While this greatly reduced the number of American targets, it didn't remove the terrorist threat.

Q: Well, it seems that you and Peter did not see eye to eye on the gravity of the Iranian threat?

NEITZKE: No, we didn't. And this is where, near the end, our otherwise generally strong, collaborative, working relationship nearly came apart. Peter's view of the Iranian threat was always tempered by his Iran-Iraq prism and the role he had played in helping to expose the horrors that Saddam Hussein had perpetrated on the Kurds. Even as Iranian-backed terrorists began surveilling him, Peter insisted that it made no sense for Iran to hit us in Croatia at that time. But by then Peter himself was living in a fairly tight security cocoon.

My view was that the surveillance, and the warnings we were getting through sensitive channels, spoke for themselves as to the threat we faced. It might not make sense for a clear-headed strategist in Tehran to strike against Americans in Croatia just then, but who knew what games others might be playing, what points someone might be trying to score, by the terrorist elements that the "green light" decision had unleashed in Croatia. Since when are all terrorist acts precisely logical from a Western perspective? This all came out during the various Congressional investigations in 1996. The Agency and I were of the same view, by the way, on the urgency, the immediacy, of the threat we faced. Zagreb was way up on Washington's possible terrorist action watch list during this period.

Q: Did the press, the Western press, notice, report on, the weapons flow and all? And the, as you have described it, the burgeoning Iranian presence in Croatia?

NEITZKE: They noticed it, and there were reports, but it wasn't covered extensively. And the fact that Washington had given the go ahead wasn't known or reported on at all. And behind the scenes, among the various U.S. Government agencies with an interest in this matter, the situation appeared even murkier. The reason, as I said, is that State and NSC had lied to CIA and the Pentagon about their role in this. They maintained that Washington had not approved this activity. Yet before long it became clear to CIA and the Pentagon that Iranian arms were flowing in, and lots of them. And they were picking up reports that Washington indeed had had a hand in this. Rumors were flying, including one that I alluded to earlier, that the USG itself was running the whole operation, that we had launched a large program, worth hundreds of millions of dollars, to arm the Bosnian Muslims.

Against that backdrop, things took an unfortunate turn within the Embassy. Certain Washington agencies ordered their top people in the Embassy to find out all they could about any role the U.S. may have played, or any role other officials in the Embassy, including Galbraith, might be playing, in these arms flows. State told Peter to keep everything he knew about the arms flows, including the "green light" decision, from these very people at post. Even more disturbingly, I

was told that that Holbrooke had advised Susak and, through him, another Croatian official, not to discuss any aspect of the arms flows with certain, other agency Embassy officials, because, presumably, he felt they couldn't be trusted. How would you like to try to keep the team together, which was my job, with signals like that going to senior officials of your host government?

Because of the lack of consensus, the outright mistrust and lies told at nearly the highest levels of the Clinton Administration on this issue, and Lake's and Talbott's clumsy efforts to keep the DCI and Defense Secretary in the dark, there sprouted this bizarre situation among certain Embassy Zagreb officers of surveillance, suspicions, allegations, and tension. Peter was in an untenable position. As I said, he was charged with covering up the "green light" decision while other Embassy officials had been tasked by their agencies to find out what was going on. It was my job to keep the lid on all of this, keep people acting professionally toward one another, and try to keep everyone's focus on the work we were being paid to do. That was a tough act, and it went on for quite a while, at least until the initial investigation of the "green light" decision and its consequences by PIFIAB, or the IOB, in early 1995, I believe. Later, in 1996, the Congressional investigations got into this aspect of the "green light" decision as well; careers were on the line, not mine but others I cared about, and I did the best I could to place the blame for this aspect of the fiasco precisely where it belonged, on Washington's, the Administration's, doorstep. From the feedback I got from a number of House Intelligence Committee members of both parties, I succeeded.

Q: Surely, that would have some effect on your own career also.

NEITZKE: I remember being asked that question at the time by several House Intel Committee Members, including Porter Goss – who would later briefly head the Agency under Bush – did I fear retaliation for my testimony? I told them no, but more out of visceral disgust over the whole affair than from any sober analysis of whither my career.

Q: Well, before we move on, just one thing. You have mentioned Deputy Secretary Talbott. What about Secretary Christopher? What roles did he play in this?

NEITZKE: That was strange. I never came across evidence of Christopher's hand in any of this. Presumably he was in the loop, but whatever involvement he had remained hidden.

Q: Okay, well, talk a little about the evacuation. How did that go?

NEITZKE: Once we made the decision, it went very smoothly. We'd practiced it, prepared the community, gone over everything. Our consul, Dennis Hearne, deserves a lot of credit for that. We later learned from those in the Department who handle evacuations that ours had been nearly a textbook case of how to do it.

But in the days leading up to that decision, it wasn't at all clear where things would end up. I should mention that, among those I'd briefed on the security situation in early 1995 was the staff of the American School. Someone there asked me when I thought the threat would be greatest. I said I thought it would be if and when the Croats moved on the UNPAs and said that that could

come as soon as late April-early May. I had no special foreknowledge of that; it was just my best guess. A day or two later, however, an anonymous telegram arrived at the Embassy, implicitly threatening me if I further disclosed Croatian government plans. Apparently I had called the Croatian move against Sector West almost to the day. That fed rumors around town that the Americans had the details of the Croatian move, that we were in on it, may even have assisted with it.

To add fuel to that fire, on the day the Croats did move against Sector West, I got a very early morning call from Herrick, our Defense Attache, who'd been summoned to the Defense Ministry and been told that the Croatian military action was imminent. It had probably already begun. Peter had left town the day before and was hours away at the coast when this alert came in from Herrick, so I took a number of actions, including, as Chairman of the Board of the American School, closing the school until further notice. The Principal and staff began phoning all the students' parents telling them there would be no school but offering no explanation. At that moment, most of Zagreb was unaware of the impending military action. Only hours later did it become clear to all why I'd done what I did. That confirmed in some minds that the Americans had to have been involved in some way in the Croatian military move.

We should probably return now to the activities of the retired U.S. military group I mentioned earlier, MPRI, the guys who had the private contract with the Croatian Defense Ministry to provide officer training. When they first came to town, the head of MPRI, it may have been Vuono …

Q: General Vuono, who had been Army Chief of Staff?

NEITZKE: Yes. I think it was Vuono who gave me a long briefing on what MPRI was going to be doing for the Croats, with instructors who'd be more or less hanging out in the Croatian Defense Ministry. He wasn't asking for our approval or concurrence; MPRI was a private concern, although the Pentagon must have helped to arrange it, or at least given its okay. He said they'd be teaching Croatian officers various professional skills, accounting , for example. That seemed odd, but he mentioned military discipline as well, the laws governing warfare and respect for the rights of non-combatants. But nothing on military tactics or strategy. I asked a few questions, but it wasn't clear whether I was getting the whole story. I'm still not sure. Nor do I think that even Peter, to this day, knows exactly what MPRI did. Maybe it was as innocent and limited as Vuono, or whoever it was, described it. It seems unlikely, however, that that many ex-U.S. military personnel could have spent that much time in such close proximity to a Croatian officer corps on the brink of going to war and never talked shop.

So did MPRI, as I know some Serbs maintain, not only offer professional training to the Croats, but actively participate in, even orchestrate the planning for the liberation of Sector West, or for Operation Storm? Or, setting MPRI aside, did the USG provide real time intel assistance, and perhaps more than that, to the Croats during Storm, as a couple well-placed Croats have apparently testified? I saw nothing to indicate conclusively MPRI involvement in the liberation of Sector West, and I departed Zagreb over a month before Storm. And I'd had almost no contact with MPRI after that initial briefing.

Q: Storm, again, was what?

NEITZKE: Operation Storm, the Croatian move on Sectors North and South in August 1995. There were aspects to the Croats' early May move against Sector West, however, that suggested they'd taken on board someone's warnings about cleaning up their act, literally. There had been some artillery exchanges and skirmishing in the days leading up to the Croatian move, which, in the event, they characterized as a "police action" aimed merely at opening up the main east-west highway. Obviously it was much more than that, but the point I wanted to make is that before the press or international observers of any stripe could descend on newly-liberated – the Serbs would say cleansed -- Sector West, the Croats had rapidly and systematically – reportedly using refrigeration vans in some cases – cleaned up much of the physical evidence of the fighting and nearly all evidence of non-combatant casualties, including removing the bodies and hosing away the blood. I'm not sure whether they even attempted such an effort during the much larger scale Storm; there was evidently plenty of evidence left behind in that case, including non-combatant dead, to prompt Hague Tribunal indictments of Croatian commanders.

The Croats' move to open Sector West began in the early morning hours of May 1. At that point the Embassy community was in a high state of alert. The Department had long since approved our request for authorized departure of family members.

Q: Explain authorized departure.

NEITZKE: I think the term is authorized departure. Perhaps it's voluntary departure. In any case, it's meant to address situations where there's a heightened level of threat to American officials and their families, a situation which the post and the Department don't think yet merits an ordered departure of dependents and non-essential personnel. Authorized departure had been in effect for Zagreb for some time prior to May 1. People could temporarily depart at Department expense and stay out with certain allowances. Anybody who felt they or their family members needed to get out could do so. But despite the level of concern, acute in a couple cases, people were extremely reluctant to depart voluntarily, to be the first to go, I suppose, or to be the only ones to go early, despite my urging them to do whatever they felt was necessary in their own circumstances. So there developed among some Embassy officers a desire for immediate, ordered departure, which I guess they felt would remove any stigma or whatever they might have felt from sending their dependants out. Nonetheless, I wasn't ready to recommend ordered departure, and Peter deferred to me.

Once the Croatian military action began on May 1, however, that issue became more urgent. The question before Peter and me and the rest of the country team as we considered our security options on that eerily quiet May 1 afternoon was whether to seek a Department-ordered evacuation of all family members and non-essential personnel. Peter was ready to move on this, as were most of the others. But I still wasn't and I fought against it. For me the issue turned on how one read the intentions of the Serbs in Knin. Would they respond to Croatia's move by loosing on Zagreb the rockets that had long been readied in Sector North? Or would they hold off on the rockets, figuring that such a retaliatory step might trigger a much larger Croatian move on Sectors North and South? Or play for international sympathy? Virtually the entire UN team in Croatia, Akashi and his staff, were sympathetic to them and had strongly condemned Croatia's

"destabilizing" move as well as its intransigence during fevered ceasefire negotiations. Nor were we sure that the rockets could even hit downtown Zagreb; the ones they'd fired in the fall of 1993 had only reached the outskirts of the city.

Q: Now, who controlled these rockets?

NEITZKE: That's another question we had. Was operational control wholly in Knin's hands, or, more likely, would Belgrade, Milosevic probably, have to give the go-ahead? And was he likely to do so? I didn't think so. And I concluded, basically, that if the decision were Knin's alone, it wouldn't opt for suicide, at least not immediately. At that time, we heard from one of Tudjman's closest advisers that they too, Tudjman's inner circle, were convinced Zagreb wouldn't be rocketed. And after it was rocketed on May 2, they told us they were convinced it wouldn't be rocketed again, but it was. What I interpreted this to mean is that they were in contact with Belgrade and had received certain assurances. So either I was wrong, or they were snookered by Belgrade, or Belgrade had lost control over its friends in Knin.

Q: Well, what about your own family, their safety?

NEITZKE: They weren't anxious to leave. We'd been living with a significant amount of threat for three years by that time and had grown accustomed to it. We had, as I said earlier, strangely normal lives. I suppose my family was an example, though. I had a better sense than others of the various threats we faced, and my family was still there. So that may have deterred others from leaving. I don't know. But we'd made contingency plans by that point to get our kids temporarily back into their old school in Washington if the worst came, and some others had as well.

Frankly, on May 1, even as the Croatian attack to retake Sector West was underway, I was still just as focused on the terrorist threat confronting us. And I wasn't alone in that. And when the rockets came the next morning, mid-morning May 2, I was sitting in my office, windows open, a beautiful spring day. The explosions sounded like very loud, sharp, cracks, right next to us or very close by. The building shook. And in that instant, my first thought was that the terrorists had finally struck. I later learned from a contact with intimate ties to Croatian security services that those services too, with offices close to us, in that first instant, thought the American Embassy had finally been bombed.

Although it would be some minutes before we knew what in fact had happened, the Serbs had launched some of their rockets, and cluster bombs were exploding in various parts of downtown Zagreb, some as close as 75-80 yards from the Embassy. People responded instinctively but differently. Some fled instantly for the safety of the thick-walled, cavernous Embassy basement. Others took a moment to secure classified materials and make sure everyone was heading for safety before joining them. It fairly quickly became clear that we hadn't been hit, but we didn't know about possible casualties outside the Embassy, those who'd been out and about when the Serbs struck. Herrick soon joined us and reported that several parts of the downtown area had been hit and that there were fatalities. We'd been practicing with a walkie-talkie serial contact system for some time and in that manner were eventually able to account for everyone in the official community. No deaths, no injuries. But the need for ordered departure of dependants and non-essential personnel was no longer disputable.

We informed the Department by phone that we intended to implement our evacuation plan as soon as the dust cleared and it seemed prudent. There was no argument; they sent the authorization immediately. I got on the walkie-talkie system, told the families what little we then knew, and told them, along with personnel designated non-essential, to be ready to evacuate on very short notice. In the event, we were able to give them about two hours before they were to assemble for departure by bus from the Ambassador's residence. They all left, including my family, later that afternoon. Some of them, including my family, since my tour was by then nearing completion, never came back. And that was kind of a strange and difficult thing for them. No good-byes to friends and schoolmates and so forth. The Department doesn't authorize a return simply to pack out, so I would do that on my own.

Q: So did things calm down then, or…?

NEITZKE: The Serbian rockets struck again the following day, again hitting several parts of the downtown area in the general vicinity of the Embassy, including near a children's hospital, the national theater, and a large market place, Britanski Trg I think, where we often shopped and through which many of us drove a couple times a day. This was the point at which Peter tried to contact officials in Knin, with whom he'd dealt in the Z-4 effort, and at least implicitly threatened them with U.S. retaliation if they hit the Embassy or killed Americans. I'm not sure that would have had much effect on Knin at that point, however. It was obvious that the game was up, that their part of Milosevic's Greater Serbia experiment would soon be history, and that the repeated, indiscriminate attacks on Zagreb were merely cynical retribution, intended to inflict pain on the civilian population. The Krajina Serbs had quickly forfeited whatever claim they might have had to international sympathy.

Q: How was Washington reacting? What were you telling Tudjman?

NEITZKE: As we'd done for nearly four years at that point, we urged Tudjman to show restraint. And we meant it, but our constant pleas had become a borderline pro forma exercise. Washington, and we, still didn't fully appreciate how strong the Croats had become militarily, and there were fears that any move by Tudjman would be met by a stronger countermove by Serbian forces. We didn't want another hot front opening up in the post-Yugo wars. But as Croatian forces quickly prevailed in Sector West, and did so, as I indicated, in a way that didn't leave much evidence of criminal excesses behind, some in Washington began to see the light, to perceive that this first major successful pushback against a four-year Serbian offensive, if it didn't go too far too fast, was not only tolerable but a positive development. This U.S. reaction to the Croats' move on Sector West, however, was before, and was not part of, whatever may have subsequently passed between, say, Holbrooke and Susak, or Perry and Susak, or MPRI and the Croatian Defense Ministry, regarding whatever green light we may have given, or assistance we may have rendered, to the later Operation Storm.

Q: Well, this issue came up in the trial of some Croats at the Hague Tribunal, did it not?

NEITZKE: That's my understanding, that the accused Croatian officers, on trial for crimes committed during Storm, claimed that Washington was aiding them in this offensive. I don't

know the truth of all that. Holbrooke, I know, says it's fiction, that Washington strongly cautioned Tudjman not to undertake Storm, fearing that Belgrade, the JNA, would be drawn in. Given how Storm unfolded, however, and the follow-on strike into Bosnia with help from the Bosnian army, and the manner in which we finally did intervene to get the Croats to halt short of Banja Luka, I find it hard to believe that we'd been sitting this out entirely, let alone demanding throughout that Tudjman halt this action.

There's one more thing in this regard that has always troubled me in trying to figure out what Holbrooke or Perry or someone else may have privately advised the Croats in the late spring or summer of 1995 on the possibility of their taking military action. That's the surprising note that Bob Frasure is reported to have passed to Holbrooke at a luncheon with Tudjman two days before the Mt. Igman tragedy. This would be mid-August, when Storm was already underway. Bob is said to have referred to the Croats as "junkyard dogs" we had "hired" because we were "desperate," urging Holbrooke that we not order them to stop their offensive. I have to assume that there was something more to that relationship, something about our backing of or involvement in Storm that has yet to come out.

Q: That happened after you had departed?

NEITZKE: Yes.

Q: Let us go back then. After the rocket attacks on Zagreb and the partial embassy evacuation, how did life change for those of you who remained behind?

NEITZKE: That all happened just two months before I was set to depart. For me personally, it didn't return to anything resembling normal – even what had previously passed for normal. We didn't know how many rockets the Serbs might still have. Obviously they felt no compunction about firing them, so we had to plan for the worst. We basically moved most remaining personnel up to Peter's residence – up the hill and, we hoped, out of range -- for a few days, perhaps a week. We may have continued to do visa work at the Embassy downtown for a few hours a day. Trying to do any serious work out of the Residence, however, proved nearly impossible and, there having been no further rocket attacks for a week or so, we moved operations back to the embassy. We tried, for what little good that might have done, to keep as many people as possible out of the more vulnerable front offices. But frankly, if we'd taken a hit in that period it wouldn't have much mattered where you were sitting. The building was old and, notwithstanding our efforts to shore it up, still not all that structurally sound. After a couple weeks in that cramped situation, everyone went back to their old offices and we got on with it.

The downtown area was much quieter than before; it seemed almost deserted at times. People were spooked. It didn't return to anything like the way it had been in my final two months. Outside of work, we tried to avoid the downtown area as much as possible.

Work in that final period focused, obviously, on our security situation, both the possibility of further rocket attacks and the lingering terrorist threat, and on what Tudjman planned next. His move on Sector West was a game-changer. No one expected him to stop there. Some historians point to Storm and its substantial reversal of Serbian gains as the game-changer, and it was a

game-changer of a different magnitude. But it was the move on Sector West that broke the ice; it occurred when there was no other prospect in sight of anything happening in the area that would alter the fundamental equation or get the international community off the dime. So that got a lot of our attention. In addition, with our evacuated families and non-essential personnel in various states of limbo, keeping them informed and negotiating with the Department over whether and when it might be safe for them to return took a lot of time. And Peter tried to keep the Z-4 process going, with now even more limited prospects.

Q: Were the Croatians able to launch attacks of any kind against Belgrade?

NEITZKE: Directly? Against the city?

Q: Yes. You said something about strategic weapons.

NEITZKE: I'm not sure what they'd have been capable of, other than perhaps bombing missions. And they didn't have that many aircraft at the time. So no. They never attacked Belgrade. Tudjman might have wanted to strike back after the rocket attacks on Zagreb. He probably did. But he kept his cool, opting instead for Storm and a bet that Milosevic wouldn't respond directly, that he would abandon the Krajina. And Tudjman was proven right. As for strategic weapons, that had been mentioned in the context of Croatia's new ties with Iran, but I'm not aware that anything ever came of that. They did get some interesting weapons, but I don't think any would qualify as strategic.

Q: Well, there is something I wanted to get to before we leave your time in Zagreb. I have done a long interview with Peter Galbraith. He had something of a reputation in his Senate job, as I understand it, for going beyond his brief. Did you see any of that in Zagreb, that he was pulling Senatorial strings, doing things to push the Croatian cause or anything?

NEITZKE: Did he push the Croatian cause? In my own efforts to accurately portray what was happening in Croatia and Bosnia, to get the proportionality of criminal behavior and guilt right, I was sometimes accused, not directly but plainly enough, of advocating for Croatia, you know, the crime of clientism. But I wasn't. I was just trying to get the facts before senior Washington officials convinced that the Croats had to be acting as badly as the Serbs. And later, the comprehensive CIA study bore out the accuracy of our reporting.

Whatever his reputation may have been, Peter saw himself as a foreign affairs professional, and he was, and he came out determined to do a good job and to have an impact on things. Nothing wrong with that. He'd been told in the Department to be tough with the Croats, who in the summer of 1993, as I've said, had been going after Muslims in Bosnia. Peter's initial emphasis was both as defender of Croatian sovereignty in the occupied areas, the UNPAs, and critic of what some Croats were doing in Bosnia. I think that was an appropriate balance.

I've already suggested that on an occasion or two Peter got too close to Tudjman personally. But that's different from clientism. On the Iranian "green light" decision, Peter strongly backed our telling Tudjman unequivocally to go ahead, which is what Tudjman would have preferred to hear, but Peter's stance there was far more out of sympathy for the Muslims than for Croatia's

self-interest in the deal. On Croatia's move into Sector West and preparations for Storm, although Peter dutifully executed his instructions urging restraint, his personal sympathies were with the Croats. Anyone who'd sat through two years of policy malaise, hoping for a break in the stalemate, a pushback of the Serbs, might easily have felt the same, which would not necessarily make him a Croatian partisan. And in his Z-4 effort, Peter took the interests of the Krajina Serbs into account to an extent that did not endear him to some in the Croatian Government. So, no, in sum, I don't think it's fair to say that Peter pushed Croatia's cause per se.

Now, on the question of whether Peter tried to work any levers in Washington while he was in Zagreb, if he tried, his efforts had no perceptible impact. Peter's view of Washington changed considerably over the two years we were together. He initially saw himself as a Clinton Administration and Democratic Party insider. He'd been sworn in at the White House by Vice President Gore. But he became increasingly frustrated with our policy drift, and worse. The ignominy of it weighed heavily. And the callous way Washington treated him during the Iranian "green light" affair clearly troubled him. He was being hung out. I think he dealt with that as well as one could. Nor did Washington warmly embrace his Z-4 project. And later, it wasn't clear that he had Holbrooke's complete confidence; Dick appeared to be circumventing him occasionally in dealings with Susak and perhaps others. So I think, from the Washington angle, Zagreb was a sobering experience for Peter.

Q: Okay. You left when?

NEITZKE: July 1. That was ten days before the start of the mass murders at Srebrenica, over a month before Operation Storm was launched, a month and half before the Mt. Igman tragedy, and well before the Clinton Administration was forced, by these and the other events that I've mentioned, to get serious about Bosnia.

Q: Did the Croats, the Croatian government, or the diplomatic community note your departure in any way? Since you were…

NEITZKE: They did, actually. In addition to some farewell calls, Foreign Minister Granic and his wife took me to lunch. The German Ambassador, a guy I'd gotten to know very well, hosted a farewell dinner for me. And the Italian Ambassador and his wife fed me a couple dinners after my family was evacuated. And on the morning before I left, Tudjman asked me to come up to the Presidential Palace, as it was called, one of Tito's villas, and, with several of his Ministers and senior advisors and the Croatian press present, awarded me the Order of Prince Branimir.

Q: That sounds impressive.

NEITZKE: That depends. Tudjman's political opponents ridiculed him for his efforts to imbue the office of president with symbols of age and grandeur. For example, the elaborate uniforms worn by the guards at the Presidential Palace – even his calling it a palace was lampooned – were of Tudjman's design. As, reportedly, were the medals, or Orders, of merit or honor that Tudjman bestowed. The Branimir medal, however, was supposed to be reserved for departing Ambassadors. I think I was the sole exception to that. There was a ceremony, following which we sat down for a chat. This was still a pretty tense time, but Tudjman was relaxed. He asked me

what advice I had for him. I told him I'd watched him closely for three years and was pretty sure he didn't take anyone's advice. I offered, however, that as shrewd as he'd been in getting independent Croatia on its feet and through the crises it had faced up until then, the future – this was before Storm, Dayton and everything – was likely to be even more challenging. And we talked about how far U.S.-Croatian relations had come – a sea change, really – since our first conversation three years earlier. Then we wished each other well, shook hands, and I left.

Q: What were you feeling, if anything comes to mind, when you departed Zagreb?

NEITZKE: That for three years I'd been watching up-close the effects of two U.S. Administrations' cowardice in the face of the worst humanitarian catastrophe in Europe since Hitler. That diplomacy, absent a credible threat to use force, or at least a credible demonstration of political will, is often worse than farce. That I'd done all I reasonably could, and then some, to try to get my government to do the right thing. But that I'd failed, at least in the near term. Along with most of the press, I had vastly overestimated the coercive power of shame, of conscience. I was ready to leave the Foreign Service at that point, not to resign in a huff, just to go. What was the point? I was never again likely to find myself in a job as intellectually, emotionally, and morally challenging and draining as what I'd just been through. And I'd witnessed how a few of the brightest, most highly thought of FSOs of my generation and the one preceding it had responded when confronted with their own career-threatening challenges, and it was not edifying. I had asked for and been granted a year's Leave Without Pay. My wife was going back to work, and I was looking forward to being a full-time dad.

Q: Had anything been offered you, jobs I mean, or had you made it known right away that you wanted to go on leave without pay?

NEITZKE: Before that year's bidding cycle had begun, a friend, an Assistant Secretary, had asked me to consider a Deputy Assistant Secretary job. I looked into that briefly, but couldn't see myself making that change just then. For me, and I knew it at the time, Zagreb had been the kind of job from which I couldn't just pick up and start afresh with something else. It was going to take a while. So, yes, I asked for LWOP up front and was granted it.

Q: You said you were ready to leave the Service. Did you mean that?

NEITZKE: Not literally. I meant I was fed up. I was questioning as I'd never before the institution in which I'd invested the bulk of my working life. I still felt that most FSOs most of the time did terrific work. There are few, if any, more dedicated groups in government. They do 98 percent of what they're asked to do with energy and creativity and fortitude and you name it. But there are instances when it's necessary to weight conscience against career, to take a stand. I was stunned by the number of respected, senior-level officers who easily put career above all else and by their uncanny ability to rationalize doing so.

Q: Rationalize it how?

NEITZKE: Most of them, it seemed, took quiet professional pride in their ability as cool, seasoned diplomats not to succumb to what they deemed "emotionalism," you know, the sort of

distracting emotionalism that full-blown genocide can unleash in officers less well-grounded. These guys took an essentially patronizing view of the dissenters, or worse, clicked their heels, and went out and told the Congress, the press, and the American people whatever was necessary to put a cloak of respectability on a policy of expediency. I recall, in that regard, an exchange on Bosnia that Mike McCurry, the Department Spokesman, had with reporters in late 1994. They were badgering him, demanding to know how he could stand up there at the podium day after day and pretend that we were doing anything at all significant to stop Milosevic. And he answered, I'll never forget, "because I'm paid to engage in the absurd."

Q: Well, unfortunately, that is what we are called upon to do sometimes as diplomats, to state our government's case as best we can despite even grave personal qualms.

NEITZKE: I think we touched on this earlier, when we were talking about how policy gets made, and how useful one really is if he's too close to an issue, relates to it too emotionally. At that point you just have to back off. But I strongly disagree with the notion that an emotionally sterile, utterly dispassionate approach always serves best. There have to be limits. Realpolitik is not all that we're about as a nation. In dealing with something like genocide, let alone genocide in the shadow of the Holocaust, there has to come a point when your basic values kick in. I think we're best served as a nation by diplomats who neither go off on emotional tangents nor check their humanity at the door.

But it's a question that's always troubled me, whether you could be successful in the Service, keep rising through the ranks while dealing with tough, gut-wrenching issues, and keep your soul intact, as it were. When I led those few sessions on dissent in mid-career training at FSI after I retired, I would begin with remarks that I'd come across in the early 1970s by then-Under Secretary Macomber. Testifying before the Senate, he was asked what an FSO should do – Vietnam was then the focus of dissent – if he were asked to carry out a policy that he deeply opposed. Macomber responded that if one felt that strongly about it he probably shouldn't be a diplomat; he should be a teacher or a writer or an advocate of some sort. He quickly added, however, that if one decided he could live with "certain inhibitions" – his phrase – then he'd have the marvelous reward of a ringside seat at some of the greatest events of his day. I think that a lot of our best and brightest cling to that ringside seat at all costs.

Q: Well what happened to some of these FSOs, whom you keep referring to, the ones who took the careerist path on Bosnia as you say, defended the policy and…

NEITZKE: Nearly all of them did extremely well, actually, the senior officers we're referring to, I mean in terms of their onward Foreign Service careers. Lots of them were awarded with ambassadorships, ironically, in a couple cases, ambassadorships to the former Yugoslavia. Eagleburger got to be Secretary of State briefly. And on the military side too, nearly every senior officer who dutifully towed the line did extremely well. There's a pretty clear pattern there. I'm reminded from my research on the Holocaust of a similar pattern of reward for some senior people in the Department back then, men who'd held the line against admitting more Jews, who'd scoffed even at talk of rescue, and who'd steadfastly denied we knew about the Nazis' extermination program long after we did know. In the end, however, FDR fired EUR Assistant Secretary Breckenridge Long. At least there was that.

Q: There have been a number of books, loads of books in fact, some memoirs, written on experiences in the wars in the former Yugoslavia. Did you ever consider doing that? And lastly, now that you have the perspective of over a decade, are there any aspects of the conflict and what you did that you now see differently?

NEITZKE: How much more time do we have? I did think of doing a book. Some journalist friends even had a publisher get in touch with me, and we spoke a couple times, batting around ideas, what they'd most be interested in, what I felt I could do. We got to the point where they wanted an outline and, after some soul-searching, I decided I really didn't want to do it, at least not then. I was trying to work Zagreb out of my system, and I didn't want to descend again into that morass of anger and disappointment. But I'm a firm believer in the therapeutic value of writing things down, or airing them out, and this exercise with you is, I guess, my third and longest and probably my last effort to do that. So I'm grateful.

Q: The others were…

NEITZKE: The others were the long research paper I wrote in the Senior Seminar, which I guess we'll come to, comparing and contrasting the State Department's and the U.S. Government's responses to the Holocaust and Bosnia, which I titled "But Bosnia was not the Holocaust!" The second was a book done by Roger Cohen, "Hearts Grown Brutal," published in the fall of 1998.

Q: Writes for the <u>New York Times</u>.

NEITZKE: He does. I think he's the <u>IHT</u> foreign editor now. Roger was one of the many correspondents I got to know in Zagreb. I think he was technically Berlin bureau chief at the time. Later on he became chief foreign editor for the <u>Times</u>. We stayed in touch for a few years after I left Zagreb. When he was working on his book, I gave him a copy of my Senior Seminar paper, which he ended up quoting from at length. For anyone who has studied Yugoslavia going way back, "Hearts Grown Brutal" is a great read. Roger has a wonderful, at times almost poetic writing style. His treatment of Bosnia closely parallels my own. A sense of having helped inform his views relieved some of the pressure I felt to write something more elaborate myself.

The other question, on whether my perspective on what happened in Bosnia has changed, is more difficult. My fundamental take on what happened, and on the moral vacuity of our approach from 1992 to 1995, hasn't changed. But you learn more and your perspective broadens with time. We witnessed the war, the wars, from a certain vantage point. We weren't as attuned as the Bosnians themselves would have been, for example, to the war on a micro level, to the carnage and the corruption, for example, in arms dealing, food smuggling, and so on, to the innumerable deals cut at the local or village level among otherwise hostile factions that resulted in brief, ad hoc alliances that permitted some of these places to survive against all odds. And there are, of course, the many moving stories of loss, unbelievable hardship and even heroism that have come out. On the major outlines of what happened, however, history has shown that we got it right, and early on.

In mid-1995, Clinton was said to have been in a near-panic over what his failure of leadership on Bosnia might do to his reelection prospects a year later. I think Woodward in his book The Choice said Clinton then viewed Bosnia as a cancer on his Presidency, the old Nixon era characterization of Watergate. That Clinton's handling of Bosnia is now rated a stellar success by so many, most of whom either knew little at the time or remember nothing, is little short of obscene. That's the true miracle that Holbrooke worked at Dayton, transforming Clinton's Bosnia cancer of early 1995 into a grand plank of unmitigated success in his reelection platform of 1996. And now critics of our Iraq strategy – and god knows there's lots to be critical about – demand that we apply to Iraq the strategic insight and creative diplomacy that Clinton supposedly demonstrated in bringing peace to Bosnia. It boggles the mind. Galbraith and now even Biden are calling for the formal ethno-religious division of Iraq, supposedly drawing on lessons from the Clinton Administration's success with Bosnia. What a profound and potentially catastrophic historical distortion that is.

Lastly, I feel a lot better now than I did when departing Zagreb about the cumulative effect of all we did in those years on later policy. Some might dispute this, but I believe that we contributed critically to the public, congressional, and Administration mindset that guided our much firmer response to the Kosovo crisis, going to war with Serbia, even bombing Belgrade. There was cause enough to have done that in the way Milosevic treated the Albanian Kosovars, but I don't believe we actually would have absent the lingering humiliation and shame of our earlier three years of cowardice on Bosnia.

PETER W. GALBRAITH
Ambassador
Croatia (1993-1998)

Ambassador Galbraith was born in Massachusetts, the son of a renowned economist and ambassador. He was raised in the U.S. and abroad and educated at Harvard and Oxford Universities. He joined the staff of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in 1978, where he served until 1993. There he became closely involved in Middle East matters, particularly those concerning Iran, Iraq and the Kurds. Conflict among nations of the former Yugoslavia later became a major issue in which Mr. Galbraith became closely involved and where he developed expertise. In 1993 he was named United States Ambassador to Croatia, where he served until 1998. In the course of his assignments, Ambassador Galbraith played a major role in resolving the conflicts among the Balkan nations. After this assignment, he was appointed to the United Nations Transitional Administration for East Timor, where he served from 1999 to 2001. Ambassador Galbraith was interviewed by Charles Stuart Kennedy in 1999.

GALBRAITH: When I got to Israel I was staying with a friend who was a journalist there and she called and said that there had been a call for me advising that I was going to be ambassador to Croatia.

Q: So, that's where you heard?

GALBRAITH: Yes. This had come from Moynihan. He and Liz had been with the president at a retreat and the president said, "Oh, you should know I'm going to appoint Peter Galbraith ambassador to Croatia." So, that's how the appointment came about. When I got back to Washington I did what I was told to do which was to call the State Department Croatia desk and begin the process of briefing.

The briefing period was very short. I did go over to FSI and I guess spent about a month studying Croatian although since I was still working for the foreign relations committee I was not the most diligent of students I'm sorry to say. Then came the ambassadorial seminar, which is the two-week course to prepare ambassadors to go out. The security clearance was done very rapidly. I already had of course a security clearance with the foreign relations committee and the administration actually pushed to get me done quickly because they wanted to get me out. I guess it turned out I had a rather clean life. I only had two problems. One was that I had truthfully said that I'd never smoked marijuana. Since I'd graduated college in 1973, the FBI was dubious about that and I realized of course it would have been much better off to have lied and said yes I did, but it just happened to be the truth. The agent, also, since I was divorced, had decided that maybe I was gay and that had to be checked out, but maybe this was just vicarious interest on his part. Anyhow, the whole thing was done very quickly. The papers then came up from the White House. This is the formal nomination. I was notified immediately in my office at the foreign relations committee when they arrived. So I called the Chairman, Senator Pell, and asked if he'd be wiling to hold a hearing soon since they were eager to get me out and since I was eager to get out. So, he agreed that we would hold the hearing the next day.

Now, there's a six-day rule, which says that a nomination has to layover for six days. I was in touch with Helms who said, well, I don't waive this rule for nominees, but I'll make an exception in your case. The hearing was scheduled for the next day. It was in S-116, the small room in the Capitol, not the formal hearing room. Pell chaired, Helms was there, Lugar and Jeffords who was the Senator from Vermont, which is my own state, and a huge number of staff. I think Pell didn't have any questions. Helms announced that he had 200 questions, that the staff had prepared 200 questions, but then he said, I've decided we won't ask them for you. His standard technique for harassing nominees was to give them 200 questions to answer for the record and then to keep going back and so he was very pleasant. Lugar gave a statement denouncing the Clinton administration's policy toward Bosnia and its failure to act. This was now June of '93, and he said, "But, I won't ask you to respond because I know what you think." He knew I probably agreed with a number of his points. So that was the nomination process. It was approved. That was one day. The day after, it was approved by the committee and sent to the floor of the Senate. I think it went to the floor of the Senate on a Thursday and the following Tuesday I was confirmed.

This all occurred during my ambassadorial seminar so I missed the last part of it because I was actually getting ready to go. I was confirmed on a Tuesday and the following Thursday I had my swearing in which Al Gore did, a ceremony of about 20 people in the Executive Office Building. My parents were there, my son held the bible and two days after that I was off to Croatia.

Q: Well, when you went out what was the status of our relations with Croatia? You went out there when in '93, this would be?

GALBRAITH: I arrived June 26th of '93, which was a Saturday.

Q: What was the status of our relations at that point?

GALBRAITH: I think the status of the relations was cool on both sides for a variety of reasons. First, on the Croatian side, they had believed that the United States was the country that had been the most reluctant about Croatia's independence. I think Croatians wished that the Bush administration had done

more to support Croatia during the 1991 war. Also there was some lingering resentment that while the European Union recognized Croatia in January of 1992, except for Germany which had already done so in December of '91, the United States waited until April of 1992. There was also concern that the United States hadn't sent an ambassador from when it established diplomatic relations until I arrived in June, 1993.

Q: So, you were the first?

GALBRAITH: I was the first. On the other hand, things were getting pretty desperate for the Croatians. One-third of the country was occupied by rebel Serbs who were backed by Belgrade and there seemed to be no prospect of recovering that territory. It actually bifurcated the country so that there was no land link between the main part of Croatia, Zagreb down to the coast between that part of Croatia and the Dalmatia coast, Split and Dubrovnik. Furthermore, Serbs had destroyed some of the key infrastructure, electric lines, and destroyed a lake where power was generated. Split, the second largest city, was without power for 20 out of 24 hours a day. This was a place whose economy was heavily dependent on tourists, and there wasn't a single tourist. Things were looking quite bleak for Croatia when I arrived. I think they had given up on the idea that the European Union could help them and so they looked to the United States. They believed that if the U.S. had the right policy then the U.S. had the power to help them. While relations were cool, and the Croatians felt that the Americans had not done enough for them, on the other hand there was no hostility because they couldn't afford to antagonize the United States. On the American side, Tuđman had never been very popular, never been popular at all with the State Department or with the Bush administration or with the Clinton administration and he never was. He was viewed as a person of authoritarian instincts, anti-Semitic.

Q: He made a remark I believe.

GALBRAITH: In his election campaign, he had said, thank God my wife is neither a Jew nor a Serb. He had written a treatise about the number of dead in World War II in a notorious concentration camp run by the Croatian fascists who were allies of Hitler. He downplayed the number of dead. The Serbs said it was a half a million and Tuđman I think argued that it was 40,000. All of this made him not very popular and he was in his personal style very unlovable. In addition, a conflict had broken out since the beginning of the year between the Muslims and the Croats and there had been in April a massacre of 150 civilians in central Bosnia where bodies were burned – men, women and children. There were other atrocities taking place. So, the State Department, in fact, was increasingly hostile toward Croatia and it was the concern of Steve Walker, the Croatia desk officer, and some others that if I didn't get out quickly the decision would be made not to send an ambassador at all. That was something that led me to push for the fastest possible confirmation, then get the swearing in as quickly as possible, and to leave two days after the swearing in or the day after.

Q: Did you find in this really short time that you were dealing with the State Department, dealing with the Balkans, was it ribboned by dissent by what we were doing, you know at the desk officer and below?

GALBRAITH: It certainly was. There was a lot of angst about the whole thing. There had already been several resignations. I think within six weeks of my getting out there, Steve Walker, the desk officer, would himself resign in protest over the policy. People and at the senior levels, Steve Oxman, Sandy Vershbow, Terry Snell who was the office director for the Office of East European Affairs. There was a sense that they didn't know, they didn't know what to do. I think that was very demoralizing. There were also some significant bureaucratic problems. One of them was how the State Department structured its handling of this. As you know, the bureaus and in this case the European Bureau, are divided up into a number of offices which generally cover several countries and then those offices have desk officers for each country. Of course, if the country is large, there may be quite a number of people sitting at the desk.

In the case of the European Bureau one of these offices was the office for Eastern Europe. Now, as a bureaucratic structure that made sense in 1988, when there were six countries in Eastern Europe. But by 1993 those six European countries had become 15 with the break up of Yugoslavia into five separate countries and the break up of Czechoslovakia into two. Then came the addition to Eastern Europe of the Baltics, since politically they could no longer be in the Soviet Union office and they were also independent countries. So, the office director, Terry Snell, was overwhelmed by too many countries in his purview. Added to that was the fact that within those 15 countries were Bosnia and Croatia, that is to say Europe's biggest war since the Second World War. So, that structure I think was demoralizing to the people who worked there. It certainly was frustrating to me and it made it hard to get the kind of attention and focus on the issues that were required.

Q: Well, then, did you go out with a message in your portfolio as you went out there or what?

GALBRAITH: This was the damnedest thing. I went out with no instructions at all.

Q: The first ambassador to, you know, we're talking about a very crucial point. Was this State Department, was this the Clinton administration or is it just?

GALBRAITH: I'm not sure I can say why this was so.

Zagreb was the diplomatic hub within the former Yugoslavia and certainly for a variety of reasons. First, Belgrade, which of course had been the largest embassy, was drawn down. I think it still had more people than Zagreb when I arrived, but they were under travel restrictions. We were engaged in a visa war with Yugoslavia because we weren't accepting their diplomats as diplomats in the United States because we didn't recognize the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia as a successor to Yugoslavia. Then there was no ambassador in Belgrade anymore since we didn't recognize the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In Sarajevo we had Ambassador Victor Jackovich who had just been confirmed when I'd got out, but there was no embassy. He had almost no staff and they wouldn't let him go, the Bureau of Diplomatic Security (DS) wouldn't let him go to Bosnia because it was too dangerous. Zagreb was the only mission there that was able to operate freely. It was also the place where, in addition to our work on Croatia, we had the responsibility for all the humanitarian activities in Bosnia which was carried out by AID and by the disaster assistance relief agencies. Further, one part of Bosnia to which you could get easy access was from Croatia – that is to the Croat held areas in Bosnia and from there to the Bosnian government held territory, at least some of it for example heading up to Tuzla. So, for all those reasons, here was a post that was at the center of the crisis, It was the number one crisis the Clinton administration was facing and, as you point out, or as your question illustrates, the first ambassador goes out without any instructions.

Reasons. I think there are several. First, the speed by which I went out. People were not focused on writing a set of instructions. Second, and probably more importantly, the administration really didn't know what it wanted done and most of all it wished the problem would go away so that it could focus on its domestic agenda. June 26th was when I arrived. It was a month after Secretary Christopher had made a trip to Europe to round up support for the Clinton administration's preferred policy option of lifting the arms embargo and striking the Bosnian Serbs. Christopher made that case so weakly and so poorly that there was a real sense that he had gone there not to advance that argument, but to hear why it shouldn't be done. In any event, this was something of a handicap not having any mandate beyond that which Steve Walker the desk officer had provided in the form of the comments that I was to make to Tuđman on presenting my credentials. Steve actually wrote up an extremely good statement with clear support by the United States for the territorial integrity of Croatia within its internationally recognized boundaries, as well as calling on the Croatians to support the territorial integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Q: Well, now was anybody within the State Department or anywhere else, I mean, as you've described yourself, in the Senate you were somewhat of a loose cannon, that may not be the right word, but you were a self-operator. You initiate things. If you're not given very strict guidance, you take off. Was anybody saying to you, now Peter, cool it or something like that or was there any concern in this?

GALBRAITH: You raise a good question and the answer is no. I certainly had the reputation, I wouldn't say loose cannon, but we'll do with self-operator, self-starter.

Q: All right, okay.

GALBRAITH: I think people who knew me well, know that I'm a pretty strong-willed person. One of the consequences in Washington of punching above your weight, meaning accomplishing more than is appropriate for your position, is that some people say oh, he's really effective and others say, well, he's a loose cannon or a maverick or not quite reliable. So, certainly, one of the consequences of the fact that I was effective at the Foreign Relations Committee and accomplished a lot is that others thought this is a potential maverick and we have to be concerned about him. I would have welcomed clear instructions and, of course, I would have followed those instructions. Indeed, at every stage in my tenure I was very conscious of what U.S. policy was, and if I wanted to communicate something that differed I tried to get permission to do so, tried to get the policy guidance changed. I certainly never did anything that wasn't U.S. policy and for a very simple reason. You take an oath to carry out your office, and the job of being an ambassador is to follow the instructions you have, to carry out the policy that you're given. That's different from being on the Hill. On the Hill, your job is to work on legislation and to represent the senators. If you can get a senator to agree to your position, then you are serving his or her interests. Again, that is different from an ambassador because, well, the same point applies and you can try and change your instructions, but you certainly shouldn't operate freelance. You also do a great disservice to your to any cause that you might wish to advance. If I had communicated to the Croatians or the Bosnians that which I thought ought to happen or that which I thought should be U.S. policy, I won't have made it U.S. policy. I will simply have misinformed them and they might take some action that would be harmful to them and harmful to the things that I wanted to accomplish. Being a maverick as an ambassador makes no sense and I understood that from day one. Nonetheless, again given the reputation that I might have had, I was surprised that nobody gave me any guidance about how active I should be, what was expected of me. Should I focus on reporting, should I focus on commercial issues, should I take a high profile in the country, a medium profile, low profile, whatever, nothing. In the absence of such guidance, I concluded that it was up to me to decide. I did not conclude that the absence of guidance on that point means that I should do nothing at all. In the absence of guidance I felt it was up to me to decide how to represent U.S. policy.

Q: On your arrival you must have been hit by the press, you know, you say, okay, we're starting this whole new relationship, what are we, I mean, you know the media and all this, I mean you can't just duck. I mean there you are.

GALBRAITH: Yes. Well, first, I arrived on the 26th, presented my credentials to Tuđman on the 28th of June, two days. The 504th anniversary of the Battle of Kosovo. We had a very good conversation following the presentation of credentials and indeed it was noted how much time we actually spent talking by all commentators. He had given his historical view of Croatia as the Eastern edge of Western civilization. The struggle of civilizations that it represented in the Balkans. From Steve Walker's talking points, I made this clear statement of support for Croatia's territorial integrity which he had noticed and appreciated, which I don't think had been articulated previously in U.S. policy. He was very interested in how the new administration perceived Croatia, and perceived the situation in Bosnia. It was a sign that Tuđman for his many

flaws was something of a strategist. He was interested in the context. The situation in Croatia as I think I was describing earlier was one of quiet desperation. One-third of the country was occupied by the Serbs with a UN peacekeeping presence in that area, the region which extended to the coast near Zadar, again cutting Zagreb off from Split. In addition, there were some 200,000 Bosnian refugees in Croatia, an enormous burden on the social services of the country. Beyond that, the war was going poorly for the Croats who were quite outnumbered. Croatia, because of its involvement in Bosnia, was feeling increased pressure from the international community, risking increased isolation. Yet Croatia didn't feel it could withdraw from Bosnia because if it did withdraw, the Croats would do even worse. They didn't have the possibility of preserving the status quo. The economy was in terrible shape. Virtually all the tourist resources of the former Yugoslavia were on the Dalmatian coast and there were no tourists. There were a small number in the North, but that was it. Certainly not in Dalmatia or Dubrovnik.

All this actually created an opportunity which I was eager and able to exploit. In this I was helped by my very aggressive public affairs officer, Susan Hovanec, who was certainly somebody who believed that there can never be enough publicity. She measured her success by the number of times I was on television or in the newspapers and she made sure that was a very large number. I decided that the first trip I wanted to make was to repeat the trip I had made in August of '92 and go revisit the refugee populations from Bosnia. This was the trip from which I'd done the report on ethnic cleansing. I would go to Slovenia and to Osijek right on the front line and I wanted to do it very quickly. My idea was basically to signal the United States' concern for humanitarian issues. Ron Neitzke, who had been the chargé the previous years and was now the deputy chief of mission, proposed that I should also go to Vukovar, the Danubian city that had been seized by the Serbs after an 88 day siege in November 1991. He arranged with the UN for them to come and pick me up in Osijek and to take me to Vukovar. So, I made the trip. Susan rounded up a lot of Croatian media, Croatia television cameras. There were some Americans who accompanied, notably Roy Gutman of Newsday. He had won the Pulitzer Prize for exposing the genocide the year before and had helped me a lot. We went to Osijek and met with the governor and the mayor and the next day we crossed into Vukovar, toured the city. We got a briefing from the UN and did a windshield tour of this utterly devastated city. It looked like something out of Berlin in 1945, every building pounded away by artillery. One thing that really struck was the twinkle of lights in some of the apartment blocks because whole apartments were missing and there were holes in these communist era apartment blocks and yet people were living in them. It just seemed almost impossible to imagine. I didn't talk to any of the local Serbs.

Q: Now Vukovar was under Serbian control?

GALBRAITH: Under Serbian control. It had been taken by the Yugoslav army in 1991 and it was the great symbol of Croatian suffering. The city had and still has enormous emotional power for the Croatians and the siege of Vukovar was their Alamo. This was their heroic stand. Then when the city fell it was sort of the story of the heroic defenders who had held out against all odds. Then the survivors, including wounded soldiers who were in the hospital, about 400 people in all, were removed from the hospital and taken to a warehouse. They were beaten and then taken in trucks to a farm, shot and buried with the garbage. There were many who disappeared from Vukovar, a lot of whom were unearthed years later from the mass grave.

Q: How did you get in?

GALBRAITH: Well, the UN was there under the Vance plan; the UN had peacekeepers in the Serb-held territories. They were called UN protected areas. The Vance plan was meant to have a process by which these territories would be returned, reintegrated into Croatia, but the Serb population refused. The Serb leaders refused to cooperate, the warlords. So, the UN, in fact, facilitated a frozen situation there. It was part of what kept the status quo. The UN was able to arrange for me to cross the lines although they were very nervous about my being there. When I was driving around the city we did it at great speed and with a convoy of modest security. They must have had permission from the local Serbs to permit me to go. They had some reason to want to have relations with the American ambassador. Of course, they would not allow any Croat press in there. When I came out, Susan Hovanec had arranged a press conference and the first question I got was, "Mr. Ambassador, why did you go to Vukovar?" I said, "Well, I went to Vukovar, Croatia, because I'm the ambassador to Croatia." Well, needless to say, this comment was sort of page one banner headlines in all the Croatian press. The idea that here was this man newly arrived as the first American ambassador. The first thing he does is go to the city which is the symbol of our suffering, and he comes out and he states clearly: this is part of Croatia and the reason he went there is that he's the ambassador to Croatia.

In the ensuing weeks I would walk down streets in different towns and women would come up and kiss me. It really had a big impact. Unfortunately most of them were grandmothers, but anyhow. For lots of reasons that summer we repeated the formula, traveling around always with a large entourage from Croatia television and the Croatian media and the occasional Western journalist. We went down to Split, or up to Zadar, to the front lines in Croatia. We went to places that were considered dangerous. We visited with refugees, visited with local officials, expressed sympathy, expressed support and in the process did two things. First, became personal and very well known in Croatia and secondly, built up a reservoir of good will which, as Brian Atwood observed years later, he said, "You built up this reservoir of good will that you could draw down in your tenure." In fact, I did draw it down after 1995, extensively, in defense of Serbian rights once the Croatians had retaken the disputed areas. But I don't think I could have had the influence I had if I hadn't actually created the persona, traveled around the country, managed to identify myself as a friend of Croatia personally, that the new administration was different, that American stood for Croatia's territorial integrity.

Q: Were you getting any reflections from the Croatian community, particularly in Chicago. I mean some who tend to ultra nationalistic and all through congress or anything. I mean were they a factor?

GALBRAITH: Not very much.

Q: Because earlier on they were a very definite factor in our policy. Maybe they'd gotten older or times had passed them by and all.

GALBRAITH: The Croatian American community, the principal places that they came from were Pittsburgh, Ohio, much less Chicago actually, and Southern California. There are several

organizations, all of whom were supportive of Croatia's independence, but many were not very supportive of President Tuđman. In fact, the leader of the largest of them would make it a point when he saw me to say, "I saw Tuđman and I told him, Mr. President, you have to understand we are Americans first before we are Croatian-Americans. Our loyalty is to the United States and don't think that you can use us to promote Croatia's interest. We wish Croatia well, but our loyalty is to the United States." Interestingly, Tuđman treated the Croatian-Americans differently than he treated the Croatians in Canada or in Australia. In those countries he expected that the first loyalty of the Croatians should be to Croatia and he encouraged Croats in Canada and in Australia to come back to Croatia. He passed a law of return like the one in Israel and it gave them automatic citizenship. He wanted them to come after '95 after they'd retaken the Serb held area of the country. He wanted them to come and settle in Serb homes. He never made comparable appeals to the American Croatians, partially I think because he knew the Croatian-American community wouldn't be as receptive. Secondly, I think because he didn't want to antagonize the United States or the Clinton administration.

Two reasons that the Croatian-American community I think was less receptive: first, I think our country does a better job of assimilation than the Canadians or the Australians. Secondly, the Croatian-American community in the United States is much older than the one in Canada or Australia. The United States group came at the end of the 19th Century, the first decades of the 20th Century, along with many in the interwar period and after the Second World War, but the initial immigration was early. In the case of the Canadians and particularly the Australians, the Croatians were people who had supported the fascists or who had left when the fascist regime had fallen, who had fled the communists so they had quite a different mentality.

Q: Were you seeing or getting any reflections of apologies for what the Croatians under the fascist regime did in World War Two to the Serbs?

GALBRAITH: This was a significant and constant issue. There were efforts to rehabilitate the fascists, some of which were carried out by Tuđman's government and to diminish the partisan contribution. Schools, for example, were named after a Croatian poet who had been a minister in the fascist government and that offended a lot of anti-fascists. Tuđman wanted to get rid of the communist-era names of streets and public buildings, but many of them were associated with the partisan movement. Although I think his motives were largely against the communist association, it appeared as if he were diminishing Croatia's partisan movement. For example, he renamed a principal square in Zagreb after a Croatian king of medieval, early medieval times. It had been called the Square of the Anti-Fascist Heroes. It offended a lot of people that he had changed that name and people who were anti-fascist continued to call it by the old name. In some parts of Croatia, not so much in Zagreb, but in some places on the coast and on the islands, for example on the island of Vis in the town of Komiža, people smashed the anti-fascist monuments, the monuments to the partisans. In some places like Komiža they put up new monuments to those who had died in the homeland war, meaning those who died fighting for the fascists, the fascist Croatia. Interestingly, the village that I sighted this monument in, Komiža, was one that had the highest immigration to the United States. So, I guess that some of this came from Americans who had come either themselves or the children of people who had come after the Second World War.

Q: Komiža played a rather important role I think during World War Two as far as the staging point for the supplying of Tito's partisans and all that.

GALBRAITH: It did, yes. I think it's where George McGovern came down when his plane was shot down or had a crash landing.

Q: In the first few months you were making your visits. In the first place what was the reading you were getting, your personal one and from your staff and others you were talking to about Tuđman. Was he a man we could do business with or was he a man we had to watch, I mean what were you thinking?

GALBRAITH: Both. A man we should watch and a man I felt we could do business with. Neither the staff nor any of the other sources that we had had much feel for him. Neitzke, the chargé who now was DCM, had met with him a number of times, but not much more frequently than other members of the diplomatic community. The other staff many of them were new, so they hadn't had that much dealing with him. When I was in Zagreb in 1991, December of '91 when Mike Einik was there as consul general, there were five Americans there. Even the year before, the embassy had 10 or 15. When I arrived it was around 20. By the time I left it was probably closer to 60 or 70 Americans and then 120 Croatian employees. It was really in a process of being set up and it had some pretty significant growth. I was convinced that you didn't need to like Tuđman to be able to do business with him. Even more importantly, my fundamental conviction was that the only way out of the Croatia Bosnia wars was through Croatia. We had to get Croatia build an alliance between Croatia and the Bosnian Muslims. We had to get Croatia to be as much as possible willing to promote or implement American policy goals. When I arrived I would say that the balance of policy in the United States favored the alternative approach namely that to treat Tuđman as another dictator, as a bloodthirsty Balkan pro-tyrant eager to carve up Bosnia and therefore to be treated the same way, to have sanctions imposed on him and interestingly that came from two different camps. It came from the Yugoslav camp in the State Department, in the policy circles. These were people who knew the old Yugoslavia, who loved the old Yugoslavia and felt that it had an important role in the Cold War. They regretted its breakup, and felt that sanctions on Serbia were justified, but that Tuđman was also responsible for the breakup. Therefore, Croatia was responsible for the breakup, and they resented the fact that Croatia had declared its independence. So, there was that impulse to have sanctions. Certainly, I think was the anti-Croatian sentiment that was a factor in the Bush administration where Larry Eagleburger and Brent Scowcroft had served in Belgrade and where the people working on the staff level were also people who had this experience in Belgrade.

Q: I was part of this, I was rather astounded at how pro-Serbian some of my colleagues had become and this was when things were getting very nasty in Bosnia, but they were still excusing the Serbs. It was long-term localitis or something.

GALBRAITH: Well, there was that element which to some degree came from the self-styled realists in the U.S. foreign policy apparatus and from the foreign policy establishment. On the other side there was this desire to impose sanctions on Croatia from those who were the idealists and who had taken up the cause of Bosnia. These were my friends, my allies, where I was coming from, who saw Bosnia as I saw it – primarily as a moral issue that would define Europe

in the 1990s. They believed that what was at stake was not just this small country in Europe, but some principles. The principles related to how you respond to aggression, how you respond to genocide, how you respond to crimes against humanity. A group of us who had no particular connection to Yugoslavia, no attachment, no real knowledge, but that group, too, was by July of 1993 looking to impose sanctions on Croatia. So, in some sense I had to deal with the effort to isolate Croatia that came from the establishment group, from the Yugoslav hands, and from the idealists who were concerned, and the Bosnia hands. In order to be credible in opposing that, I had to demonstrate that there was another alternative, that Croatia could be turned around, that the sanctions likely wouldn't work because it would leave us with no alternative. This was of course one of the great potential disasters here. Sanctions on Serbia, you have sanctions on Croatia, the Bosnian Muslims, who were the people we all wanted to help, are completely surrounded. How do you get any aid in, how do you get any assistance? So, on one hand I had to demonstrate that Croatia was capable of doing better; two, I had to demonstrate that sanctions would be harmful; three, I had to be damn sure that I wasn't seen as an apologist for Croatia. The moment I began to excuse Croatian actions or to deny that they were taking place, then the immediate response would be that Galbraith has gone local, clientitis, let's just miss what he has to say.

Q: This happens again and again in the State Department because they look at ambassadors and if they all of a sudden go that way, they become completely ineffective at least as far as Washington is concerned.

GALBRAITH: This was my number one concern. It came up very early. Neitzke had taken the cables that were written by people including by the disaster assistant relief team, the DART, the people who went into Bosnia. He would rewrite them at great length, delaying them for going out for days and would take out the criticisms of Croatia, or many of them, would tone it down. I think he did this for two reasons. First, I think he felt that Croatia was not as bad as Serbia. I think he was reacting to the old establishment, the Yugoslav hand phenomena. He didn't want to give them ammunition. I think he was concerned also that by reporting lots of bad things that the Croatians were doing, this might lead to sanctions on Croatia which would have the disastrous results that both he and I agreed they would be. My view was the opposite. My tactical approach was the opposite. I figured the more critical my cables were of Croatia, the more credibility I would have in Washington in making the case against sanctions on Croatia. In other words, I could go in there and say I'm not apologizing for Tuđman, you've heard what I've had to say about him, you've heard what reporting we've done, nonetheless I can tell you, as a tough-minded person taking on the Croatians, that this approach of sanctions will do more harm than good. So right away the issue was joined about how much to edit the cables, particularly from the disaster assistance relief team. I said no editing on the facts. You guys report what you see in Bosnia; you report what the Bosnian Croats are doing. We're not going to take any of that out of the cable. Now, there may be some editing for style and so on, but I want the reporting as you see it. This, incidentally, turned out to be very good for morale because this was at a time when people were resigning left and right when they felt that the policy was immoral. They felt that they were cogs in a machine that was standing by while atrocities and genocide were being committed. That was affecting not only Washington, but our embassy. By having our embassy from the start reporting the facts, highlighting the atrocities as we saw them, not mincing words, all of us could feel we were making a contribution. The situation was better off for our being

there; we were not cogs set in a different policy, but we were trying to do what we could to improve the policy by providing better reporting. I also realized that it would be deeply demoralizing for the staff to have an ambassador that they saw as an apologist for Tuđman.

Q: This has happened in other embassies when you get this toning down of things. When you arrived there, what were sort of the issues that you had to deal with?

GALBRAITH: There were two issues at the beginning of my time. The first issue was the deteriorating humanitarian situation in Bosnia and particularly in Sarajevo. The second issue was the Muslim Croat war in both its humanitarian and political dimensions. I focused on very little else in my first months there in terms of policy. Obviously I was doing these other things, going around the country, meeting people, seeing what the conditions were like and attempting to develop a rapport and to promote or build up morale. The first issue was joined in a kind of interesting way, that is the Sarajevo issue. The first week I was there, Tim Knight, the head of the DART team, came out of Sarajevo. He wrote a cable about what was going on in Sarajevo and it was really devastating. The Serbs had turned off the utilities and this meant that, among other things, water was not functioning. There wasn't much water pressure, so people were getting water from the river or from puddles. Without water, of course, the toilets weren't working and this meant that sewage, human waste, was seeping out in the ground water. Furthermore, because the gas had been turned off, people were unable to take sanitary measures like boil the water and so there was, Tim felt, a huge risk of epidemic. So, he made this report. Ron Neitzke added to it: this is an urgent action cable and proposed some specific actions on the humanitarian side including acquiring iodine pills for purifying the water and some other things. He made the point that something needed to be done about the situation in Sarajevo. I looked at the cable and I did a little bit of editing. Tim had told me of a joke that was circulated in Sarajevo and the joke went as follows: What's the difference between Auschwitz and Sarajevo? Answer: At least at Auschwitz they had gas. I debated with myself as to whether to include that in the cable or not since, well, there were a lot of people frankly who don't like comparisons with the Holocaust. They feel that that is such a unique event and second, there's always, there's a lot of sensitivity about anything that smacks of a joke in relation to what happened at Auschwitz of course. Nonetheless, I also realized that if I put that joke in there the cable would be read. So, I put it as the first thing and indeed the cable was read. It came into the Op Center and was marked all the way up to the Secretary. It went to the President who read it and was so upset that this led him to order consultation with NATO to get the first Sarajevo ultimatum which is more or less forgotten. It was an ultimatum to the Serbs in July of 1993 to turn on the utilities in Sarajevo or to face consequences. Interestingly, well, the cable was also leaked to the Washington Post where it appeared on page one as part of the story. It was leaked by a guy named Tom Brennan who worked for the Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance who had actually accompanied me to Banja Luka and into the prison camp which I was describing last time. It was unclassified because the work that was done by the DART team was done in a space that was not secure. If the space is not secure then you can't do any classified work there. Besides, the DART team were U.S. government contractors, they weren't U.S. government employees. Frankly, there was nothing in the cable that needed to be classified anyhow. Well, after I'd been there about two or three weeks I got a call from Peter Tarnoff on the secure phone. His question to me was, "Peter, why did you send that cable unclassified?" I was sort of taken aback. "What are you talking about?" Then he went on to discuss this cable. "Well, frankly, I hadn't even thought about it."

So, I gave the explanation and then they had a second critique about a lunch I had with the foreign minister. I had noted he had talked about Croatia's deep commitment to human rights and I had rather carefully expressed appreciation for his stated commitment to human rights and rather carefully worded this: "I see you, you praised Croatia's human rights record. Well, no, you didn't, is this correct the way you put it that you stated?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Oh, well, I guess that's no problem." I said, "Peter, now on the subject of that cable about the situation in Sarajevo, what are we going to do about it?" "Got to go, got to go." So, it was a classic case of form over substance. They were concerned that, well, it was obviously not critical of them, but something that was going to force them to act had gotten in the newspapers and so they wanted to fire some shots back over my bow.

Q: This of course is a classic case. I mean you were trying to prod the Washington group no matter what the issue is to do something and how do you gain attention and all and often it's to write something in vivid form that gets circulated around.

GALBRAITH: Oh, yes. Of course the danger of anything circulated, it would also leak although again this was unclassified. The assumption was that I had of course sent it unclassified intentionally so that it would leak. The reality of course is just the opposite. You send something unclassified, often it's never read at all.

Q: Because it doesn't have that pizzazz.

GALBRAITH: That's right.

Q: Top Secret, Eyes-Only or something like that. Well, when you're dealing with the Croatian government, was Tuđman the be-all or end-all or were there other people that you could talk to better or who were influential?

GALBRAITH: I developed at the time I was there four close contacts and they were more or less the end-all and be-all. Obviously I met many more people and worked with many more people, but the way the Croatian government actually operated in terms of these war and peace issues, there were four people that mattered and they were his defense minister, the foreign minister, and in a somewhat a lesser role, his national security advisor and other times chief of staff. I developed probably the closest genuine friendships with (inaudible) and (inaudible); those friendships remained throughout my entire tenure. With Tuđman we had very friendly relations up until the summer of '95, late summer and then it deteriorated sharply in '96. Tuđman imagined that the sympathy and support that I was expressing towards Croatia translated into a friendship for him personally. Then when I began to criticize Croatia for its own human rights violations after it took the Serb area, he was incapable of separating the state from himself. So, the criticisms of Croatia were criticisms of him, which, of course, were aimed at him, but he couldn't disagree agreeably. These were interesting characters.

First I think a word on Tuđman. Let me give you some sketches of these characters. Tuđman, I considered to be an extremely principled man. The trouble was that his principles came from the 19th Century, not the 20th. Many of them were wrong or unacceptable, but he had a comprehensive system of beliefs about which he did not waiver at all. In some ways it was very

difficult for him to engage in any guile whatsoever because his beliefs would always come through. Of course, I eventually began to be able to read him extremely well. He was in my view incapable of guile because his beliefs just came through. He was in his '70s. As a young man he'd been a partisan in the Second World War as he'd fought on Tito's side against the Croatian fascists. He had risen in the ranks, become one of Tito's youngest generals. He had gone on to do academic study at the university in Zagreb and written his Ph.D. I think in 1963. At this point he basically broke with Tito and became a Croatian nationalist. His Ph.D. was in history. He imagined himself to be a great historian and a great scholar and a real intellectual. In fact, he really had an Austro-Hungarian 19th Century mindset. He was very rigid. He believed that there were great forces of history. He also believed in the manifest destiny of Croatia. He believed, and he studied the maps, and what territory was Croatia and he had this vision of Croatia within its current boundaries, but also extending into Bosnia. He believed in greater Croatia meaning that he basically felt that about half of Bosnia really belonged to Croatia, not only Herzegovina which is almost entirely a Croat area, but central Bosnia, Sarajevo possibly, and Banja Luka which is the principal Serb town. He was always careful to point out to me that Banja Luka always looked to Zagreb, not to Belgrade. Sometimes he had a slight sense of humor and would sort of chuckle at his own jokes. When he got angry or disagreed his face just showed it. He'd clinch his fists and his teeth, that's how you could really tell how an explosion was coming. When he got angry, he often, would focus at the first thing that came into his head. Sometimes it wasn't the main point at all.

He had a great sense of his own importance. He subscribed to the notion of the congress of Vienna, to the sovereign equality of states, and therefore, he was equal to any other leader in the world including those of very large countries. Any act of lese-majeste was something that he did not appreciate. He took over one of Tito's old palaces on top of a hill, one of the hills behind Zagreb, which had several hundred acres, gardens. He used that as his presidential office which he furnished with Austro-Hungarian gold gilded furniture, wonderful oriental rugs. One of my favorite Persian rugs of animals devouring each other which I thought was really quite appropriate for the Balkans, but I'd never seen a rug quite like that. Meetings with him had a set formula. You'd come in and he would be at the end where you are. He'd come and sit on the couch. The primary guest would have the number one position. The juices would be served and then coffee. He was completely punctual, disliked it intensely when people were late – as Holbrooke invariably was. He was an interesting character. He liked to go down to Brijuni which had been Tito's summer resort. Tito spent much of the last part of his life there. He stayed on the main island of Brijuni in one of the guest villas that Tito had built. The first time I went down to Brijuni which was in September of '93 I stayed in one of the guest villas. He went and got me a bottle of wine, from Tito's collection, from the year I was born. This was apparently a Tito tradition, which he was simply continuing. Tito would give guests a bottle of wine from the year they were born. Pamela Harriman describes being with Tito when he opened up a bottle of wine from the year Averell Harriman was born which was the year before Tito was born. They were both in their '80s then. I can only imagine how vinegary the wine was. It's not as if Brijuni produced brilliant wines. There were peacocks inside in the summer outside the presidential palace in Zagreb wandering around. He designed the uniforms for the guards, like Nixon when he had uniforms for the Secret Service.

Q: Like something out of an operetta.

GALBRAITH: It was operatic, these red and white uniforms that the presidential guards had, all of which now has been abolished. Some of the other things were aspects of what he did when his character were better. He was very keen on Croatian national symbols. He had lots of people in their folk costumes appear with their traditional weapons as parts of guards and it was charming and perhaps a revival of old tradition. There was some promotion of Croatian theater and arts. Some of it again had comic opera qualities to it, but others were better than that. I think one of the funnier episodes with him was on his 75th birthday, which was in May of '97. There was a special performance in the Zagreb Opera House, a lovely building, a similar design to the Vienna Opera House. The permanent five ambassadors plus Germany were invited. Even though I was the longest serving ambassador at that time, I wasn't the smartest because none of the others came with their wives. They somehow figured out what was going on. I came with my wife – we were not tool long married – and it was a play in Tuđman's honor of the 1,000 years of Croatian history. Different Croatian poets and historical figures of the previous 1,000 years spoke in anticipation of Tuđman arriving on the scene. Then the last 20 minutes they rolled out about 20 different television sets and had Tuđman's speeches. I titled the cable on the event, Ruritania Redux or something. This was the character. I said of Tuđman that he believed in greater great Croatia. I think he was the only Croat who believed in that.

The defense minister, Gojko Šušak, was from Herzegovina and he believed in little great Croatia meaning Croatia within its existing borders plus Herzegovina. and I think he might have been willing to compromise even some on Herzegovina as long as it included Široko Brijeg where he was from. He was quite a fascinating character. He was the youngest of 15 children of his mother. He was born posthumously after his father had died in May of 1945. His father had been murdered, killed by the partisans in February of 1945, because the family had supported the Croatian fascist regime. His oldest brother was captured in Zagreb when the fascist regime fell on May 8th of 1945 and was thrown out of a window and killed. Šušak was as tough as nails, grew up in Herzegovina. He declined to be drafted into the Yugoslav army, escaped walking across the border. In 1962, he made his way to Canada where he went to work and founded a pizza business and so he became known, I never called him this, but Holbrooke and others used to refer to him as the pizza man. He was quite a successful businessman. Šušak was a great tennis player, and this was and this is where he bonded with people. He had a very rigid schedule for playing tennis. It was Saturday mornings and Wednesday nights from nine until midnight or something. I once played with him, I'm terrible at tennis. Needless to say, we lost. He was very competitive. The wonderful thing of course about him was that he understood North America and he could talk to Americans in our own language, in our own idiom. He understood what we were concerned about even if he was extremely nationalist or right wing. I think many people would say he was the most far right person in the government. On the issue of Herzegovina, when it came to Canadian politics, for example, he actually supported the liberals. He was a chain smoker and a heavy coffee drinker. Often he was seen to be in great pain which he thought was from his back. Eventually Holbrooke got him to go to get a medical exam in Europe and they found that he had lung cancer. Then he was operated on in the United States and died in early 1998 of lung cancer. Almost certainly had he lived he would have been indicted by the Hague war crimes tribunal. We spent lots of time together. We often had meals.

Q: You had two major issues, one was?

GALBRAITH: Sarajevo.

Q: Sarajevo and we really haven't gotten into that yet.

GALBRAITH: And the Muslim Croat war.

Q: And the Muslim Croat war, but we're talking, you mentioned you had four contacts.

GALBRAITH: Yes, I described Tuđman and Šušak. Granić, the foreign minister, for next time, and the chief of staff and national security advisor.

Q: When you first arrived what was the role of the German embassy. Because they were sort of instrumental in getting Croatia recognized and then also the British and many others were involved in that.

GALBRAITH: Yes, I'll be happy to talk about all those things of course.

Q: Then as developments go on. Great.

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Okay, today is January 10, 2002. Peter, well, let's continue. You were talking about Granić?

GALBRAITH: Mate Granić, he was the foreign minister of Croatia from 1993. I think actually he took office about a month before I arrived and he continued in the capacity until January of 2000 when he ran for president of Croatia to succeed Tuđman who had died in December of 1999. He ended up finishing third in a three-man race. Granić was a medical doctor, approximately my age, maybe a year or two older, a kidney specialist actually, who had gone into politics only with the independence of Croatia. He had served as minister for refugee affairs where he had met Dick Holbrooke, in 1992. He was a very low-key, extremely nice man. He spoke good English, but not the fluent English that defense minister Šušak spoke. I suppose he was my most frequent contact. Somewhat later the foreign ministry moved from a location on the hill in the old town to the park where the embassy was located. I could literally just walk around the park and he and I would do this all the time. Granić was clearly more liberal than Tuđman. He did not share Tuđman's ambitions for a greater Croatia at the expense of Bosnia. Tuđman was basically the only Croatian leader who believed in greater great Croatia that is believed in the partition of Bosnia between Croatia and Serbia and basically he would have drawn a north south line down the middle of Bosnia. He would annex to Croatia almost purely Croat areas of Herzegovina, but then leave the rest of Bosnia to whatever scheme. Granić by contrast didn't favor a greater Croatia in his personal views. He believed Croatia ought to stay within its internationally recognized boundaries, both as a tactical matter and I think as a matter of conviction. He came from the Dalmatia Coast from the town called Baška Voda near Makarska. He prided himself on his connection with the sea and particularly on the fact that he could hold his breath longer than anybody. The people of Dalmatia considered those of Herzegovina to be backward, reactionary, unenlightened. Indeed Herzegovina was the center of the Croatian fascist

movement during the Second World War. So, Granić was a different personality from Tuđman by background.

Granić also had a kind of interesting relationship with Šušak. He would refer to the defense minister as the boss, but there was chemistry between the two of them. They used to play tennis together. I never had the sense that Šušak had a personally close relationship with Granić and yet Granić did have influence with him. When Granić committed himself to do something he generally could get Šušak to do this and this was most dramatic when we were trying to negotiate into the 1994 Muslim Croat war as I will discuss with you later. Granić didn't fully trust Tuđman and his circle. On a couple of occasions, when there was a sensitive conversation, he would turn up CNN in his office or he would talk in a very low voice or otherwise indicate that he was concerned that his own office was being bugged. In spite of that, and in spite of the obvious concerns that he had, he was influential.

Q: Did you have a feeling that he was both influential, but also, trying to put a more positive face on this government of Tuđman which really didn't come out you know, I mean, when one looked at it at all closely, the public felt it wasn't, Tuđman didn't say the right things.

GALBRAITH: There is no question that Mate Granić was the more presentable face of the Tuđman government, but that also reflected a reality which is that he was a genuinely a more presentable and decent and liberal person. I often said this at the time. My final major contact was Hrvoje Šarinić. He came from Rijeka adjacent to the Istrian Peninsula. Rijeka was a social democratic stronghold the place that Tuđman's party did least well. Šarinić himself had been in exile and had spent much of his life in France. He spoke English with a very pronounced French accent. I never quite got the full story from him, but I think that his father was involved with the fascists in the Second World War, perhaps as some kind of local official, and may have been punished for having had those connections. Again, I'm not entirely sure of those facts, but it was alluded to and I suppose he was in his '60s. So, if you look at those four contacts it's kind of an interesting mix.

Q: What was Šarinić's role?

GALBRAITH: He was the at various times the national security advisor to Tuđman and his chief of staff. When he was the chief of staff he had an office on the same level as Tuđman's private office in this villa at the top of the hills behind Zagreb that had been a Tito villa. So, if Tuđman had had Tito's bedroom suite, Šarinić had the second as an office, Šarinić had the sort of the second suite. If you look at the four of them, it's kind of interesting. Granić and Tuđman had stayed in Croatia. Tuđman, of course, having been a dissident in the later Tito period and imprisoned, Granić essentially non-political. Šarinić and Šušak both having been abroad and both having connections to the Croatian fascist movement. Tuđman having been a partisan and the group also coming from four different areas of Croatia. Tuđman from the Zagoria the region around Zagreb the kind of heartland, Šarinić from the Rijeka near the edge of the Istrian Peninsula, Granić from Dalmatia and Šušak from Herzegovina.

They were collectively I think a very solid national security team and they served Croatia well in terms of being effective. I mean one can disagree with the direction it took or wanted to take, and

of course I did. But I think Tuđman was an effective leader. He had a commanding presence. He set the agenda. He made the decisions. His decisions were largely respected yet he had a wide enough circle of people that could actually carry out decisions. These were people who had an independent existence who could talk to him and to whom he delegated autonomy. He would delegate the business of negotiating with the United States, negotiating peace agreements to Granić. Granić would check with Tuđman, but Granić felt able to enter into commitments and with the sufficient understanding of where Tuđman would come out, that he could speak to Tuđman. Incidentally, there was also a reasonably talented group of people on the economic side of the house as well.

When I arrived Croatia was in a real strategic bind. A third of its territory was occupied by rebel Serbs. There seemed to be no prospect of regaining that territory. In Bosnia, the Bosnian Croats were in a war with the Muslims who had been their allies the previous year. A lot of people missed this, including in Washington, but the Bosnian Croats were losing. So, Croatia was having to put more and more of its own troops into Bosnia to help the Bosnian Croats and yet by so doing they were risking having the United States and other countries take action against Croatia including sanctions. In short, they risked becoming more isolated, more like Serbia. While Serbia always had the option which Milosevic eventually exercised of giving up the territory of Bosnia and Croatia, withdrawing; then there was still Serbia, Croatia couldn't do that because it would still have the problem of Croatian territory being occupied by Serbia. They were in a bind. Another contrast is that in Serbia the Serbs saw themselves as victims. The war of the Bosnian Serbs was reasonably popular.

By contrast, the Croatia war in Bosnia was unpopular with the Croatian public. By and large the Croatian public did not agree with the idea of a greater Croatia, either the big Croatia or the little greater Croatia. The political opposition was more liberal, more internationalist, more respecting of Bosnia sovereignty than Tuđman. So, Tuđman represented the right wing of the spectrum. That too put Croatia in a dilemma. Not only was its side losing in Bosnia not only with a third of its territory occupied by rebel Serbs, but the government's policies were being attacked by the opposition and were increasingly unpopular. When I arrived I quickly saw that there were a couple of things to focus on. I tended to focus on relatively few issues and to some degree give much less attention than one would in more normal circumstances to the full range of issues that an ambassador should be concerned with.

For example from the beginning I told Tom Mittnacht who was the economics officer that the overwhelming interest was in ending the war. If one was to create an environment in Croatia conducive for American business investment, the war had to end first. Therefore, he, Tom, was going to work largely on political issues, not economic issues. Like so many of the people on the staff, he adapted and made a very good contribution. I think he actually enjoyed the different kind of work.

Anyhow, the first couple of issues that I was focused on were Sarajevo and the Muslim-Croat war. I got there and was confronted with the dramatically deteriorating humanitarian situation in Sarajevo. Although there was an ambassador to Bosnia, there was no embassy in Bosnia, so, effectively, much of the Bosnia operations for the United States in the period '93 to '95, but particularly '93 to '94 were run out of the embassy in Zagreb. We had responsibility for all

consular affairs relating to Bosnia. We had responsibility for refugee programs. There were a large number of refugees who were being taken care of in Croatia who wanted to come to the United States. We did the basic liaison with the American journalists. The way you got into Bosnia was through Zagreb and many of them were based in Zagreb. The United Nations mission to Bosnia was headquartered in Zagreb, and the UN of course was interacting with the various parties in Bosnia. So, if we wanted to interact with the parties we often had to do it through the UN because there was no U.S. mission in Bosnia. The U.S. humanitarian relief team, disaster assistance relief team for the entire former Yugoslavia was based in our embassy in Zagreb. Bosnian government officials, when they got out of Bosnia, they did so out of Sarajevo. They did so on UN airplanes that flew to Zagreb so they would always spend a day in Zagreb at least before they went in or when they went out and almost always I would see them. Typically, I mean, my most regular contact among the Bosnians was the foreign minister and then the Prime Minister, Haris Silajdžić, who became a very close friend.

Q: Were we keeping book on what was happening for a future war crimes trial?

GALBRAITH: Yes, we were, yes. The more immediate problem was that it was going to increase the pressure for sanctions on Croatia and also make it less likely to have an end to the war. As long as this war continued the plight of the Bosnian Muslims of course was much worse. They were fighting two enemies at once. The previous Muslim-Croat alliance had been unable together to stand up against the Serb military action. To me this process had a number of stages: first, to end the Croat atrocities against the Muslims; second, to end the Muslim-Croat war; third, to get an alliance between the Muslims and the Croats; fourth, to assist that alliance in resisting Serbian aggression and possibly rolling back Serbian gains. If you got the Serbian military position either stabilized or some of the gains reversed, you could get to a peace settlement. This would be based on internationally accepted principles specifically preserving the integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina and, secondly, the right of refugees to return to their homes and to live there securely. The two essential conditions in my view for peace. Or, in the alternative, ultimately you could see a complete Serbian defeat and a legitimate government of Bosnia would be in charge, but the prospect for any settlement was remote as long as the Muslim-Croat war continued.

Q: Where was the Muslim-Croat war going on?

GALBRAITH: It was going on in several places. It was going on in Herzegovina and where Bosnia meets with Herzegovina. It was also going on in central Bosnia, the Lašva Valley where by summer, fall of '93 and going to winter of '93 the Croatians were losing ground. There were also Croatian advances elsewhere and in the territory the Croatians held they were brutally ethnically cleansing the Muslim population.

Q: In what form?

GALBRAITH: Well, they would go into Muslim villages or the Muslim part of villages, the mixed villages. They would shell the villages, they would burn houses, execute people. In April, 1993, there had been a massacre in which more than 100 civilians were murdered, including children, women burned in their homes. One of the women who survived the attack describes

covering up her small child's eyes so that the child wouldn't see that the man who was killing them was a neighbor. That was the nature of it. In addition, in the summer of '93, the Bosnian Croats had rounded up and placed in prison camps Bosnian Muslim men and some women. Many of these men had fought in the HPO, that is with the Bosnian-Croat military, but were no longer considered trustworthy after the Muslim-Croat war had broken out. Some of those camps had quite appalling conditions. Those camps became the initial focus of our activity and what I did was to try to get people into the camps. I pushed Granić to agree to let our people in. When they got in I would use the information they obtained to complain about the conditions in the camps and to try and force the Croatian government to take action to release the Bosnian Muslim prisoners and to close down the camps. That strategy was successful. Here Granić was a major ally. I mean he didn't like the camps. He knew the damage they were doing to Croatia's reputation. He prided himself on his previous work as the minister for refugees who had taken care of all the Bosnian Muslim refugees in '92 as a humanitarian. I think he was a humanitarian. So, he and I became allies. He would assist us in getting access to the camps. He welcomed the complaints that I would make and the threats that had been contained in official demarches because then he could go to his boss and say, "you've got to take action to close the camps, otherwise we're going to face sanctions from the Americans."

Q: What support were you getting from the State Department and other parts of our government?

GALBRAITH: At the working level, from the desk, from people in INR, from the office director level and so on, lots of support. They were excited that somebody in the administration was doing something. At the higher levels I think there wasn't much awareness of what was going on. I think they were focused on the impossibility of doing anything in Bosnia. They were so focused on what was happening in Sarajevo. They saw the Serbian-Muslim war, the larger Muslim-Croat war. These humanitarian issues and the conditions of the camps were not a big part of the equation except as they provided ammunition for people who just wanted to impose sanctions on Croatia. As I said, all bad news was unwelcome. Also, Steve Oxman was the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe. He was a political appointee who had served in policy planning in the Carter administration, and he was one of the most hopeless and incompetent figures.

Q: Just out of his league? Was this a routine sort of political appointment?

GALBRAITH: Completely out of his league. He had a lot of experience, but he was more academic. He didn't know how to run things. Then the structure of the bureau wasn't working. Steve had no idea that it wasn't working. It was totally nonfunctional and Steve Oxman didn't have a clue. He was Assistant Secretary for nearly a year and in that year he never visited Bosnia, Croatia or Serbia – the number one issue on his plate and he never went there nor did any deputy assistant secretary come out. I think the highest level visit we had was an office director, maybe a deputy office director. I used to refer to the bureau in those days as the home alone bureau, which to some degree suited me fine. I had strong support from the desk, which generated demarches. Those were helpful to me because I could take them to the Croatians to push them to take action: first to end atrocities in Bosnia, second to end the Muslim-Croat war.

Q: Well, did you get the feeling that Clinton and his National Security Advisor, Tony Lake, just wanted it to go away?

GALBRAITH: Well, in the 1992 campaign, Clinton had sharply criticized the Bush administration for inaction in the face of genocide. I don't think, however, the Balkans were a personal priority for Tony Lake or for Warren Christopher. I guess here I'd say this is where personalities matter. If there had been a different selection for Secretary of State or National Security Advisor maybe there would have been more oomph behind it. For Warren Christopher, it seemed to me that his priority was the unfinished business in the Middle East. He wanted to pick up where he had left off in 1981. Tony Lake had a global agenda. Russian loomed large on his agenda, but when he got away from the main strategic issues like Russia and China, he was interested in the developing world. He had a particular interest in Africa and then problems like Haiti loomed large on his radar screen.

Second, and most important, what was possible in '91 and '92 was no longer possible in '93. Once the UN had deployed extensively to Bosnia, it wasn't possible easily to do the lift and strike policy – lift the arms embargo and strike at the Serbs forces attacking Bosnia cities for a number of reasons. First, the European allies would object because they actually had troops on the ground. Their concern, which I think was well founded, was that if NATO were striking at the Serbs or arming the Bosnians, these UN peacekeepers would no longer be seen as neutral. The way the Serbs would get back at them would be to strike them, to attack them.

Second, even if you cared about the humanitarian issues in Bosnia, there was a danger: before the weapons that could come in from lifting the arms embargo would be effective, the Serb forces would throw everything they could to grab as much territory as possible. They would try to take the enclaves as in fact they did in '95 and maybe even Sarajevo might have fallen before an effective lift policy could have been implemented. Finally, because the Europeans were there, if we were to lift and strike unilaterally, U.S. forces would have to extract the European peacekeepers. That would have had Clinton deploying U.S. military into the middle of a hot war where everybody was saying Bosnia, the former Yugoslavia, is a death trap, the Serb forces or fighters are all ten feet tall. Clinton came in with very lousy relations with the military. They didn't trust him. They didn't feel that he understood them. They felt he was a draft dodger. So, he was reluctant to deploy military forces against the advice of Colin Powell and the other military commanders. So, all in all, I think it was understandable why the administration couldn't implement what they had proposed to do in the campaign. The other major element in this picture was the Muslim-Croat war. Because of the Muslim-Croat war there was no access to the government-controlled part of Bosnia. The only way you could reach Sarajevo and central Bosnia was through Serbia. Obviously you couldn't do that or go through Croatia as long as there was a Muslim-Croat war.

Q: How were you all seeing UN action in that area in Bosnia?

GALBRAITH: The United Nations?

Q: Yes.

GALBRAITH: My view was that the United Nations did heroic work. You had lightly armed peacekeepers employed in the middle of a war. Quite a number got killed. They did manage to facilitate the flow of humanitarian assistance to Sarajevo and kept the airport open for much of the time. During the Muslim-Croat war they facilitated access of convoys through Croatia territory to central Bosnia. But, it was a very difficult mission. The resources were inadequate to it and the leadership was appalled with that. This certainly included the special representative of the secretary general, a Japanese official who had been reasonably successful in the Cambodian operation. He was a career UN person, but he could not understand that Yugoslavia, the former Yugoslavia, was not a traditional UN peacekeeper task. So, he imagined that the United Nations had to be neutral. In fact, the UN wasn't neutral. The UN had clearly identified an oppressor and had imposed sanctions on the oppressor. The UN's unwillingness to authorize the use of force, even when NATO was ready to use force, was the darkest day. I think everybody bears responsibility for that, including the United States. The UN leadership failed to authorize military action when it was requested by the Dutch commander. Then, of course, the Dutch behaved poorly, not putting up any resistance and then being very meek as the Serbs separated the men from the women and sent the men to their deaths. There were many shortcomings to the UN.

Q: As you were watching these developments, what was happening in the international community in Zagreb? I'm thinking about the German and the British missions there, too. Were they taking any part?

GALBRAITH: I think one of the great myths of the former Yugoslavia was that the Germans were the major power. That wasn't true. German influence was a fraction of ours. They did not have a very dynamic ambassador and their embassy was smaller than ours. They didn't have the staff. Partly it was the constraints of the EU system. The totality of the European presence was less than the sum of its parts. The Germans had done what the Croatians had wanted in '91. They had secured international recognition, but the Germans didn't have either the will or the military resources that the United States did. So, when the Croatians looked for somebody to rescue them, they knew that that rescuer wouldn't be Germany. They knew the only country that was capable of rescuing them was the United States. That led, to what I at the time referred to as the voice of God phenomena. Whenever I would go to see Granić and read demarches some of which had very strong language, complaining about Croatian behavior, he never got angry. The response was always, "Oh, yes, well, we recognize that there are problems. We're trying to correct them. We just haven't been able to do so. We'll try to do better." It wasn't necessarily that they agreed with what I had to say. They did not want to antagonize the one country that could make their situation impossible by supporting sanctions. They also didn't want to alienate the one country whose active involvement in trying to get a solution could rescue them. So, it was something like the voice of God. You may not agree with the instructions that God is giving you, but you don't argue back. You say, oh, yes, I'll try to reform. The mind wants to do what you say, but you know the temptations of the flesh. It was that kind of phenomenon in those years.

Q: Did you get any sampling when you first arrived of the European attitude. The EU attitude that you Americans stand aside, this is a European problem and we'll take care of it or had that dissipated by that time?

GALBRAITH: That was gone, that was 1992. '91, in fact even more '91. I think the Europeans were really very happy to have an American ambassador in Zagreb, to have that voice in the diplomatic community. Eventually, I think they may have come to feel that we were playing too large a role, that we were, acting too much on our own and became envious of our access and of our clout.

Q: With the EU system, there is no way for them to take off and do much was there?

GALBRAITH: That was exactly right.

Q: You had the Bosnian Muslim war going on, but you also had the siege of Sarajevo going on at the same time which was essentially Serbian versus Bosnian. One of the imperatives was what are we going to do about these poor Bosnians who don't have military supplies. The Serbs, you know, we put the sanctions on, but the Serbs had more guns than they needed and more ammunition than they needed and so it was very one-sided. Was there any effort made to do something to help the Muslims while you were there?

GALBRAITH: Well, there were many people who believed that the arms embargo, which was UN resolution 713 passed in September of 1991, was a bad policy or even immoral. The government of Yugoslavia, which was dominated by Serbia at that time and I guess it still is, basically welcomed 713. The idea behind 713 is that there's a war, you don't allow arms to go in, but of course the Yugoslav army, the Serbian army, had all the weapons. So, the effect of 713 was to freeze their advantage leaving the Slovenians the Croatians, and the Bosnians largely unarmed. All of these countries, Slovenians, the Croatians in Bosnia began a process of smuggling weapons in ever larger numbers. Mostly these were weapons that they acquired on the black market from Eastern Europeans and Russia. When the Muslim-Croat war broke out in the end of '92, the Croatians were able to block weapons going to the Bosnians and the Bosnians were effectively surrounded. This was another urgent issue in the Muslim-Croat war. Ending it would enable the Bosnians to gain access to weapons and to enhance their ability to defend themselves.

Q: We're up to the point where Sarajevo is under siege and you're sort of a center for humanitarian efforts there and you have the Muslim-Croat war. So, what happened?

GALBRAITH: There were a number of steps as I've already indicated. Part of it was working through Granić who welcomed our firsthand reports of what was going on inside the camps, firsthand reports on the atrocities because then he could use them to push for policy change. In July I guess it must have been toward the middle or end of July.

Q: July of which year?

GALBRAITH: '93. My first month there. I got word that the leader of the Bosnian Croats wanted to see me in Split on the Dalmatia Coast. So, I went and saw him. We met at the Croatian naval headquarters in Split. He had followed carefully my public statements, which had been very supportive of Croatia's territorial integrity. That statement had captured public imagination. People were very excited that an American diplomat, that in fact any westerner, was taking the

time to go to the front lines to see how people were suffering. It was being sympathetic, which it was easy to be. So the Bosnian Croat imagined that I would be sympathetic to his cause. It was quite an interesting meeting. It lasted for two to three hours. He began by saying how wonderful I was. Finally there was an ambassador who understood the Croatian cause. Then he wanted to explain the entire justice of the Bosnian Croat cause and how they had a right to have their own republic carved out of Bosnia and so on. I let him go on for about an hour. Then I said, well, now, let me say a few things. We support the territorial integrity of Bosnia Herzegovina as a single country. We do not support Bosnian Croatia to be a separate republic and, furthermore, your behavior is atrocious. You're holding more than 5,000 Muslims as prisoners. I've had people in those camps. We know what's happening. Here's what's happening. This behavior is beyond the pale of the civilized world. Frankly, it could constitute war crimes and we're going to hold you liable. He was really taken aback and shocked. The meeting ended conclusively. The next day he called me to say that they were going to release 5,000 prisoners and they did. By the end of that summer we got all the prisoners released.

Q: Where did they go?

GALBRAITH: Some came to Croatia as refugees, others went to Muslim controlled parts of Bosnia.

Q: Well, I take it that there was this difference between the Herzegovina Croatians and the rest of Croatia. So, if you were a Muslim refugee, if you get away from these, essentially from the hillbillies, down to the cultivated fields and all, you were probably all right.

GALBRAITH: Oh, for sure, yes. Once you got to Croatia and you became a registered refugee in Croatia you were fine.

Q: Muslim, or what, it didn't make any difference?

GALBRAITH: Beg your pardon?

Q: If you were a Muslim, it didn't make any difference?

GALBRAITH: You did much better if you were a Croat, but I mean if you were a Muslim, if you had relatives to stay with as many did, you could go there. Many of them had weekend houses on the Croatian coast. If you didn't have any of those connections, there were refugee camps you could go to. These were not closed camps, these were places people lived and they could go back and forth. They were in Slovenia and on the coast.

Q: Well, then how did things develop?

GALBRAITH: Well, in September of '93, the Croatians called me, the German ambassador and the Turkish ambassador and he announced a surprise. The Bosnian Croats and the Bosnian Muslims had agreed to form a federation and that that federation would be confederated with Croatia. So, this then was the key to ending the Muslim-Croat war. I then hosted a series of dinners at my house night after night. This would be a few days later, between Granić and Haris

Silajdžić who I think was still foreign minister, but just about to become prime minister or maybe already prime minister of Bosnia to try and implement this agreement. The trouble was that during the day, in the Croatian foreign ministry, the delegation for Bosnia and the delegation for Croatia would get together and they would try to work out some of the details and they couldn't reach an agreement. Then I would have them at dinner. The two ministers basically could reach some agreement in principal and I would press them to do this and talk through the details. Then the next day when their staffs began to work at it, it kind of would fall apart. Then there was a massacre again of Muslims by the Bosnian Croats and the Muslims were very upset by that understandably. They blamed the Croatians of Croatia and that helped poison the atmosphere.

The real importance of all of this exercise was that it showed what was possible. There were a series of peace plans for Bosnia put forward by Cyrus Vance, the former American Secretary of State who was the UN mediator and, initially, David Owen who represented the European Union, the UN and the European Union, the chairman of something called the International Conference for the Former Yugoslavia. This was the umbrella organization to try and bring peace and which was operating, I guess in '91, '92 and '93 and it wound up in '95, but it played a role in the ultimate peace settlement. At this time these were the two mediators. Vance had withdrawn in '93 and he'd been replaced by Norwegian foreign minister and former defense minister, Thorvald Stoltenberg. At that point Owen then had become the dominant partner which was a very unfortunate thing. It was the Owen-Stoltenberg plan. The Vance-Owen plan had envisioned that Bosnia would become divided into ten different cantons on the Swiss model, some with a Serbian majority, some with a Croat majority and some with a Muslim majority. The Owen-Stoltenberg plan envisioned that Bosnia would consist of three republics: a Serbian republic, a Muslim republic and a Croat republic. The Muslim-Croat war, basically one of its origins was the desire of the Croats to seize and ethnically cleanse the territory on the map that was allocated to the Croat republic. Although the Croats were 17 percent of the population, actually probably less, the Vance-Owen and Owen-Stoltenberg plans gave them about 30 percent of Bosnia. The Serbs got 49 percent and the Muslims got the rest, 21 percent even they were 44 percent of the population. So, that basically the Croats were trying to bring the Owen-Stoltenberg plan into reality by seizing the territory on the map. This was one of the triggers of the Muslim-Croat war.

What this surprise in September and in these subsequent meetings with Silajdžić and Granić at my house indicated is that that formula, which was a formula for war, could be overturned. The Croats were prepared to give up on the idea of a separate Croat republic, agree to the federation with the Muslims. I cabled all this back in a NODIS (no distribution) cable to the State Department.

Q: When you say a confederation with the Muslims, you're talking about within the Bosnian confines?

GALBRAITH: A federation of the Muslims and the Croats within the borders of the internationally recognized state of Bosnia Herzegovina.

Q: Yes, we're not talking about Croatia itself.

GALBRAITH: In a confederal relationship with Croatia, whatever that meant. I can tell you that that formula was the basis of the final peace settlement of Dayton. Dayton has a two entity settlement: the Muslim-Croat federation and the Serbian republic within a single Bosnia Herzegovina. Each state, each entity, that is the Muslim Croat federation on the one hand, the Serbian republic on the other having the right to have special links with neighboring states, i.e., the federation with Croatia, the Serbian republic of Bosnia being able to have special links with Serbia. Now, fortunately, in the time since all this emerged in '93 and even since it was agreed in Dayton in '95, those special links, the importance of them had much diminished. The Croatians said, we aren't really interested in special links with the federation. We want measures that unite the two parts of Bosnia and these special links are less important to the new Serbian government as well. At the time, this linkage to Croatia was a key element of the package. Much of our diplomacy from '93 on was to emphasize the part we liked – the federation – and to de-emphasize the confederation.

Q: When you heard this what was the initial reaction?

GALBRAITH: The German ambassador, well, all three of us were very positive about it. I thought it was quite a dramatic breakthrough. I had questions as to whether it would actually be achieved: maybe I was not as skeptical as I should have been. I was only at the beginning of my experience in the Balkans where grand statements and proposals are put forward and then nothing actually is done. Again, what was critical about that meeting was that it provided a road map as to how to go forward.

Just before this in early September Tuđman invited me to come down to Brijuni, a group of about 16 islands in Archipelago off the coast of Istria. Tito had had his own personal residence there and toward the end of his life he spent about half of his time.

Q: Any leader who went to Yugoslavia usually ended up in Brijuni.

GALBRAITH: That's exactly right. A beautiful place, I mean the main island is manicured lawns, cedar trees. Tito had his own private zoo. Foreign leaders knew particularly to come and bring in exotic animals. By the time I was there, there were only aging elephants left or whatever, giraffes. There were lots of deer, and off of Brijuni, big grand Brijuni, was a little island where Tito had his own private house. It was a stone house. Tuđman took me over there on a number of occasions. It was very interesting to see the decor in the Tito house. I described it as gift dictator decor. So, he had one room done in wood paneling. It was Indonesian wood, the national symbol, a gift of Sukarno. There were dead leopards, you know, their skulls with the mouths open. That was from various African leaders. All the gifts were the decor. I also noted that the expense of the gift was inversely related to the wealth of the country and its degree of democracy. He had a picture or photographs of Canada autographed by Pierre Trudeau and a whole room of furniture from some poor country. Anyhow, I went down there for the first time in September. Tuđman didn't stay in Tito's villa. He stayed in what had been one of Tito's guesthouses on the main island. I spent a lot of time talking to Tuđman one on one. What was very interesting about it is that some of his key people particularly who had been his allies, but who were about to break with him, came to me and said, he won't listen to us, you've got to talk

to him about Bosnia. I spent many hours with him basically explaining that the United States would insist that Croatia respect the international borders of Bosnia. Croatia had to respect it as a separate country and ultimately convincing him that if he were to accept this, that the United States could become a partner of Croatia. We could support Croatia's integration into the West and that we would support Croatia's desire to get to recover its national territory. During the summer of '93, at some point, I was seeing him twice a day. I think this persuaded him that he could make at least a tactical decision to give up on the idea of a separate Croat republic in Bosnia, to give up on carving up Bosnia at least for the time being. There would be significant benefits the main one being this partnership with the United States. That's basically what began to fall in place in the autumn of '93.

Q: Did the State Department play much of a role in this?

GALBRAITH: Well, by this time they were beginning to play a larger role. Reggie Bartholomew had been named the special envoy for Bosnia. I think it was started in the Clinton administration, he had accomplished nothing, and he had been nominated ambassador to Italy. Chuck Redman, who had been the press spokesman in the Reagan period and ambassador to Sweden, was named the special envoy and at this point, he was sort of reading into the issue. After I sent the cable in about the Tuđman proposal for the federation and confederation, this grabbed his imagination.

Q: Redman's?

GALBRAITH: Redman's. He decided to come out. He and I spent time talking about it and we went up to see Tuđman and talked through these issues. This was really the beginning of the State Department engagement on a path that ultimately led to the solution two years later. Redman also recognized that Oxman was a very weak person. He felt confident to take over the policy, to deal directly with Warren Christopher. I think that put things on track. Christopher worried that the U.S. might be getting too involved. At the same time, I was doing a large number of things including hosting these Silajdžić-Granić meetings, pushing the idea of a federation, seeking movement. Redman would be on the phone with Christopher who would be worrying about us sending a signal of too much closeness. I was reporting every one of my meetings, but the cables from the ambassador, the reports on these negotiations, basically weren't being read. So, while Christopher was worried about us not getting too involved, in fact I was going ahead and doing things. To be honest, the reports weren't being read and so nobody told me not to do it.

Q: Well, how long did this negotiation period last?

GALBRAITH: It was about three or four days at the end of September and then October, November, December, it became a matter of increasing pressure on the Croatians to give up on the idea of a separate republic. I mean Tuđman had put this idea on the table in September, but then began to fall off of it. I guess I was away in October and I came back to do things like pack up my house and all the kinds of business that you need to do if you're going to move abroad for an unspecified period of time. Came back in November. Again went down to Brijuni along with a diplomatic corps, Tuđman's. He invited the entire diplomatic corps down to pick oranges on Bonga, his Tito island, which was given to orphans, war orphans. It was also an occasion for me

and this time I enlisted the Vatican, the nuncio and the German ambassador. We sort of did a little three on one with Tuđman to try and push it more along this line.

In January of '94 there was another very important meeting. The Bosnian, it turned out that the Bosnian Croats were not really united. The Herzegovinians had one line under Mate Boban, these were the extreme nationalists. There were other Bosnian Croats who had a different perspective particularly those from a region in the north of Bosnia just across the Sava River from Croatia who realized that in the partition, if Bosnia was partitioned, they were never going to recover the area that had been taken over by the Serbs. So, they were much more interested in a unified Bosnia and then there were the Sarajevo Croats and some of the central Bosnia Croats who also were interested in a multiethnic solution because they felt they would have no role in Sarajevo if there was a partition. Sarajevo wasn't going to be part of any Croat republic and that there would be isolated pockets that couldn't long survive in central Bosnia.

There were two councils, one of the Posavina Croats and another of all the Bosnian Croats but in Sarajevo and they came up with a plan, which they brought to me, the Posavina Croats brought it first which involved creating cantons. They had maps of the cantons. Some Muslim, some Croat and some mixed cantons, half Muslim, half Croat. They had a map. So, this was a way to make more concrete the idea of the federation of the Muslim Croat federation. The parts of Bosnia that were in the federation were those parts that under the 1991 census either Muslims or Croats had been a plurality. So, it was about 60 percent of Bosnia. It was a very sensible solution. Redman, I sent a cable in and sent the map in and Redman I think also, liked this map very much.

A second thing that happened that was a major focus of my effort from September of '91 on was to get rid of Mate Boban as the leader of the Bosnian Croats. I didn't like him much. He was a squat man, very unpolished, aggressive and very, very rigid, very ideological. It was clear and also he was much hated by the Muslims who blamed him, rightly, for the atrocities. I could also detect that Tuđman was beginning to see him as a liability. So, I figured I would do everything I could to make that liability part of the equation higher. In September of '91 I was interviewed by the BBC.

Q: In '91?

GALBRAITH: I said '91, '93. I'm getting tired, sorry, September of '93. I was interviewed by the BBC and basically said that Mate Boban might be guilty of war crimes. Interestingly, and this to me was a signal of where things were going, the Croatian press which was most of it was government controlled, ran my comments on page one. That was to me a signal that they really were receptive to pressure to get rid of Boban. Boban, incidentally, called me up and said that after what I'd said, he was no longer going to be my friend which I didn't think was one of life's great losses. I kept pressing Granić and Tuđman that he had to go, that he was responsible for the atrocities and then in January, no in December Granić called me and said do you think I could get a visa for Boban to go to the United States. That put me on the horns of a dilemma. On the one hand it was a major goal of mine to get rid of him.

Q: To get rid of him, yes.

GALBRAITH: On the other hand, it was a question of whether the United States should be admitting people who we thought might be war criminals. I talked this over with Dennis Hearne at the consul and we agreed that we wouldn't give him a visa, but beyond that we entered him into the system as somebody to be rejected with a coding for war criminals. I didn't give, I took my time getting back to Granić and eventually I told him that we couldn't accept him. Then in January Granić called me over and explained that Boban was going to be going on a long vacation. He was replaced by a lawyer named Krešimir Zubak as the head of the Bosnian Croats and frankly that changed the dynamic and made possible the next stage, which was the negotiations to actually form the federation. Here Redman basically came up with a plan although I had a certain amount of input particularly on the issue of what incentives Croatia would need to accept the plan. Redman came, I think it was on Thursday, the 17th of February of '94. We went up to see Tuđman and he laid out a U.S. plan which was that if Croatia would accept a federation in Bosnia of Muslims and Croats then the United States would provide all sorts of benefits to Croatia including Croatia integration into the West. Tuđman sort of looked at Redman and said I accept your proposal and went on at some length. Then he said, "I accept your proposal except for one thing. If the Serbs have their own republic, then the Croats have to have their own republic." Well, it was like saying, I'll take all the benefits, but I won't pay any of the price. Redman was quite dispirited and I said to him, he had to go to Athens to brief the European Union. So, I said, "Don't come back. Let's wait and see." I went to Granić and talked to him privately and told him how upset we were with Tuđman's reaction. He said, "Just wait." Over the weekend he worked on Tuđman, got him to turn around and when Redman came back the following Tuesday, Tuđman had accepted.

The other thing that had happened. There are two other elements to this story I need to bring into it. At the beginning of February, we had given the Croatians I guess it was a presidential statement in the Security Council, given the Croatians two weeks to withdraw their troops from Bosnia, otherwise they would risk sanctions. So, they were operating on a two-week deadline. On this I guess it was the same Thursday that Redman presented the plan. I had a speech scheduled. It was the second major speech I was giving in Croatia. The first one basically was the usual diplomatic niceties. This one I was determined to use the occasion to explain our policy, to explain the deal, to explain the consequences for Croatia if it didn't cooperate and I did that. I think the speech got huge coverage and caused a lot of shock and it was that Friday that Tuđman ordered Granić to call me in to complain about the speech. I used the occasion then to say, yes, but what about Tuđman's response to our proposal. He said, "Don't worry about the complaint of the speech. We know who is Peter Galbraith, but you wait over the weekend and I'll get Tuđman turned around." Then he got Tuđman turned around.

Q: Well, now what was happening I mean this is one part of the equation, but the other part of the equation was the Serbs, wasn't it, you know what they were doing. Did we see that if we got the Croatians in line that the Serbs would necessarily follow or not?

GALBRAITH: What the important thing was that unless we got the Croatians in line, it wasn't even worth talking about the Serbian part of the process and that was to me that was one of the breakthroughs in terms of U.S. policy in the summer and fall of '93 was to get Washington to understand that this was a two step process. That Croatia was the swing country in the equation. It was the key. You may not like it, but it was the key to the peace. The first step then was to end

the Muslim Croat war, to get that alliance set, then you'd be in a stronger position to deal with the Serbs. I think Redman was going to Belgrade and he was going probably to see Karadzic up in Pale, but he too understood that the main action was to end the Muslim Croat war first.

Q: Do you think that as this was going on, I mean this is you know, you've got Muslims, Croats, Serbs and all, I mean something that you were learning on the ground, but that within the Clinton administration were there people who were beginning to understand this, our top man for sort of Eastern European affairs or Soviet affairs was Strobe Talbott. I mean do you think he and Christopher and Clinton and all, did they really understand the factors there?

GALBRAITH: Well, first, I don't think at this stage that Talbott was much involved. I think he was still the Russia person or maybe he was just becoming the Deputy Secretary of State. Christopher, you know, basically at this stage everybody still wants a hand's off approach although Christopher was becoming more engaged. He is talking regularly to Redman and he does authorize Redman to invite the Bosnians and the Croatians and the Bosnian Croats to Washington to negotiate about a federation. That's what happened and the upshot is on the first of March 1994 agreement is reached after three days of shuttle, of proximity talks, in different rooms on the first floor of the State Department, there's a room for the Bosnians and a room for the Croatians which the Bosnian Croats shared. Basically we would go back and forth between the two rooms.

Q: Did you get called into this?

GALBRAITH: Yes, I participated.

Q: How did you find the atmosphere among the apparatchiks? I'm not trying to use the term in a derogative way, but those that were dealing with this in Washington, I mean, did they have any feel for the personalities?

GALBRAITH: No, I think a very little feel for the personalities, but Redman had a good feel for the personalities and the desk officer did, but unlike the Dayton operation, it was a very small number of people involved, Chuck Redman and his assistant and basically the people from the desk.

Q: Well, in a way when the Croatians and Bosnians arrived they were ready for a deal?

GALBRAITH: That's essentially right. The groundwork had been laid. I mean the critical variable was Tuđman's willingness to give up on the separate Croat republic and related to that was getting rid of Mate Boban, different leadership. Once those things happened, yes, things were ready for a deal.

Q: Okay, I think this is probably a good place to stop. We're getting both tired, it's 4:20 in the afternoon and we're talking about what March 1st or so, 1994?

GALBRAITH: March 1st, 1994, I think would be the next big thing to talk about is in fact the issue of the arms, the no instructions policy decision in terms of arms flow to the Bosnians.

Q: But to explain here where we were, March 1st, the Bosnians and the Croats in Washington came to a- (end of tape)

Peter, we're to, we have, an accord has been reached between the Bosnians and the Croatians, is that right?

GALBRAITH: That's right.

Q: So, what are we up to now?

GALBRAITH: Well, it's the beginning of March 1994 and the accord that was reached was the Washington Agreement. Its real effect was to end the Muslim Croat war and it did so by creating a federation, a single unit within Bosnia of Croats and Muslims which was called the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and that in turn consisted of cantons. Some were Muslim majority cantons, some were Croat majority cantons and some were mixed cantons. The territory of the federation was all territory in Bosnia where Muslims or Croats were a plurality. It was about 58 percent of the territory of Bosnia, but at this point in time the Serbs who were not part of this polled 70 percent of the territory. Furthermore, the Croats although they signed on to the federation and I think Zubak sincerely believed in it, that is the chief Bosnian Croat negotiator, much of the Croat leadership does not accept it and Tuđman is very unenthusiastic in terms of creating genuine joint political structures, but in terms of the more immediate objective of ending the war, the effect was immediate. I remember an account relayed to me by a friend, a journalist named Samantha Power taking place up in I think near Duboi, in the Maglav pocket where at the, this was an area that was surrounded on three sides by Serbs and the Muslims were at the top of the, were at the top of the salient and the Bosnian Croats completely cut them off from access to anyplace else. Once this agreement was initialed on the first of March she recounted Croat soldiers throwing hand grenades at the Muslim soldiers with cigarettes attached and the pins not pulled meaning that the Muslim soldiers were able to have the hand grenades as weapons against the Serbs and the practical effect of the Washington agreement then was to create an alliance, an alliance between the Bosnian Muslims and the legal government in Sarajevo, the Bosnian Croats whose military force, the HBO, was more or less entirely controlled from Zagreb by the Croatian defense ministry and Croatia itself. Within a relatively short period of time, that is between March 1st, 1994 and October 1995, that alliance had so changed the military situation on the ground in Bosnia that peace was possible. So, the events that led to Dayton really date back to our ability to push the Croatians to end the Muslim Croat war to end the atrocities, to get rid of Boban, to form this alliance.

Q: Was this, I mean, was this foreseen? Was this, how were you and others dealing with it from the American side, saw this thing going with the idea eventually if we get this war over, then we can take care of the Serbs?

GALBRAITH: I don't think it certainly, I didn't see it, I didn't, I wasn't able to foresee what would happen or what would happen in a relatively short period of time. What was clear to me was that, it was that as long as the Muslim Croat war continued, as long as Croatia became increasingly isolated from the West and from the international community, that it was going to

be hopeless to find any solution to Bosnia and we would perhaps face a problem like the Middle East; a crisis that would go on for 50 years. I also certainly saw that ending the Muslim Croat war, rebuilding this alliance would be the best way to deal with some of the humanitarian and moral issues that were created by the war. The fact that people were being attacked, they were being denied by the UN arms embargo, the means to defend themselves, the UN was ineffective in protecting safe areas, that this provided an alternative. So, I think we did see this as an important step in the right direction as important to the goal of enabling the Muslims to defend themselves and something that would increase the negotiating leverage with the Serbs.

Q: How did this play, I mean, say the two sides really stopped fighting quite quickly. I mean it ended that for a while.

GALBRAITH: Well, what was remarkable wasn't that it was quick, is that it was immediate and it ended completely and permanently. I think the next instance of fighting was in September or October of 1995 when Bosnian government forces killed three Bosnian Croat soldiers in what was, well, it was certainly, it was an unfortunate incident. It was not something I think planned by strategists in, Bosnian strategists or Croatian strategists and it was a one-time incident.

Q: What about Mostar where some of the nastiest stuff had been going on?

GALBRAITH: It stopped. It stopped immediately and that was what was so remarkable about it. What I had dealt with for the first nine months that I was in Croatia was incessantly problems from Mostar where the Croats in West Mostar were shelling the Bosnian Muslims in East Mostar in the old town where they completely destroyed the old town which had just been repaired by UNESCO at great cost and the Aga Khan Foundation a few years before. Of course they destroyed the most famous landmark in Bosnia, perhaps in Yugoslavia, the old bridge in Mostar. I remember I crossed that in 1992 with Senator Moynihan and it was a sad sight. It had rubber tires hanging off of it to try and protect it from Serbian shelling and a wooden cover, but in this case it was completely destroyed.

Q: Now, what was going on in Zagreb on the Croatian side? Were they saying, okay, I mean you say there was some reluctance of the members of the government, but were they seeing this as an opportunity, I mean what were you getting from them?

GALBRAITH: Different things. Tuđman clearly didn't like the idea as I had described earlier when the proposal was put forward to him on the 17th of March he had turned it down. That was the Thursday, it was only on the subsequent Monday when faced with the prospect of an explicit warning of isolation and of sanctions that he changed course. There was no change of heart. On the other hand, the man who went to Washington for the negotiations, Mate Granić, the foreign minister, he, I think he genuinely supported the federation. He was a much more moderate figure. He was a urologist who hadn't had very much involvement in politics until the change from the communist system, who had risen quickly and only become foreign minister in June of '93 and yet although not seemingly not part of Tuđman's inner circle, at least not having a personal chemistry with him, he clearly was able to persuade Tuđman of the necessity of doing things and he was able to negotiate competently, not to feel that he had to refer everything back to Tuđman, but to negotiate and make commitments and then he would check them out with

Tuđman in the evening, but it seemed that Tuđman backed him up in the calls he made. He was a very comfortable and effective negotiator. Šušak the defense minister who was the third really critical person in all of this, he was a Herzegovina. Well, Tuđman favored the great greater Croatia, meaning to divide Bosnia in half and Croatia take half Šušak was primarily interested that first that his own hometown of Široki Brijeg might be part of Croatia and beyond that the surrounding Herzegovinian regions which were 90 percent Croat. He was more willing for tactical reasons to support the federation. He saw, he was a great benefit to U.S. involvement. I think he believed that some of the things that would follow would be important to his goal, which was to make Croatia as Western as possible and an important part of the Transatlantic system. This was a man who had gone to Canada in the early 1960s and had become a successful businessman of pizza parlors and was very fluent in English. More than that he had a real understanding of North American politics. He was also prepared to be supportive of the federation even though in some ways he was quite an ardent nationalist and certainly an apologist and a political ally of some of the Herzegovinians who committed some of the worst atrocities against the Muslims.

Q: Were we keeping book on who was doing atrocities for a day of reckoning later on? I mean were we sort of to ourselves?

GALBRAITH: We were keeping book, not only for ourselves, but for the international criminal tribunal in the former Yugoslavia. We would and this was something that the embassy was doing. I had people regularly going out and interviewing refugees documenting what was going on, collecting names and we would send those reports in to the State Department. Some of them anyhow would be turned over to the tribunal.

Q: Well, now were there people in the Croatian, particularly in the military, but also in the civilian side who were rubbing their hands and saying, okay, we've gotten rid of this problem with the Muslims, now we've got our ducks in line, let's go, as far as the Serbs are concerned.

GALBRAITH: No. I don't think that was the case certainly in March of '94. I think the Croatians in the end they, at that point, they didn't know how Serbia would react and also, I think that they had a sense of their own weakness. So, Šušak, the defense minister, was prepared to spend the time building up the Croatian forces, which he did.

Q: Now, just timing, now the Serbs still have the Krajina at this time?

GALBRAITH: That's right. They did not lose. Their first territorial loss was May 1, '95 when the Serbs took Western Slavonia which was a small territory.

Q: When the Croatians took that.

GALBRAITH: Sorry, when the Croatians took Western Slavonia and then the so-called sector west, UN protected areas, sector west. Then it was in the beginning of August of '95 that the Croatians took the Krajina.

Q: Well, what was happening between the Washington accords and the Croatian counter

offensive?

GALBRAITH: A number of things happened. First, I should say it took me some time to get back to Zagreb having gone to a chiefs of mission conference in Warsaw to which I was a last minute addition on the grounds that now that Croatia had taken these positive steps it would be appropriate for me to participate in discussions about what steps the United States might take to promote democracy and economic reform in the former communist world. I got back to Zagreb and then almost immediately left with Tuđman in his airplane for the formal signing of the Washington agreement, which was about the 21st of March in the presence of Tuđman, Izetbegović and Zubak. I guess Silajdžić came to Washington, yes Silajdžić came to Washington. There was a formal signing ceremony and then Tuđman had a one on one with the president, not a one on one, he had a meeting with the president in the Oval Office. I was there then.

On the plane over Tuđman had asked if I would agree to join in a Russian initiative aimed at getting a cease fire between Croatia and the Krajina Serbs. After we had pulled off the Washington agreement, the Russian Deputy Foreign Minister, Vitaly Churkin, attempted to do something on his own to establish Russia's role. He had actually gone to Pale where the Bosnian Serbs had their headquarters and had a very testy exchange with them, but he had also gotten the Krajina Serbs to agree to come to Zagreb to participate in negotiations for a cease-fire. So, I went with Tuđman, in fact it was really an exhausting period of time. He had asked would I join as a, in these negotiations with Churkin as a mediator because he didn't trust the Russians and he wanted to have the American connection. There were also European Union and United Nations representatives, co-sponsoring the talks. The EU representative was the German ambassador named Geert Ahrens and the UN was a Norwegian named Kai Eide.

Following the meeting with the president, we flew back to and I guess a meeting the next day with Larry Summers, we flew back to Zagreb arriving at 6:00 in the morning and I immediately went to the Russian embassy to begin this mediation effort which lasted all through the night. Then as I recall, I'm going to have to check this, it went through the night and then we resumed on March 30th and 31st again in the Russian embassy. Basically one of the roles I played was to formulate, was to formulate one of the key compromises that made the cease-fire possible. The issue was the, the UN had done a lot of work, they'd gotten the maps and certainly they'd done the overwhelming part of the work. They'd gotten the maps, they'd gotten the two sides to agree where all the positions were, but Tuđman wanted a preamble to the agreement that stated that this was all in Croatia. Obviously the Krajina Serbs who maintained that they were a separate country were not prepared to agree to that and so what I did was to go up and see Tuđman late on one of the nights and get him to agree that that wasn't necessary. When that was done then it was possible to get a cease-fire which was signed at about 4:00 in the morning I think on the 31st of March. So, essentially as I recall there were two all night sessions. That then led to something that become known as the Z-4 process. Zagreb 4 and then later shortened to Z-4 which was the Russians, the Americans, the European Union and the UN sponsoring talks between Knin which was the capital of the Krajina Serbs and Zagreb.

At the beginning we envisioned this as a three-stage process. The first stage being the cease-fire. The second stage being economic and confidence building measures, that was cooperation between the two sides across the cease-fire line and then the third stage being a political

settlement. After the cease fire we proposed that there be economic talks and the Krajina Serbs said we want to hold this in our territory and they invited the Croatians and us to come down to Plitvice Lakes, a national park in fact one of the most prominent tourist sights of Yugoslavia? You've been there, huh?

Q: Beautiful.

GALBRAITH: So, at this point nobody is going, it's under Serb control. It's agreed and the Serb, one of the Serb delegation leaders, Jovanović, I think he was the foreign minister of the Republika Srpska Krajina. He said to Charnick, the Croatian negotiator, he said, "You, we had our journalist here" because they had two journalists, "we'd like to invite your journalist to come down to the Plitvice." I take it back, I think Charnick said that, we had your journalist here, we'd like to have our journalist come down and Jovanović replied, "Of course, in fact I was going to propose that." So, we set I think for April 13th a meeting in Plitvice whereupon the Krajina Serbs said, "We only had two journalists up at the Zagreb talks and therefore you can only bring two journalists down to Plitvice for the talks." Well, the fact is the Serbs only had had two journalists at the Zagreb talks because that's probably how many journals the Krajina Serbs had. This was, Knin was the capital of a self-styled country that didn't have a daily newspaper. The Croatians said, that's unacceptable. So, we talked to the Croatians and we got them to agree that they would have only five journalists go down. I think it was two from Croatian television, one from Croatian radio, one from the Croatian news agency and one from one of the daily newspapers. Then I went down to Knin to talk to and it was the first trip I'd made there to Milan Martić, who is the president, self-styled president of the Republika Srpska Krajina, the Krajina Republic and his colleagues and also to try and work this out, completely without success. The end result was that the talks were scuttled and they in fact didn't resume until the autumn at which point the Croatians were getting much more belligerent.

Q: The fact that the talks didn't work were really digging in of heels in the Krajina Serbs?

GALBRAITH: Yes. I mean what became apparent in dealing with them was that they were terribly disunited. The president was a former policeman of, not a very high rank as a policeman and even lower intelligence, a relatively young man in his forties, but very, with blinders on, very rigid. I think in part because his brain worked so slowly, he really, he was afraid, he was unwilling to do much of anything. There was a prime minister, a guy named Boris Mikelić, who had owned a or been the manager of a meat packing plant in Petrinja which was a town that the Serbs had taken in '91 but it was right on the confrontation line. His plant was more or less on the confrontation line. I think his primary interest was in getting payoffs as well as perhaps getting his plant to start working again and making more money. He was a man who had clearly eaten a little too much of his own product. He sauced patty sausages and sort of, his clothes were all a little too small and that was the prime minister. Then there was Milan Babić who was the Foreign Minister who had, who was the one from Knin, he was a dentist. I think he was the one politician who actually had genuine support. He was sort of a baby-faced man in his thirties. He headed the largest party in the Krajina Serb parliament and almost certainly he had run against Martić for the presidency in early '94 and in the first round I think he had gotten 47 percent of the vote and Martić had gotten 20 percent of the vote and somehow in the second round Martić won. Clearly it was a rigged result and it was Milosevic who was widely thought to have and his

services to have arranged this result. So, Martić was the being the foreign minister, he had the popular support, but he was he didn't have the military force to exercise power. Well, it was clear that none of these guys could get along with each other. They all had different agendas and they were all afraid of being seen as having done more than, having gotten out too far in front and that paralyzed their negotiating efforts continually.

I think the last trip I made down there just to illustrate this. I'd gone to see Babić again who was the Foreign Minister before seeing Martić. Martić then sent a message to me in the midst of my meeting with Babić saying he wasn't going to see me because I'd had the wrong protocol to go see the Foreign Minister before seeing the president. Well, I mean, the UN of course had arranged the program, but beyond that there was a kind of absurdity for an ambassador, that the ambassador sees the foreign minister, he has offended the president, but it just showed how disunited they were and how little they had a sense of how to do things or even how little a sense they had of the impression that they would be making on the outside world.

The meeting with Martić was interesting. It was in early April. He began the meeting by saying the most deadly words you could ever hear on the Balkans and certainly from a Serb which were, "Mr. Ambassador, before we begin, let me tell you a little bit about the history of this part of the world." You know that you will get a lecture on everything since the battle of Kosovo on.

Q: 1389.

GALBRAITH: Exactly, but worse the next words out of his mouth were "In the year 700 comma." Now it has to be said to his credit he got to the two genocides against the Serbs in the 20th Century in about five minutes. The other interesting thing about it was that this was shortly after the NATO air strikes on Serbian positions, actually I think it was mostly an empty Serbian tank near Goražde. All the local population was up in arms about this and we had a joint press conference I think at the beginning and before we had our private discussions and there was somebody from Chicago who claimed to be from the Serbian Democratic Party of Chicago which for a moment I thought it was the Democratic Party, but I realized in a second the it was of course the Karadzic Party. I hadn't realized Karadzic had a party in Chicago, so he had some very contentious questions and I turned to Martić and I said, "I don't think the Serbian Democratic Party of Chicago is a journalist, is a press outlet." Martić was quite gracious. He said, "Oh, the American ambassador has come here on a mission of peace" and we moved on although I had responded to one earlier question by defending the air strikes and saying they were entirely justified and if the Serbs kept up their behavior there would be more.

Anyhow, all these negotiations, we were unable to salvage the meeting at Plitvice. We couldn't get another meeting organized and that whole process of confidence building measures looked like it wasn't going to work and so I decided and got the EU representative, Ambassador Ahrens and the Russian Ambassador, Leonid Kerestedzhiyants, who had taken over from Churkin, I'd gotten them to agree that we would try, we'd pass over the second stage and we'd start to work on the third stage, that is trying to find a political solution. In September and October of 1994 we met daily or very regularly at the UN headquarters and on occasion at my residence to thrash out a political plan for the Krajina that became known as the Z-4 plan. The group became known as the, it was the Zagreb four because it was four Zagreb based ambassadors and that was shortened

to Z and the Z-4 plan basically, the basic idea of it was that in those areas of Serb occupied Croatia, where the Serbs had had a majority in the 1991 census, specific and this meant much, but not all the Krajina. They would have a self-governing area. In fact the autonomy that we proposed was very extensive. They would have their own president. They would have their own parliament. They would have their own taxing powers. They would have their own expenditures. There would be no authority to tax from Zagreb. Of course, no obligation from Zagreb to spend either. They would have their own police would be responsible to their local parliament. There would be no Croatian police there. The Croatian army wouldn't go there except the Croatian army could go in a ten-kilometer band along the international border with Bosnia. They could have their own flag. The number of Croatian institutions present would be limited to things like the post office. Very great autonomy. Then in the case of Eastern Slavonia which did not have a Serb majority, but where there was a substantial Serbian population, we took the provisions from the Croatian constitution that dealt with minority rights and we said that there would be I think a five year transitional period before this territory would be reintegrated into Croatia. That then became what we hoped would be the document that would the subject of negotiation between Zagreb and Knin. I'll come back to that. We didn't present that until January of '95 though. Let me go back to '94.

So, on the one hand there was the tract of negotiating, of turning to trying to deal with the problems of Krajina, the U.S. participating, negotiating a cease-fire, trying to work out economic and confidence building measures and then a political settlement. The other tract dealt with Bosnia and this came to be what was certainly the most controversial part of my tenure, mainly the arms for Bosnia issue. As a result of the Washington agreement, the Bosnian government went to the Croatian government and basically said a number of countries have offered to provide weapons to us. The only way they can reach us of course is through Croatia. At this time there were no airports under Bosnian government control. Would you please let these weapons transit Croatia to come to Bosnia? The Croatians basically talked to the Bosnians and they had an arrangement in which the Croatians would take a cut, a third, of the number of weapons that were being shipped in this way, but the Croatians wanted to know what the attitude of the United States would be. Now, as you know since September of 1991 under UN Security Council Resolution 713 there was a UN arms embargo against any arms to any of the republics of the former Yugoslavia. So, Croatia wanted to be sure that if the United States agreed, sorry, wanted to be sure that if they agreed, Croatia wanted to be sure that if Croatia agreed to permit arms from other countries to transit its territory to Bosnia that this would not complicate their relationship with the United States.

Q: And could we have this arms embargo in the whole place was their announced policy?

GALBRAITH: Well, there was a UN Security Council resolution that had been approved by the Bush administration. In fact it was the announced policy of the Clinton administration to seek repeal of that arms embargo.

Q: So, there was a little wiggle room?

GALBRAITH: Yes. The fact that the Clinton administration didn't like the arms embargo, but on the other hand, it was something passed by the Security Council and the Clinton administration I

think rightly, was not willing ourselves to unilaterally violate the arms embargo. In part because the most important part of this equation was the economic sanctions on Serbia which were UN sanctions and if we violated the arms embargo with regard to Bosnia or Croatia by providing our own weapons, then Russia and other countries who didn't like the economic embargo on Serbia, would have a very good argument as to why they could violate that. It was the sanctions on Serbia that was the cornerstone. That was the source of the pressure on Serbia to withdraw its support for the Bosnian Serbs. That was the key variable. The administration was not in favor of unilateral lift. I was not in favor of unilateral lift. The Deputy Chief of Mission, Ron Neitzke, and I discussed and basically, he put forward the idea that perhaps there should be a U.S. covert program to supply arms to the Bosnians. Something that I was not very enthusiastic about because I thought first there are very few things that are covert that are likely to stay covert. So, I thought there was an excellent chance that if we undertook this it would emerge that we were doing it and then we would be in the position of violating a UN arms embargo, violating the Security Council resolution and I didn't think we should be in that position.

On the other hand, what the Croatians were talking about doing did not involve the United States breaking the arms embargo. It involved Croatia and Bosnia breaking the arms embargo. Now, Tuđman decided that he wanted to know what the U.S. position was and so he sent word that at a meeting, I think it was April 28th. I'll have to check these dates precisely, but that at a meeting on April 20, anyhow it was a Saturday, that he would ask me what was the position of the United States if Croatia permitted arms to go across its territory to Bosnia and in particularly if those arms came from Iran. Naturally, I cabled for instructions. I also sent a NODIS cable, that's no distribution cable, expressing my views and my view was that we should give a non-responsive response. That is to say, we should not tell the Croatians no, but that by not responding to their question, they would understand that we were not objecting to their violation of the arms embargo and the arms would flow.

I also was on the phone to, the secure phone to a variety of people including Sandy Vershbow who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State and Peter Tarnoff who was the Under Secretary of State. I did not receive an answer in those phone conversations and I didn't receive an answer by cable, however, on the Saturday morning of this meeting with Tuđman, Vershbow called and he said, "You have no instructions." Now, because I'd been on the phone the previous days and what I'd been getting from Washington is we don't have an answer for you, we can't tell you yet, I interpreted his statement which was over a nonsecure line to mean that Washington hasn't made up its mind yet. You don't have any instructions. So, that evening I went up and saw Tuđman and he posed the question. I said, "I'm sorry. I don't have any instructions or Washington hasn't gotten me an answer."

Q: Let me stop here.

GALBRAITH: Chuck Redman was coming the next day. He was again, the special envoy for the former Yugoslavia and the principal architect, the principal negotiator of the Washington Agreement. I'd raised this issue with him and he didn't have an answer. However, while he and I were in the living room of the residence, Jane Hall of the National Security Council staff called on a different matter. What had happened was that a Croatian ammunition dump had exploded and it caused a huge fire. It spread, unexploded ordinance all over the place right by Zagreb and

we were trying to, the Defense Attaché, Rick Herrick, and I were trying to arrange U.S. assistance to come in and assist the Croatians in cleaning up what was a catastrophic explosions that threatened life and limb. Jane and I talked about that and then I explained the dilemma. You know, why can't I get an answer to my question. We're going to be seeing Tuđman in an hour. She put me on the phone with Jenonne Walker who was the Senior Director for Europe at the National Security Council. Jenonne said, "No, your instructions are to tell Tuđman you have no instructions" and Tony said that with a smile and a raised eyebrow.

Q: Tony Lake?

GALBRAITH: Tony Lake, the National Security Advisor. At this point I realized that a final decision has been made and that I had in fact the instructions I wanted. That the "No instructions" was not that Washington hadn't made up its mind, it was Washington was giving a non-responsive response. So, Redman and I go up and we see Tuđman and Tuđman asked the question and I say, "Mr. President, I have no instructions and to pay attention to what I am **not** saying." Actually Tuđman doesn't get that. He's invited Redman and me to dinner; his office is on the second story of this villa that had belonged to Tito in Pantovčak with a large park around it with great views of Zagreb. So, as we're going downstairs, he pulls Redman aside and he says, "What's all this about?" Redman says, "We don't want to be the ones to object." Tuđman finally gets it. We have a dinner, the subject is not discussed. We discuss other things like the federation, the beauty of the Croatian islands. Tuđman's secretary was there. I was sitting next to her opposite Tuđman. Tuđman was telling Redman about how many islands they had. He said, "Oh, we have 1,500 islands, but some of them are under water at high tide." I turned to his secretary and I said, "Those are the ones that you guys want to give to the Muslims" whereupon she says to Tuđman, "Mr. President. Did you hear what the ambassador said?" It teaches you not to make snide asides. So, she recounted to Tuđman what I had said. It didn't do any damage, but anyhow it was all kind of amusing.

The end of the story, about a week later the arms begin to flow. Now, how did this become a big issue? That's a very interesting story. I had actually been on holiday in Italy with my son in the beginning or I guess after April 13th for about ten days. It was during this time that the Deputy, DCM Neitzke, had gotten, he had heard from Granić about this question and when I got back I guess I was informed by the Defense Minister Šušak about the question would be asked. In addition, Miroslav Tuđman, who was Tuđman's son and he was the head of the Croatian intelligence service, had talked to the station chief and while the DCM had deferred the question to me the station chief who was relatively young, quite inexperienced, he had taken it upon himself to answer the question. What he told Tuđman, Jr. was "it is U.S. policy to support the arms embargo and we believe other countries should support the arms embargo, too." So, when I arrived back, I was quite appalled at that because I believed that first that that was not U.S. policy under the Clinton administration, second, that this was such an important question that it ought to be decided by the highest levels in Washington which is why I had sent a cable to Washington saying this question will be posed. I told the station chief to tell Tuđman, Jr. that the issue was being reviewed by Washington. He refused to do it. I then got my answer. I delivered it to Tuđman in the manner that I've already descried. After the meeting with Tuđman, incidentally I should say that the decision about this although I didn't know it until much later was actually made by President Clinton. Lake raised it with President Clinton on Air Force One

flying back from Richard Nixon's funeral. So, it was a presidential decision. Now, all I knew was that it was an authoritative decision.

Anyhow, after my meeting with Tuđman, I told the station chief what had happened and that this was the policy. He didn't believe me. He then sent an inquiry back to the CIA headquarters. Woolsey was the DCI. Woolsey then got in touch with Strobe Talbott and he said to Strobe, "Has there been any change in our policy with regard to the arms embargo?" Strobe who frankly was a little too cute by 50 percent said, "no there's been no change." Meaning that since Clinton took office it has been our policy not not to want to see the arms embargo enforced. Woolsey believed that no change meant the policy was the same as in the Bush administration when they were enforcing the embargo. So, the message came back to the station chief that no there's been no change in the policy. He interpreted that to mean that therefore, I was running a rogue operation. Then his imagination began to run away with him. I had gone to the Eid celebrations at the Zagreb mosque in February.

Q: It's a Muslim holy day, the end of Ramadan.

GALBRAITH: The end of Ramadan. It was 8:00 in the morning with a group of people who I met and shook hands with. Frankly an hour after the meeting I probably couldn't have told you quite who I'd met. We had Fantas and some cakes.

Q: A diet drink, I mean an orange drink.

GALBRAITH: Orange drink and some cakes, sweet cakes, baklava or something and you know, exchanged pleasantries. Anyhow the station chief believed at that meeting that somehow I had said something more and the head of the Islamic community in Zagreb was there. He believed that. In fact I don't think he was, a guy named Omar _____. Anyhow, as I say, his imagination began to run riot and so over the ensuing months he began to send cables back which I didn't see with all sorts of imaginations about activities that I might be engaged in and also not resisting the temptation to make personal comments about me and others including comments about a woman I was dating who I will point out for the record here. I wasn't married at the time. She wasn't married. She was American, not Croatian. She didn't work for the U.S. government and she was not an intern. But, it seemed to be his business or he thought it was his business. Ultimately this became an issue two years later, well, in September of that year Holbrooke came out and he went and met with Šušak, the Defense Minister, he and I alone. I had persuaded, well I should say that he was nominated in I don't know in April or when his name emerged in May I had sent him a message in May of '94 saying you should come out to Croatia. He had called me back at 6:00 in the morning from Chicago where he was with Helmut Kohl. He was the ambassador of Germany to watch the World Cup game. To say no I've already talked with the State Department. They don't think it's a good idea for me to come to Croatia or Bosnia until I'm confirmed, but why don't you come up to Germany and talk to me. So, I went up and saw him at the beginning of July. One of the ideas that I had was that we should go to other countries that might be willing to provide arms to the Bosnians or money and basically say to them, we do not object if **you** decide to violate the arms embargo by assisting the Bosnian Muslims or we do not object if you decide to provide money. After all money was basically as good as arms because they could buy things on the black market.

Holbrooke liked this idea and at this meeting with Šušak he outlined the idea. He said this has not been approved by the U.S. government. This is my idea. It is not a covert program. It has nothing to do with the CIA. In fact it was not a covert program. A covert program, a covert action is when the U.S. does something and wishes to conceal its role. Here somebody else was doing something and our role was simply to encourage them to do it. That is a diplomatic action not a covert action. Well, Holbrooke perhaps didn't realize and if I'd known what he was going to do maybe I would have told him, but maybe I wouldn't have been clever to think of it either. That Šušak's wife, Georgia, was the number two in the Croatian intelligence service and she then told the station chief about the Holbrooke conversation. Well, of course, this really riled up his imagination now that it was Holbrooke and Galbraith who were running a covert action. This got back to Tony Lake who was a bureaucratic rival of Holbrooke's. They had been close friends for many years, but they had drifted apart and in fact Holbrooke believed that Lake had kept him from getting the jobs he originally had wanted.

Q: They were part of that little Mafia who'd taken Vietnamese together and gone to Vietnam early on.

GALBRAITH: That's right, they had begun their diplomatic careers as junior Foreign Service officers in Vietnam. They'd been close friends, but had drifted apart. Lake had become the National Security Advisor and Holbrooke had wanted to be Deputy Secretary of State and basically he hadn't gotten anything. I think he blamed Lake. Lake and this is Holbrooke's telling of it saw this, saw it as an opportunity to get Holbrooke and referred it to the intelligence oversight board an entity which I hadn't heard of, but which sits in the White House and does investigations. One of the things it does is to be sure that the intelligence community or everybody else is behaving as they should. I must say I only found out about this in '95 when I was back in January and all of a sudden this was on my schedule to go see Anthony Harrington, a Washington attorney and head of the intelligence oversight board. Holbrooke who I guess knew this was coming up wanted to see my schedule. He said, "Do you know what this is about?" and explained it. Well, anyhow, I went to see Harrington and I explained the story. I didn't know what the station chief had done at this point in time, but I explained the facts and so on. They wrote a report and they basically said everything was done correctly. There was no covert action. This is fine. That's '95.

A year later in '96 the report is leaked to the Los Angeles Times. The Republicans think, now two years after the event the Republicans think that they have discovered the Democratic equivalent of Iran Contra. Why? Because the word Iran appears here. Now, how is this similar to Iran Contra? Iran Contra was where Ronald Reagan sold arms to our enemy, Iran, in the hopes of securing the release of hostages, American hostages held in Lebanon, and diverted the proceeds to illegally fund the Contras. In this case our enemy, Iran, was supplying arms, we had simply had a single conversation saying, we didn't object if our enemy Iran supplied weapons to our friend Bosnia. In the Reagan case the net result of all of this was to make Iran more powerful militarily. In our case our decision to say nothing in response to a Croatian question reduced the number of weapons that our enemy had and increased the number of weapons that our friend had, but again, the word Iran appeared and so Bob Dole called for the foreign relations committee and the intelligence committee to investigate. He was of course running for president

in ‘96. Newt Gingrich not to be outdone by Bob Dole established a subcommittee with a million-dollar budget under Henry Hyde to launch a special investigation. When I came to Washington to testify before the Senate Intelligence Committee, that was the first trip to Senate Intelligence Committee, the CIA had done its typical thing which is that when anything comes up it immediately does a dump of every document that it has on its intelligence oversight committees where the State Department tends to defend its documents and prerogatives much more closely. So, there was some sense that since all this had been to the intelligence committees, I also want to get to see it and thus I went to and was able to read about all these communications from the station chief which again were about me, but also about other people in the embassy. It created a rather disagreeable period of time for about six months, but in the end all turned out well. That is the story of that particular controversy.

Q: Well, I’m interested in the station chief, one refusing to do what you told him to do which is you know, I mean, that would normally, how could he refuse?

GALBRAITH: Well, he said bluntly to me that he didn’t believe, I mean the first time he said that he didn’t believe the policy was under review and therefore that he had correctly stated what he thought the situation was to Tuđman, Jr. and the second time after the president’s decision and after I’d explained it to Tuđman, Sr. his argument, he said I want to see this in writing. Now these instructions had been conveyed orally and indeed I’d hoped to get them in writing, but Washington for understandable reasons didn’t want to put them in writing.

Q: This is the wink and the nod type.

GALBRAITH: Well, it wasn’t a wink and a nod, but it was, I mean we simply didn’t. I mean what factually happened is that we didn’t answer the Croatians’ question and they understood that to mean, as we intended, that we don’t object. Now, at that point I could have made an issue of it and said either you do this or I’m sending you home which would have been a reasonable thing to do under some circumstances, but frankly you know, I knew what the consequences of that would be which is that it would have made this whole issue into a huge controversy and nobody in Washington would have appreciated me doing that. They would have felt that I wasn’t a team player. Since they wouldn’t put it in writing the instructions to me, you know, I obviously understood that this was a very sensitive matter. Since within a week it was clear that the Croatians had got the message from me and that what he told Tuđman’s son was irrelevant. There was nothing further for me to do. Frankly, at that point I thought the whole thing was over.

Q: Well, I mean did you find, this raises another question, did you find the CIA particularly relevant to you when you were there? I mean were they giving you good stuff, what was your impression?

GALBRAITH: Well, without going into too much detail, some of the material was extremely helpful, notably intercepts. Although a lot of that was collected by the Croatians. Overhead intelligence was a very limited utility in part because they weren’t focused on that so much in that part of the world and in part what was going on is not things that you could see from satellites. You know, you can see the location of missiles from satellites, but even if you can pick small groups of men, you cannot determine their murderous intent with a satellite. We were very

weak in my view on our human intelligence, that is the spies. I suppose I shouldn't say more about that, but frankly a major source of intelligence came from the Croatian service. The trouble with having this rather inexperienced station chief was that he just accepted everything that they said as true and since his standing depended on how much intelligence he could generate and since there was a growing interest in intelligence from the Bosnians, this material he would transmit with great authority which meant that Tuđman and Tuđman's son as some of the most right wing people in the Croatian administration were basically able to use this channel to get their side across without any filter and that was a significant problem for me and for Holbrooke and for some of the others. The other result of this is that on a number of things that the agency or the station chief simply got it wrong. For example, because Tuđman was his source, Tuđman, Jr., he was adamant to Redman and to me that the Croatians would not accept a proposal for a Muslim Croat federation; they wouldn't accept it. The strategy we were putting forward wouldn't work. Of course they did accept it.

There were some other deficiencies. The CIA came up with an assessment that the Krajina Serb military would be a formidable adversary to the Croatians and that it would not be an easy campaign to retake the Krajina. They never actually went to the Krajina. They never saw it and frankly what always struck me every time I went down there and I did a regular shuttle, was there were no people in the Krajina and in fact often I would go by helicopter and from the helicopter just looking out I wouldn't see any military positions of Krajina Serbs and when I drove there was no sign of anybody on the Serbian side of the front line. They had very long lines to defend. So, I came to the conclusion that they would have a hard time defending the territory, but I had these assessments which indicated just the opposite from people again who had never been there and never looked, but looked at the units that were on paper, looked at the equipment that they had on paper, made certain judgments.

Q: Let's talk about what happened. You gave the non-answer to the Croatian government. The answer was eventually that we weren't going to make it, do what you want on this. We're not going to stand in your way. How did this play out?

GALBRAITH: Within as I say within a week or two in May, Iranian 747 cargo planes were landing at the airport on Kirk Island loaded with weapons and these were offloaded. The Croatians took a third and the other two-thirds went to the Bosnians. But, beyond that I think there were other channels. The Croatians were busy arming, buying from countries of the former Soviet bloc and of the former Soviet Union. Šušak and I once had a talk about this. He basically said, hey, I said, you must be paying a premium for this stuff since you're having to buy it on the black market. He said, no, in fact, we get it for less than the list price. There was just an enormous glut of Soviet weapons. The irony is that the country that was most adamant in insisting that the arms embargo stay was Russia, which was also the country, whose nationals were most busy violating the arms embargo.

The Croatians got some very sophisticated stuff. I went to a military parade, I guess it was '95. They had very elaborate anti-aircraft SA-300s, I think. I mean it was quite elaborate. They started with two MIG-21s and I don't know eventually they ended up with about 12 or 14. The defense minister kept teasing me. He said, "Well you know we have a mommy MIG." I said, "Where would you get them?" He said, "Well, we have a mommy MIG and a daddy MIG and

we're having baby MIGs."

Q: Well, then what happened on the ground then, some dates, while you were there? You were there until when?

GALBRAITH: In Croatia?

Q: Yes.

GALBRAITH: Until January of '98.

Q: In the first place, you had two things happening at this time. You had the Croatia.

GALBRAITH: I wish it were only two.

Q: Well, but on the military side, you had the Croatians new army developing an army which they really hadn't had as much as the Serbs had and you had the Bosnians army. When did this begin to have an effect?

GALBRAITH: Yes. Okay. Basically from May of '94 the weapons are flowing to the Bosnian government. Of course all through this period they're flowing to the Croatians. Incidentally when the Croatians asked us the question should we permit weapons to go through Croatia to Bosnia, even if we'd told them that they should respect the arms embargo they would of course had no intention of respecting it with regard to Croatia, so. The other thing that was occupying my attention enormously in '94 is the Croatia peace process. I already described the negotiations leading to the cease-fire. I described the origin of the Z-4 plan. We presented the Z-4 plan to Tuđman and Martić on the 30th of January, 1995. It was something very carefully scripted. I'd become identified with this in Tuđman's mind because I talked to him more about it. He hated the plan. He was not really prepared to concede that much autonomy to the Krajina Serbs. So, I had the French ambassador who represented the president of the European Union make the presentation. In this sense it expanded because of European Union politics from more than four to about six. I had him make the presentation and then the Russian to Martić. Tuđman took the plan and I mean he just hated it. He could barely agree to look at it. He looked at the first words, which referred to an agreement between Croatia and the Krajina region I forget the exact terminology. He said, "There is no Krajina. This is an obsolete word. This is meaningless." He denied the existence, the basic concept, but he agreed, gritting his teeth he agreed that he would negotiate on the basis of the plan, but not that he was accepting the plan. Martić went down to see him. The Russian ambassador presented the document and he wouldn't touch it. It was like somebody, it was a horseshoe table and the Russian, he was sitting at the head of it, the Russian was sitting to his right. The Russian tried to hand it to him. It was like he was handing him a pile of dog crap. He said, "I'm not going to accept this plan. We haven't had any part in formulating it. Furthermore, the Croatians are threatening us." The Croatians had said they were going to force the UN to leave Croatia. "I'm not prepared to receive this plan until Croatia withdraws its threats and we know the UN is going to be here" and then he went on. He said, "How can you expect us to look at and accept a plan that I haven't read." I quickly picked it up off the table and said, "Well, here, read it, read it." But he wouldn't touch it. Frankly at that point the negotiations

came to a grinding halt. We were really at an impasse. We were at an impasse in terms that made the Krajina Serbs look like they were the people who were refusing to negotiate. The reality was that Tuđman wasn't going to accept this plan either, but he was smart enough to take it off the table. He was smart enough to say even though he didn't want to that he was prepared to negotiate on the basis of it.

There was another thing that had happened, well, two other things, well, a number of other things I think that are worth mentioning in '94. At the last minute in I guess October, David Owen, who was the EU mediator and Thorvald Stoltenberg was the UN mediator, they came into the Z-4 process and sort of bumped into staff positions the Geert Ahrens, the EU rep and Kai Eide, the UN rep and were able to broker an economic and confidence building agreement. That agreement provided a number of things. It provided that the Croatians would return some generating poles to a utility I think in Dinkovatz that the Serbs had. These were things that had been sent to be repaired and hadn't been sent back. They put in the agreement by the Serbs to open the gas pipeline that went from Rijeka to Zagreb in east, which ran through Serb-held territory. That included an agreement by the Serbs to open the autoput, the four-lane highway that went through part of Western Slavonia. David Owen was so keen on this that he actually went out of his way to sabotage parts of the Z-4 plan. He tried to get the Russians to withdraw their backing of it. His basic argument was that Eastern Slavonia which under our plan because it was not a Serb majority area, but a Croat plurality area, it was going to be returned to Croatia, that that area should not be considered part of the plan, it should be left separate. The reason that he was doing that was that he actually personally wanted to get territorial exchanges. He hoped that Croatia would be persuaded to give up the Baranja region to Serbia. This is the area in the east that is north of the Drava River and which had a significant Hungarian population. He also wanted Croatia to cede land to Bosnia north of the Sava by Brčko so that there would be a corridor so the Serbs could have a corridor through there and then Brčko could then be perhaps linked to the federation. Frankly some of these ideas actually had appeal to Tuđman. I knew that they were completely unacceptable politically in Croatia. Tuđman might have had the illusion that he could agree to territorial swaps, but the Croatian parliament wasn't going to agree to that. The Croatian public wasn't going to accept that. Frankly I thought it was a very bad idea for the United States to accept that. The only solution had to be based on recognition of the, on the successor states of the former Yugoslavia having been internationally recognized and accepted as members of the UN, maintaining their territorial integrity because once you open the idea to any changes in borders, then you would be in a situation where basically those that wanted to divide up Bosnia, namely Serbia and Croatia might be able to do that. The way you stop that is to never open the door on that. So, I thought Owen's tactics were incredibly dangerous.

He went to Moscow and he tried to get the Russians to agree that Eastern Slavonia not be part of the Z-4 plan and to overrule their ambassador, Kerestedzhiyants, who was a very good partner of mine and a complete collaborator. The Russians wouldn't do it, which was very interesting. The notion that the Russian position was entirely pro-Serb. It may have been at the macro level, but it was still a sufficiently professional foreign ministry that they were going to listen to their ambassador and take his recommendations at heart. He was able to outmaneuver David Owen who wanted to take a more pro-Serb position than they were taking. Anyhow, Owen also got his. He, and Stoltenberg contributed, were able to delay the preparations of the Z-4 plan, so it wasn't presented until the 30th of January, '95. At the beginning of January '95 the Croatians

announced that they would not extend the UN mandate beyond the 31st of March which basically was a signal that the UN would have to leave Croatia, leave the occupied areas and then Croatia would presumably be prepared to take military action. This was something that was completely, you know, had everybody in Europe and in Washington up in arms and panic.

Q: At this point, Serbia occupied almost a third of Croatia in the Vukovar area and all that?

GALBRAITH: The Serb occupied territories were Baranja, which is north of Vukovar, Vukovar and the surrounding area of Eastern Slavonia. Territorially that was probably about 4 percent of Croatia. But they also held Western Slavonia which may have been another 4 percent and the Krajina which is this region in the west of Croatia west of Bosnia so if you will, north of Bihać and west of Bihać touching practically to the sea. That would be about 23 percent of Croatia's territory.

Q: So, you come out close to a third?

GALBRAITH: Yes.

Q: So, I mean was this sort of sitting and rankling all the time? I mean was this something like Alsace Lorraine with France, they were going to get back theirs?

GALBRAITH: Oh, yes, there was no question that Croatia intended to take this back. It was more than Alsace Lorraine in the sense that first this, I mean it was a larger percentage of Croatia's landmass. Second, the local, the Croatian population in these areas had been brutally expelled in '91. A number of people had been killed. The homes of the Croats had been burned and tank shells fired through them. They had been looted. There was this lobby of dispossessed people and it basically bisected the country. In fact when I arrived in Croatia, there was no land route between Zagreb and Split. It was between the capital and the second or third largest city in the country. With that whole region, all of Dalmatia was cut off by land from the rest of Croatia. So, this was not something that they were going to accept permanently. I don't think August 1995 was the point at which Tuđman planned to take it. He took advantage of Serbian actions and errors.

But, let me sort of make one point about the Z-4 process and I may come back to it later, but Owen's delays, David Owen's delays pushed the presentation of the plan from November-December to January and I think having to present it after the Croatians had said they wouldn't renew the UN mandate really killed it as a meaningful, as a document that could have provided the basis for a meaningful political settlement.

Okay. The events that led to war. I tend to date this from what I call the first Bihać crisis, which was the 9th and 10th of November, 1994. In fact, I was down in Lovran which is near Opatija on the Istrian Peninsula when I got a call from the foreign minister, Granić, asking if I would come back to see him and Šušak immediately. I think they were going to send a helicopter, but the clouds between the coast and Zagreb were such that it couldn't fly so instead I raced back with a police escort making it in a couple of hours. I met with Granić and Šušak and I think the defense minister. Basically they said, we intend to take military action to relieve the siege of Bihać.

Bihać was part of Bosnia. It had 160,000 people in the northwest of the country. It was completely surrounded on the south and east by Bosnian Serbs and on the north and west by Croatian Serbs, by the Republika Srpska Krajina. The military commander there was fifth corps, a guy named Dudaković, General Atif Dudaković, had in September of '94 launched a military offensive first against a breakaway Muslim leader named Fikret Abdić, who had allied himself with the Croatian Serbs driving Abdić quarters out of Bihać. They eventually took refuge between the Croatian frontline and the Serbian frontline in an utterly destroyed place called Trn. Then he had launched an attack south of outer Bihać, basically trying to break the siege against the Bosnian Serbs that had made some considerable headway. In October the Bosnian Serbs had counter attacked and in November the Croatian Serbs had attacked, maybe even October, October or November, along with the Abdić supporters and had come around the 9th of November the Bihać pocket was much shrunk and there was a lot of concern that it might fall. Now, from Croatia's point of view that was completely unacceptable strategically because what it would mean is there would be a single western Serb state from Brčko, from the Posavina corridor practically to the coast. A solid block as opposed to the current situation which in essence that the western Serb territory had this big donut hole of Bihać. Of course, if you eliminate the donut hole there are no internal lines, you are able to redeploy your forces against both the Bosnian government and against Croatia.

The second Croatian concern is that if Bihać fell there would be an enormous humanitarian crisis, 160,000 Muslim refugees and where would they all end up? Well, where so many of the other Muslim refugees had ended up, mainly in Croatia. So, Gojko Šušak and Granić in this meeting outlined a plan for a surgical strike through a place called Slunj which would relieve the siege of Bihać and enable weapons to be provided to Bihać and maybe military forces and so on. I didn't believe that they would do a surgical strike. I thought that they would probably end up taking the Krajina. I called Holbrooke and woke him up. It was his routine to wake me up, so I took some pleasure.

Q: Holbrooke was ambassador?

GALBRAITH: Assistant, not the State, the Assistant Secretary for European Affairs. I explained the situation and told him that in my view we should, well, I should tell you. What Šušak and Granić wanted was an assurance that the United States would block sanctions being imposed on Croatia if Croatia took military action. Basically they were looking for a green light from us once again. My view was that we should in fact tell the Croatians that we would block sanctions. Why? Well, I had legal humanitarian and strategic reasons. Legally, some of the attacks on Bihać, which was in Bosnia, were emanating from Croatian territory; Croatian Serb held territory, but nonetheless part of Croatia. The UN was unable to stop attacks from this territory onto the territory of a sovereign state. Arguably Croatia would even have a legal obligation to stop attacks from its territory onto the territory of the neighboring state. It was the Croatian Serbs who were crossing the international boundary. If NATO or the UN were unwilling to stop those attacks, then I didn't see how we could object as a legal or moral matter if Croatia were willing to do it. While we might not want the Croatians to do something that would widen the war, it did seem to me that they had a strong legal argument for what they were doing.

The second reason that I was in favor of letting the Croatians know that we would block

sanctions which again would be interpreted as a green light, is my fear that Bihać was going to fall and that you would have a humanitarian catastrophe with 160,000 people. Finally from a strategic point of view I thought that the fall of Bihać would be a catastrophic blow to the Bosnian government. I mean I bought the Croatian argument that the creation of a western Serb state would be a very bad strategic development in the conflict. I made these arguments to Holbrooke who got quite angry with me. He said nobody in Washington wants to hear this kind of analysis. You'll lose your credibility. You'll be thought of as a hawk. Don't say anything further. I think that he was concerned that a U.S. role in seeking to widen the war would do great damage to the European alliance perhaps at a time that they were turning to a, relations with the allies were strained and also he had another agenda which included NATO enlargement. I, as was typical, ignored his advice. I put this into a cable. The response I got was to tell Tuđman, it was a demarche for Tuđman, to tell him under no circumstances would we support widening the war. We wouldn't support a military campaign to relieve the siege of Bihać.

I went to deliver the demarche and Granić and Šušak were present. I must say it was quite something because Tuđman turned to them and listening to my demarche which said, you know, warned about the dangers of a wider war and it could go into an unforeseen direction. He turned to them and said, that's exactly what I think. So, it was clear that that was one of the few times that I'd seen that Šušak and Granić had gotten together and they didn't actually have Tuđman on board. I could understand that. I mean Tuđman; neither Granić nor Šušak had any military experience whereas Tuđman had been a general under Tito. He had been a partisan in the Second World War. He did appreciate some of the dangers of war. He was not a bloodthirsty character.

In any event.

Q: Was the fact that he had been a partisan, Bihać was where the partisan movement technically started, wasn't it November or something? I can't remember. Bihać was I guess where the five fires were and all that. So, it was sort of a partisan holy sight.

GALBRAITH: Well, Granić and Šušak were wanting to rescue Bihać and Tuđman was saying don't do it, it's too risky. So, I don't think that would have been a connection. I think Tuđman simply was cautious about committing military force to risky campaigns. But, anyhow, so the Croatians didn't take military action at that time. As it turned out the Serbian offensive against Bihać subsided and things settled back into a more normal situation.

Q: Were arms moving in to Bihać and all this and the Bosnians at this point?

GALBRAITH: Well, it was completely surrounded so it was very difficult. There were flights by helicopter from a Croatian helicopter field near Zagreb called Luka or something like that. I'd have to look at the map and see. They had Russian pilots. These guys would ferry this stuff in. On one occasion one of the pilots was shot down. A flight carrying Ljubijankic who was the Bosnian foreign minister who after Silajdžić had become prime minister. He was also from Bihać. Then the flights were suspended for a while. Yes, they flew in. Šušak told me that the Russian helicopter pilots would get really drunk and make these flights.

Q: But basically Bihać held?

GALBRAITH: At that time, yes.

Q: At that time. So, how did things develop?

GALBRAITH: Well, there are many aspects to this story, but just to stay on this particular threat, in May of 1995, let me sort of back up to the Krajina campaign and all what happened there. I guess I should go with the Croatian decision mentioned earlier that they were not going to let the UNPROFOR renew its mandate at the end of March of 1995. That engendered I happened to be in Washington and this was I guess the one time I attended a deputy's committee meeting in this crisis. It was very interesting. Holbrooke was representing state and he brought me along to sit in the back and talk in case the issue of the Croatian action came up. DOD was, and Walt Slocum were really pressing Holbrooke. They'd wanted him to prepare some paper that, research paper, a strategy paper that Holbrooke had no intention of producing. So, Slocum kept pushing him on it and Holbrooke kept resisting. Finally Holbrooke turned to me to say to talk to and try to change the subject to the Croatian decision not to extend UNPROFOR. Everybody was really wringing their hands. They thought this was going to lead to a much wider war. The meeting had already been quite tense over this issue and the whole Bosnia paper, which Holbrooke just saw as a waste of time. I had thought about it and I had four or five points of ways in which we might approach the crisis caused by the Croatian decision not to extend the mandate so I outlined my four or five points. Everybody in the room looked visibly relieved. They immediately adopted those points as policy. I then briefed the Bosnia people of the various embassies in Washington, the main European embassies and this then they circulated back to their capitals. This became known as the Galbraith Plan leaked to the British press by somebody in the FCL. In fact it eventually provided the basis under which the Croatians agreed to extend the UN mandate.

Having extended the mandate, it was a little more complicated than that. The plan was the basis, but it had required a couple of Holbrooke trips, a lot of jawboning and then Tuđman had gone to the UN and I went with him to the UN social summit in Copenhagen and there we met with Gore and Albright and Holbrooke. It was prescripted. Tuđman made the necessary concessions to Gore. He could say that the had done something at the request of the vice president and the Croatians agreed to extend, well, they agreed to a new UN mandate with a different name and some other things. However, they were fundamentally dissatisfied because they had wanted to force the issue with the Krajina Serbs. Nothing had happened. That was as I say it must have been in late March. At the end of April.

Q: This is '95?

GALBRAITH: 95. At the end of April there was a killing of a Serb who had used the highway to go out of the Western Slavonia enclave into Croatia proper. There was a rest area just, I guess just before you entered on the east side of the enclave. Serbs and Croats would meet there and families would get together. It was quite funny. I mean I was there at one point and there was a young Serbian man and he had a Croat wife. So, we were talking and he said that he hadn't seen his in-laws and his wife hadn't seen her parents in four years, since '91. I said, well, why don't you call them? He said, well, I have no way of calling. I said, well, there's a phone booth. He said, I don't have any Croatian money. I said, well, use my cell phone. So, he then called his

relatives, in-laws and they had quite a conversation. I think they arranged to meet, but this kind of thing was going on. Of course, I considered this highway to be very important because it was breaking down the barriers between the Croats and the Serbs. After all, these people had lived together. They knew each other. They were developing contacts, but one of the things that happened is that one of the Serbs who came to it and a Croat who had a grievance against him or he felt he had committed some crime, came and met and killed the Serb at this spot. Not while I was there, but at a separate time. The Serbs then responded by closing down the highway. The Croatians then used the excuse of the Serb closure to move militarily to open the highway and coincidentally to take the Western Slavonia enclave. This in fact was the first that they did this on the first of May and it was the first major loss of territory by the Serbs.

Two other things about it are noteworthy. First, there was virtually no Serbian military resistance and no response either from Mladic and the Bosnian Serbs or from Milosevic. So, I think at that point the Croatians understood that they could take the Krajina.

Q: Was the analysis that the Bosnian Serbs and the Serbs proper because Krajina was beyond their pale or their metal border or whatever it was?

GALBRAITH: Well, at this stage because of the pressure of sanctions, I think Milosevic wanted a settlement and he wanted and there were parts of the territory he knew he couldn't hold onto or Serbia couldn't hold onto and the Krajina was clearly one. Croatia was becoming too strong. For him, the only way to do it was to deploy the Yugoslav army to Krajina and that would of course have provoked a major reaction from Europe and the United States. All the efforts to partially lift sanctions and so on would have come to an end. Even then he might not have prevailed. So, clearly he had decided to write off the Krajina. And, Mladic and the Bosnian Serbs I think were just not, they weren't prepared to invest their resources in the Krajina because if they did it would leave an enormous opening for the Bosnian government to use. The political pressure on the Serbs was increasing, particularly on the Bosnian Serbs was increasing. I think for all of those reasons it wasn't, neither the Bosnian Serbs nor the Yugoslavia Serbia were going to come to the aid of the Croatian Serbs. I think the Croatian Serbs; the Western Slavonia experience got the Croatian Serbs to see that clearly, so it enabled Croatia to see that clearly.

The second point about it is that it had a population of about 14,000 I think. Some 11,000 fled, but 3,000 remained and they remained in the _____ area where there was a Serb leader, a guy named _____ who was a moderate and who had resisted and I think for a while been imprisoned by Martić and the hardliners in the Krajina Serbs. So, he mobilized his community, as many as he could who stayed to begin to cooperate with the Croatian authorities. There was also a very good and moderate Croatian put in charge of the area. They began to work together. Then we got involved and we, the embassy, because our interest was in restoring the multiethnic area, so we wanted the Western Slavonia Serbs to stay. We provided aid and we supported employment projects for the Serbs. We got lawyers to help the population, get the Croatia citizenship papers and deal with all the protective property rights, all those sorts of things. The point is that not only did some Serbs stay, but the Croatian treatment of them was reasonably good. So, the real nightmare scenario in which the Croatians would behave as beastly as the Serbs had behaved hadn't taken place on a large scale there. That in turn could make one somewhat more sanguine about the humanitarian consequences of Croatian military action to retake the Krajina.

Unfortunately, as it turned out, the Croatians were not very well behaved.

Anyhow, that was the beginning of May, so it was the first major Serb defeat. In the middle of May, the Serbian shelling of Sarajevo had become more intense. There had been a cease-fire between December and May 1st and then it had been breaking down very much in April. Mid-May the shelling had become fairly heavy and so Michael Smith, the UNPROFOR commander in Sarajevo ordered air strikes on Serb ammunition depots near Pale. The Serbs responded by seizing UN personnel as hostages and chaining them to strategic sites. The UN then, General Janvier, who was the UN force commander for all of UNPROFOR based in Zagreb basically met with Mladic, the Bosnian Serb commander, in June and they cut a deal in which the UN agreed not to have more air strikes against the Serbs and all the hostages were released.

Mladic I think at this point saw the handwriting on the wall. Specifically, that the U.S. was becoming more aggressive, more assertive and that pressure was building in the congress for unilateral lifting of the arms embargo and the training and equipping of Bosnians and unilateral air strikes if necessary. I think basically Mladic decided that the summer of '95 was when he had to win the war and the way he wanted to win the war was to clean up the enclaves, particularly those in the east, Srebrenica, Žepa , Goražde.

Q: Maybe this is a good place to stop.

GALBRAITH: Okay.

Q: So, we'll pick this up the next time, we're talking about the early summer of '95 when Mladic has seen that the U.S. may start to intervene in one way or the other on the side of the Bosnians. This is when he is ready to clean up the enclaves of Srebrenica and all that. Then we'll pick it up at that point.

GALBRAITH: Excellent.

Q: Great.

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Today is the 4th of March, 2002. Peter, as we go into this I particularly wanted to make sure we focus on your perception of this and your experience in dealing with this situation that came. Were there indicators that the Serbs were really going to clean up these things? I mean were you picking up things that they were going, these enclaves like Srebrenica and Goražde and other places?

GALBRAITH: There was some intelligence, but it really lacked clarity. Things had been building to a head. There had been a cease-fire that Carter had helped mediate in December of '94. Well, I think it began on the first of January and it lasted four months, so it ended at the end of April. Already it was breaking down in April and the airport in Sarajevo was closed. I remember talking with Tone who was my girlfriend at the time and now my wife and she'd been in Sarajevo in April and her view was that the Serb forces were, (she worked for the UN), that

they were seeking to cut the city in two.

Q: You were saying that your future wife was working with the UN. I mean she was getting information. What was our intelligence like? I mean did you feel was there a pretty good flow because this would have struck me as a pretty easy, this was not a very disciplined crew on any side. I would think it would be pretty easy to penetrate and get stuff and all that or not.

GALBRAITH: Well, as is generally true of intelligence, most of the intelligence information you get is not through the intelligence services, but from the conversations that we have with principals, that diplomats have, the local press, what the UN is picking up, the reports of their people. So, there are lots of different sources of this material, as is clear at the Milosevic trial. The Croatians also were getting or intercepting conversations between Milosevic in Belgrade and the Bosnian Serb army and among the Bosnian Serb army commanders as well as the politicians. We saw a lot of that stuff. With that said, there were a couple of events that took place. As the Serb forces began to encroach on Sarajevo in April of '95, I began to lobby and others for a robust response because it was violating the agreement that Churkin had negotiated the year before that had created a safe area around Sarajevo. Finally the UN had turned the key to permit NATO air strikes. Those NATO air strikes had in turn led the Bosnian Serbs to take UN personnel as hostages. I must say this was one of the more absurd things that happened because obviously what the UN ought to have done is that knowing that there were going to be NATO air strikes which the UN did know because they had to approve them. They should have before the strikes took place withdraw all their personnel from Bosnian Serb areas because these people were potential hostages. Indeed I had conversations with Yasushi Akashi, a Japanese career UN official who was the SRG, the Special Representative to the Secretary General and the head of the UNPROFOR mission about this. I warned him about the danger for hostages and his reply was well, we have to be neutral and what about our mission. Well, the whole point because the people were for example guarding heavy weapon storage sites outside of Sarajevo and what was happening was that the Serbs were actually firing their weapons from the heavy weapon storage sites into Sarajevo. So, I said, well, what's the point of having them there. Well, what about the mandate he replied. Anyhow, these people were all taken hostage and there was a prolonged and very demoralizing period which ended up with the French military commander who was in charge of UNPROFOR agreeing with Mladic in effect that there would be no more air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs. That set of events began to set in motion the congressional action to lift the arms embargo. I mean it was already underway, but the hostage taking and the fact that NATO, the UN was forced to back down that NATO air strikes seemed to be off the table basically was the beginning of the series of events which made it look like the U.S. would have to deploy forces to extract the UN mission.

Q: Well, now, what was your role in this, I mean Sarajevo was this part of your beat?

GALBRAITH: No, there was an embassy in Sarajevo, but the UN headquarters was in Zagreb so I interacted with the UN officials. In the early period of my tenure until, well, until really early '95 we had no functioning embassy in Sarajevo. The ambassador Jackovich was in Vienna and he would only very infrequently get permission to go into Sarajevo. We had consular responsibility for Bosnia and all the Bosnian politicians passed through Zagreb on their way in and out to Sarajevo. So, I was constantly involved with it for all these reasons. Frankly, I was

also Holbrooke's primary interlocutor among American diplomats in the region. We had a reasonably good relationship. He would be on the phone all the time and we would be strategizing together.

Q: Yes, well, now, was it, you and others who were dealing with this reach the conclusion that it was going to take American force to do it? I mean did you pretty well by this time written the UN off as an ineffective force?

GALBRAITH: Yes, for sure. In fact in May after the hostage taking I went up to Budapest for Holbrooke's wedding to Kati Marton and he was on the phone almost like a madman advocating bombing and I shared his views that military action needed to be taken.

Q: Well, now where there other voices within sort of a government representation in that area who were saying let's not do this?

GALBRAITH: No, well, in the Balkans I think the diplomats present, there were three embassies, Zagreb, Sarajevo and Belgrade. Certainly Sarajevo and Zagreb were strongly in favor of military action. The chargé in Belgrade, Rudy Perina, was a very good man and he may have been, he didn't weigh in either way. His British colleague was an apologist for Milosevic, but Rudy was pretty solid in terms of his understanding of the situation. The problem had been from the military and particularly from Snuffy Smith who was the commander at AF South.

Q: He was an admiral?

GALBRAITH: Admiral, yes, in Naples. From some of the people in SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander Europe), Chuck Boyd, although I think he was gone by this time, who their basic argument had been that air power wouldn't work because there are no forces on the ground, but in fact, there were forces on the ground, but they just ignored. Their view was, they assumed there had to be American forces on the ground or allied forces on the ground. In fact, when we finally did get to bombing the Croatian and Bosnian forces did just fine.

Q: Well, then what happened, you know, the trigger is cocked, the gun is loaded and the Serbs were ready to go after the enclaves. This would have been about when?

GALBRAITH: Well, the fall of Srebrenica was in July. I'm actually equipped with some notes this time. Yes. I actually was back in the United States. I must have left on July 5th or 6th just after the July 4th party and was there for about two weeks and was there at the time that Srebrenica fell. I think that certainly the fall of Srebrenica caught me by surprise and I think it caught others by surprise including the UN. People saw the, the trouble was the difficulty in distinguishing the assault on Srebrenica, you know whether this was yet another squeeze of the enclave as opposed to an all out effort to take it. Also, frankly, I think I imagined that the enclave would put up more resistance than it did.

Q: Was this from either the Dutch protective troops or from the Bosniaks themselves?

GALBRAITH: It was from the Dutch and I also would have thought from the Bosniaks.

Q: When you got back, I mean, I can't remember Srebrenica happened at one point and then what happened? I mean did the other ones fall in time, did Goražde?

GALBRAITH: No, Goražde didn't fall, Žepa did. I was in Vermont on holiday for about a week with my family and parents. Then I went down to Washington and met with this would have been, well, I was in Vermont when Srebrenica actually fell and I talked a number of times to Holbrooke about it, but without any real conclusion as to what could be done. I was concerned about Žepa, which was another enclave in the east bordering Serbia, and fearful of what might happen there. I mean it was clear that that was the next target. Also, I was concerned about Bihać, which was the big enclave in the west surrounded on the one side by Bosnia and on the south and east by Bosnia. On the north and west by Croatia… and that had 160,000 people, so it was four times larger than Srebrenica so I was very concerned about that. Holbrooke had arranged for me to come up and see Christopher. I mean he knew that I was a dissident on a lot of this policy. So, I went up and saw him. I made a pitch about Žepa and in general, an argument against the policy that seemed to be in play, which was to offer Milosevic relief from sanctions in exchange for concessions that I didn't feel were real concessions. I wanted to make a case against that and a case that we shouldn't write off Žepa because we would be consigning its population to a terrible fate.

I returned, it must have been around the 19th of July and shortly thereafter Tune who had been down in Tuzla interviewing survivors from Srebrenica because the population, the children and women of Srebrenica had been bussed from Srebrenica to Tuzla and they were all camping out in the airfield there. UN human rights workers were interviewing them. She wasn't actually doing the interviews, but she was listening to interviews being conducted by Peggy Hicks and Grace Khan two Americans who worked for the UN. There was a man who had arrived just arrived and had been very intent on telling the story. Now the two UN officials or staff didn't speak Bosnian, but my wife Tune does, she wasn't yet my wife. So, she could detect a real sense of urgency by the way he was speaking, the language he was using. Also, he kept other people were since he was a new arrival, women were wanting to know, have you seen my husband, have you seen my son and he was putting them off. He had a very, you know, there are things I just have to say. I have to explain what happened. He then gave a detailed account of what had happened to him of how he had been brought to a stadium, how Mladic had taunted the group of men he was with and how they had been taken to Bratunac and the group had been shot and he had of course had not been killed. He, I think a bullet had grazed his forehead so it had produced a lot of blood without killing him and then when the executioners took a break he had managed to escape and walked through the woods to Tuzla.

The thing was as Tune was observing this; the UN staff were just taking it down as if it were another one in a long series of stories. They had done a lot of interviews with women who had been on the bus who had described Serbs seizing their money, young girls taken off and disappeared, presumably raped, you know, groups of men, bodies by the roadside and so on. What they hadn't seemed to grasp was that this man's account really was evidence as to what had happened to the missing men. Now, I had frankly had had no doubt, but from the start that the missing men had been murdered because I don't think you have 7,000 people just go missing. But, I needed, I mean, one needed some evidence of that. I mean I had pointed this out in cables.

This account seemed to provide a pretty clear evidence as to where the missing…

Q: Yes, so you had come back and you were talking to Christopher. Did you, the policy which seemed to be at that time to be what, of, were we doing anything or just being passive?

GALBRAITH: I think there was great uncertainty as to what to do. There was a lot of passivity and just I would just say uncertainty or confusion. Nobody had any good ideas except Holbrooke who was repeating a mantra of we should be bombing, but that was not immediately acceptable to or thought of as realistic by Christopher and some of the others at that time. I think there was a lot of frustration on the part of the people who were working this issue, Holbrooke, Bob Frasure, myself and I think probably the Secretary was pretty unhappy as well. I had some very specific policy ideas one of which was that we should be, we should be actively encouraging other countries to and particularly Muslim countries to provide weapons to the Bosnians, not doing it ourselves, but making clear that we wouldn't object if they did it. Again, I was very concerned that in the statements we made because NATO was moving to draw the line to protect Goražde that we not implicitly write off Žepa or Bihać.

Q: Were you getting anything from your contacts who were back in the States in the Senate, any of your either staff members or Senators saying, well, we just don't want to get involved in this thing?

GALBRAITH: Well, on the contrary, at that point, people were basically wishing to lift the arms embargo and to end the UN presence and come to the aid of the Bosnians. So, that was where congressional sentiment was at that point in time. Not send in U.S. troops, but provide arms and enable the Bosnians to defend themselves.

Q: What was your, how were your suggestions received by Christopher and others?

GALBRAITH: Christopher listened on the issue of letting, of sort of signaling to other countries we wouldn't object if they provided additional assistance or military assistance to the Bosnians. His response was, well, it may come to a covert program, although I would not have considered this a covert program. There wasn't any real response on the issue of Žepa. When I got back to Zagreb and I heard this story that I've just recounted, one of the things that and I put all of this in a cable to Christopher, a NODIS, and I said, this is a reason to try to save Žepa. This is what's happened to the men and boys of Srebrenica and this is what has happened to all of those who have disappeared. The same fate awaits those in Žepa. Unfortunately, Žepa fell within a few days of my sending the cable. It did have an immediate impact in that it, Holbrooke took the cable to Christopher and put it in his hands and he said, "Chris, this is the human side of what has happened." In other words, this man's account which I had put in the cable. Christopher then dispatched John Shattuck to come out and report on what he, on what had happened in Srebrenica and the human rights violations that had taken place there.

The other thing is thanks to this man's report, the survivor's report; he gave very precise details about where the killings took place. The CIA was then able to go back and look at overhead satellite and aircraft pictures, looking at those specific places on those days and were able to find the bodies. People have the idea that because we have extensive satellite coverage of an area that

we see everything, but of course that's not the case. We're quite good at locating missile silos, but to find evidence of bodies, that's something you've got 10,000 pictures of Bosnia on a particular day, it's not something you're going to find unless you know where to look for them. Having located those pictures then Albright was able to use them at the United Nations.

Q: So, then what happened, I mean at Žepa*, what happened?*

GALBRAITH: At Žepa?

Q: Žepa*, yes.*

GALBRAITH: Well, it fell around the 26th or 27th of July. Many of the men., and I think much of the population, because they'd seen what had happened at Srebrenica were able to escape either through the woods to government controlled territories or across the river to Serbia where they were interred.

Q: Were the Croats playing any role in this time?

GALBRAITH: They were getting increasingly nervous about what was happening in Bihać. This really was the turning point of the war. It was in many ways a replay of what had happened in November of '94. The Croatian Serbs were pushing in from the north and from the west and the Bosnian Serbs were pushing in from the east and the south. There had been in around July, I'll tell you precisely, around July 21st there was a meeting in London which produced of NATO, a London declaration which basically drew the line at Bihać, drew the line at Goražde which was another of the enclaves and said that NATO would use force to protect Goražde, but what was therefore not said was also significant, mainly Bihać and Žepa. That day I was with Tuđman at Brijuni, this island off the coast of Istria which had been much favored by Tito at a villa that Tuđman used for holiday with Demirel the Turkish president and when the word of the London declaration came in, the Turks were quite contemptuous and saying openly, well, where's Bihać, where's the reference to Bihać?

At this time the Croatians were figuring out what they were going to do. From a strategic point of view they did not want to have Bihać fall because that would have created a single western Serbian state stretching from Brčko almost to the Adriatic including both the Bosnian, the western half of the Bosnian Serb territory and the Croatian Serb territory. They also didn't want to see you know, 100,000 or so new refugees come into Croatia, which had already had well more than a million refugees pass through it in the course of the war. The Croatians were contemplating using, taking military action to relieve the siege of Bihać, but also I think using it as a pretext to take the Serb held Krajina region of Croatia. In this period from the 20th of July until maybe, well for the week or ten days that followed, the Croatians basically were feeling us out to determine what our attitude would be if they took military action to retake the Krajina. They were also smart enough to realize that what Mladic had done in Srebrenica, the attacks on Bihać, the fear that Bihać would be another Srebrenica gave them a pretty, a pretty good reason, a ready made excuse to take military action and that even if the general policy of the United States in the west was to impose widening the war under these circumstances, the west could hardly blame Croatia.

Q: Were you observing the development of an effective Croatian military?

GALBRAITH: Yes. I think the Croatians had during the time I had been there been steadily rearming or arming themselves. They really didn't have a military before. They had been acquiring things on the black and gray markets particularly Soviet equipment. Šušak once told me that they were able to acquire stuff for less than the market price because the world was so awash with these weapons. Some came from East Germany, but much of it came I think from the former Soviet Union, maybe Russia itself. Šušak made clear they dealt with a lot of very unsavory characters. They got some pretty sophisticated equipment. Croatia had inherited two MIG, early model MIGs.

Q: 21 or 23?

GALBRAITH: 21 or 19.

Q: 23 or 19?

GALBRAITH: Yes. When it became independent, but by '95 it had a dozen or so. Šušak used to joke that they had started out with two MIGs and they had had baby MIGs, but these were obviously smuggled. They were also able to acquire SA-300 anti-aircraft missile system and a lot of artillery and other weapons. All that had been going on. I think in the operation they undertook in May of '95 they had demonstrated their military effectiveness when they had taken Western Slavonia. What they were concerned about, I don't think they doubted their ability to take the Krajina. I think they were concerned at the international response. They didn't want to be blamed for widening the war. They didn't want to be blamed; after all it was a UN mission in the Krajina whose job was to maintain a cease-fire between Croatia and the rebel Serbs. They didn't want to be seen as directly doing something contrary to that mission.

Q: Were they beginning to lay down markers that unless you do this or something we're not going to stand by and see Bihać go under?

GALBRAITH: That's what they were saying to me. Now, what I wanted for the policy was that we in fact would stand aside, that we wouldn't tell them no because I thought it would be a disaster if Bihać fell and I put that into the cables that I sent. I also went on the, well, after this dinner on the 21st down in Brijuni Tuđman had the aspect of a man who had actually wrestled with a big decision and made it. Šušak at that time told me that Croatia intended to take military action. I reported that in a cable I dictated the next day and I basically said we have two options. We could do nothing in which case the fall of Bihać could create 160,000 new refugees and strike a further blow at the credibility of the UN, or we could promise the Croatians that if they exercise restraint that we would oppose sanctions- further sanctions relief on Serbia, and any sanctions on Croatia. I also argued, perhaps not entirely convinced that it was right, that the Croatians would not be responsive to a threat of further action. I then went down on that day which was the 22nd to Split for a rather extraordinary meeting that took place at the villa Dalmatia, just a little north of Split on the Adriatic in which Tuđman, Granić, Šušak, Červenko who was the Croatian military chief of staff were there with the Bosnian government,

Izetbegović, Sacirbey was the foreign minister, Silajdžić, the prime minister Zubak who was the head of the federation, Delić who was the military commander plus lots of other military from both sides. The two militaries had sessions in which they engaged in very detailed planning for a joint strategy and the basis of that strategy was that Croatia would move up the Livno Valley which was a valley parallel, in Bosnia, parallel to the Croatian coast, parallel to the Croatian-Bosnian border. Basically they would get up until they were opposite Knin, the capital of the Croatian Serb self-declared republic. It would at that point they would have cut Serbs, Knin's supply lines and be in a position to attack it from the east.

It was also a political dimension to it which is that the Bosnian government and here was something where I had urged that this be done in my informal discussions particularly with, as usual, it was Petar Sarcevic, the Croatian ambassador to the U.S. at this point one of the key foreign policy advisors to Tuđman, was that the joint communiqué include a Bosnian request for Croatian assistance. That would give a legal basis for any Croatian military action as well as a signal that this was a real alliance. Indeed then, in the next few days, this military action took place and they did move up behind Knin. It also became clear that the arguments that I advanced earlier had been accepted namely that we should not, that we would not put ourselves in the position of objecting to Croatian military action to alleviate the siege of Bihać. At that point on the 25th I got a demarche which read "with the Serbs attacking Bihać enclave from Croatian territory and Sarajevo requesting your assistance, we cannot dispute you right to intervene militarily to repel the Serbs," but with suitable warnings about not mistreating the civilian population or UN personnel.

Q: Did you have the feeling at this time that the Croats had learned the lesson that you don't go after prisoners of war and commit genocide and all that, that this was counterproductive. I mean this was not a good tactic. Do you think this had penetrated them by this point?

GALBRAITH: Yes, I think they were aware of it unfortunately, as we'll see, in a few weeks they seemed to have forgotten that lesson. They did themselves a lot of damage, but yes, I think they were very conscious of the advantages that they had by virtue of not engaging in atrocities. As they moved up the Livno Valley for example, Croatian television was very careful to show the Orthodox churches being intact, indeed protected by Croatian troops and kind of making a point that this was different than how the Serbs had treated Catholic churches or mosques.

Q: How about, had the Serbs, the Bosnian Serbs moved what amounted to mainline troops from eastern, their eastern areas towards the Krajina or were they relying on the troops that were there?

GALBRAITH: They were relying on the troops that were there and this was I think this was part of their problem. Mladic I think wanted to clean up the enclaves to the extent possible and I think he was personally obsessed with Srebrenica and devoted a lot of force there and a lot of force to the killing. The result was those forces were not able to be quickly redeployed when the threat from the east, when the threat began to materialize from the Croatians in the west. I think in this regard he was a rather poor general.

Q: Because also the troops in the west, the Serbian troops in the west, really hadn't been what

you'd say bloodied in the way that the ones in the east. The east had been doing all the fighting and the ones in the west hadn't been doing it. Correct me if I'm wrong.

GALBRAITH: No, I think that's essentially right although I wouldn't say massacring 7,000 unarmed people is really a lot of fighting.

Q: Yes.

GALBRAITH: The Bosnian Serbs basically engaged in no serious military engagements until the summer of '95. What they did was ethnic cleansing which essentially was attacks on defenseless populations. Their assaults on Sarajevo were largely standoff assaults from the hills lobbing artillery and heavy weapons down on the city. They did have I guess close in combat with Bosnian government forces for example trying to push out of Sarajevo advancing up the hills and they'd had some fighting in the west in '94 when Dudaković's fifth corps had pushed out of Bihać and made some significant progress.

Q: Well, then what happened? You know, I mean, we've moved up to when the Croatians are ready to go. I mean had there been, were you watching significant or getting any information on significant troop movement?

GALBRAITH: Well, we had lots of information because the Croatians were, I was talking to them everyday and they were telling me what they were planning to do. Šušak had told me that the military campaign would begin on the first of August. Something that in fact had not been shared with a lot of people in his own government, _____ for one didn't know. He was talking to Bob Frasure in Washington and telling Frasure that it wasn't true.

Q: Well, was there a concern as they were doing this that the eastern front between Serbia proper and Croatia by this time was under a cease fire, wasn't it?

GALBRAITH: It was.

Q: Was there concern that if they did something here this might stir up the Yugoslav Serbs?

GALBRAITH: Or Yugoslavia to intervene in the east? Indeed there was evidence. I think Červenko the Croatian chief of the military staff told me that the Yugoslavs were bringing bridging equipment into sector east. Nonetheless, Tuđman discounted the thought that there would be significant attacks from sector east. I think he believed that Milosevic was not going to do anything to help the Krajina Serbs and I think that he believed that there would be no attacks from sector east. I think his primary concern was with the reaction of the United States. Now, does that indicate that he had some kind of deal with Milosevic about this? I think that's possible.

Q: Then how did things develop? Were you getting from the States, from the Department of State in Washington, tell them to stop this, don't do this or anything like that?

GALBRAITH: On the contrary. This demarche that I just described to you on the 25th of July

basically said we accept, given that the Bosnians have asked for your assistance and given the attacks that are being made by the Bosnian Serbs, we understand that you have to take military action. Now, for example, it included a line in there. We appreciate the close consultation with your government in the past week as well as your willingness to expend blood and treasure to help defend the Bosnians. I think with that kind of response then the Croatians moved in that last week of July you know, they sort of firmed up the decision that Tuđman I think had made on or about the 22nd of July to go ahead with military action. I had actually sent a message making the point that while the Croatian military action against Krajina was likely to involve lots of refugees that that was less bad than having 40,000 something like 40,000 men massacred if the same ratios prevailed as in Srebrenica. As we got toward the end of July there were many signs of the impending military action for example calls for blood donors. We had kept some of the local staff, were drafted, the railroad down at Karlovac was closed presumably to facilitate troop movements. That kind of situation.

At the very end, I also had the idea, toward the end of July, that we should try to make one last effort to revive this peace process between Zagreb and the Krajina Serbs. I had the thought that we should invite both Zagreb and Knin to meet on an American warship in the Adriatic. I think the warship idea was quickly shot down by Holbrooke who thought it would just be too difficult bureaucratically to get that agreed, but he did agree that I should undertake a mediation effort which I, so I then asked Akashi to take a message down to Babić who I thought was the most reasonable of the three leaders of the Krajina area to propose a meeting. Akashi was initially very reluctant to do that. He said that the peace process was Stoltenberg's business, he didn't want to get into that. A very bureaucratic response. I said, "For Christ's sake, Yasushi, there's going to be a war in a couple of days and Stoltenberg isn't around, we've got to do something." Then he was just going to carry a sealed note. I said, "No, you're going to have to make a case that this should take place." Reluctantly he agreed to do so. Babić basically said the Krajina Serbs were very negative toward me, but that he would be willing to meet me in Belgrade. I then got on the phone with Belgrade, our chargé to find out if that was okay.

Q: Who was our chargé again?

GALBRAITH: Rudy Perina.

Q: How do you spell that?

GALBRAITH: P-E-R-I-N-A.

Q: Okay.

GALBRAITH: He said, indeed, fine. Holbrooke, actually as I was talking to him, Holbrooke was calling me and learned that I was talking to Perina because the only way you could talk to Belgrade was through the Ops Center, so he joined the conversation. He agreed I should go to Belgrade, but then the next day I think he had basically reconsidered. I think the reason he reconsidered.

Q: This was Babić?

GALBRAITH: Not Babić, Holbrooke reconsidered.

Q: Oh, Holbrooke.

GALBRAITH: Is because I think Frasure prevailed upon him that we shouldn't be trying any peace initiatives at the last minute, that finally the bureaucracy in Washington had agreed not to block further military action. They had agreed that Croatian military action could be a good thing and that if this decision which had been a hard pressed one to get through the deputies and the principals, if it were reversed, that the opportunity might be lost. The Bosnia peace process really depended on what Frasure later told me was "a fundamental reshuffle of the deck." He didn't tell me that at the time. Therefore, any mediation effort that I undertook would not be helpful, so I think that's the reason Holbrooke decided the next day that I shouldn't go to Belgrade. Then he said to me, he said, I had also agreed or asked to go down and see Tuđman and I had some instructions for that meeting in Brijuni on the Monday. Let me just get the dates for all this. I got an instruction to go see Tuđman. Yes, and this I think reflected some of the confusion in Washington. The message of the 25th I had read some points in it where we had expressed our appreciation of Croatia's willingness to spend blood and treasure. Then on the 29th came a message, which came out of a deputy's committee meeting that Croatia should withhold military action and warning of the risks of military action. I noted in the journal I kept at the time that some of these points were a bit silly, that the Croatian have obviously assessed the risks of intervention and their prospects for success "in the mountainous area of Krajina" which was something I was supposed to warn them about. I cite that because when I actually delivered this, Tuđman later pulled out the piece of paper in a BBC interview for the BBC show, The Death of Yugoslavia, and he laughed. He said, "This is what the American ambassador told me. Ha ha ha." But just for the record, I also thought it was silly and I think I said it in a cable to Washington that I thought these warnings were silly, but sometimes you have to do silly things for your country.

Q: True.

GALBRAITH: Anyhow, the second message was on the 29th and I guess it was also that day that I asked Akashi to see if whether it would be useful to have a last minute mediation effort. Akashi came back on the 30th from Knin reporting that the Krajina Serbs had made real progress and that Martic, the self-styled president, had agreed to meet a number of Tuđman's demands. That turned out to be rather typical of an Akashi report which is that a great deal in the telling of it, but not a lot of substance once you've seen it in black and white and Tuđman totally rejected it. It was at that time then on the 30th that I got word that Babić would be willing to meet me in Belgrade. That was his proposal. It was on the 30th then that Holbrooke approved going to Belgrade. On the 31st Holbrooke basically reconsidered, skeptical that any good will come again for what I think what lay behind it although I didn't know it at the time was the argument that it was basically a bureaucratic argument, keeping the administration on board in favor of allowing the Croatians to go ahead was a very difficult decision that was hard to hold and perhaps that second demarche that I read to you was evidence that it was hard to hold.

On the first I went down. So, Holbrooke basically said the compromise we left it, since I'd

argued hard that we should try this last effort for peace, the compromise Holbrooke said, was well, if Tuđman agrees you should go to Belgrade, you should go. So, I went down and saw Tuđman on the first of August and it was I must say it was quite a kind of a somber trip. I went in Tuđman's plane, helicopter, from his villa in above Zagreb down to a villa he had in Brijuni. The only other person on the plane was Professor ____ who was the translator. Got down there and it was all business. Usually Brijuni with Tuđman was a fairly relaxed place, but Tuđman was cocky. I read him the final demarche emphasized strongly, the main point of which was you should not interpret that you have a green light from us. On the other hand, we understand the reasons why you are doing this.

Q: We're both shrugging.

GALBRAITH: Yes. I emphasized what was in the demarche, but I said it perhaps more strongly the importance of avoiding attacks on civilians and on UN personnel. Then I told Tuđman about the fact that Babić had wanted to see me and proposed that I see him in Belgrade. Tuđman said, "Well, oh, that would be interesting. But, don't wait until Thursday, you should see him right away." I understood the message there.

Q: What day of the week was this?

GALBRAITH: This would be Monday that I saw Tuđman. Incidentally, Tuđman also discounted the concern about FRY intervention from Serbia itself. He said the Serbs were in a daze after the campaign in the Livno Valley in Bosnia and he just didn't think that was going to happen. I got Akashi then to get the word to Babić as to whether he could meet me on the Tuesday, the next day. He was out of town and he didn't get back until about 1:00 in the morning. The only plane was a UN plane to Belgrade and that was leaving at 9:00. I only got word at about 8:00 that yes, indeed he would see me and the only plane going was at 9:00 and it was about an hour to the airport, but I managed to make the flight, get dressed and get to the airport. I flew to Belgrade. I think that was then the first of August, sorry second of August. I spent the day in Belgrade sort of looking around and noticing how devastating the sanctions were particularly on petroleum. At 8:00 Babić showed up at the embassy and he and I met alone. I had a note taker. He was alone and I had a note taker and an interpreter. I basically outlined what they had to do if they wanted to avoid being destroyed, that was to withdraw immediately from Bihać, accept the UN monitoring on their borders, open a pipeline through sector north, open the start discussions on opening the railroad and most importantly, accept a political settlement within Croatia. Babić was very interesting. He began by saying I can understand why the Croatians are going to attack us. I cannot understand what our own leadership is doing. He was obviously appalled that they had attacked into Bihać and realized the risk that had brought on the Krajina Serbs. He also apologized for the behavior of Martic in January when he had refused to take the Z-4 plan off the table, refused to accept the plan and how could he have behaved that way when the ambassadors of the United States, Russia, of France, Britain, not it wasn't Britain, France, Italy and so on. So, we had a very good discussion and basically he accepted all of Tuđman's conditions including agreed to accept that there would be a political settlement on the basis of Krajina being within Croatia. We worked out a language. He said I can't say that publicly. I said, well, all right, suppose you say publicly that you'll agree to negotiate on the basis of the Z-4 plan, but that privately I can convey to Tuđman that you've agreed that there will be a settlement, that within

Croatia and that it will involve much less autonomy than the Z-4 plan and he agreed.

I then flew back. I got a special plane from the UN to come back on August 3rd. In the morning Rudy Perina and I worked on getting demarches to Milosevic and Tuđman to support this deal with Babić. Milosevic wouldn't see Perina and indeed he had refused to see Babić, which I think, was a pretty clear sign, well, was a clear sign that he had written off the Krajina Serbs, possibly further evidence of the deal with Tuđman. When I got back to Zagreb the demarche that I had to give that Washington had written for me to give to Tuđman was ridiculously weak. Basically it said we can understand that, for example, it said, we understand that Knin's attentions must be measured by actions, not words. We urge you to evaluate the Serb reaction carefully and to explore fully the possible opening for diplomatic resolution of the conflict. Well, this wasn't exactly what I wanted which was to say that this provided a basis for a settlement and that you should hold off on military action a few days to see if the Serbs actually carried through. I placed a number of calls. I called Bob Frasure who was busy. He said that the deputies would take up this question at 5:00 Washington time. (End of tape)

I called Tarnoff who was the acting Secretary, I guess Christopher was in Vietnam and I pointed out that the war in Croatia would be a terrible tragedy, that it would lead to the departure of 100,000 Serbs. It would create an ethnically pure Croatia and therefore would undermine our goal of multi-ethnicity in the Balkans and that the population was a rather simple form population of the Krajina shouldn't be punished for their leaders. So, his suggestion was that I use my 5:45 meeting with Tuđman to find out from Tuđman if he planned to launch the war tomorrow. Then perhaps I could get back to him after I heard that from Tuđman so the deputies could consider the response which of course was also ridiculous because we knew that Tuđman was going to launch the war the next day. We'd been told this. It was just a delaying tactic.

Q: One question, you were on this with Babić. Did you feel he carried any, I mean was he the decision maker or was he just a person who you know, the most well meaning of a triumvirate or the equivalent thereof?

GALBRAITH: He was the most well meaning of a triumvirate and he was certainly no saint himself. I don't know whether he would have been able to deliver or not. That's a completely open question. My point simply was that it was worth waiting a few days to find out. I wasn't saying that…. The case I was making was for a few days delay, not that the Croatians shouldn't move, but that we should wait and see if there was some basis for a peaceful settlement.

Q: Was the delay to the benefit of the Krajina Serbs to dig in and all that?

GALBRAITH: No. I mean they had no capability to dig in. It made no military difference whatsoever. After all, I mean, I was the person who two weeks earlier had been advocating the position that the U.S. government adopted, mainly that we would not object to the Croatia military action. It's just that by the end of July the situation on the ground had begun to change. The Serbs, the position of Bihać had gotten much stronger. It was no longer in imminent danger of falling and the question was could we get an agreement in which the Serbs would withdraw from Bihać, the Croatian Serbs and in which they would in turn enter into a process which they understood would have the result of peaceful reintegration into Croatia. I thought it was worth a

couple of days to find out. In fact the agreement I had with Babić involved some very concrete steps that he and a Krajina Serb delegation in Geneva was supposed to take, that there was a meeting on the third of August in Geneva between a Krajina Serb delegation and a Croatian delegation which the Croatians deliberately had at a rather low level.

In any event, I did get Chris Hill who was the office director to agree that I could toughen up my talking points. I had a huge problem. Tarnoff had wanted some, wanted me to fax them on a classified fax and just couldn't get the classified fax to work. Eventually I was able to get them to agree to delete some of the weak stuff and to make it somewhat stronger, although not strong enough to stop the Croatians.

I went up to see Tuđman at 5:45. He was in a very good mood. He listened to my urging that there be, that they consider the peace process. He then said, well, at 6:00 I've got a meeting with the National Security Council. We're going to make the decision about proceeding with the military operation and indeed that was the decision they made. I was in an awkward and I knew that so we had, I mean basically he had listened to what I had to say, but had no intention of acting on it.

There was a huge amount of international and local press around all looking for news. So, I met with them outside of Tuđman's office. There was a stakeout. I had to choose my words very carefully. On the one hand I felt an obligation to Babić to say that we had reached an agreement and to say what the agreement was. On the other hand, I knew that the Croatians hadn't accepted it and there was going to be a war. So, I outlined what the points of agreement were, I think the five points that Babić had agreed to. I then offered my own view that I thought Babić had essentially met Tuđman's conditions, that there should be time to see if the Serbs implemented and that in my view there was no reason for war at the present time. Unfortunately, well, that comment was interpreted to mean that there wasn't going to be a war. Even though in fact I called in Jim Rupert of the Washington Post, Ray Bonner of the New York Times and the Los Angeles Times reporter. I couldn't come out and say there's going to be military action tomorrow, but they would ask me questions like, are you optimistic and I would say, not at all. Nonetheless, the New York Times had a page one story about this brilliant diplomatic move that had prevented a war or to be precise it was a page one story about this, in the early bull dog edition about this brilliant diplomatic coup that had prevented a war. In the later editions it was about how the Croatians had moved militarily in spite of the efforts of the United States and what a slap it was at the United States that they had done this in spite of their urging. Ray Bonner later told me, he said that it was my fault, you tried to warn me, I just didn't pay attention. It was my fault. That didn't stop him a year later from writing a profile of me saying that I had boldly proclaimed that there wasn't going to be a war and then it had turned around that there was, but anyhow.

About 10:00 I was asked if I would come up and see Šarinić, the president's chief of staff, Hrvoje Šarinić. I came up and the appointment was set for 11:30. When I arrived the British ambassador was leaving. I and the German went in and he gave me a letter to President Clinton and he gave the German a letter for Chancellor Kohl from Tuđman in which Tuđman explained the reasons for the military action. Šarinić and I had quite a short debate for the next 45 minutes. He said, our people won't allow, our people won't allow us not to act and I tried to point out that

the Serbs were Croatian people as well, were Croatian citizens as well, but obviously I made no headway. So, military action began at about 4:30 the next morning. Actually I learned later that there were Croatian forces that had already penetrated the day before, that is on the 3rd of August. It began at 4:30 in the morning and it was over in about four days.

Q: What was the analysis of why the Krajina Serbs did so poorly?

GALBRAITH: I wasn't, I was not at all surprised because I had been traveling regularly to Knin, both by car and by air and whenever I'd cross the frontline I couldn't help but notice that there was just nobody there. I mean there were Serbs at the checkpoints, but not very many and then you know, looking from the air there were no dug in positions, no discernible population and indeed they had 180,000 people and a huge line to defend with very limited forces. Those who hadn't been there and I would include the analysts from the intelligence community I think vastly overrated their strength because they hadn't really seen it. Second, they didn't have any assistance from the Bosnian Serbs. They didn't have any assistance from Serbia itself. Third, they chose not to fight. They organized an evacuation of the entire population and that's exactly what took place.

Q: Was there any, was the evacuation, I mean as this military four day campaign went through, I mean it was obvious I assume by the first day or two that this was going to be a walkover in other words and what are you going to do about the refugees? Was that your problem or was that the people in Bosnia's problem?

GALBRAITH: Well, the population, most of it left crossing from Serb controlled parts of Croatia, Krajina, into Serb controlled parts of Bosnia. There were scenes of tens of thousands of people on the roads. There were about 40,000 people that were trapped around Topusko by the Croatian forces. Topusko being a town in the northern part of the Krajina and Šušak, the Croatian defense minister, asked if I would help arrange a cease fire that would enable these people to, it was military forces and civilians that would enable these people to be evacuated. Washington didn't want any U.S. role in any of this and they didn't want any help, didn't want me to help on arranging the cease fire either.

Q: What would be the reason for that?

GALBRAITH: I think it was you know the same kind of ambivalence of what the policy was between those who saw that the Croatian military actually was going to be a key to changing the map at a possible settlement and those who were very nervous about anything that widened the war. Now, basically the argument had been won by Bob Frasure by those who wanted a reshuffle of the deck and those who wanted the Croatian military action to go forward, but I think Frasure and others were sufficiently nervous about the other camp that, that the other camp didn't want any U.S. fingerprints on anything, that even an involvement in arranging a cease fire might suggest that the U.S. had some greater role with regard to the Croatian offensive and they didn't want that optic.

Q: We're talking about a domestic political consideration at this point?

GALBRAITH: I wouldn't say it was domestic political in the sense that it, it was within among different factions within the administration and just a general anxiety about what it is we were doing.

Q: How did the conquering of the Krajina go? I mean we must have been looking at it very closely to try to make sure that the Croats didn't do what the Serbs were doing.

GALBRAITH: Yes, we did, unfortunately. They didn't do what the Serbs had done in the sense that they allowed the population to leave. Basically virtually the entire population left before the Croatians took over the territory, but when the Croatians took over the territory, they secured the territory, set up checkpoints and that sort of thing. Then they allowed paramilitaries; gangs and I think even some of the military themselves to systematically burn all the Serbian homes so that the populations who had left would have no opportunity to come back. Their homes were burned, their possessions were looted, their animals were stolen or killed. So, within a short period of time the Krajina was just a wasteland. In '91 the Serbs had expelled the Croats and destroyed their homes, burned them and fired tank rounds through them, stolen their possessions, killed their animals. In '95 the Croatians did the same thing to the Serbs. The result was there were no, in many places, there were no buildings left standing. It was the classic example of Mahatma Gandhi's adage that an eye for an eye leaves everybody blind. This wasn't just spontaneous anger. This was a conscious policy decision to allow this to happen or to facilitate it happening. It is something for which I'm pretty sure Tuđman would have been indicted by the Hague Tribunal had he lived. I mean I know because I was interviewed by them in October of '99 on this point and on the Croatian commander responsibility for what happened. One of the Croatian generals who was in charge of this has been indicted and he's a fugitive. He hasn't surrendered.

There was an incident with these 40,000 people who were trapped in Topusko. On the third day of the offensive, I went down to Petrinja, which was one of the major towns. It had fallen that morning and I went a couple of hours later. It was very interesting to see. It was a bright August day and it was clear that the Serbian defenders had left very suddenly. In the ice cream shop, the ice cream was still there, but it had melted. In the town hall there was a huge pile, a huge delivery of bread and the Croatian government had already moved in, literally it was a Croatian municipal government had moved in to replace the Serbian municipal government, two or three hours after the taking of the town. I asked them, I said, well, did you bring the bread? They said, no, that was delivered to the Serbs in the morning. There was like a picnic table laid out with food and all of a sudden abandoned. There was a child's bike lying on its side and some flowers and a shell. Who knows what happened there? The shell mark. This is also where one of the Danish peacekeepers was killed by the Croatian although in circumstances where the Serbs had taken into their position. Then the guy had stuck his head out to communicate to his captain and when he stuck his head out he had been shot by a Croatian. Then the next day I went down to a place to Sisak and saw hundreds of people who had been prisoners who had been taken prisoner by the Croatians and they were really stragglers. It was a sad lot of people. They were men who were really focused on what had happened to their animals and who would milk the cow and who would feed the horse and that kind of thing. I guess they were really being held until everybody had time to loot all their property. Perhaps they realized that and they were very depressed. They certainly weren't much in the way of prisoners of war. I'm not a terribly fit

person, but I could have taken on the whole army, the whole room of men there single-handedly because of their physical condition. That night or that day an agreement was reached between the Croatians and the UN and these 40,000 trapped people in Topusko that they could pass through the Croatian lines with their possessions and the soldiers with their sidearms and travel on the main highway to Serbia or to sector east that is the eastern part of Croatia that was occupied. The first of these refugee convoys left in the evening. I should get the date. I think it would be the 7th of August. No, sorry I guess it was the 9th of August. As they passed through Sisak a Croatian mob formed and began to attack the refugees. I had already been in Sisak maybe a couple of hours before this took place. I didn't know of it until the next morning when Doug Davidson put an AP story on my desk which described the attack on these refugees and it described the mob throwing bricks through their car windows and a new mother plucking shards of glass out of her baby's blanket. I just was really offended. So, I called up Šarinić and I read him the story and told him that this was completely unacceptable and I began to get worked up and I told him that in a normal democratic country the minister of interior would have resigned or been fired by now.

I had a 12:30 appointment to see Tuđman and so I went up to see him to deliver yet another demarche, this one urging respect of the refugees and also the military restraint in Bosnia. That's a separate issue I'll touch on, but I read the demarche to Tuđman. I was quite angry and then I read him the AP story and then I having liked my lines so much with Šarinić I repeated it. I said, in a normal democratic country the minister of interior should have resigned or been fired by now. Tuđman just went ballistic. He said how hard he was trying to avoid these incidents and all the terrible things that had been done to Croats, all this kind of stuff. So, I said, well, if you're not going to protect the Serbs, then I'm going to have to do something about it. I'll have to go down myself. I realized that once those words had escaped my lips that I probably would have to go do it. So, I got Doug Davidson the PAO and gathered all the press that was around and there was a lot and we went down to Petrinja again where the convoy was. This was in military controlled territory. I had to pass from Petrinja to Sisak where the mob had attacked. Then I thought, well, if I just drive in this convoy with the American flag flying maybe it would provide some protection. The convoy, the refugee column was stopped and I went and talked to various people and gave out water and food and that kind of thing. I got talking to a man on a tractor from Karlovac. He had been a garbage collector. He had recognized me from Croatian TV and in the trailer he had his wife a little three year old boy and a very pretty seven year old girl, something like that, 11 years old maybe. Anyhow so I decided instead of riding in the car I'd ride on the tractor, or the trailer of the tractor. So, I got on and it was quite something. As we got to Petrinja, it was just the hatred on the faces of the Croats and anger. Then people would see me and say, oh, Peter, Galbraith, and I'd wave and their faces would turn to smiles and then they would I think a minute after I passed they said, what is he doing here. But, overall the gesture, the fact that I'd gone had good affect because Tuđman had, you know the last thing he could afford was for something to happen to the American ambassador indeed in my presence. So, there were policemen every 15 yards and the whole convoy got through without any difficulty. Croatian TV though, it didn't show it that night because I think they had to figure out how to portray me, but a few nights later they ran about 10 minutes of me on the tractor including the point when I was waving my finger at some Croats who were shouting obscenities at the Serbs and probably was something that did permanent damage to my relations with Tuđman.

Q: How did you feel by this time about Tuđman? I mean was he seeing you as the perfect way to get what he wanted? I mean did he feel you were not on his side or not acting the way an ambassador should?

GALBRAITH: I guess from Tuđman's point of view perhaps I became a kind of Frankenstein monster. All the things that, all the "undiplomatic behavior" that I had done earlier that he had liked now he didn't like it. Yet since he had so endorsed it before he was in a position, you know, it made it hard for him to say that I shouldn't do it or even to complain about it now. That is in the early period of my tenure I had gone to Vukovar dramatically stated that this was part of Croatia even though it was Serb occupied. I had traveled along the front lines. I had you know, visited the Croatians whose homes had been destroyed, gone to hospitals, publicly talked with the Croatian military, publicly stood at the edge of the Croatian occupied territory and proclaimed the unity of Croatia and he loved all of this. I think he began to realize that the high profile that I had and indeed the popularity was a two edged sword and now he was seeing the other side of that sword. As far as I was concerned of course, my position and the U.S. position was perfectly consistent. We were opposed to human rights violations when they were inflicted on Croatians and we were equally opposed to them when Croatians inflicted them on others. It just happened that in the first two years '93 to '95 the Croatians were not much in a position to do the inflicting. They were only in a position to be in a position of the victims.

Q: How did you find, I mean you're taking this high profile and all. Did you find that you were having problems with support back in Washington or with the press or something because you know the nail, which sticks out, sticks out gets hammered. I was wondering if you felt that the people at the State Department were beginning to feel well, this guy's really on his own or doing something. Were you getting to feel any problems with this?

GALBRAITH: I mean I'm sure that not everybody was happy about all of this. On the other hand, I chose my battles carefully and a high profile action in defense of refugees of essentially defenseless people is nothing that anybody can complain about on paper or even orally so they might mutter about it. I'm sure there were people who thought I was grandstanding, but they couldn't complain about the substance of it. I think there were people who were unhappy about my role and the visibility in the last minute peace initiative with Babić. On the other hand, I mean that was really a product of confused and uncertain policy making in Washington. If in fact the desire was for the Croatians to go ahead the very simple solution would have been to say don't propose a meeting with the Krajina Serbs, don't accept Babić's alternative proposal to meet in Belgrade. I felt that once I had started on something and once I had gone as in the Babić thing, once I had gotten a commitment from him and once I had said that I would try to use that commitment to head off military action I had an obligation to carry through, a moral obligation at least. None of this was really capable of being done quietly. That wasn't how any of the parties operated in this conflict. So, once I'd met with Babić that was known and also to some degree I would be betraying him in the hope of peace if I didn't make some statement to the effect that an agreement had been reached and this agreement ought to be a basis for a pause to see if it would be implemented. Again, the other thing is in some ways I think U.S. policy makers found some of this useful. Christopher, for example, in Vietnam was asked about the Croatian military offensive said that his attitude was the same as that of our ambassador in Croatia who had acted on behalf of the U.S. and had left no stone unturned in the search for a

peaceful settlement. Holbrooke and for that matter I were able to use the tractor ride as a sign for the Serbs as a sign that we were not one sided, that we were concerned about Serbian suffering and human rights of Serbs, that it wasn't just a concern for the Bosnian Muslims for example.

Q: Now, what about the diplomatic side. I'm thinking of the British, the Germans and the French in Croatia. What were they up to during this crisis?

GALBRAITH: They basically were supportive of what we were doing. I briefed the German ambassador on the various demarches. He had been down at Brijuni with me for this dinner with Tuđman. They were not as active, but they were not giving any contrary position. Essentially the British and the French had a very low profile.

Q: Well, it sounds like this whole thing started that you Americans stay out, this is a European affair, kind of like the fall of Yugoslavia and all the stuff that happened and we Europeans can take care of it and we were delighted. But it sounds like by this time that all the fire, was this Europe as a whole sort of a spent force or not?

GALBRAITH: I think these months beginning in July of '95 through, to December of '95 would probably be the low point of Europe as a political force certainly in the Balkans. Once we moved to peace implementation in Bosnia and as we moved onto Kosovo, Europe again has become much more of a force.

Q: So, we now reach where the Krajina has reverted back to Croatia essentially I mean after 400 years, I mean into real Croatian occupation, hasn't it?

GALBRAITH: That's right. Well, it was always legally part of the Republic of Croatia in Yugoslavia and it was part of the Austro-Hungarian empire, but at this point now it is no longer a Serbian majority region. In fact it's largely depopulated. Tuđman proclaims that the Serbs are *optonzi* meaning they have opted out of being Croatian, they can't be Croatian citizens. He initially issues a decree, I don't think this was passed by the parliament that gave the Serbs 30 days to return home and reclaim their property or the property would be confiscated and belong to the state. As I said in this period everything was burned. Of course there was no possibility that the Serbs could return. It wasn't going to be saved, their homes were burned and the Croatian authorities wouldn't let them back. I, early on you know, began to raise these issues both with Washington and with the Croatians telling them that as far as, that we expect that they treat all their citizens equally, that the Serbs were citizens of Croatia, that they had the right to return and that they couldn't confiscate their property. In the initial period, August, September, October, and Washington didn't disagree and it was certainly consistent with U.S. policy, but this wasn't much of a priority, however, in the next couple of years this became the major tenant of our relationship with Croatia was our insistence on the right of ethnic Serbs including the right of Serbs from the Krajina to return home.

Q: Was this a, I mean was this one of the things that we said, but we didn't think was going to happen, was this just to be consistent? What was the possibility of this happening?

GALBRAITH: Of course, it has happened now. I mean at least it is happening. When I first

began saying it in August of '95 I don't think anybody in Washington was much thinking about it. I guess I said it because I thought it was right because it offended me greatly that Tuđman thought he could just disown people who are Croatian citizens. It offended me that this; his racist ideas of ethnically pure populations might prevail. I also thought it was bad for Croatia the country. I mean, if this kind of approach prevailed in which Croatia would become ethnically homogeneous, ethnically pure, it wouldn't auger well for Croatia evolving into the kind of tolerant, pluralist society that might then be eligible to join the European union and then become part of a greater community. Countries that wish to purge unwanted populations generally are not tolerant. Tolerance is the cornerstone of democracy. So, these were all elements of my thinking, but there was also the fact that there was still the problem of Eastern Slavonia, this Serb held area about 4 percent of the territory in Croatia that had not been taken back in August and which still needed to be resolved. There was an area that had been, had a slight Croatian plurality in 1991 before the war broke out. The Serbs had expelled.

Q: where was this located?

GALBRAITH: It is the far east of Croatia. It consists of three distinct geographic areas. Baranja which is bordered on the east by the Danube and on the south by the Drava which had been part of Hungary until the end of the Second World War. In other words, it had been part of Hungary even after the First World War and had been attached to Croatia in 1945 and had a significant Hungarian population. Then south of the Drava was Eastern Slavonia which was a mixed Croat Serb area, but the Croats had I think a slight plurality and then Western Syrmia around Ilok which is the part of Croatia again along the Danube which juts the furthest into Serbia. It was also this whole area was a mosaic in addition to the Hungarians in Baranja, there were Slovaks who were in Ilok and across the river in Serbia in Bačka Palanka. Czechs, Romani, quite a number of different groups in this region. Anyhow, as I said, it had been taken over by the Serbs in '91 in the bloodiest incident of the Croatian war, which was the siege of Vukovar. Vukovar is the main town in Eastern Slavonia. It had been a beautiful Baroque city, shelled for more than 80 days, destroyed and then when the Serbs took it, they drove out the population and the men who had been in the hospital, the wounded, they took out and shot them. One of the first and worst atrocities of the war. In any event, obviously Croatia wanted to get Eastern Slavonia back and unlike Krajina; there really was no claim for special self-government in this region because it was not a Serb majority area. It was clear that this issue had to be resolved or there could be another conflict over it. It was at the beginning, well, I should back up and say in the middle of August began the Holbrooke peace shuttle. That was based on the Lake plan which had come up as Operation Storm as the Croatian military offensive was unfolding. Eastern Slavonia was one of the points in the Lake plan mainly that there should be a peaceful settlement providing for the return of Eastern Slavonians to Croatia. Holbrooke at the beginning of the shuttle tended to dismiss Eastern Slavonia. I mean he was really focused on getting a solution in Bosnia and one of the longest discussions we've had. I mean a month long, two month long discussions was my argument to him that could get the Bosnia peace plan without Eastern Slavonia. He believed that it was just a separate problem. He might be able to solve Bosnia and then basically he was prepared to leave Tuđman on his own to deal with Eastern Slavonia. My point to him was the Croatians are in a position to veto any Bosnia settlement unless they get what they want in Eastern Slavonia. The Croatians are not going to sit aside and see all the sanctions on Serbia lifted because of a settlement in Bosnia without there also being a settlement in Croatia and that

they have the power to block a settlement in Bosnia because they control what the Bosnia Croats do. Eventually Dick came around to that view and so Eastern Slavonia was solved. It was solved on November 12, nine days before Dayton.

There was one issue that I referred to earlier that I think I need to come back to which was after Operation Storm, the offensive to take the Krajina the Croatians continued into Bosnia. Šušak came to me and said we had a discussion and basically he was trying to find out what I thought about the ongoing military action in Bosnia and I made the point well, the whole reason is that we wanted to see a change in Bosnia so basically we welcomed your actions in support of the Bosnian government in Bosnia. He said, well, I hear that from you, but I'm hearing something different from our people in Washington. It turned out that in fact the State Department was putting out a different line based on a decision at the deputies committee which was that we wanted the Croatian military action as this whole Lake peace initiative, Lake and then later Holbrooke peace initiative began. Well, this was actually the period before Holbrooke before the handoff to Holbrooke, so while Lake was going around to European capitals selling the plan. I got a demarche asking me to raise this with the Croatian government to tell them to stop. I sent a reclama objecting pointing out that already there had been great suffering as a result of the Croatian military offensive. Why would we want it to stop now that it was actually beginning to liberate Bosnian territory where when our objective was in fact to shake up the map of Bosnia and hopefully pave a way to peace? I also pointed out that they were on the verge of taking Prijedor, which is the site of some of the worst ethnic cleansing of the entire war of course, committed by Bosnian Serbs against Muslims. I described it as being the Auschwitz of Bosnia. In the end my objections were not heeded by Lake and so I of course delivered the demarche as instructed. Later when Holbrooke took over he began to realize and he says this in his book that the Croatian and Bosnian military campaigns in late August, September of '95 were helpful to the peace process principally because the peace process was based on the idea that the territory would be divided 51 percent for the Muslim Croat Federation and 49 percent for the Serbs and it was much easier to get the Serbs to accept 49 percent when they held 45 percent as was the case by mid-October than it was when they held 70 percent as was the case in July. When you hold 45 percent, 49 percent looks much more appealing.

Q: Around this time did the bombing start?

GALBRAITH: Well, on the 28th of August, I think there actually before we get to that, it's probably worth a word about the beginning of the Holbrooke mission. Holbrooke came out on the 14th of August to Split where he was going to go to Sarajevo to make the first presentation of the plan. So, I flew down to Split to meet him and the party there was Bob Frasure, Joe Kruzel who was the deputy assistant secretary from the Department of Defense, Wesley Clark and Nelson Drew of the National Security Council staff. I put them up actually not in Split, but in this wonderful 15th Century castle in Marina. It wasn't quite a successful choice because there's only one pay phone and the cell phone coverage didn't extend there. Whenever they were sort of constantly on the one phone to Washington. You can imagine Dick Holbrooke without a phone, but we did have a dinner outside the hotel, scampi and Pristina type of finger mussel and we went over the peace plan. I mean I had some real concerns about what was in the plan. One of them was the notion that Goražde should be.

Q: Srebrenica.

GALBRAITH: It's not a Srebrenica, it's a separate enclave about 20 miles away, 25 miles away that that should be turned over to the Serbs. The Pentagon basically had wanted before it was going to deploy; it had wanted the map of Bosnia to be as compact as possible. I thought there were a number of, that was one major concern and more generally the plan involved lots of incentives and punishments to the parties. If the Bosnian Serbs were to accept the plan and if the, yes, the Bosnian government accepts the plan and the Serbs don't, then we'll lift the arms embargo and arm and strike. If the Serbs accept and the Bosnian government doesn't, then we will basically lift the arms embargo and walk away. In my view part of the problem is that the problem was a military one, not just, it needed a military solution, not just a diplomatic one, therefore, as I reviewed to Holbrooke that we ought to be encouraging pending offensives in the Prijedor area. I also strongly objected to the Goražde language because basically I pointed out to Holbrooke that this is a place where Bosnian Muslims live and now you would be you know, we'd be in a position of advocating a plan that would be tantamount to ethnic cleansing. I thought that was completely unacceptable. He said, well, Izetbegović has agreed that the enclave should be given up. I said, well, it doesn't matter. The question is will the people of Goražde agree. I must say, one of the more impressive things about Holbrooke is that afterwards is that he said., the paper was laid out with the points of the Clinton plan. Clinton had personally endorsed it. On my other point, he said, well, about the military issue, he said, that's decided. Clinton has made the changes, but on the Goražde issue he said, I have enough flexibility and he just took it out of the plan. He never raised it with anybody.

The next day, the 15th, the delegation left early to go to Sarajevo and I went down to Imotski which was the hometown of Miomir Žužul but before I left it was Assumption Day, a big Catholic holiday, we got word that the helicopter couldn't fly into Sarajevo because of the rainy weather. So, they came back to Split and I invited them to go down and join me in Imotski saying it would be a chance to talk to Žužul and Granić. Holbrooke and Clark traveled in my car. We get there. There was an outdoor mass cathedral of about 25,000 people. They recognized me. I think this was the one environment where I was more recognizable than anybody else, so there was lots of applause and so on. Frasure is muttering, "Galbraith, more popular than Christ." We get up to the front and Clark is standing next to me, the cameras are on and Clark says, he's very nervous, "Is it okay for me to be on the cameras?" I couldn't resist. I pointed to the bishop and I said, "Wes, it's okay to be on the camera and if you want to swap hats with that guy, that's okay, too." We then had lunch and Holbrooke got a chance to present the plan to Granić and Žužul which was key that he presented it to them before he presented it to Tuđman because they were then able to work on Tuđman and so Holbrooke kept referring to the fog as the fortuitous fog because he got to make this presentation. Sacirbey then came over, Igman, Holbrooke made his presentation to Sacirbey on the plane sitting on the plane on the ground at the airport. Sacirbey, the Bosnian foreign minister was there in jeans, but taking very careful notes, asking lots of very good questions. Very serious, often he came across as a rather sort of flip personality, but this time he was very focused and good. What Holbrooke's big concern was on that day and particularly from Sacirbey's reaction is that the Bosnians might be more attracted by the failure scenario than by the success. In short, that they may wish that the peace process not work that the Bosnian Serbs do not accept the plan and then they would get military support from the United States and that was one of the concerns.

The next day, the 16th, we went up to see Tuđman. That was really, that was an astounding performance on his part. He sort of, Holbrooke presented the plan and Tuđman basically said that he agreed with all that, then he proceeded to trash the Muslims, trash the federation of the Muslim Croat Federation and the idea of a continuing Bosnian state. One point he said, in English, he usually spoke only in Croatian. There would only be one-way translation with him, so he would listen to you in English, that would never been translated because he understood English very well. He could speak it also very well, but he didn't like to speak it. He would speak in Croatian. Of course, as a technique this gave him quite an advantage.

Q: Oh yes, he would have time to sit back and listen.

GALBRAITH: Yes, he would have time to think about what he was going to say next while he was being translated whereas we didn't have the same advantage, but anyhow. At one point in the conversation, he said in English, "Bosnia will continue first state for now." Then he proceeded to give his big sweep of history about the Islamic threat extending from Kosovo and Sandžak and Bosnia and Croatia was doing the west a favor with its civilizing mission. Then he went on to talk about things that he previously denied talking about like trading Banja Luka for Tuzla and it was clear to me that while having triumphed, all his old prejudices were out. He just couldn't contain himself. He was at the moment of glory and he thought he could dictate the terms and those terms involved what he always wanted which was to divide Bosnia down the middle. I sent Dick a note saying that we couldn't let all this pass and that this was unacceptable. He wrote me back a note that said, I agree, not now, not here, not yet. I also sent Frasure a note. I said, congratulations, here's your fundamental reshuffle of the deck. Bob sent back a kind of funny note. He said, I'm quite sure Tuđman just came to these conclusions in the last couple of weeks in his long and interesting life. This was where Frasure sent Holbrooke a note which he said, this is our, we hired this guy to be our junkyard dog, no time to go squeamish now. We met with Granić and Žužul in the afternoon. Frasure, Kruzel and I and Drew did and Granić talked about Eastern Slavonia. They were at pains to point out that Tuđman's views on Bosnia, I think they were pretty appalled, were his own, he wasn't speaking for Croatia. We also had a discussion about Eastern Slavonia. That night we had dinner at the residence, Tune and I and she sat next to Nelson Drew and Bob Frasure and opposite Kruzel, Joe Kruzel and she said, you know, afterwards, she said, she's a Norwegian and sort of academic and very skeptical about the U.S. and about diplomats and so on. She said, you know, I'm so impressed because they genuinely seem to want to help. Then they wanted to know things and they genuinely seemed to want to help. That was the 16th. The next day they resumed their trip to Sarajevo and couldn't be on the helicopter across. I guess they went from there to Belgrade those couple of days later. They went from there to Belgrade and then they came back to Split to go to Sarajevo. Jeff Hovanec, one of the embassy staff was there. He was escorting them. I guess he was going from the. I was just trying to put the sequence of events straight, but all of it was quite inauspicious. Jeff who worked in the embassy, a political officer, and was serving as control officer for the Holbrooke team was driving in one of our cars and it flipped over and fortunately he wasn't hurt, but he bumped his head. Then they all took off to I guess the helicopter to the base of Mt. Igman and of course, the story is well known, but Holbrooke and Clark went in the APC, no in the Humvee and the rest of the delegation went in a French APC, which on a turn in the mountain slipped off the road and tumbled over many times. There was ammunition in it and it began to

ignite and three of them were killed. In fact the very three that my wife had been talking to: Kruzel, Drew and Frasure. As it was Tune and I were going to take a few days holiday. We were going to rent a yacht from Dubrovnik, which one could do complete with captain at very low prices. In fact, all the yachts had been pulled out of Dubrovnik except for the one we were going to rent because the city was being shelled. It's a bit odd to go on your holiday someplace where you start being shelled, but it was beautiful, a beautiful city. It was August and we were actually, we had flown into Split and we hadn't seen the party that morning, but we were driving down the coast and Jeff called me on the cell phone and asked if I would go to a land line, so I went to a land line. He explained what had happened. So of course I turned around and went up to Split.

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop because we're moving on. So, we'll pick this up the next time. You've just heard about the death of Frasure and the others. You were driving down the Croatian coast and you were called and so you had to go back and we'll pick it up at that point.

GALBRAITH: Fine.

Q: Great.

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Q: Today is the 11th of March, 2002. Peter, so we know where you were. I mean you got the word about the tragic deaths of our negotiators, but I mean, what did this mean to you? I'm speaking personally, but job wise, too.

GALBRAITH: Well, it was a personal, well, I'd come to know Bob Frasure over the previous year and some months and he was somebody who was readily accessible, very funny, very sardonic sense of humor, who was respected by everybody who worked with him. Joe Kruzel I didn't know as well, but I'd worked with him as we'd established working groups with the Croatian ministry of defense and Nelson Drew I'd only met at my house a few nights before, but he'd certainly impressed Tune who had talked to him at great length with the fact that he genuinely seemed to want to know what was the right thing to do, the way he went about trying to collect information. Actually at that point we only knew that Frasure and Drew were dead. Kruzel had been injured, but by the time we got up to Split, Rosemarie Pauli, Holbrooke's assistant told me that indeed Kruzel had died as well.

Q: Then what sort of, did this set anything back, or what did it do?

GALBRAITH: Most immediately it set things back in the sense that the shuttle mission was put on hold and a new team had to be reconstituted. Holbrooke and Wes Clark and Rosemarie went back with the, on their plane with the bodies of the fallen colleagues and also with the two State Department officers, Dan Gerstein who was, not State Department officers, but with Dan Gerstein who was a lieutenant colonel who was a military assistant to Clark and who had survived and been in the APC and Pete Hargreaves the security officer, the RSO from Sarajevo. They came back. I think the accident served to solidify Holbrooke's determination. I think it got President Clinton more personally engaged. He came back from holiday in Wyoming for a

memorial service that was at Fort Meyer and then there was a meeting with a new team just after the service. I wasn't there. I had stayed in Croatia throughout. I guess professionally I mean the loss of Bob Frasure was a real one. We'd had a very good working relationship over the year plus that he had been the special mediator envoy for Bosnia and he was replaced by Chris Hill who had been the office director for South Central Europe and Chris had a more abrasive personality. He gave more of the impression of a young man in a hurry whereas Bob was more relaxed and I'd had a good working relationship with him, so I think there was in addition to the personal loss, there was a professional loss.

Q: Time wise, I mean what was happening? I mean in Sarajevo, how did things develop there?

GALBRAITH: Basically in the second half of August and beginning, well, no, second half of August, the Croatian army was moving. It had taken the former Serb-held Krajina and was moving into Bosnia and was making progress. There were instructions that I was asked to carry out to tell the Croatians to stop on the grounds that one shouldn't be negotiating, shouldn't be having military actions while negotiating peace. These were instructions that I thought were ridiculous and I tried to get them changed. The reason I thought they were ridiculous it was in fact the changing situation on the ground that was going to create the opportunity for peace, but it was hard to get focus on that in this particular time period. Lake still had a big say in the process. Holbrooke didn't have the kind of bureaucratic or personal support that he was going to get later in the process and certainly that he had after it was over. Actually Holbrooke and I had a conversation in Split in the VIP lounge as the arrangements were being made for the transfer of the bodies on the helicopters to the plane and I think before he went off to talk to the press. He was very negative about the peace plan that he'd been asked to present and he'd said that Bob Frasure was negative about it. I was very negative about it. In the end I think it was Holbrooke's achievement that he was able to take that plan which had been crafted by the NSC and by Lake and to make something out of it that in many ways was quite different from what that plan originally entailed.

Q: Well, when you think, just to get a feel for this. The NSC, Tony Lake, what was there, was it just that they were out of touch or did they have a certain, their own agenda, what was the feeling that you all had?

GALBRAITH: This was a process that involved endless concession to accommodate different bureaucratic interests in Washington and in an environment where basically the policy had been in shambles that summer notably with the fall of Srebrenica. It was my impression that while they would work up all these plans and proposals that made everybody happy or would be a satisfactory compromise to the different interagency actors, they became increasingly divorced from the reality in the Balkans. What the plan that Lake came up with the seven points involved complicated, it first involved a number of, it had a number of different elements for a peace plan, the 51 49 territorial split. It involved that the Bosnian government giving up Goražde an element that I talked about last week, which Holbrooke took out. It had a reference to a settlement of Eastern Slavonia based on the Z-4 plan that is the Croatian peace plan that I'd been working on the previous year. Then an elaborate system of incentives depending on how the different parties would respond. If the Bosnians were cooperative and the Serbs were not, then there would be a lifting of the arms embargo training and equipping of the Bosnian government. If the Bosnians

were not cooperative then the arms embargo would be lifted and the UN forces would simply leave. There were a lot of different permutations to it. It also depended in my view too much on a vision of Milosevic as a reasonable actor who, it skirted the fact that he was responsible for all that had happened, or for so much of what had happened. What was the great success was not this plan. The great success was the fact that what happened in August and September when the military situation on the ground changed so that by time the cease fire went into effect in early October the Bosnian government and the Croatians, the Bosnians and the Croatians controlled something on the order of 57 percent of Bosnia and it was a lot easier to get Serbs to agree to take 49 percent when in fact they actually held 43 percent than it was to get them to accept 49 percent when they actually held 70 percent.

Q: I've heard people say one of the things was you couldn't do anything with air power alone and then people would at that point point to Bosnia so you didn't have an army on the field. They said you really did, you had the Croatian army. I mean were you working to cause restraints? They were going after Bihać weren't they?

GALBRAITH: Well, this debate was certainly one that I had with Snuffy Smith the NATO commander in AF SOUTH and with Chuck Boyd who was in CINCEUR. That was their argument, air power wouldn't work. Those of us who were advocating air strikes ignored the fact that there wasn't an army on the ground and precisely the argument that I made in returning is yes, there is an army, it's not American, it's not NATO, it's the Croatian army and also the Bosnian army. As to restraint, we basically had told the Croatians that we would not object if Croatia moved military to take the Croatian territory; Serb held Croatian territory that was between government territory and Bihać. In other words, we wouldn't object if Croatia took military action against the Krajina that resulted in breaking the siege of Bihać. The issue was Croatian, further Croatian military action in central Bosnia of the Livno Valley. Taking places like Jajce which they did. Then possibly going on would they take Manjača and Banja Luka.

Q: What was the Bosnian army? Was the Bosnian army beginning to take shape and was it becoming a real factor. How did you see it?

GALBRAITH: It was a real factor, but it was definitely less strong than the Croatian army and much less capable of concerted of extending itself of moving and holding territory. The Bosnian army basically had been a defensive army. It wasn't particularly mobile. It didn't have a lot of equipment. It didn't have a lot of heavy weapons. One of the things that I'd worked on was to encourage in cooperation between the Bosnian and the Croatian armies in the summer of '95 and the conversations I had with Croatian defense minister Šušak in these periods was to make sure that the Croatians would support the Bosnians, particularly providing artillery support.

Q: Did the fact that Milosevic had made no move to help the Krajina when it was threatened, did that have any effect on the Bosnian Serbs' morale, efficiency or anything else? I mean at that time were you seeing a message had been delivered that Milosevic was cutting his losses?

GALBRAITH: I think that probably they did take that message. Beyond that the Bosnian Serb army basically had never been tested in battle against another organized military force. I mean it had proven that it was quite capable of moving into villages and towns and organizing mass

killings.

Q: The Serbian army?

GALBRAITH: Bosnian Serbian army, yes. Mass killings, rapes, expelling people, but an army that engages in that kind of behavior I never thought was likely to be a very efficient fighting force and they certainly proved that they were not. One of the other events that took place was on August 28th when a shell landed in Sarajevo, one mortar near the covered market and killed something on the order of 30 people and that then led NATO to the UN to turn the key and NATO to begin the air strikes and these air strikes were not sort of one off, they were sustained. They went on for three weeks and it was during those three weeks basically because the Bosnian Serbs had to keep their heads down because their communications were being destroyed because their command-and-control was being destroyed. The Croatian army and to a lesser extent the Bosnian army was able to roll over essentially undefended territory in the western part of Bosnia.

Q: Was this decision, what brought about this, from your perspective, I mean there had been lots of massacres and everything else. Why was this market mortar so important? It was, but why?

GALBRAITH: The previous market mortar had led to the ultimatum demanding the withdrawal of the heavy weapons in February of '94 and warning that there would be military action if another such attack took place. Fundamentally this came after Srebrenica. It came after the humiliation of the UN in May where hostages had been taken. It came at a time where UN troops had been withdrawn from all the safe areas. It came after the London declaration, which had put the Serbs on notice of a more forceful response to such attacks. So, I think it wasn't surprising. I mean people were really looking for an opportunity to pay these guys back for what had happened in Srebrenica. Again, I would give Holbrooke and his team credit for keeping Washington's feet to the fire, as for keeping the military campaign going. They recognized or they came to recognize that this was actually going to be useful.

Q: Were you getting any pressure prior to this from the Croatians? Why don't you guys use your air power and do stuff?

GALBRAITH: No. The attitude of the Croatians certainly at this stage was that they could do everything they needed on their own. In some ways they were becoming quite arrogant. Even before they didn't lecture us or push the way the Bosnians did.

Q: Did you have the feeling that I mean obviously every country or group has its own agenda and there was a certain feeling that things were not going their way and that we would just muck things up as far as they were concerned because we might make them concede things that they could grab. Did you feel that sort of a big land grab was in the works?

GALBRAITH: I think more than anything they wanted to be seen as our partner. They wanted to be our ally in the region. Tuđman often spoke of the Bosnians being a cross that he would bear on behalf of the west meaning in particular on behalf of the United States. Yes, I think the Croatians were also engaged in a land grab. One of the things that concerned me enormously is that the territory that was being taken in Bosnia was mostly being taken by the Croatian army

and it was mostly areas that the Croatians that were Croatian interest territory. I was afraid that we would end up with a situation in which the Croats in Croatia would have 30 percent or 40 percent of Bosnia. The Serbs would have 40 percent and the Bosniaks would have 20 percent. It's one reason that I strongly objected to instructions that called for an end to the military action because I felt that it was important that the Bosnians have an opportunity to take some of the places that had been majority Muslim and that were of very significant psychological importance to them partly places like Sanski Most, and Prijedor. I also was afraid that if Croatia got too much of a land grab in Bosnia that Tuđman would never give it up. If it was, I felt he was a pragmatic character so that he wasn't going to make a big stand over something relatively small so that if it was shall we say 25 percent Croatian and 25 percent Bosnian and that needed to be adjusted to make it 28 percent Bosnian and 22 percent Croatian I thought he would do that. What I was more concerned with again was that if he got his hands on all the territory that he thought should be part of greater Croatia having achieved this dream that it might be very hard to get him to pull back the fingers that were grasping to this dream.

Q: While all this was going on from the very beginning, were you ever thinking or were people around you saying, what the hell are we trying to do to create this Bosnia Herzegovina? Why not have a greater Croatia and a greater Serbia and let the Muslims and the Bosniaks I mean because in a way an awful lot was being made for a relatively small group of people within the greater Yugoslavia to create a place for them.

GALBRAITH: That discussion never took place within the embassy. It never took place among the people in the administration who were really working the issue full time. I think we were all fully committed to the idea of preserving Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent state within its international boundaries. I think there were a number of reasons for it. First, and I give you my reasons, but I think they were shared. First, Bosnia Herzegovina had become an independent state. It had been internationally recognized. It was a member of the United Nations. It would do great damage to the kind of world system that we believed in. It would do great damage to the post-World-War-Two system if neighboring states were able to get away with, were able to succeed at gobbling up the territory or part of the territory of a state that was a member of the UN and in fact if you think about it, since 1945 that basically has not happened. States have been unable to occupy and successfully annex territory that belonged to- (end of tape)

Q: One is continuing today in Israel.

GALBRAITH: That's the obvious counter example. The first point I make it is virtually the only one and second legally, the territory in question wasn't actually recognized as part of other UN members. In other words, Egypt was administering the Gaza Strip; it wasn't part of Egypt. Jordan was administering the West Bank; it wasn't part of Jordan. The one territory that does belong to another state is the Golan. Certainly Israel's annexation has not been recognized by anyone. That was one reason.

The second reason is that what took place in Bosnia was not the result of choice by the people of Bosnia, it was the result of ethnic cleansing and genocide. It was the product of horrific crimes. While I can accept a right of self-determination, I cannot accept the right that a group within a country or a group backed in this case by a foreign country, by Serbia, can come in and kill,

expel the previous inhabitants and then declare that they have a right of self-determination. That's just morally reprehensible. I think that this judgment was shared by all of us who were working on this issue. One of the arguments that I had with David Owen in the year and a half previous when we were working on various peace initiatives, not always in parallel was that he constantly wanted to redraw the boundaries of these countries and I thought that set a very dangerous precedent. For example, I think he contributed significantly to the demise of the Z-4 plan, the Croatia peace plan, because he wanted, he didn't want Eastern Slavonia to be part of it because he hoped that he could engage in a territorial exchange relating to Eastern Slavonia. He had ideas to solve the problem of Brčko in the northeast of Bosnia by granting the Serbs a corridor through Gurnia, which is on the north side of the Sava in which Croatia would give up territory. At one point he actually was proposing that that territory not go to Bosnia or to the Bosnian Serbs, but to Serbia itself because the Bosnia Serbs were being uncooperative. I think our position, which was to insist on the existing borders, was much sounder. It provided the basis for a settlement that ultimately everybody was prepared to accept. If we had ever begun to open the question, reopen the question or open the question or borders, we would really have opened a Pandora's box. Incidentally, Tuđman was prepared to do territorial exchanges. He was actually I think prepared to give up Croatian territory. Repeatedly he would tell me with regard to Prevlaka, which is the southern tip of Croatia that juts into Kotor Bay where Yugoslavia had its navy that he was prepared to, he wanted to know whether. He constantly was asking me whether NATO and the United States cared if Croatia held on to this territory. I think he wanted, kept wanting me to say that this was strategic valuable territory because it controlled the access to the bay where the Yugoslav navy was. I declined to do so. It was clear that he was also trying to, you know, he was considering whether he should trade this territory or give it up in some kind of deal with Serbia.

Q: Did you get any feel for, it wasn't your territory, but you were obviously intermittently involved with it, Izetbegović's role and how he was at this particular time?

GALBRAITH: Well, I saw a lot of Izetbegović as well. I saw him at Sarajevo. I saw him; I could see him when he came through Zagreb. I would see him at international events. I mean I always thought of him as being, I mean he certainly was different from Milosevic and Tuđman. Those were the two nationalists. Izetbegović was a much gentler person. He didn't have all the, he didn't have the forceful personality of Milosevic or Tuđman. In that sense some of the other Bosnian leaders were more attractive leaders. Notably Silajdžić, the prime minister who was probably the Bosnian leader with whom I was the closest. I think Izetbegović was fundamentally a decent man. He was more capable of being intimidated. It was interesting to see the different styles that Holbrooke used with these three different leaders Milosevic, Tuđman and Izetbegović. With **Milosevic** it was a mixture of camaraderie, New York street talk, playing on Milosevic's nostalgia about his banker days, you know, playing to the fact that Milosevic spoke fluent English, he liked to use terms like "bullsheet" combined with some threats and tough talk. With Tuđman, Holbrooke always played to his vanity. Basically he'd come in and say, "Oh, I've just been talking to Milosevic and I've been talking to that Izetbegović" as if Izetbegović was a kind of inferior creature, "but you, President Tuđman, you're the visionary here, you're the, can I get your thoughts as a great strategist and historian on the problem?" It worked and Tuđman would eat it up.

I think the funniest thing was Holbrooke and I had talked at some length about who should represent Croatia in Dayton. I had given him my assessment based on what I'd seen in previous negotiations including the Washington agreement that ended the Muslim Croat war was that Granić, although the foreign minister, although seemingly mild mannered, really was a capable negotiator and the way the Tuđman government worked was that Granić could operate quite independently and could make deals, he had a good sense of where Tuđman was and basically Tuđman would back him up. So, on the other hand Granić had a lot more progressive views and was a lot easier to deal with. I said to Holbrooke, basically Granić is the man that you want at the head of the delegation in Dayton, not Tuđman. Granić and Šušak, the defense minister. Holbrooke agreed with that, but how do you accomplish that? So, basically he came to Tuđman and he said, "Oh, great President Tuđman, we're going to have this conference in Dayton. We'd like you to be there at the opening and we'd like you to be there when we need you, but I know how busy you are and what other important jobs you have, so we wouldn't expect you to have to stay the whole time. Unlike that you know, unsaid, but implicit unlike that Izetbegović and Milosevic who are kind of below your level and will have to be there." So, he was flattered at being at this higher level when in fact of course the whole plan was for him not to be there the whole time. With Izetbegović , Holbrooke could be more threatening and Izetbegović was a more vulnerable character and people would yell at him and he would be taken aback by it.

Q: In a way did you feel that one had to be careful with Izetbegović because it was easier to pick on him and as a negotiator you don't want to just go after the soft target?

GALBRAITH: Well, I think a lot of people thought that. I mean I again, of all the three the one I liked the most was Izetbegović and I was most sympathetic to the Bosnian cause. Basically I viewed Izetbegović favorably. I was understanding of the enormous pressures he was working with and the weakness of the hand that he had so I guess some of the other people were more looked down on more, but not me. The Bosnians were quite divided. They didn't have and this was a handicap. They didn't have the sort of vision and clear lines of leadership that existed in Croatia. Without a doubt the best led of these three countries was Croatia. This doesn't mean that I like where Tuđman was leading Croatia, but as a leader he was by far the best in the sense that he had a vision, he knew where he wanted to go, he recruited capable people in whom he had confidence and he let them carry out the work and they did so more or less within his general direction. Milosevic was also I think not a particularly good leader. He had a handful of people, was sort of chums, he had to make every decision. I think and he didn't, he had no vision. His decisions were not particularly orderly.

Q: When the air strikes came in about three weeks, did you get involved with the Croatians asking them where we should be putting our bombs or was this a complete bypass?

GALBRAITH: The bombing was in Bosnia and we had, there were predetermined target sets so no, I didn't ask the Croatians where we should be bombing and nor did they have any input nor do I think they would have had any, nor would they have had anything particular to add at that point, too. In time now these target sets were developed from all sources and the Croatians provided lots and lots of intelligence to us.

Q: The bombing went on for about three weeks and what happened?

GALBRAITH: Several things happened. First, the Bosnian Serbs agreed to end the siege of Sarajevo. They agreed to withdraw their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. They did withdraw their heavy weapons from around Sarajevo and those were the major achievements in the ending of the siege. Holbrooke moved quickly at the end of this siege to try to make the point that it was over. He had wanted me to; this was on the 20th of September, to organize delivery of goods to Sarajevo and not just humanitarian goods, but commercial goods. I think around September 25th I flew into Sarajevo with Brian Atwood the administrator of AID. Part of this effort was to try and get the city back to normal as quickly as possible.

Q: The Dayton peace process, how was it viewed from Zagreb?

GALBRAITH: There really were two tracks to what was going on and in which I had a role. The first track was the Bosnian peace process which was what Holbrooke was doing. That involved these triangular missions of Sarajevo, Belgrade, and Zagreb and perhaps in some ways the main action was Belgrade. I mean getting, that more time was spent with Milosevic than with Tuđman by a huge margin because that's where the concessions need to be made. Zagreb was more of a center in terms because the UN was headquartered there. In the early days of the war that's where the media was, but I guess the media at this stage was as much in Belgrade and perhaps even more in Sarajevo.

The second track was one for which I was principally responsible which was to negotiate a peace agreement between Zagreb and the rebel Serbs or the local Serbs who had 4 percent of Croatia in Eastern Slavonia, Baranja and Western Slavonia that is the far east of the country, Vukovar. So, in this period, I would find myself on my own shuttle between Zagreb and Erdut which is a little village outside of Vukovar were I would meet with the local Serbs, and then participating with Holbrooke in his shuttle whenever he came to town, which was two or three times a week.

Q: How did you see the role on this thing? Was it the Croatians were I mean what sort of role in the Dayton thing did you see them playing? I mean it's three sides, well, it's the United States, and then it's four sided.

GALBRAITH: The Croatian role at Dayton in the period leading up to Dayton, at Dayton was the and indeed the whole two years, was important because it was the swing role. They were the ones who were capable of making things happen. By the time we were getting to Dayton they were also looking like the big winners. On the one hand, that made them more confident, made it in some ways they could be relied on to be more responsible. On the other hand, they were the least willing to compromise on matters of their own vital interests.

Q: I mean while these things were going on sort of in this compound in Dayton, Ohio, were you getting cables saying why don't you tell Tuđman to tell his people this or that?

GALBRAITH: The timing I think and perhaps a word about that. The shuttle began on the 14th of August and then the accident I think was like the 18th or 19th of August and it resumed around maybe the beginning of September. It was the beginning of September.

Q: This was '95?

GALBRAITH: '95.

Q: 95, yes.

GALBRAITH: There was basically eight weeks of shuttle diplomacy. Holbrooke flying from Sarajevo, Belgrade, Zagreb. Dayton then began on the first of November and went for 21 days. A great deal of what was accomplished in Dayton had actually been accomplished before then. The first of these was a meeting in early September in Geneva with the foreign ministers, Milutinović of Yugoslavia, Sacirbey of Bosnia and Granić of Croatia at the U.S. Mission to the United Nations in which they agreed to some fairly far reaching basic principles. One of which was everybody agreed that Bosnia Herzegovina would continue as a single state. Second, that it would have two entities. One being the Republika Srpska which was the first time that name was recognized and the other being the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and that there be common institutions and so on. Then those were elaborated in a meeting in New York on the 25th of September with further agreed principles. There was a process that was laying down a lot of the stuff that was being elaborated at Dayton.

Now, I think I should say something about the Croatia peace process. First a word on the Croatia peace process. At the end of August I got word from Babić, who is the more moderate of the Krajina Serb troika, saying that he would be interested in seeing me, that I suggested we meet in Eastern Slavonia. The Eastern Slavonian Serbs however, sent back word saying Ambassador Galbraith is welcome anytime to Eastern Slavonia, but not for the purposes of meeting Babić who is not welcome here. They also no longer referred to themselves as the Republika Srpska Krajina, but instead as the municipality of Vukovar, as their regional government, I forget now exactly what term they used. I had consulted with the others in the Z3 process and with the Croatians. The others in the Z-4 process, who were at this point were Z3 and also with the Croatians. Basically they made it clear, the Croatians made it clear that they were not interested in this international mediation process. They wanted a U.S. mediation. So, on the 5th of September I went out and I met with the leadership of the local Serbs and basically told them that if there was going to be a peace settlement it would have to be a settlement within Croatia. They said what they wanted was a blue zone or a UN administration for five years followed by a referendum without ever being clear what the referendum was on. It was obvious to me that the Croatians would never accept a referendum and that then began a process of negotiation. A week later I went out and met with a smaller group including Milan Milutinović who was the head of this delegation and at the press conference that we had afterwards he said, well, there are two options. One option is that there be a UN blue zone for five years and then a referendum and then the other option would be that we would have a peace settlement within Croatia. We'd prefer the blue zone, but we're prepared to be open to consider both options. That to me was a critical admission that they were prepared to contemplate being part of Croatia.

There were some bumps in this process. One of them was I had the idea that I would work off of the Z-4 plan because the Z-4 plan had a chapter that related to Eastern Slavonia which basically would have granted it, which would have reintegrated fully into Croatia over a UN administered transition period. Reintegrated it because our position in drawing up the Z-4 plan was self-

government only went to those areas that had had a Serb majority in 1991 in Eastern Slavonia had to have a Croat plurality. But, that the Serbs would also have certain provisions for autonomy as provided for in the Croatian constitution. Now those provisions of the Croatian constitution had been related to what Croatia had been prepared to offer the Krajina. It involved a transfer then on the theory that if Eastern Slavonia had a Serb majority or those parts of it, those municipalities that had Serb majority then they ought to get the same level of autonomy. It was a fairly small amount of autonomy. It wasn't as if they had their own parliament or anything like that, but they got some control over education and culture and that kind of thing. The interesting thing was at this stage was that Šarinić who was the lead Croatian negotiator, the president's chief of staff, he, the Croatians rejected applying the provisions of their own constitution. My basic view in September was tough, we'll just jam this down the throats of the Croatians and that we would present a plan that was based on the Croatian constitution and again the chapters of the Z-4 plan. I think I made a considerable mistake on a couple of grounds. First, it turned out that Holbrooke and the administration was not nearly as willing to play tough with the Croatians as I was. They didn't have the same calculation that I did which is that the Croatians, that if we pressured the Croatians enough they would concede. This was understandable. Their primary focus was on Bosnia.

Second, I think it may have been unnecessary to have had made the references to the Croatian constitution and to the international peace plan, the international peace plan basically had gone by the boards with the Serbian takeover of the Krajina. While there were parts of it relevant to Eastern Slavonia, they had not been the primary focus of discussion when the plan was on the table. Secondly, the whole plan had been I think quite discredited in Croatian eyes.

Then the third point about the Croatian constitution I think I insisted on this formula. Well, the reason I went with it initially was because I thought surely the Croatians won't have any problem accepting provisions of their own constitution. Initially when I had drawn up this approach I had drawn it up not making reference to the Croatian constitution to make those autonomy provisions more attractive to the Serbs. I thought I could say to the Serbs, "Look, here are autonomy provisions I'm prepared to try to get for you" and that they would be impressed. In fact they were impressed without ever having to tell them that those were already there in the Croatian constitution. So, I was very surprised when the rejection came from the Croatian side and not the Serbian side. At that point I think my own stubbornness kicked in. My thought was, how can these bastards reject the terms of their own constitution? Basically two things happened. First, the Croatians then decided that they would move off of having me as the mediator and go back to having Thorvald Stoltenberg the UN mediator and Stoltenberg had felt shut out of the game. He was eager to get back in even if it was destructive of the U.S. led mediation process. I learned that Šarinić was working with Stoltenberg to set up a meeting at the end of September in Beli Manastir, that is in Serb-held territory where Šarinić was going to come and present the Croatian peace plan which basically told the Serbs, you will be part of Croatia and tough. I could see that this was going to set off a disaster that is that Šarinić would come out and tell the Serbs, basically you don't have any choice, surrender to us. The Serbs would come back and say and our plan is that there is a UN administration for five years and a referendum, which is going to be completely unacceptable to the Croatians. I thought then the Croatians would say, well, we did everything we could for peace. We offered our plan, the negotiations broke down, the Serbs weren't serious and this would give them the pretext to take the Eastern Slavonia militarily as

they had taken the Krajina. I thought Stoltenberg was setting himself up for disaster. I went over and had breakfast with him at the Intercon and I made this case and I must say to his credit he immediately recognized the potential disaster. So, he agreed to postpone the Beli Manastir meeting, but in order to get him to do that I had to invite him to join my mediation effort, something that Holbrooke criticized me for doing, but anyhow.

Šarinić was furious that the meeting was postpone which really confirmed for me the idea that he had wanted to use it as an occasion to deliver an ultimatum rather than begin negotiations. It turned out that the partnership with Stoltenberg was very good. Stoltenberg didn't have a lot of specific ideas on the content of the peace agreement. So, he left all of that to me and he left to me virtually all of the negotiating. He would come in as kind of the wise man almost as if he wasn't on the same side as me which of course he was, but as if he were some independent older, wise negotiator having heard all of this, he'd say, well, to the Serbs, well, I've listened to what Ambassador Galbraith has had to say and I've listened to what you've had to say and I've thought a lot about it and on the whole I think you should consider Ambassador Galbraith's points. Of course these were points that Stoltenberg and I had worked up together. It worked with the Serbs.

At the end of September, another person, another thing that happened was the British Ambassador Gavin Hewitt came to see me and he said, "Look."

Q: This was the British ambassador?

GALBRAITH: In Croatia.

Q: In Croatia, yes.

GALBRAITH: "Šarinić is very upset about your proposed comprehensive plan, that is the one which used the Croatian constitution and the Z-4 plan. He says that if you go forward they'll take military action. I think you should back off of this and just try and get agreement on some basic principles." Initially I resisted that advice again because I thought they ought to be able to accept their own constitution. That was the route I ultimately went down. On October 3rd we went out to Erdut. Jeff Hovanec, who worked for me, had prepared some basic principles, ten principles. I'd reworked some of them, particularly strengthening language on human rights and basically in sort of two, in proximity talks with the Serbs and the Croatians, not face to face negotiations, but meeting with the delegations separately, got them to agree to the principles. The Croatians wanted one more, which we got so ultimately the list of basic agreed principles was 11. Those principles provided that there would be a transition period under UN administration for the area. They provided that all persons who had been displaced from the region would have the right to return home, meaning that Croats who had been driven out could come back. It provided that all persons who were in the region, i.e., Serbs from other parts of Croatia would have the right to return to their homes in other parts of Croatia and to recover their property. It provided that all citizens of the region would be treated on a nondiscriminatory basis. Again, that anybody who had property would get the property back or compensation if it couldn't be returned. It provided that Croatian institutions such as banks and post offices would be reestablished during the transitional period. It provided that there be an ethnically police force and finally it provided that

there would be local elections before the end of the transitional period. Both sides accepted it and that was in fact formal acceptance by the Serbs that they would be reintegrated into Croatia. It was a huge breakthrough.

Holbrooke was in Belgrade. I think it caught him and Milosevic by surprise. Over the ensuing months, Milosevic held back on the finalization of an agreement because I think he wanted to use Eastern Slavonia for more leverage, but the fact is that when a final agreement was concluded on the 12th of November it was virtually identical to these agreed basic principles, although in the ensuing month I tried a number of different formulae to elaborate them and to make it more detailed without any success. So the final agreement was basically the same one that was negotiated on October 3rd.

There was an amusing incident in all this. When I was doing the shuttle to Eastern Slavonia, to Erdut, basically what I'd do I'd fly out either in a UN helicopter or the Croats loaned one of their government Learjets so we'd fly from Zagreb from the airfield in Osijek and then be met by UN vehicles and cross through the checkpoints and go into Serb territory and go to the headquarters to this little villa in Erdut. A very lovely little Eastern Slavonian villa. When I did that I then was unreachable because the cell phones didn't work and there were no telephone lines between Serbia and Croatia and this was connected to the Serbian phone system. At one point when I was there Holbrooke had wanted to reach me. This was in September and he had been unable to reach me. So, Wes Clark had offered to provide me with a team of, an army team with all these satellite communications so that people could reach me. I had this team and it was deployed outside of the villa and it was never used because Holbrooke basically knew nothing about the content of Eastern Slavonia negotiations nor did anybody in Washington. So, there was really nobody to talk to about any of the content points. Having this team impressed the hell out of the Serbs because it exemplified the power of the United States. Periodically, they had a tent and so on, so periodically I'd go out and I'd talk to the communicators and sort of go into the tent as if I was using the phone even though I wasn't. The one time I did use it was on October 3rd when we had concluded this agreement. I thought well this is good news, I'll call Holbrooke. I got him on the plane as he was flying to see Milosevic. He was thinking of the moves ahead. So, he said, "Well, are you going to announce this?" I said, "Yes, the press is here." He began to go into how it wouldn't be a good idea to have a press conference. Well, the reality of the situation was there was nothing I could do about that. First Stoltenberg wasn't going to take his instructions from Holbrooke. I couldn't get Stoltenberg not to hold the press conference. The Serbs and the Croats wanted the press conference. I had to arrange in mid-conversation with the communicators to disconnect. It was simply because, it was too complicated to explain it to work the whole thing out and there was no way I could avoid. I didn't want to get an instruction not to have a press conference because I couldn't carry out that instruction. I mean I could not participate, but that would only make things worse.

Q: Well, this is interesting, I mean this is a significant slice of territory that we're talking about.

GALBRAITH: Oh, yes.

Q: But it sounds like you were almost completely off the Washington radar which of course is a delight because my experience in the lowly position of a consular officer, you never ask

Washington for advice unless you want a delay and if you're willing to accept something that you really can't live with. You have to be very careful about this.

GALBRAITH: Well, that was exactly right. I described this as the phenomena, the shadow of the bright light. The shadow of the spotlight. Everyone was focused on Bosnia at this stage. It was the number one foreign policy issue of the United States in the fall of 1995 and so in the Pentagon, in the NSC, in State, people were looking at what Holbrooke was doing with a microscope and the joint chiefs. Now, State wasn't a problem because that was Holbrooke's turf and he had that under control, but he certainly had rivals and people that didn't trust him in NSC and in the Pentagon and the Joint Chiefs. His genius was to bring that team together which he had described at the beginning of this process on August 14th when we'd had this dinner that I described in Castija in Marina at the castle. That team wasn't his team; they were there to spy on him, that's how he put it. He converted that team into extensions of his personality and they were able to help him get confidence of the other elements in the bureaucracy and in some ways and also he didn't report in writing. So, in some ways he avoided the micromanaging. I avoided it because obviously the same people in our government who work on Bosnia on a policy level were those that work on Croatia. They were all focused on Bosnia and therefore, none of them aside from the Croatia desk officer who I had recruited, who was on my side, there was nobody who had any independent thought on Croatia. As I say, it's kind of the spotlight effect. When you're just out of the spotlight it's very dark or it's dark at least in relative terms. So, I never got aid. In this whole process there wasn't a substantive word from anybody in Washington in the substance of what went into the Eastern Slavonia peace agreement. Now, we had some discussions on how to factor this into the overall peace initiative, but you know, as to what words might be in that agreement, what guarantees, policy decisions that I kept insisting on like the right of all Croatian citizens to return to anyplace in Croatia, the right of people to recover their property, no input at all.

The agreement on October 3rd was 11 points; the final agreement was 14 points. Of the 14 points, seven of them related to human rights, principally for ethnic Serbs in Croatia and it has to be said that neither the Serbs nor the Croatians ever asked for any of those points. Those were simply things that I insisted had to be part of the agreement.

Q: You know, when you were getting into this, I think we covered it before, but by this time had the Croatians gotten their act together? Were there nasty concentration camps or were they treating Serbs as prisoners of war in normal terms?

GALBRAITH: Basically the Krajina population, the Krajina Serb population had all fled and there were very few of them who had been captured and I think they had allowed almost all of those to go to Serbia or Bosnia. There were not Croatian run camps being held by Serbs in which Serbs were held.

Q: You didn't have the Croatian equivalent of Arcon and that kind of thing, a sort of criminal militia groups going out and doing things?

GALBRAITH: There was some of that. Whoever had been burning the Krajina clearly there were paramilitary groups, but the Arcon equivalents within Croatia had basically been in '91

when they had engaged in some massacres of Serbs and also there were Bosnian Croats paramilitary/criminal gangs that were doing things more in Bosnia than in Serb-held, than in Croatian territory that had been recovered from the Serbs. Arcon, however, was present in Eastern Slavonia. For example, we came across the line and then drove through fields and then vineyards to go to this little villa in Erdut. We would be on the main road that would go to I guess to Vukovar and we would take a left at the Arcon's gas station and whorehouse. We'd just be a mile up the road from that.

Q: Well, after these agreements had been reached, these essentially were put together into what was called the Dayton Package?

GALBRAITH: No. This was the Erdut agreement and it was separate from Dayton. Dayton concerned only Bosnia. Erdut concerned Croatia. It was done November 12th; Dayton was done November 21st. The Erdut agreement was important for a number of other reasons that I think are worth mentioning. First, it represented the first time that territory in the former Yugoslavia was going to change hands or change ethnic control peacefully. Second, the basic concept of the agreement was to integrate people and that since it was separate it was different from Dayton which created these two ethnic federal entities of Bosnia. In Eastern Slavonia our goal was to create conditions in which the Serb population in Eastern Slavonia could remain and the Croat population that had been expelled in '91 by the Serbs could return. In short, our agreement, the Erdut Agreement sought to restore the multiethnic character of an area. If it succeeded it would represent in fact the first reversal of ethnic cleansing, and in fact it did succeed, and it has succeeded. There was a two-year UN transitional administration. At the end of this, this came under full Croatian control, basically all the Serbs who were from Eastern Slavonia originally, virtually all of them stayed and some of the Croats have returned, and it is part of Croatia and administered.

Q: What about all the houses and churches that got blown up and all that? Was that included in the agreement for something to be done or was that done on the side?

GALBRAITH: It didn't actually require a specific mention in the agreement because well, and many other things didn't need specific mention in the agreement because the agreement was providing that the territory would return to Croatia and when it did return to Croatia then of course one knew that the Croatian government would be in a position to rebuild and restore these churches. It wasn't something that you could ask the Serb authorities to do during the transitional period for two reasons. One is they would say that they had no responsibility for the destruction of the churches, that was basically done by paramilitaries and people like Arcon and there might be some truth to it. Second, they had no resources. Some of the reconstruction of churches actually took place during the period of the UN administration.

Q: Was there your agreement came first and then the Dayton one came later.

GALBRAITH: Yes.

Q: Was there any discrepancy or did one screw up the other or did they completely complement each other? How did they fit? I mean it's different, apples, oranges, but at the same time, it's all

part of the process.

GALBRAITH: It is part of the process and there was no conflict between the two agreements and indeed they were essential, it was essential. Eastern Slavonia was a necessary precondition to Dayton. In that, without an agreement on Eastern Slavonia, Tuđman would not have allowed an agreement to be reached on Bosnia because he knew that with an agreement on Bosnia sanctions would be lifted on Serbia and that would eliminate the leverage that he had to ever recover Eastern Slavonia. So, he was always going to hold Bosnia hostage to Eastern Slavonia. That was the point I have to say at the beginning of the shuttle Holbrooke didn't realize it. It took him a while. He imagined basically that we could have a peace process that would go on for however long, maybe never conclude on Eastern Slavonia and then meanwhile we would get a deal on Bosnia. One of the arguments I had with him, procedural arguments was just on that point. I kept insisting, "Dick you can't get a deal on Bosnia until you deal with Eastern Slavonia." I think he ultimately came around to that view.

Now, Eastern Slavonia as I said, the basic deal was reached on October 3rd, it was signed on November 12th and the reason that nothing happened, that it took so long in-between was that Milosevic basically decided he didn't want a settlement that soon. He wanted to have this as something additional to use in Dayton. On the first day of Dayton, there was a meeting that dealt with Eastern Slavonia and it was at, it was very interesting. It was at the, at a guest house outside of the enclosed area, not far from the officers' club and it was set for 4:00. It was Tuđman, Milosevic, Warren Christopher hosting. Tuđman arrives at 4:00 and Chris, Secretary Christopher greets him and shakes hands warmly and asks him what he would like to drink. He says, "What will you have?" Christopher says, "Well, I'll have some wine if you have it." So, they both agreed to have some wine. Šušak is there and Granić. Milosevic shows up 35 minutes late. His first meeting with the American Secretary of State at Dayton and first meeting with Tuđman in years. He's also obviously been drinking. He asks for a glass of red wine and then the corporal who's serving is constantly refilling his glass. Milosevic then when the subject of Eastern Slavonia comes up, Christopher asks me to explain where we are in the negotiations. I start to give an answer and Milosevic says, "Oh, these are details." The essential question is I guess then Tuđman says, "Yes, but the essential question is whether you're prepared to recognize this as part of Croatia." Milosevic then comes back and he begins to insist on this idea of a referendum. Tuđman tells him a referendum is out of the question and Milosevic says, "No, I can understand why you're saying that. Your generals are making you say that." At which point Šušak jumps in, the defense minister and says to Tuđman, he says, "Mr. President, this is your policy. It's not what your generals are telling you." Milosevic looks at Šušak and says, "So, Šušak, what are you, a general?" Then finally he says, Milosevic says, "Oh, okay, I understand this. You can't have a referendum; there won't be a referendum." Thus, it was, you know, this stumbling block was eliminated. It was really quite remarkable. Christopher and Tuđman left and I stayed and talked to Milosevic for another hour during which time my time was over and he left I then asked the corporal how much red wine had been consumed. Nearly two bottles, all of it by Milosevic in this two-hour meeting. It was quite amazing.

Q: Milosevic seemed to have the ability to get to a certain point where he is quite willing to give away a lot of things that were not going through, he was not a careful negotiator.

GALBRAITH: Not at all, not at all.

Q: I mean, which is not, I'm not putting that in a pejorative term, I mean sometimes a careful negotiator can get too caught up in bargaining things. Did you get the feeling he was giving things away in order to really clear away the underbrush, he saw where he wanted to go and he was doing it or was this sort of a spur of the moment thing?

GALBRAITH: It's hard to say. Frankly, there was no chance at this stage in the game that he was going to hold onto anything in Eastern Slavonia. There was no chance that Tuđman would ever agree to a referendum. In reality he didn't give away anything by saying, okay, no referendum. On the other hand, that was his sole negotiating leverage. I suppose the, what was impressive was the sort of casual way he went about this. I mean I very much had the impression that this was the product of a guy who had been drinking all afternoon. Although the other side of that coin is again that this was also something that was inevitably it would have to come to. In much the same way that he told the Bosnians. No, no, you people, okay, I agree to a united Sarajevo. You people have really fought for this. You've suffered and thus casually wiping out something that the Serbs had maintained, carried out four years of war to get which was to have a Serbian Sarajevo by partitioning of the city. On the other hand, I doubt if we would have gotten a Dayton peace agreement if there was an insistence on partitioning Sarajevo.

Q: When you were talking to Christopher, did you find much interest on his part on the Eastern Slavonia thing or was this, again did you find that everybody was really focused on Bosnia?

GALBRAITH: I think Christopher was more interested in it, but I mean he was Secretary of State so he couldn't possibly know any of the details of it. The upshot of this meeting was an agreement that Milosevic and Tuđman would ask Stoltenberg and myself to go back to Eastern Slavonia and resume our mediation. Holbrooke having decided that Stoltenberg should come to Dayton since Eastern Slavonia was being discussed. He was actually when this meeting took place on his way on an airplane into Dayton. Holbrooke I had drafted a statement in which the two presidents requested that Stoltenberg and I return to Eastern Slavonia to resume our mediation efforts and so they then initialed it and I think Stoltenberg arrived at about 6:00 p.m. and at about 10:00 p.m. we were flying back on Tuđman's plane, poor man. This was leading to your question, which was.

Q: Well, I was just wondering, I was just asking about Christopher's.

GALBRAITH: Yes, that's what I was getting to. So, Stoltenberg and I left that night as I recall, however, Eastern Slavonia was discussed about a week later at Dayton. The issue being the one thing that we hadn't settled on October 3rd was the length of the transition period. The Serbs had initially wanted five years. The Croatians of course initially had not wanted a transition period. They had agreed there would be a transition period, but they wanted it to be short, to be one year. There was this last issue then that in Dayton where Tuđman and Milosevic were apart on the, now, I wasn't there, whether it should be one year or two years and Christopher fashioned a compromise in which it was going to be one year but could be extended for another year if either party so requested and the security council agreed for up to another year. Chris Hill describes this in which Hill basically is offering to write this all out and Holbrooke is saying no, no, no,

because Holbrooke wanted Christopher to get into the negotiations and to feel that he himself had made a personal contribution. In fact, it wasn't really that big a deal. It was obvious that it was going to be one or two years and formulation like this was fairly obvious, but it gave Christopher a sense that he had actually come up with an original idea and done something.

Q: After the agreement was signed and all, did you feel that you had any problems other than from the NSC or State or Defense or anything like this or was this so far off the radar by this time?

GALBRAITH: There was a funny element to this which is that Holbrooke had told Tuđman that he wanted to have American troops in Eastern Slavonia, but this was before Dayton. The NSC and the Pentagon basically said that's a bridge too far. We're going to have a hard enough time trying to get this agreement on troops into Bosnia and then have to explain what is Eastern Slavonia and why we have troops there, no, that can't be done. Holbrooke came up with the idea that we would tell Tuđman that we would have an American retired general be the administrator of Eastern Slavonia because Tuđman basically so admired generals and American generals and of course had thought highly because he had had this contract with MPRI and admired what they were doing and Tuđman himself had been a general. Holbrooke called me up and asked me to go out and see Tuđman and to give him the resume of a three star, retired three star general who was going to be the administrator and then to explain to Tuđman that I had, that Holbrooke had delivered on his promise, he hadn't delivered troops, but he had delivered on his promise for an American general. So, I dutifully went up and made this briefing and Tuđman was you know, he didn't react particularly, but you know, I guess he was happy.

Holbrooke then calls me up the following Monday and says basically, we've got a problem. General so-and-so has thought about it over the weekend and he doesn't, he's talked it over with his wife and he's called back and said he doesn't want to do it. You go figure out how to handle Tuđman. Well, needless to say, I did not immediately make an appointment to go see him. The next day Holbrooke called me up and he said, do you know Jacques Klein? I said, well, I've met him. Jack was a Foreign Service officer who had been the political advisor to CINCEUR, no to EUCOM in Stuttgart. Holbrooke said, well, I think he's crazy, but he's an air force reserve two star and I think you know, you'll just have to make the best of it. So, I went up and told Tuđman that we'd thought about it and we'd come up with somebody even better instead of a retired three star, we had an active two star air force general who is also one of our great diplomats. Jacques Klein came out and he was the administrator. He was born in Alsace, a big guy, you know, bon vivant, fondness of good wine and cigars and good food, great raconteur and he and Tuđman hit it off perfectly and I think Tuđman felt he was really talking to somebody who was his equal. The Serbs loved him because they felt he was their protector. He knew how to behave like a dictator and a viceroy and he did brilliantly. The story about how he got the job is very funny because basically his career was at a dead end.

Q: I remember meeting him at the Pentagon and he was one of those political advisors who you know, go nowhere.

GALBRAITH: Yes. He'd been a POLAD. He was in the inspector corps and what was he, minister counselor maybe. But, clearly about to TIC out.

Q: Time in class.

GALBRAITH: Time in class, but Holbrooke had known him when he was ambassador to Bonn and Jacques had been the POLAD and Jacques was on his schedule. It happened that when he was on his schedule during this two week period that Jacques was on official duty, was on air force duty. So, he showed up in his air force uniform with the two stars. Holbrooke was thinking about who he is going to send to Eastern Slavonia and sees Jacques and it just goes through his head, you, Eastern Slavonia. Again, it was a perfect fit. Jacques did a terrific job and it made his career. He went on from there to be the deputy high rep in Bosnia. Now he is the SRSG, Special Representative to the Secretary General in Bosnia. He was offered an ambassadorship.

Q: Did you have any problems with him? I mean he's in your territory.

GALBRAITH: Everybody imagined we could, we would because of course, you know people, well. Everybody imagined that our personalities would clash, but, no. I think I mean I recognized from the start that if this agreement, that if the Erdut agreement was going to work it required a strong UN administrator and having an American there who was going to be the dictator of the region was exactly what was called for. I didn't want to be the dictator of the region, so I was fully prepared to support him. I mean, I considered the Erdut agreement to be my real legacy for my time in Croatia, so I didn't want to undercut the guy who was responsible for its implementation. I think Jacques was a little nervous about me at the beginning. One of the features of the Erdut agreement was that there was a guarantee commission of U.S. and European Union and Russia, a couple of other countries, Canada, Norway that was supposed to go up and monitor implementation. The Serbs attached a lot of importance to it because this was going to be a guarantee of their right to stay and that the Croatians would attack.

Q: You're talking about the Serb population?

GALBRAITH: Of Eastern Slavonia, right and the Serb leaders. Jack on the other hand didn't particularly want this article 11 commission to come into being because he was afraid he might be second-guessing what he was doing, but we worked it out. The commission did come into agreement. Jack we'd go out and fly out. He'd provide briefings and then he'd helicopter us around or bus us around and show us what great things were going on and all the wonderful things he had done, so it worked out fine.

Q: I think this is probably a good place to stop. We'll pick this up the next time, the Erdut agreement. How do you spell that?

GALBRAITH: E-R-D-U-T.

Q: Agreement has been signed and it is being implemented by Jacques Klein and you've talked about your relationship with him, the Dayton Accords have been assigned, have been signed. So, we'll pick it up at that point.

GALBRAITH: Okay.

Q: That really brings us to well, the end of '95, doesn't it?

GALBRAITH: Yes.

Q: Yes. Great.

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Okay, today is the 11th of September, 2002. Peter, what did you do from here on?

GALBRAITH: Okay, well, we're beginning with the new year in January of 1996 and the first thing that happens is the large number of visitors that are coming to support the implementation of the Dayton peace agreement. I calculated that in a, I think it was in a one year period, but most of it in the three months from December 1st of 1995 through the first couple of months of 1996 we had at our small embassy we had one hundred members of congress, we had the president, we had the Secretary of State, we had the secretary of Defense, we had the secretary of, the two secretaries of commerce, one of whom died, we had the director of central intelligence. So, these months a period that really began with the signing of the Dayton Peace Agreement for the next year.

Q: You were there for how long?

GALBRAITH: I left Croatia on the 3rd of January, 1998.

Q: 19?

GALBRAITH: 1998.

Q: '98, yes. Talk first about it happened in your territory, you had the Secretary of Commerce Brown and his plane went down. What did that do to you?

GALBRAITH: I'll say a little bit about what was going on. We had all these visits. I must say when I had done my ambassadorial seminar there was a discussion of what happens if you have the president come visit and how that can turn an embassy upside down. It was a briefing that I completely turned out since it seemed so improbable that the president of the United States would ever come to Croatia in the middle of the war and under Franjo Tuđman and indeed for the first year of my tenure the highest level visitor we had was an office director I think and I think that was the highest level visitor that had ever come, an American visitor that had ever come to independent Croatia. There were members of congress, but from the executive branch.

Again with the peace implementation, President Clinton was going to make a very fast trip in January to Bosnia, Hungary and stop off in Croatia and see President Tuđman. I had wanted him to stay a little bit longer because I thought that he would get a very, I knew he would get a very warm reception from the Croatian people. At that point in time there was no country in the world that was as pro-American as Croatia with the sense that the United States had stood by Croatia

and had helped bring about what was from the Croatian point of view a successful outcome to the war. Needless to say, feelings in Bosnia were more mixed with the Serbs not as happy. I think politics was also a little bit in my mind with the notion that it certainly wouldn't hurt President Clinton's standing with the Croatian Americans who are located in some key states for him to be well received. The other side of that coin which I understood very well was first that the president had a very tight schedule, there were security concerns and he didn't want to be seen in too close an embrace of an odious leader like Franjo Tuđman. In any event, the visit was an airport stop and in some ways the elements of the visit were very interesting. The White House advance chief was a guy named Redmond Walsh who is one of the more laid back individuals I ever encountered and he behaved nothing like a White House advance man. He was very polite, never placed demands on anything. The Croatians offered to close the airport when Clinton arrived and he said, oh, well, it's not necessary, we'll just have a little part of the airport. So, finally, I turned to him and took him aside and said, "Redman, you're really doing great damage to the reputation of the United States. Everybody expects that when the president comes, we make the world stop, that we boss everybody around. You've got to be a little more demanding." I was joking, but not entirely joking.

Anyhow, what also happened was that the weather cut short the president's visit to Bosnia, so he came earlier than anticipated, but it was a successful meeting in the evening in Zagreb. The Croatians had taken the VIP rooms at the airport, which were done in what I call Yugo-communist style, which was sort of a 1970s dark wood and lots of brown colors and a ghastly chandelier. They had transformed it into a room, several rooms out of the Hapsburg Empire with furniture from the museums and paintings on the walls from the museums in Zagreb. Clinton had a reasonably, I mean it was a fairly straightforward exchange with Tuđman. He was very tired. They had a one on one and then he left.

We had Christopher come, I think that was January, Christopher in February again the message to reinforce the Dayton Peace Agreement. Then with the idea of producing tangible results. We wanted to convey the impression that peace was going to bring economic benefits. The decision was made that the Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown should come with a delegation from the various U.S. agencies that handled economic matters along with businessmen. Interestingly, his advance team was the most demanding of all. It was the antithesis of President Clinton's. There was a young man at the head of it named Morris Reed who I'm afraid we'll probably hear from again in politics, although I hope not. He came into my office and we chatted about what Ron Brown might do. There was a scheduling problem, which was to be, the visit was coming up just before Good Friday and the Easter holiday. Ron Brown had promised that he'd be back with his family for Easter Sunday and I think Ambassador Swanee Hunt wanted to do something for him and he promised to do something in Vienna on the Friday or Saturday, I think it was the Saturday and the visit to Bosnia was going to be on the Tuesday or Wednesday, so the question was how to fill in the time. So, I suggested on that Good Friday that he go to Dubrovnik. Now, Morris Reed had never heard of Dubrovnik. I showed him, I had on my coffee table in my office a picture book, a wonderful Croatian picture book of Dubrovnik and I showed him the picture book. He looked at it and then he was concerned that it might look like a junket and he wanted to protect his boss. I said, no, first that this was at the edge of what had been a war zone, but that really there would be a great economic boost to Dubrovnik and if the U.S. secretary of commerce went there, it would give a morale boost to the city. It had suffered a lot and it wanted to get its

tourism on and going again and given that Ron Brown had this hole in his schedule, this would be an excellent way to fill it. In any event, Ron Brown's schedule got turned around and instead of going to Dubrovnik on the Friday and maybe doing the other part of the trip on the Thursday, on Wednesday, Thursday, he was going to come in earlier. I think it was a, come in on Monday night, no Tuesday night and then do the trip through Bosnia on the Wednesday and continue on to Dubrovnik that Wednesday, be there overnight and then come up to Zagreb and meet with President Tuđman on the Thursday. Apparently Ron Brown, when he heard about Dubrovnik and the possibility of going there, he really wanted to go. This was a complicated itinerary, which he was going to be in and out of Croatia a number of times. In fact on the night he arrived, he flew into Zagreb on a small U.S. government plane, a very small jet, four people to join up with the 707 that was going to take him on the trip to Bosnia. I went out and greeted him as I did with most visitors. We drove in to the airport together. I gave him a few key points that needed to be made on terms of U.S. policy for Croatia stressing that Croatia was not adhering to its obligations to treat its Serbian citizens on an equal basis with the Croatian citizens, and that Croatia needed to be a country that respected human rights if it was going to get the economic benefits.

I then went up to the control room just to see how things were and had a nice, Chuck Meissner who was the Assistant Secretary to Commerce for International Affairs and who had been a staff member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. I'd known about Chuck Meissner, one of the legendary figures from the staff, but this was the first time that I'd met him. He gave me a copy of Ron Brown's speech which Morris Reed who had been somehow unwilling to share, the speech that Ron Brown was going to give in Dubrovnik the next day and I read that in my car on the way back to my residence and called Chuck. I said it was fine, I may have had a small suggestion or two. The control room was a lively place, lots of activity. I remember seeing the Croatian woman who had served as the translator for me on a number of occasions and who was going on this trip to be the translator. She was a little bewildered as to why she was going. In other circumstances I might myself have wanted to go on the trip because it would have been quite a convenient way to go from Zagreb to Dubrovnik. It would have given me a chance to go to Sarajevo to see what the latest developments were, to see what was going on in Tuzla and then arrive with the Commerce Secretary in Dubrovnik. However, my fiancé, now my wife, was staying with me and we didn't have a lot of time together and she wasn't feeling well. I never raised the issue. The plane was full. There might not have been space and I did tell Ron Brown, if you don't mind I won't see you off tomorrow morning, but I'll see you in Dubrovnik.

The next day the weather was not very good and I went down in President Tuđman's plane with his cabinet, he wasn't there, in the Challenger to Dubrovnik with the prime minister, the Croatian ambassador to the United States went as usual, the economic minister, a number of other cabinet ministers for this great event. As we approached Dubrovnik there was zero visibility. I knew the pilot of the plane fairly well because he had flown me and Thorvald Stoltenberg a lot when we had gone from Zagreb out to Osijek to do the negotiations in the Erdut agreement and I'd flow with Tuđman to the United States on other occasions. We came in and we couldn't find the runway and we veered to the right over the sea. I turned to- (end of tape)

Okay, first I should say as we were coming in through this bad weather, there was the kind of gallows humor that sometimes exists among passengers on a plane when it is very turbulent and

as usual the Croatian ambassador to the United States was making jokes and I was teasing him. I was asking whether Tuđman would be more upset at losing his plane or losing his cabinet. Then I looked over to the prime minister who was sitting opposite me and I could see that he was very nervous. I also knew that he was a pilot. So, this affected my thinking. When we couldn't find the runway the first time, as we were circling back around I said to him. I said, "Zlatko, look there's no point in attempting a landing in this weather because we'll get on the ground at some risk, but there's no way that the U.S. air force is going to land this VIP plane if the weather conditions aren't safe. So, we'll be there and Ron Brown will go to Split. We shouldn't do it." By the time this whole exchange had been completed and we in fact were on approach and we landed. We then stayed on the plane. It was raining ferociously. We stayed on the plane awhile because there was no way to, we didn't want to get wet and we were waiting for the Ron Brown plane to land. We then got off; there were umbrellas and so on. I should explain that the Dubrovnik airport had been destroyed, it had been taken over by the Montenegrins in 1991 and been looted and destroyed and it was only partially rebuilt at this point. One of the things they didn't have was the instruments for an instrument landing. Anyhow, we went inside the terminal where there was a table set up with food and I think there were some girls dressed in traditional outfits to make an offering to Ron Brown. All the local dignitaries were there; the Croatian cabinet was there. Everybody wanted to make an impression. Chris Hedges was there from the New York Times purely by coincidence. He wasn't covering this, but he'd been in Bosnia, Mostar I guess, and he'd come out and he was going to take the Croatia airlines flight from Dubrovnik to Zagreb, but that had been canceled. All the commercial flights had been canceled because of the weather.

In any event, at 3:25 Mateša took me aside and he said, "Ron Brown's plane, we've lost radio contact with Ron Brown's plane and it's disappeared from the radar." I had this total reaction of disbelief. I mean I knew what this meant, but it just, it just didn't seem possible. Airplane crashes are something you read about, but they're so rare most people, thank God never experience them. So, I looked at him and I said, "Zlatko, is this serious?" I mean I knew it was. He said, "Yes. What can I do for you?" I said, "Well, I better make some calls." I didn't want to do it on the mobile phone because they could be monitored. So, we went back to Tuđman's plane, the Challenger and I called the OP Center and asked to speak with the secretary or the most senior person who was available. It turned out to be Peter Tarnoff and I told him that we'd lost radio contact and it had disappeared from the radar screen. We then immediately, the Croatians immediately began to mobilize for a search. I got on the phone to try to get U.S. forces involved in the search and rescue. We had a report that a French I-4 helicopter had seen the plane in the water and bodies floating. It turned out that about 6:00 I think we'd gone into Dubrovnik and actually left the airport, but the plane was found on a mountain near the airport now known as St. John the Baptist. What had happened was a local man had heard the noise of the plane flying overhead and thought this was very unusual that he hadn't seen anything and then the clouds had lifted and you could see the plane wreckage and he didn't, in fact he didn't have a phone. So, he had had to walk down to find a phone and the rescuers came up. The Croatians did what they could. There was one stewardess who was alive in the back of the plane, a military officer, Sergeant Kelly, but she died being transported to the hospital in Dubrovnik. I went up that night in the rain with the prime minister to the crash site as it was getting dark and in the end it was clear that it would be quite difficult to get up to the top of the mountain and I didn't want our VIP delegation to interfere with the rescue effort so I said, no, we won't go now. There's nothing

that we can do.

The next morning, the White House had wanted me to do some television shows. So, I think I did the Today Show and of course I had to be very careful and simply say that the weather was terrible and that the plane wasn't where it should have been, fairly obvious. We went up the mountain and the engine was in one place and the tail was reasonably intact and over the top of the mountain were just pieces of wreckage, burned parts and bodies. There wasn't anything to do I mean that could be done for anybody. I went down the mountain. As we went down I slipped and fell off the side of the mountain and ended up upside down in a tree. Fortunately I was only scratched up and not injured. I could have been. I think later that day I went back to Zagreb and then came down as the bodies were brought off the mountain and identified them. On Good Friday, which was a beautiful day, it was the day Ron Brown was originally thought to go to Dubrovnik, I flew down with Tuđman and we each gave speeches. It was one of the more difficult speeches I've ever done. I wrote it myself as I did almost all my speeches. I wanted to find some words to give meaning to the sacrifice that these people had made. It was Good Friday, sort of commonplace, biblical passage. Blessed are the peace makers, that they should be called the children of God and how these people had died on a mission of peace to try and make a better place for the people of the region. Then the bodies went in two large, they all went in one C5A, there was a second one as backup for reasons that weren't clear with me, but that one did make the Atlantic crossing. I didn't go with it although, as usual, the Croatian ambassador was there.

There was an investigation, a very extensive investigation and the determination of the cause of the crash was that, well, the first underlying cause was that they had no business flying into Dubrovnik. Dubrovnik was operating on visual flight rules for U.S. VIP aircraft and the instrument landing system had been destroyed and the weather didn't justify coming on visual flight rules. I learned a lot about aviation and flight instruments through this experience, but there were beacons that the pilots used to determine the course. Normally, for these beacons you should have two receivers and then you can line up on the two points and find a rooting, but because this is a system that isn't used much the aircraft itself actually only had one receiver and so the pilot had to switch back and forth to triangulate, but the manual said you weren't supposed to do that. They got the bearing and they simply entered it wrong by 10 degrees and that took them into the mountain rather than into the airport.

The other thing I learned was that our VIP aircraft, airport VIP aircraft far from being super safe, don't meet the same standards as the terms of equipment that they have for safety features as commercial airliners. Notably there was no black box.

Q: Oh boy, well, after this what were these people doing? I mean you get a lot of people to come in and take a look. Were the Dayton Accords were they taking place within Croatia or was it actually outside of Croatia?

GALBRAITH: Before I answer that.

Q: Well, now I'm just wondering I mean you had people coming in to look at how the Dayton Accords were going.

GALBRAITH: The Dayton Accords were of course in Bosnia.

Q: Yes, that's what I mean.

GALBRAITH: But the people who were coming were either members of congress who were coming to examine how it was going and most of them, as is the case with members of congress on these issues had predetermined positions. So, they were looking for ammunition to be for or against the Dayton implementation and the sending of the American forces. The people from the executive branch were coming principally to reinforce the implementation of the Dayton Accords and that meant. Obviously it meant talking to the various sides in Bosnia, but since the war in Bosnia was not an internal civil war, but one that was directed significantly from the outside from Serbia and also from Zagreb it meant talking to Tuđman to try to get him to use his control. I don't say influence, his control over the Bosnian Croats to produce certain results. Tuđman of course would say that he didn't control and that was a sham, but that was the basic message. Tuđman you need to do more to make Dayton successful, to strengthen the Muslim Croat federation which was one of the two entities along with the Republika Srpska and part of Dayton.

Q: As you were looking at this did you see this Muslim Croatian thing a viable coalition?

GALBRAITH: Well, the Federation had been created in 1994 and it was as I think I said earlier on this interview process, at least I should have said, it was the turning point in the war. What had existed in 1993 was this three-sided war and in fact where at times the Croatians would actually rent tanks and shells from the Serbs to use against the Muslims even though the Croatians and the Serbs were also enemies. As long as it was a three-sided war, it was hopeless. So, the Muslim Croat Federation was the cornerstone or first for our strategy to end the war, that is developing an alliance between Muslims and Croats in Bosnia and then that alliance being aligned with Croatia. I always thought of the Washington agreement that established the Muslim Croat Federation as a peace treaty dressed up as a system of government. So, by that standard as a peace treaty to end the Muslim Croat war it was 100 percent successful. As an alliance, it was 100 percent successful or 80 percent successful, but as a government for this 51 percent of Bosnia, it was certainly in '94 5 percent successful, but in order to have a durable peace we needed to translate that from 5 percent to 70 percent successful to make the Federation an effective government so that you know, Bosnia could get beyond the war phase and into the process of reconstruction and yet that was the focus.

Q: Now, was there as your focus, I mean there had to be a time I guess where you wanted to get Croatia or Zagreb from controlling the Croatians in Bosnia so that they were acting on their own. Were we trying to sever the ties?

GALBRAITH: I think in truth we were a little schizophrenic on that point. One the one hand we definitely wanted to sever those ties because the Bosnian Croats were citizens of Bosnia, not of Croatia or at least in our view they shouldn't be citizens of Croatia and they should play a role in the government of the Federation where they had an outsized role compared to their population. They were one quarter as numerous as the Muslims and yet they had a nearly equal power

sharing arrangement. Croatia gave these people Croatian citizenship. Tuđman allowed them to come in fact encouraged them to come and settle the Krajina region from which the Serbs had departed because he wanted to make it impossible for this to become a Serbian area again to settle it with Croats. Of course the result was that these people then began to acquire, the Bosnian Croats began to acquire multiple houses. They had some in Herzegovina or central Bosnia, then they would get a house in Krajina that had belonged to a Serb and the husband might have one house, the wife might have another, the father would have one and each of his sons would have a house. Undoubtedly there was also significant corruption in all of this. There were many signs that Croatia did not respect Bosnia as a separate state. The Croatian banks operated in the Croat parts of Bosnia. The Croatian Kuna was used as the currency in the Croat controlled parts of Bosnia. In 1997 Tuđman ran for reelection and his slogan was, what was it, Our Country, Our President, and they had the Tuđman billboards all up in Bosnia. Our joke was right president, wrong country.

Q: Well, now, did you get involved, I'm not clear where did the first division in our heavy tank troops and all come through? Did they go through Croatia in order to get to Bosnia or do they come through Serbia?

GALBRAITH: No, nothing came through Serbia, so they came through Croatia in very difficult weather conditions.

Q: Yes, I recall, they had a hell of a time getting over the what was it the Sava?

GALBRAITH: The Sava.

Q: The Sava.

GALBRAITH: Yes. The Sava was very flooded at that time of year. In fact there were some disastrous moments when they set up a whole tent city in the flood plane and then it was flooded a few days later.

Q: Was that a problem getting the troops through there?

GALBRAITH: It was a logistical problem, in part all the bridges had been blown up so they had to create a bailey bridge to get across.

Q: Did the Croatian government and the people welcome this?

GALBRAITH: The Croatian government was very cooperative. They more or less turned over the railroad systems that came from Hungary down through Croatia to the U.S. They accepted that the American troops were going to chew up a lot of roads with the heavy equipment and they accepted that the U.S. was stationed with guards who were not entirely sensitive to local sensitivities at the bridges and key points. I mean the Croatians on this kind of thing always behaved well.

Q: Well, then what were the developments after we lost this plane?

GALBRAITH: Well, I think the thing that took much of my time in 1996 was the investigation into the 1994 decision of President Clinton which I carried out not to object to the flow of arms across Croatia to the Bosnians including arms from Iran and specifically, when Tuđman had asked whether the United States, what the United States' view was of a Bosnian request to prevent arms, Iranian arms to flow across Croatia. In April of 1994 my instructions were to say I had no instructions. We discussed the facts of this on a previous tape, but what had happened was that after that decision that frankly I had argued very strongly that we should give a non-responsive response, that we should not be in the position of objecting to the flow of arms to the Bosnians, that first no other UN security council resolution was being respected, therefore, for us to enforce the arms embargo for that to be the one to be respected, would have only a devastating effect on the people who were on the legitimate government of Bosnia Herzegovina, the people who were the principle victims of the war. I didn't, I never favored a covert U.S. program to aid the Bosnians because I thought the United States itself should not be in the position of violating UN security council resolutions and also because I was concerned that if we violated the security council resolutions then we would undermine other resolutions that were important particularly the sanctions resolutions on Serbia and for that matter sanction relations on Iraq. I didn't see that we had an obligation to get everybody else to honor the embargo. We should honor it ourselves, but if others were prepared to violate it, we didn't need to be the policemen on it and in fact we should simply not object. That was the decision that President Clinton took and although as I think I said before, I think president Tuđman himself was kind of hoping we would say no because he never liked the Muslim Croat Federation. He in fact permitted the arms to flow and I think it helped turned the tide. In fact when I was in Sarajevo in August or July of 2001, I saw President Izetbegović, ex-president Izetbegović, he said that this was the turning point in the war.

In any event, after the decision had been taken in April of '94 after I'd conveyed it to President Tuđman, the arms began to flow and I frankly didn't think that much more about it. However, in September of 1994 Dick Holbrooke who had just been named the Assistant Secretary of State came out on a look see visit and I'd gone up in July of '94 to see him in Berlin after he'd been named, but before he'd been confirmed, I'm sorry in Bonn, after he'd been named, but before he'd been confirmed. I had told him at that time about our decision not to object to the flow of arms to the Bosnians. I had been concerned that the arms that were going were coming from the Iranians and I was also concerned that the Bosnians weren't getting enough arms.

My basic idea was that we should send a message to other countries, that we would not object if they were willing to provide arms to the Bosnians. I believed that you know, countries like Pakistan, Malaysia, Turkey were in fact prepared to provide arms and in fact several of them Malaysia and Turkey were doing so perhaps on a more limited scale. Holbrooke liked this idea and when he came in September he talked to the Croatian defense minister Šušak and told him about this idea and Dick was really focused on the domestic politics of the United States U.S. law. He said this is not going to be a covert action. It has nothing to do with the CIA. Indeed it wasn't a covert action. It was simply a diplomatic message that we will not object if you provide the arms. So, Dick was completely right.

Unfortunately, and I'm not sure Dick realized this at the time, Tuđman's wife, Georgia, was the number two in the Croatian intelligence service. Tuđman's son, Miro, was the number one guy

and of course they were in a, they cooperated with our intelligence services including the ones we had in country. So, this conversation was reported back to the U.S. intelligence services and it came to Tony Lake who believed that perhaps Holbrooke had become a rather bitter rival of Holbrooke's, he believed that Tony Lake was in fact. I'm sorry Tony Lake believed that Holbrooke was trying to orchestrate a possibly illegal covert action. Lake seizing on this report that Holbrooke had had a conversation with Šušak and had said the CIA shouldn't be involved asked the intelligence oversight board to investigate. To be honest at that point I hadn't even heard of the intelligence oversight board, which sits in the Old Executive Office Building. When I came to Washington of January of '95 it was on my schedule and Holbrooke said, do you know what this is and explained what was going on. Well, I went and talked to them and they interviewed lots of other people and they concluded that the United States had behaved correctly. They said there was some confusion in the execution as indeed there had been, but that there was no covert action. It was a perfectly correct diplomatic decision and for us first the Holbrooke plan had never been implemented. That is the idea of going to other countries and say we don't object, the Holbrooke plan, one that I had suggested.

Q: So your view was almost completely passive.

GALBRAITH: My view was. The Holbrooke plan was essentially passive. It would be to go to other countries saying we do not object if you violate the arms embargo. That had been my suggestion. This is what he talked to Šušak, the Croatian defense minister in September of '94 and it is what I had talked to him about, was my idea that I had proposed to him in July of '94. Christopher had rejected that idea, so even that had never been done. The only thing that actually had ever been done was my telling Šušak that I had no instructions on the, as to how to answer his question which was what is the attitude of the United States if Croatia permits arms to cross Croatian territory to go to the Bosnian government. I said, Mr. President, I have no instructions and when he didn't get it I said and pay attention to what I didn't say. Eventually they got the message, we are not objecting. That is the sum of what happened. The intelligence oversight board looked into all of this. They concluded there had been no covert action, that everybody had behaved correctly and that this was a perfectly legitimate policy decision. End of the story or so we thought. Well, a year later a guy named, a reported named Jim Risen of the Los Angeles Times gets hold of all this and the secret report of the intelligence oversight board and so he is calling around to do interviews. When he called Zagreb basically I am unwilling to talk to him very much. I do talk to him but only in very general terms. I talked to Chuck Redman who was the ambassador to Germany who had been involved in this and who was retiring so I figured he could talk more safely than I could. I guess he talked and filled him in, Risen in to some degree. On the day that Tuđman and I went down to see Dubrovnik, to see the coffins with the 35 passengers sent off or 33 were sent to the States, two were Croatian. On that day, the Los Angeles Times ran this story and I read it. Tuđman had it and gave me a copy and I read it. This then led Bob Dole to call for an investigation and in fact his call for the investigation was the brainchild of his foreign policy aide Mira Baratta who had been a good friend of mine and who had frequently stayed with me in Zagreb. She was a Croatian American, but very much against the Tuđman government, very sympathetic to the Bosnian cause. In fact her grandfather had frozen to death in Sarajevo in an old peoples' home in 1993 at age one hundred during the siege because there wasn't any gas. Anyhow, Mira called for this investigation as to whether, and Dole was running for president, and she was hoping she had discovered the Democrat version of the

Iran Contra scandal, although the only common element was the word Iran. In this case again it was simply a statement, a decision not to respond to a Croatian country and the result was that arms went from our enemy, Iran, to our friend, Bosnia. The Iran Contra scandal we were actively shipping arms to the Iranians, to our enemy, arming our enemy. Again in this case we'd done nothing, so very different, but she thought she had found a hot political issue. She asked the senate, so Dole asked in his letter to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, the Senate Intelligence Committee and the Senate Armed Services Committee to look into this.

Not to be outdone, Newt Gingrich decided he wanted to have an investigation in the House of Representatives. He chose Henry Hyde. He asked, he didn't have any faith in Bill Gilman who was the chairman of the House International Relations Committee. They set up a special committee under Henry Hyde and they gave it a one million dollar budget or nine hundred ninety-five thousand dollars. They wanted the figure to be just a little bit less than a million dollars. Well, on the Senate side the Foreign Relations Committee and the Armed Services Committee decided to do nothing. Foreign Relations there were people there who knew me well and I think were very sympathetic. Armed Services decided to do nothing. The Senate Intelligence Committee under Arlen Specter had a couple of, had some hearings. I testified in secret before the committee. At the end of the process they came up with a report which they issued a week after the election, the '96 election. They basically said the policy was a success. Several members tried to suggest that maybe our decision had gone into the gray area between traditional diplomacy and covert action, which I must say, was an absurd position because again there was no action. We didn't facilitate the flow of arms. We didn't provide arms. All we did was to say we didn't object. I think their argument basically was if the subject was arms and if the conversation is secret that maybe that was something that was no longer traditional diplomacy again on the base of a position that would be difficult to justify.

The Hyde committee, however, at having gotten a million dollars, nine hundred ninety-five thousand dollars, then had to have an investigation although I think it was very clear that there was in fact nothing to investigate. Backing up I should say even before the Hyde committee got started, the House International Relations Committee under Gilman who felt he'd been cut out by Newt Gingrich decided to hold his own hearings. That was the only hearing before which I ever testified publicly. Redman and I testified. I prepared a statement and which I explained what we had done and I noted that as a result of what we had done the Bosnian government had survived. It had gained strength, that this led directly to the military victories in 1995, which in turn had made possible the Dayton Agreement, which in turn had had the paradoxical effect of diminishing, paradoxical from the Iranian point of view. Or maybe I use the word perverse, the perverse effect from the Iranian point of view of diminishing Iranian influence. Why? Because one of the conditions of the Dayton Treaty was that all foreign forces had to leave except for those there under IFOR and so the Bosnian government had expelled most of the Iranians and many of the other foreigners who were present there and basically IFOR rounded up and help force out almost all the rest. The irony was that our decision to permit the arms to flow to the Bosnians and Iranian arms to go to the Bosnians had served to diminish Iranian influence and when the press wrote about that hearing, it was a big story, that was the headline.

Now, one of the things that happened and it's an interesting way in which our government works, is that the congressional committees asked for documents. The CIA immediately gathered

up every document it had and dumped it on its two intelligence oversight committees, whereas State Department was much more circumspect about the things in which they would be willing to turn over. In those documents that they turned over was the back channel traffic from the station chief in Zagreb. He believed, he had not, he could not believe that President Clinton had taken the decision that he'd taken. He was convinced that I'd been running some kind of rogue operation. I mean to describe exactly what happened and here I'm not disclosing anything classified because it's all in the reports. Going back to 1994. Over the Easter holidays in 1994 I had spent a week with my son in Italy. While I was away the foreign minister had told the DCM Neitzke and Šušak had indicated I think to the defense attaché or maybe that I would be asked again I would be asked a question what by Tuđman what would be the attitude of the United States if we respond to a Bosnian request for arms to cross our territory? When I got to Zagreb I gathered the core country team together and the station chief. The station chief informed me that he had informed Miro Tuđman who was the head of the Croatian intelligence service that he had actually answered the question, that he had told him U.S. policy is to respect the arms embargo. We expect you to respect the arms embargo. Well, I know that wasn't U.S. policy and so I told him, I said, you know, please tell Tuđman, Jr. that the issue has not been decided yet, we don't have an answer. He refused. I then got the answer. I delivered the new instruction statement to Tuđman. I then, I was concerned that Tuđman might be hearing a different message from his son and Tuđman was the kind, you know, he didn't understand how democracy worked, so they tended to believe that, well, yes that was the president of the United States and there was the ambassador, but there were also the people who really ran the country, the CIA and the military. I said, I explained to the station chief what had happened, what my instructions were and asked him to make sure that Tuđman, Jr. understood what the outcome had been.

Q: Can we stop here?

GALBRAITH: Again he refused and he sent a cable back to the CIA, which I never saw. Now of course like most ambassadors I had standing instructions that I want to see all messages that go out of this embassy including from the station and the only thing that could be exempted were the things that related to sources and methods. I didn't want to see that, nor was I entitled to see that. Again, there was a channel if you thought somebody was committing a crime. If they thought I was committing a crime, then I could see that, but he sent a message back, which I never saw which said, you know, this is what Galbraith says is the policy. Is this the policy?

James Woolsey, the head of the CIA, then met with Strobe Talbott, the Deputy Secretary of State, and Woolsey said, "Has there been any change in U.S. policy towards the arms embargo?" Talbott said, "No, there has not." Woolsey believed that the U.S. policy was the same as it had been in the Bush administration namely that we enforce, that we respected the embargo and we expected others to respect it. Strobe believed that the current policy was that we were not enforcing the arms embargo, that we were not insisting that we opposed it, Clinton opposed it and we were not insisting that other countries follow it. Frankly, I fault Strobe a bit on this. I think he should have explained what the policy was, but that was the exchange. So, Woolsey was left thinking that there's something funny going on in Zagreb. The ambassador is telling the Croatian president that we don't object to the flow of arms and yet I'm hearing from the State Department that we do object. Strobe believed that he had told Woolsey and cleared this up and that Woolsey understood that we were not objecting. The station chief hears back of course that

there has been no change in policy. He believes that I'm running some kind of unauthorized operation and he then gets into a conspiracy mindset and looks for all sorts of signs that I'm running an unauthorized operation. He then proceeds to put in a variety of comments about me and a few about some other people in the embassy including comments about my personal life, which I will state for the record.

At the time I was single and dating adult women who were Americans and not employees of the U.S. government, not my subordinates, but that didn't stop him from making various comments. In fact he was repeatedly told by Nora Slatkin who was the chief of staff to the director of central intelligence that he shouldn't be making those comments because all these documents could be turned over to the intelligence committees. Well, they were turned over to the intelligence committees and one of the agreements was that I got to read them before I testified. So, I went over to the CIA. There was a room with a very long table piled up with documents and this was of course done to make it hard for me to actually see everything. I began to read through them and I was shocked at what was going on. I was shocked that there was this reporting that had been going on inside the embassy. I was shocked that the CIA had not followed its procedures. If they believed there was a crime then they were obliged to notify the Justice Department and then the Justice Department would then investigate. They never notified the Justice Department. If they had notified the Justice Department, then the Justice Department would have I presume checked with the State Department and would have discovered that there was nothing illegal going on and that would have been the end of the story and the CIA would have understood it. They didn't do that. They didn't follow their internal procedures and again there was this pile of material and speculation and conspiracy theories along as I say with some personal covets. I was shocked and I must say pretty outraged by the whole thing.

This material then became the grist of Henry Hyde's investigation. He actually had his investigators asking questions of my secretary, Charlotte Stockman, and of the station chief who happily provided the information. You know, even about the women I was dating.

Q: This by the way is Henry Hyde who as a youthful indiscretion at the age of 40 something fathered an illegitimate child, but anyway.

GALBRAITH: That's exactly right. This was Henry Hyde who two years later was launching this great moral crusade against the president of the United States over the president's supposed sexual misconduct. I mean I'm one of those people I don't care what he does in the Oval Office. I mean, what he does in his personal life is between him and his wife and I care just what kind of president he is. In any event, so this was Hyde and his investigation and needless to say it was a very unpleasant experience and they came to Zagreb, his team of investigators. I think I did a four or five hour deposition. They deposed everybody else. Then they presented a report. Actually there were two reports. One was the Hyde report and the other was by Lee Hamilton. The Hamilton report was very, very factual. The Hyde report having found no wrongdoing, having basically encountered a policy that worked seized upon one small contradiction, one small contradiction, yes, which was this. Back in April of 1994, when I had learned that Tuđman was going to ask this question, I had gotten on the secure phone to talk to people in Washington to urge the policy outcome I wanted. Again, basically that we'd tell Tuđman that we don't object or we just don't respond to his question. In talking to Sandy Vershbow who was then the deputy

assistant Secretary of State, he and others Peter Tarnoff basically were telling me Washington has not made up its mind. We're trying to figure out what to do. I think it was a Saturday, very early like 6:00 in the morning, Sandy Vershbow called me at my home. He wasn't on a secure phone. He knew I was going to be seeing Tuđman that day and he said to me, "We don't' have any instructions for you" or "You have no instructions." I did not understand that what he was telling me is that was the answer. In fact it was the answer I wanted. I merely put it in the context of my conversations over the previous days which was that Washington hadn't made up its mind and frankly that was the common problem I had because nobody liked the Bosnia issue. They weren't facing up to the issues on hand, so it was quite often important issues kept being put off and it was 6:00 in the morning. I didn't get it. Again, there was no secure phone in my residence. Vershbow I guess was home and he placed the call. When I saw Tuđman that night I assumed that I hadn't gotten an answer. So, when Tuđman asked me the question, I said, "Mr. President, look I just don't have an answer for you yet."

I had called Chuck Redman who was the special envoy and asked him to come to Zagreb. He came the next day and we had dinner with Tuđman. I was explaining to Chuck at my residence the frustration I had when Jane Hall who was I guess the deputy to Jenonne Walker who was the Director for European Affairs at NSC. Jane called to deal with a particular problem, the Croatians had had an arsenal explode and ammunition had gone and weapons had gone everyplace. This was near Zagreb and several Croatian military had been killed and anyhow they wanted some help from the Americans, people who were experts in unexploded ordinance to come help clean up. The defense attaché thought this was a great idea, so did I, that we could provide some help. Jane Hall called to talk about that. I think I expressed to her my frustration at not having an answer and she put Jenonne Walker on the line and Jenonne said, "What's the matter with you? Don't you understand?" I mean, these weren't her exact words, but it was something like this. I said, "Well, why can't you make up your mind?" She said, "No, no. Tony said that Peter is to tell Tuđman he has no, that Peter has no instructions and Tony said it with a smile and a raised eyebrow." I got it. The message was that no instructions was my instruction, it was the instruction I wanted. The smile and the raised eyebrow led me to understand that that was my instruction. It was a very memorable statement for me, not because it indicated any shenanigans, it indicated that a decision had been made. I did a memo for the files and I recorded all of this.

One of the unfortunate things that happened although I recorded it correctly, I had my deputy look at the memo and he interpreted the smile and the raised eyebrow as a wink and a nod. He told the station chief who reported that back. The suggestion was somehow that I'd given Tuđman a wink and a nod. Anyhow, when they interviewed Jenonne Walker and Tony Lake, Jenonne Walker had not remembered telling me about the smile and the raised eyebrow and Tony Lake had denied smiling or raising his eyebrow. He said he hadn't remembered. Now, I will tell you. In 1996 I wouldn't have remembered this conversation either. The reason I know is that I made of memorandum of record of it the next day. That's why I remembered it, but also, the smile and the raised eyebrow were significant to me because it was a sign of a final decision. It wasn't significant to them. Anyhow, this was the contradiction and the conclusion that the Hyde democrats, the Hyde Republicans, the Republican side this Hyde committee had reached was that possibly, possibly somebody was lying, somebody committed perjury and they weren't sure who it was. Whether it was Peter Galbraith or Tony Lake and Jenonne Walker, or Strobe

Talbott, so they referred everybody that they'd investigated to the Justice Department which so far as I know never did anything on it. They released their report the week before the election announcing they'd made these referrals to the Justice Department. In fact at the press conference, Hyde was pressed on it as to whether he thought anything criminal had taken place and he couldn't bring himself to say that so even he didn't stand behind their letter of referral. And of course it had no impact on the election whatsoever. The irony was the next year Lake was nominated to head the CIA and this became the major issue against him. The Republicans who perhaps just before the election had wanted to portray me as the Oliver North of the Clinton administration all of a sudden a couple of months later decided that I was really the honest person and Tony Lake was the one who had lied because it suited their purposes. I think the people basically were trying to undo the results of the election by using the investigation process. This was really in my view the greatest abuse of it. Through 1996 it certainly caused me a lot of grief. I think a word about the Los Angeles Times gives an interesting insight into journalism and I must say a lack of professionalism in it.

Jim Risen having gotten the one story imagined that he could get the Pulitzer Prize for exposing all of this, so he kept writing stories hyping the scandal, the so-called scandal through 1996. Of course no other newspapers ever picked it up as a story. Then the Republicans on the Hyde committee leaked their report, which had these allegations to Risen. Now there was also a democratic report, which completely refuted all that, and you know, basically said, these small contradictions weren't contradictions. They've explained as much as I've explained them to you. In any event, so Risen runs a story saying hundreds of pages of secret documents reveal that the Clinton administration including Ambassador Galbraith were much more deeply involved than previously reported. I called up the Los Angeles Times, Doyle McManus, and I said to him, I said, "You know, this is bullshit. I don't mind that you make these allegations, but you have an obligation to let your readers know that these hundreds of pages of classified documents were the Republican report and then they can make their own judgments and you ought to have told them that there was a Democratic report which made exactly the opposite point." McManus said, "Well, you have a point here, but we didn't want to compromise the people who have given us the report, the Republicans who had given us the report." That's how I know that they leaked it, he told me they leaked it. I said, "That's fine, but I know where it came from. Anybody in the administration knows what these hundreds of pages of classified documents are. You better believe we're going to be investigating how it leaked. So, you haven't protected your sources. The only harm you've done, is to fool your readers." He said, "Yes, the problem is Lee Hamilton isn't as casual with national secrets as the Republicans were." Then they promised to write another story, which they did some time later, which simply repeated all the allegations. It was really an eye opening experience about the press.

Q: Did this thing sort of hang around? Was it picked up in Croatia?

GALBRAITH: Of course, the Croatian press followed this with great interest. It didn't do any damage, however. I mean I did a number of interviews on it and explained the kinds of things I'd explained in my congressional testimony. Naturally I declined to talk about the internal relations within the embassy or between the State Department and the CIA.

Q: Couldn't you get rid of your station chief?

GALBRAITH: This was a dilemma and of course many people said that's what you have to do. Needless to say, our relations were not warm and fuzzy after all this came out. I think this came up in May of, I guess I saw his back channel traffic in May of '96. His tour of duty was ending in July and I mean frankly I would have loved to have sent him home with a big boot in the derriere, but that would only complicate my own situation and since there were many of these congressional investigators who were, who wanted to get the Clinton administration, and therefore he was their hero. It looked like I was sacking a whistle blower, so I wasn't going to buy any more trouble for the administration or for myself. Frankly, there were larger institutional issues that I raised and the State Department tried to raise, but never, I don't think the State Department, well the State Department didn't get too far for some other interesting reasons, which I'll tell you.

The institutional issue is this. If in fact the station chief is reporting on conversations within the embassy and on what people are doing within the embassy, then an ambassador dealing with the kind of difficult problems that I'm dealing with will not bring in the station chief. You aren't going to have a candid discussion of what your options are with somebody who is going to be reporting back in a way that you don't know what's being said. I could even have lived with his reporting back if I could have added my own comments to it. If I could have set the record straight, but I had no idea it was taking place. He was violating my instructions. In those circumstances an ambassador gets into these kinds of difficult situations. Yes, he'll have the station chief come in. The station chief can provide the intelligence, but he would be foolish to share anything back with the station chief. That is a terrible situation to be in because an embassy works well when all of its elements are working closely together. I think it's a significant institutional problem, which has not been solved.

There was an effort to try and solve it led by Jennifer Simms who was the Deputy Assistant Secretary for INR. The CIA I think realized that they had done something wrong and so John Deutch who had become the director had come out to Zagreb in July of 1996 to make peace. He came to the embassy and people were quite upset by all of this and so there was a meeting with the American staff and he insisted that there were no issues to be dealt with. I mean my point had been that we needed to go back and look through the record and that people about whom comments were made in these files that they should see what was said about them and Deutch basically said, no, we've got to move on and forget about all of that. My secretary actually she posed a question to him that stumped him. She said, "When you got all this reporting, what did you do with it? Didn't anybody there say there's something wrong with doing this? Didn't anybody there say it had to stop?" The issue in terms of the embassy staff wasn't really resolved. Then Deutch held this dinner. His idea of how to solve the problem was to have a dinner for all the Americans at the Sheraton Hotel in Zagreb. They took over a ballroom, cocktails and dinner. Deutch was at one table with my wife at his right and the defense attaché next to him at that table. I was with his new wife, Pat Walsh. I'd just gotten married, I don't know, eight days before and he'd recently been married. Anyhow, well, Deutch sits down and he says to the waiter, "Vodka martini and keep them coming." They kept coming. He then got up to give a speech and the speech talked about all the beautiful women who were the officers working for the American Embassy or their wives. Frankly it was a rather inappropriate speech for 1996. I mean that just isn't the kind of thing you do. So, I got up and made a speech and said nice things

about Deutch and his wife, but I said, "I'll stay away from talking about the beauty of the women here. I don't want to do anything that might be inappropriate or politically incorrect or illegal. I'm having enough difficulties; I don't want to add to them." Several of the wives were not American and two of them were journalists. I don't know who did this, but it was obvious that in a room with one hundred people and in this sort of atmosphere that these kinds of comments weren't going to be kept secret. There was an item in El Camin that reported and that twisted this and reported Deutch's comments and my own, but which were totally out of context and made kind of the point that there was great acrimony for the whole thing. When Deutch saw that item he then sort of refused to work with the State Department to try and solve the underlying problem. I will say my wife didn't look at him very kindly because as he got up to leave, he got up very abruptly. You know, time to go, got up and knocked over his glass of red wine all over her and she was wearing a brand new light yellow suit and never recovered. In my manner, which is always to avoid conflicts over small things, I never sent him the bill.

I'll tell you one other thing that really surprised me from that. As you know from the State Department, we don't get to entertain Americans. Anytime I have an All-American event, which I did frequently because after all I had these delegations that would come in, Holbrooke and company, and we'd have dinner and we'd sit and talk about our strategy. I paid for that myself. Here's the CIA which apparently has unlimited amounts of money to throw these. I mean this event must have cost $20,000 or $30,000, a big party.

Q: Oh, boy. Peter, it probably might not be a bad time to stop.

GALBRAITH: Oh, I agree.

Q: Where do we go from here now?

GALBRAITH: We have fortunately, I think we're, well, there are some more things to talk about in 1996. In particular, I think we need to talk about the effort to get U.S. policy straight on the return of ethnic Serbs to Croatia, that is to say this was something that we wanted to have take place. I need to talk about Deutch's visit with Tuđman on that very subject where he got the policy wrong and took some undoing and how we eventually got Tuđman to agree that all Croatian Serbs were entitled to return and to recover their property. I think we need to talk about Tuđman's illness and then 1997. Then we can go on to East Timor.

Q: Okay. 1990... You left when?

GALBRAITH: January 3rd, 1998.

Q: '98. Okay. Great.

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Okay, today is the 1st of October, 2002. Peter first, talk about the issue of getting Serbs back into Croatia. I mean in the first place, was this one of these things that we thought would make sense, but in practical terms it would be stupid for a Serb to go back to Croatia or was there, was it

more than sort of a theoretical Washington policy?

GALBRAITH: Frankly, at the beginning, Washington didn't focus on it at all. This became my personal issue. I raised it from the start after the Serb population left in August of 1995. Tuđman initially had said that the Serbs were *optonzi*, they had opted out of Croatia and unless they came back within 30 days they would lose all of their property and their citizenship. Of course they didn't have Croatian documents. There was a war on. There was no way they could return and coincidentally the Croatian military and police were busy burning all their homes in Krajina. On the other hand, Washington wasn't prepared to engage on Croatia human rights issues in August of 1995 because Holbrooke, as was I, both of us, were agreed on this, we were looking for the Croatian offensive to continue in Bosnia to defeat Mladic and the Bosnian Serbs. Lake who was opposed to that offensive, however, wanted Croatia to play a role in the peace process and felt that criticisms of Tuđman might be counterproductive. I must say I never thought that criticizing Tuđman would be counterproductive, and I don't think it was. I mean I had a sense of him that he wouldn't necessarily respond to our criticism, but that he viewed us as extremely powerful. Therefore, no matter how much we antagonized him, nonetheless he would be responsive to what we wanted or what he perceived that we really wanted. On this point while Washington wasn't initially engaged, the European ambassadors in Zagreb were, with the exception of the Austrian, who was an ethnic Croat and who thought that it was a good idea that the Serbs had left. The others basically agreed and we were able to put enough pressure on Tuđman in August of 1995 that extended the period of time from one month to three months to which Serbs could return and recover their property and become Croatian citizens.

I have to say in August I had a really shocking conversation with Miomir Žužul, who was one of Tuđman's closest advisors and the Croatian ambassador to the United States, a key player, who I always considered to be a reasonably enlightened person who was absolutely adamant that the Serbs would not return. Tuđman had always spoken favorably of the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in the 1920s, something that cost immense human suffering. From my point of view the idea of creating an ethnically homogeneous state was unacceptable. I mean that went against what being an American was and we are a multi-ethnic state. Beyond that, what I saw was really that this was a contest about whether Croatia would be an ethnically homogenous state, basically, all that went with it, the associated baggage, intolerant, intolerant not only with regard to minorities but that same kind of intolerance that was reflected in Tuđman with regard to political opposition, criticism of free media, all of that. So, that I felt that getting Croatia to commit to treating its Serbian citizens fairly, to allowing the people, the Serbs who have lived in Croatia in 1991, to return was also not just about ethnic harmony in Croatia, it wasn't just about having a multiethnic state, but it was about the character of Croatia itself, that is whether it could really be moderate, modern, tolerant and therefore a truly democratic country. If you say was it a Washington policy, an unrealistic Washington policy, I would say on the contrary, probably what drove the policy in Washington was the field and I'll take credit for this having been very persistent from August of 1995 until I left on this issue.

Q: Were you getting two things that seem to follow suffering, I mean three things. The Turkish Greek thing having served in Greece, that worked, I mean it kept the problems from getting worse. Sudeten-Deutsch getting kicked out of this Sudetenland after World War Two and the Poles, I mean the Germans, getting out of sort of East Prussia and all that. I mean these things

stopped certain problems of continuing harassment and things of that nature.

GALBRAITH: You have made just the argument that Tuđman made. My counter to him was so, the Greeks and the Turks settled everything in 1923 and there haven't been any problems since the two of them since?

Q: No, no.

GALBRAITH: The fact is that these countries have been at each other's throats for 75 years. So, I don't see how anybody can say what happened in '23 was a success. Both of these countries used what happened in 1923 to define themselves as ethnically homogenous, ethnically pure states. In Turkey this definition of being a Turk has been a major impediment to Turkey becoming a bona fide democracy. It has huge ramifications that I've been dealing with professionally that relate to the Kurdish question. The same point I would say applies to Greece which is the laggard on democracy in Europe, at least in the European Union which has been intolerant to its Slavic minority, partly because it has, and I would say the '23 population exchange was part of this, defined itself not just as a geographic entity, but as this country of the Greeks in which there really is not space for others. That was really what Tuđman wanted to do for Croatia. He wanted to define it as a country of the Croats where there wasn't space for others at least for large minorities. He was very happy about the Italians and the Jews and he treated them very well because there were so few of them and, therefore, a window dressing of the kind of tolerance.

I don't think that creating an ethnically homogenous Croatia or allowing Tuđman to create an ethnically homogenous Croatia was or is going to be a source of stability. Incidentally, well, I think most of the Serbs from the Krajina will not want to return. The fact that if they are denied the right to return they will be a lobby with a grievance in Serbia that will work against better relations between Serbia and Croatia. In addition, allowing Croatia to get away with stripping citizenship of its Serbian citizens would have a profound effect on Bosnia where we were trying to reverse the effects of ethnic cleansing.

Q: How did this come out? I mean you were working on this, what were the results?

GALBRAITH: Again, it was a theme that I sounded in my meetings with Tuđman, with Granić, with Šušak, with the main figures in the Croatian government in public statements. Points that I made in cables back to Washington and points that I tried to work into, the talking points of the various official visitors that came through. In the period from November from December of '95 through March of '96 we had many, many visitors as I pointed out, the president and Secretary of State, Secretary of Defense, Secretary of Commerce. This was something that I tried to work into their talking points, not always with success because again, and certainly on something like the president's talking points, those were very much done obviously by the White House, and Holbrooke was the major influence. Over time I think people began to take up my point and one of the people actually who was most helpful to this was Madeleine Albright who had come a couple of times to Croatia, been out to Eastern Slavonia, who had sponsored in the UN the UN resolution that established UNTAES and who also disliked Tuđman. She understood what the issue was. She was supportive and she pushed it particularly after she became Secretary of State

in 1997, which is perhaps counterintuitive considering that she was a Czech and exactly this issue arose on the Sudeten Germans. Incidentally, the Sudeten issue remains a source of friction between Germany and the Czech Republic.

Q: By the time you left, how had this issue evolved?

GALBRAITH: I said that the one sort of person who was most unhelpful was John Deutch who in the meetings with Tuđman down in Brijuni had basically gone and taken exactly the contrary position and suggested to Tuđman that it was fine if he didn't allow the Serbs back, that he shouldn't have any interest in it. I was outraged. Certainly that went against official policy, it just reflected his views. The unfortunate thing about it was that Tuđman tended, because of his authoritarian background, he tended to think that in addition to Bill Clinton and Peter Galbraith who was Bill Clinton's representative, there were the people who really ran the United States government, mainly the CIA and the military. So, the kind of messages that were received from the CIA were things that led him to believe that there were contrary views in the U.S. government and that those views were a matter of great importance, although in fact Deutch was not particularly an important player on these issues.

Q: By this point did you have a new station chief or were you still dealing with the same station chief?

GALBRAITH: No, there was a new station chief.

Q: Good relations at that point?

GALBRAITH: I suppose one can't talk too much about this.

Q: I'm just talking about the personal relations.

GALBRAITH: They deliberately chose one of their more obstreperous characters and in the end I think we had an okay relationship.

Q: I was just wondering.

GALBRAITH: It was widely said to be an in your face appointment.

Q: Well, that's usually what happens.

GALBRAITH: He was there for a year and then replaced by somebody who was much nicer.

Q: I was just wondering, Deutch comes in, the head of the CIA, and gives sort of the wrong policy signal. Did that mean, did you have any idea, was the station then following Deutch or following policy? You know, in the informal, but extremely important contacts with the Croatian government?

GALBRAITH: The previous station chief basically had an acute case of clientitis and he worked,

as I pointed out, with the head of the Croatian service, Tuđman's son Miro Tuđman, a very nasty right wing piece of work who now heads a splinter party from Tuđman's HDZ, a far right version of Tuđman's HDZ and unfortunately, they tended to take whatever Tuđman, Jr. said as the gospel truth, leading the agency to get a number of things wrong, including a belief, for example, Tuđman would not respond favorably for a proposal for a Muslim Croat Federation in '94. I remember quite a confrontation when I said to him, well, I won't say his name, but I said, "Did it ever occur to you that they might lie to you?" "They wouldn't lie to me." Of course he immediately took it back and had to recognize that yes, they might. I was concerned that the wrong messages were going in that channel. Frankly I thought Deutch was sufficiently undisciplined, what he said was not reflecting the views of the station, but just his own kind of casual view of the situation.

Anyhow, coming back to the issue of getting the policy right. In '97 Bill Richardson came out. He was the ambassador to the UN and he didn't know a lot about the issue, but he said to me, "Look I'm here to be helpful to you. What is it that I can do?" I said, "Bill, the thing you can be most helpful on is to push Tuđman to agree to the return of the Serbs." We were in Brijuni and Richardson said to him, "Look, Mr. President, you've got to give me something here." It was great; he was a pure politician. "You've got to give me something here. I need to have something that we can announce." I said, "We need to say something about the return of the Serbs." Tuđman said something and then Richardson said, "Well, Peter is what he said okay?" I said, "No, the statement needs to say this. He needs to say that all the Serbs that were from Croatia may return and are eligible for citizenship and get their property back." Richardson said, "Will you say that?" Tuđman kind of reluctantly agreed. Then Tuđman wanted to put it off. Richardson said, "No, no, we've got to do it now." I wrote out the statement that had been worked on and that was what I think it was Richardson announced as he came out of the meeting, but as to what Tuđman had agreed. It really, it was a nice relationship. I mean Richardson brought in the clout, he brought in the political side of it, but on the substance he deferred to the expert and he made sure that the statement was the one that I wanted. That really did get the commitment that we needed.

The other thing that happened as I said Albright was very helpful. She came as Secretary of State in May of 1997. First, Granić went to see her I think it was in earlier May of '97. I remember there was a I think it was a trip that was at the time of, well, it was earlier May and I flew with Granić. What happened was that day that we flew to Washington for the meeting with Albright four returnees to Kostajnica which was a town in Krajina which was on the border with Bosnia on the northern border of Bosnia just a little bit to the east of Bihać on the Una River, there were four returnees. They had been attacked and their property had been burned and I think one of the men had been beaten up. It was a bad incident. The embassy had a human rights officer, I think Martha Patterson it was. She wasn't the human rights officer, but I think it was she who had gone down. She wrote up a cable which Robert the DCM had sent in after I'd left. That had arrived overnight as Granić and I were flying to the United States. Albright decided to use this incident to really hammer the Croatians and again it was a very good way to underscore the point that the Serbs ought to be allowed to return and to recover their property. Unfortunately it did some damage to my relations with Granić because Granić was completely surprised. He hadn't known about the incident and he assumed that I did and that I'd flown back to him and not said anything. In fact I hadn't known about the incident either although I did see the cables in the

morning in the State Department before the meeting. Albright then came to Croatia later in May and she wanted to go down to Kostajnica and I'd gone down between my return to Washington and her arrival. Interestingly the families that had been attacked, they were returnees, people who had left with the Serb exodus in '95, but in fact there was only one Serb. How was it, it was a Serbian man who had a Muslim wife and then it was a Croat, a Muslim man with a Croat wife. Anyhow, but these were all people who had stayed in the Krajina after the Serbs had taken over and left in the exodus in August of '95. I'd gone down and visited and seen what had happened, seen where they were attacked, where their property had been destroyed. Albright came down. We did a very private session with the family which Jamie Rubin, Jamie Rubin I think had insisted on her going there.

Q: He was her press officer.

GALBRAITH: Her press guy, the assistant secretary for public affairs. As I say, she came out of the session with the family and she said as we got into the car, she said, "I hate these things." I think she had a sense that she was, you know, it was a manipulated kind of event and the media wasn't in the private meeting, but the, I mean, you know, it's the nature of the process. There was a larger point to be made. Inevitably it was somewhat exploitive of the family and that's what she the families what she was reacting to. Then we off to a burned house and there was a press conference there. She was with Jure Radic, who was the minister for reconstruction and she just, Jamie Rubin had planted the question what do you think of all this. She used it as an occasion to say how disgusted she was by what had happened and how the house had been, where these returnees were going to go had been burned. She pointed to Radic and said, you should be ashamed of yourself. Meanwhile, Granić, the foreign minister, was sort of turning away. He had a coat on and a hat. He was sort of looking just completely the other direction not wishing to be part of that picture holding his hat in his hand as Radic tried to explain what was going on, but Radic was basically set up. Then it just perhaps to continue quite a tense meeting with Tuđman that she'd had. Again, I think this was before the Richardson visit so Tuđman had not yet conceded the right of all Serbs to return or that they would be protected.

Q: Well, I was just wondering, you know, I mean you can make these pronouncements like we have on civil rights in the United States which is going back a long way. I mean you can make these and this becomes policy, but how well do you deliver and you know you're particularly when you get down to peoples' feelings, it takes, you know, the guys who hang around the gas station on the corner may decide the hell, we don't want any more Serbs in here. They can make real trouble. I mean it doesn't have to be government policy. Can you deliver?

GALBRAITH: That's a very good question. It strikes me that the first step toward getting a change in facts on the ground is to change the official policy to change the norms. As long as the government is saying that these people are not entitled to Croatian citizenship that they cannot return, they are not going to be able to return. So, the first step to reestablishing the multiethnic character of this place is for the government to say they are entitled to return. Now, I knew that Tuđman never wanted them to return, no matter what we forced him to say, we really forced him to do it. Changing the norms was a first step and what happened, what has happened subsequently in the January 2000 parliamentary elections which took place a month after Tuđman died and in the presidential election of January 2000 because particularly in the

presidential election the three candidates for president: Stjepan Mesić who ultimately won, Dražen Budiša who represents the liberal party and who was a nationalist, and Granić who had been nominated by Tuđman's party and then ran as an independent. They all competed as to who would do the most to facilitate the return of ethnic Serbs. The guy who said he would do the most message is the guy who won, not because the Croatian people had decided they wanted the Serbs back, but because we had worked with the Europeans to make it clear that Croatia's commitment to multiethnicity and to the return of the Serbs was a precondition to Croatia entry into NATO and the European Union. Since the Croatian public wanted to enter into NATO and the European Union they voted for the parties that were going to do the most to return ethnic Serbs. The current government has been providing financial incentives for Serbs to return home. Again, not that many have returned, but at least this issue has been removed as a sense of grievance between Serbia and Croatia. A government that is willing to commit on civil rights issues has also turned out not surprisingly to be more tolerant on political democracy issues. Incidental roughly similar to what has happened in the Unites States. Civil rights in America also has led America to become a more liberal and democratic place for white people. Well, that's what's happened in Croatia. I think the judgment call that we made beginning in '95 has turned out to be correct.

Q: You mentioned Tuđman's illness. Did that manifest itself; he died in cancer in 2000?

GALBRAITH: '99. December of '99.

Q: I remember it being reported, but did this become a factor while you were there?

GALBRAITH: It was a very significant factor in the latter part of my tenure. In I guess something like November of '96, October or November, Robert Finn came to see me and he said, "Something's going on because all of Tuđman's close cronies were coming to get American visas." It was one of the ways in which we monitored what was going on. He speculated that Tuđman was ill. He turned out to be right. Tuđman went to the United States to Walter Reed, something that we had arranged, the embassy had arranged, but well it didn't in fact, it was the product of something that had been arranged for Šušak who had chronic back problems and Holbrooke had arranged for him to get medical treatment and that medical treatment it turned out that it wasn't really a back problem, he had cancer. Then he'd gotten treated in the United States and he felt quite satisfied about it. Well, Tuđman went secretly to the United States, so secretly that Žužul, the ambassador, didn't know. Then it was leaked. The diagnosis was leaked which was inexcusable.

Q: Absolutely.

GALBRAITH: Tuđman was not an admirable figure, but he was the guest of the United States and he had the same right of privacy that other patients have.

Q: Sounds like there was an orderly with a Serb background or something like that.

GALBRAITH: Who knows what happened. Well, I can speculate, but probably shouldn't. In any event, a couple of things. It turned out the diagnosis was wrong. I mean the diagnosis was that he

had a few months to live and in fact he lived another three years. He also of course wasn't going to come to the United States for anymore medical treatment, so he went and got medical treatment with French doctors. It may be that the French doctors did something that prolonged his life. I know I got calls from one other person on behalf of another person who desperately wanted to know who Tuđman's doctors were because he had the same kind of cancer. He sadly of course died of it. I went to Tuđman's funeral, which was being boycotted by the United States, but at that point I was a professor at the War College and a private citizen and I happened to be in Venice when he died, so I went over. I was told by one of the ambassadors there, I think it was the British ambassador that Tuđman had actually not died of cancer, but that he had had some other problems, treatable problems, that he had delayed getting treatment for because he wanted to go see the Pope. He had an audience with the Pope and he just held off and held off and then he saw the Pope and then it was not the national day, this was November. It was a day to lay a wreath in honor of those who had died in the war, the equivalent of Veterans Day.

Q: The 29th?

GALBRAITH: No, I think it was probably the 11th of November.

Q: The 29th of November was the Yugoslav.

GALBRAITH: Well, that definitely would not have been a day that they would have honored, but this could have been the 11th of November, it was some day where we went up to, I mean I went up when I was there to Medvedgrad which was an old site that had been reconstructed, not accurately, but by the first DCM Ron Neitzke referred to it as a Croatian Disneyland. Then there was an altar at the homeland and there was a wreath laying and an eternal flame. Anyhow, Tuđman wanted to do that ceremony. So, he had gone to see the Pope. He resisted getting treatment until he had done that ceremony and then he went under treatment and had whatever emergency treatment needed to occur and he never recovered, never regained consciousness. It might be said that the Pope killed Tuđman. In any event, he certainly lasted a lot longer than we expected.

Q: While you were there, I don't know if I've ever asked this question before, but what was the role of the church, the Catholic church because during World War Two and prior to World War Two we both know the Catholic church was kind of vicious as far as its authority and racism and the whole thing. Was the church holding back did you feel or were they involved?

GALBRAITH: The church is a huge influence in Croatia and Tuđman naturally tried to use the church to win support for his government as had the Ustashi. The church, the Catholic Church was also targeted in the Serb-held areas. In fact every Catholic church in the Serb-held areas was destroyed except for the one at Ilok, blown up, used for target practice and so on. When the Croatians took over the territory they destroyed some, but not all of the Orthodox churches. They definitely did better on this than the Serbs had done. I mean I remember the first trips I made there before I was ambassador I was really shocked that churches had become such targets. I had thought that these were God's houses, house of God and that even if you were Orthodox, to destroy a Catholic church and vice versa. They were still Christian churches, but that wasn't how people looked at it there.

I also remember the first courtesy call I'd made on Cardinal Kuharić who as the bishop of Zagreb and the senior figure in the Croatians' church, quite an elderly man in the palace in Zagreb. I asked about the role that the church might play in terms of reconciliation and I was very surprised at the response. He said that the problem with the Serbs is that virtually none of them had been baptized and that they had no values and that lay at the root of the problem. I was surprised. It didn't immediately strike me that that was a basis for, you know, I had hoped the church would play a role in fostering in rejecting the violence, but that kind of stereotypical, what I thought sounded like a stereotyping of the Serbs didn't seem very promising.

I had other encounters with the church before I was ambassador. One of the more interesting was to visit the Catholic bishop and the Orthodox bishop in Banja Luka. The Orthodox bishop I remember meeting extremely well for the fact that it was 8:00 in the morning and this was in October of '92. When I arrived there was a table with quite a number of people who were attending and before each person there was a water glass full of scotch and a water glass full of slivovitz. It did strike me that that was a bit heavy going for 8:00 in the morning. The Catholic priest, the Catholic bishop Komarica I think his name was, the meeting was more a description of the horrors that were being inflicted on the Croatian community, which were indeed true. In general, I was disappointed in the church. I never figured out how to have a dialogue with them on these issues. I wished that they had played a better role in reconciliation.

Q: Did you have the feeling that they recognized the church's really pernicious role during just before and through World War Two?

GALBRAITH: Not at all. The church didn't recognize it. The Pope didn't recognize it and the Croatian government didn't recognize it. In fact, when Pope John Paul II came to Croatia he went and prayed at the grave of Cardinal Stepinac who was the leader of the church during the Ustasha period. What Pope John Paul II focused on as to Croatians was of course Stepinac's resistance after the war to Tito and to the communists and to his trial. There is a movement to get him beatified and made into a saint. There was a major effort. I think his tomb is a venerated place that was fixed up in the cathedral post under the Tuđman government whereas and with regard to the Ustashi, they tend to focus on what Stepinac did toward the end of the Ustasha period when he greeted Pavlovic into the church on Easter to get the traditional offerings of bread and salt and allegedly said thou shalt not kill, but ignored his earlier involvement, his earlier support of the Ustashi regime and frankly there's been a lot of sweeping under the rug, the role of the Franciscan priests in Herzegovina.

Q: And Glina.

GALBRAITH: And Glina, the massacres of the Serbs, absolutely.

Q: Yes. So, really we move into really what 1997 was the last year you were there?

GALBRAITH: That's right.

Q: You've talked about Madeleine Albright coming. How about as things began, your term

began to wind down. How did you see things moving?

GALBRAITH: It was a long haul. It was four and a half years and very eventful. I had a, I left with a sense that things were heading in the right direction. I mean I knew that Tuđman and what he stood for was a transitory phenomenon, that nobody in Croatia basically nobody subscribed to his view of the great greater Croatia that is dividing Bosnia in half. It was very much a minority that subscribed to the Šušak view of a small greater Croatia, that is taking over Herzegovina. That the opposition was more tolerant, more democratic and I thought it likely that they would win at the next opportunity, that there was a significant level of dissatisfaction with what the HDZ was doing with the corruption and with the failure to deliver economically. I felt that we had been effective in forging a consensus with the Europeans on Croatia democracy issues. Sometimes it was frustrating. One of the things that I lobbied against and again Washington agreed and took action had to do with Croatia's admission to the council of Europe. I felt that Croatia should not be admitted to the council of Europe until it met certain conditions. Our representative in Strasbourg lobbied on this point, a guy who sort of tends the council of Europe as an observer, of course we aren't members. The Europeans in the end laid down I think 40 conditions for Croatia to enter which ranged again from the return of Serbs to a free press and so on. The frustrating part was that Croatia didn't meet any of those terms and they still admitted them. The argument was that Croatia, if they admit Russia, how could they exclude Croatia and they would have more influence on Croatia if it was in than if it was out. Those might be valid arguments, but if you're going to do that then you don't first lay down conditions. But in the end I felt that we had gotten European seized on these issues and that largely there was a consensus about where Croatia should go.

Q: Did you find any divergence between say Britain, Germany and France?

GALBRAITH: No, I think there was a pretty good consensus. The view from the outside was the Germans were the major players in Croatia and that they were more sympathetic to the Croatian government. It wasn't true that they were more sympathetic, at least in this period. They were at the very beginning.

Q: Germany was.

GALBRAITH: Yes. They definitely were not the big players. I mean we were the big players. That was clear from '93 on. The Germans they were supportive of our policy. The other thing that was a major focus of my attention in '96 and '97 was the implementation of the Erdut Agreement. One of the provisions of the Erdut Agreement, which the Serbs had wanted, created an international commission that was to monitor. They'd wanted guarantees. So, my idea was to, I couldn't put in specific guarantees for them into the agreement of Serbian rights, but what I sold them on was there should be an international commission that would monitor the implementation of the agreement. They agreed that that met their request for guarantees. Then the problem was in part of '96 was that we didn't appoint the commission. Jacques Klein the transitional administrator didn't want it because he felt it might be looking over his shoulder, but the Serbs really insisted on it. So, we formed the commission that consisted of the ambassadors who were from the European Union plus Norway since Stoltenberg had been my co-mediator and Canada since they wanted something to do. That was the commission plus Russia of course.

We made period trips to Eastern Slavonia to monitor the progress of the agreement. The critical test for the success of the agreement came in April of ’97 which was the elections that were held in Eastern Slavonia, local elections. Jacques Klein very rightly made it a condition of the Serbs being able to vote in the elections, that they should take out Croatian citizenship. The number of people getting Croatian documents was very small in ’96 and early ’97 and then the Serb political leadership took the decision that they would contest the elections. So, they all took out Croatian citizenship and the population took out Croatian citizenship. Those elections produced I think of the 27 municipalities in Eastern Slavonia it was roughly that, 14 had Serb majority, 13 had Croat majorities, or maybe it was the other way around and Vukovar had a slight Croat majority because the people who had been driven of course were able to vote there. In the end these municipalities had to work together and the process of election was the key to the process of integration. I had a number of public meetings in Eastern Slavonia explaining the agreement, advocating tolerance. I found myself often feeling like I was a preacher and citing the bible, citing Woodrow Wilson and the bible as I advocated tolerance. In the end that agreement was a success. I came back on the 15th of January ‘98 when the turnover took place. In other words when Croatia assumed full authority over the region and the fact is that Croatia did take over full control of the region and the Serbian population that was from the region almost all remained.

Q: Did you get involved with I’m not sure of the timing, but Bill Walker’s operation?

GALBRAITH: Bill Walker in, well this.

Q: In Vukovar.

GALBRAITH: Right. Bill Walker was Jacques Klein’s successor. I think Bill was only there for about six months. Kline came in January of ‘96 and was there until the summer of ‘97 when Madeleine moved him to be deputy in Sarajevo. A very mistaken move; Jacques was perfect in Eastern Slavonia. He was admired by Tuđman who thought of Jack as a fellow general. He was admired by the local Serbs who admired his sort of decisive style and his swagger. It fitted him that it was a place where he could do all his speaking and the audience would listen. He was less effective in the role of deputy in Sarajevo. Madeleine wanted a strong personality to pursue Bosnia implementation, but I don’t think it really worked out that well. Bill Walker was frankly less forceful and less effective than Jacques in Eastern Slavonia. He wasn't a general. He couldn’t in the time he was there develop the persona that Klein had gotten.

Q: Did you have the feeling, you had been there for four and a half years and you mentioned preaching. I mean you were having to carry difficult messages and tell people what to do and you know, you were acting like a nag in a way. I mean this was our policy in trying to get the Croats to enter the society of Europe or something. Did you find did you have the feeling toward the end that you were beginning to run out of tolerance for doing this and they needed somebody new or not?

GALBRAITH: Well, I certainly began to feel that I was becoming a nag and a scold and that I would get up before audiences and that what immediately would come out would be the criticisms. Yes, I felt personally, I felt that that you know it’s beginning to sound like a broken record and it had a little edge in the way I sounded. Also, I didn’t feel I was connecting well with

my audiences at times. I mean of course it was a message that they didn't want to hear. But I couldn't go out and deliver the chamber of commerce type speech. First, it isn't in my nature to give that kind of a speech. Second, always it came back to these things and I think that was a, it would have been better had I given a few more chamber of commerce type speeches, you know, how wonderful Croatia is, how wonderful America is, how wonderful it will be with our two countries working together and left off some of these things, but that wasn't the mode that I was in. So, yes, I feel that my effectiveness probably diminished some in '97.

On the other hand, I had developed over the four and a half years an enormous, a very big reserve of good will both for myself and for the United States and lots and lots of Croatians did feel that the United States had saved the country. They did appreciate what we had done in terms of negotiating the Erdut Agreement. They gave me a lot of credit for the U.S. policy and U.S. actions, maybe not of it deserved, but nonetheless that was how it was. That was capital that I could and did use. Brian Atwood came in and he observed.

Q: The head of AID.

GALBRAITH: The head of AID. How I developed all this capital and now he said, and you're really planning to spend it all before you leave, aren't you? Although when I left, I mean it was a huge press coverage in the Croatian press of my departure and they also did a poll of who were the most popular people in Croatia. When I left I was the fourth most popular person in the country. There was a nun and a sports figure who were in the first and second places and third place was Tuđman and I was in fourth place, ahead of all the other politicians. With an 80 percent or something approval rating, I was pretty. So, I felt good about that.

Q: How did you find your relations with Washington? Did that change or did you find that you were, that you had good support from Washington or were you sort of at odds?

GALBRAITH: Over this whole period?

Q: Yes, well, I mean towards the end and also the whole period.

GALBRAITH: It varied greatly during this period. At the beginning there was no question but that Christopher and people around him saw me as an outsider, a maverick and also they didn't like Croatia. That was complicated I think by the incident that I explained of the cable that the dark team cable which I'd sent unclassified which had gotten in the press and they assumed that I'd done this intentionally to embarrass the administration. When the Z-4 process was underway and Holbrooke was in place in the period leading up to Dayton I think I had the strongest support from Washington that I could hope for. It was a very good relationship. I would have screaming fights with Holbrooke sometimes, but we spoke two or three times a day and he was very helpful, very engaged on the issues.

On the policy post Dayton, to some degree I was not much of a player on Bosnia implementation particularly after Holbrooke left. I mean Bosnia, a huge bureaucracy sprung up in Sarajevo and in Washington to handle Bosnia and to push the parties toward implementation. My role simply became less and I think the last really big thing I did was when Silajdžić announced he was

resigning as prime minister and Holbrooke didn't want him to resign. This was I think January of '96 and he tasked me to go to Sarajevo and talk to Silajdžić and I did. I was unable to persuade Silajdžić to change his mind, but Holbrooke thought it was worth the effort.

On the Croatia issues in '96 and '97 I got support. I didn't, I had good relations. I didn't always feel like I was an insider. There's no doubt that this whole business with the Bosnia arms investigation. That sort of thing isn't always very helpful.

Q: When you got back, you got back when?

GALBRAITH: January of '98. No, sorry, actually I took about six weeks and so I got back in February of '98.

Q: Did you find people were interested in what you were doing in debriefing or did you just sort of come back and thanks a lot and on your way or something?

GALBRAITH: No, I think, thanks a lot and you're on your way. I think when you wrap up an assignment like that, you wrap it up and it was definitely my view that the book should be closed. It was in somebody else's hands. I didn't want to be convincing from the sidelines. I don't like the view from the stands, either you're on the field or you go off and do something else.

Q: Except one of the problems often in the State Department I find and this is true in a lot of other fields and endeavors is that there's a tendency when somebody comes back, I mean, they get engrossed in a problem, there isn't much effort on the part of those who are going to continue to deal with it to milk them of everything they know in order to make their job better.

GALBRAITH: That's true and my successor Bill Montgomery never even had a conversation with me.

Q: Yes. Ships that pass in the night kind of.

GALBRAITH: I mean he never called me, never wanted my views either on policy or embassy personnel, nothing. Not, I mean, I thought it was a bit surprising, but it was really up to him.

Q: Well, this is the theme that I've heard again and again.

GALBRAITH: That's why it was my view to close the chapter and probably more than most ambassadors I could have been a problem because I really did have a profile in Croatia that no other ambassador had and no successor is ever likely to come close because of the circumstances.

End of reader