

Chapter Nine

Endgame: Dayton, November 11-21

Days Eleven and Twelve: Saturday and Sunday, November 11-12

The weekend of November 11-12 was in many ways the intermezzo between the two acts of Dayton. It had taken ten days to clear away such issues as the Federation and Eastern Slavonia. During this time, the parties had gotten comfortable with the surroundings and each other. There had been some progress in areas like the IFOR annex and elections. Yet, despite hours and negotiating and significant prodding by the U.S., most of the core issues remained untouched. This was particularly true on the map. There had been some discussion about topics related to an overall territorial arrangement -- such as the status of Sarajevo -- with little success. The problem was that the parties were still talking past each other -- no one had yet offered a proposal that could be reasonably considered a compromise.¹ The Sarajevo government had not tabled anything serious, and the Bosnian Serbs, while "theatrically engaged" with all their historical maps and emotional lectures, had "yet to seriously present a rational proposal." With the two-week mark approaching fast, the U.S. wanted to use the weekend's talks to jump-start the negotiations. "Saturday," Kerrick informed Lake, "is a day of maps."²

Unfortunately, the weekend produced nothing new; the map talks went nowhere. In a Saturday meeting with Izetbegovic and Silajdzic in Holbrooke's suite, negotiators pored over the maps in detail, but agreed to nothing. Izetbegovic did little but state that the Contact Group map would be the basis for negotiations. "They would not discuss the map for a long time, arguing that there is only one map, and that's the Contact Group map," Chris Hill recalled.³ This map still included the lost enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa, areas that although the Bosnians had no hope of getting back at Dayton, they still insisted on claiming. As long as unrealistic options were the only ones on the table, these talks with the Bosnians weren't negotiations -- they were hand-wringing sessions.⁴

The Serbs were no better. With the Bosnians so unreasonably stubborn, Milosevic had no reason to be flexible. The Bosnian Serbs were even more problematic. Although they had been left out of most of the other negotiations at Dayton, the map was the one area where they had been included. Pardew had spent the most time with them during the first week, and Holbrooke had allowed Krajisnik to have the floor during

¹ Despite such pessimism on the U.S. side, some negotiators leaked to the press that the negotiations would succeed. "Dayton will not end in failure," one such story read. "That would hurt everybody. It is something that nobody can afford." Accordingly, some stories described how the parties were looking to the U.S. to set drive the agenda. "It is up to the Americans to decide whether there will be a peace agreement or not," said one unattributed source. See Michael Dobbs, "In War and Peace Talks, Bosnian Conflict Is About Land," *Washington Post*, November 12, 1995.

² Kerrick SITREP #7.

³ Chris Hill comment, Dayton History Seminar.

⁴ See Kerrick notes, November 11, 1995.

November 7th's acrimonious "map marathon." But with the negotiations ailing, the intractable Bosnian Serbs were not the remedy.

After enduring hours of lectures about the sanctity of Serb land and the threat of encroaching Islam, Pardew did not need to be told that the Bosnian Serbs were not the most reasonable of interlocutors. Moreover, he had seen firsthand instances of downright bizarre behavior. Some Bosnian Serbs had apparently loaded up on hunting knives and camouflage gear at the Wright-Patterson PX (where all delegates had purchasing rights), although the line was drawn at firearms.⁵

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From the outset, Holbrooke had believed that the "Milosevic strategy" -- making Milosevic deliver Pale -- should continue to govern the U.S. negotiating approach. Although he had asked Pardew to talk to the Bosnian Serbs to probe their views on the map, these talks proved inconclusive. Therefore, that weekend Holbrooke asked Pardew not to meet with the Bosnian Serbs anymore. Pardew agreed that there was no way the Americans could bring them around. How the Bosnian Serbs were involved would be up to Milosevic.

The map talks that weekend seemed to destroy all the goodwill of the previous week. The parties were ill-tempered and ill-prepared. "Both sides are in over their heads," Kerrick reported to Lake. "Shouts, anger highlight talks." In another attempt to gain some bargaining traction, the U.S. team began to prepare yet another map. This effort proved to be risky. As Kerrick predicted, "[it] will make no one happy, and may drive Izzy public -- which he has threatened to do."

As relations between the parties took a turn for the worse, so did the Europeans' attitude toward their American partners. The Contact Group had never been entirely happy with a U.S.-led peace process -- they felt slighted, and complained of never being allowed to participate in serious negotiating at Dayton. Fundamentally, they disagreed with the U.S. goal of an ambitious, comprehensive settlement. "The British, French and Russians seemed ready to accept outcomes that would increase the chances of a 'greater Serbia,'" Holbrooke recalled. Thus, from the American point of view, the Contact Group was a problem to be managed rather than a partner to be included fully. Aside from Michael Steiner's important work on the Federation, many U.S. negotiators felt that, more than anything else, the Europeans at Dayton had done more to sabotage the talks than help.⁸ Accordingly, the U.S. wanted to do the minimum necessary to keep the

⁵ When hearing of these shopping excursions, U.S. staff began to joke that this was an early version of the equip-and-train program -- although for the wrong side. See Goldberg interview.

⁶ Pardew report to Perry, November 8, 1995; and Pardew comment, Dayton History Seminar.

⁷ See Kerrick report to Lake, "Dayton SITREP #8, November 11-13, 10:30.

⁸ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), November 26, 1996; Holbrooke, Hill, Owen comments, Dayton History Seminar.

Europeans on board. They were effectively cut out of most of the key discussions, and consulted only when they had to be.⁹

The Contact Group's accommodations at Dayton symbolized the role they would play: their VOQ was not a part of the quad, but adjacent to it. They complained of second-class treatment: unlike Holbrooke and the Balkan heads of delegation, for example, the Contact Group members were subject to searches at the security checkpoints. This unintended slight greatly offended the Europeans, particularly French representative Jacques Blot. At one point, the U.S. delegation received word that Blot would be unable to attend a meeting because he could not pass through the security checkpoint to be allowed on base. The Frenchman refused to be searched by the bomb-sniffing dogs, and the guards wouldn't let him in. When U.S. officials arrived on the scene, they found a livid Blot. "For the dignity of France," Blot yelled in his accented English, "I will not be sneeffed."¹⁰ For the moment, the guards agreed to waive the security search.¹¹

By that weekend the effects of neglect -- both perceived and real -- began to show on the Europeans. "These were relatively high-level officials who were at a negotiation with no negotiating power; they were there just to bear witness," Bob Gallucci observed. "It was really tough on their egos."¹² European delegates began to rumble even more about their treatment. They left many at Dayton with the impression that they did not want to be there -- they seemed angry about being in the U.S. and anxious to get off the cramped and uncomfortable military base. Rumor spread that Carl Bildt might leave Dayton. The French complained loudly about U.S. "heavy-handedness," characterizing the U.S. approach to Bosnia as "we take the credit, you get the bill." At Dayton, their unhappiness was translating into real problems for the negotiations, particularly on the annexes where Europe would have to play a key role -- such as the annexes on police, civilian implementation, and OSCE monitoring of the elections.¹³

Holbrooke was spending an increasing amount of time everyday -- starting with the large and cumbersome Contact Group meeting -- taking care of the Europeans. In an attempt to free up his own time and keep the Contact Group under control, Holbrooke asked John Kornblum to take over the Contact Group portfolio. As an old European hand, Kornblum had an uncanny knack for soothing the Europeans. He was a good listener, once described as having a Buddha-like quality for sitting through the Contact Group's tirades without either exacerbating their anger or giving in to their demands. For the rest of the negotiations, Kornblum was the primary daily interface with the Europeans, keeping them informed of overall progress, negotiating select issues with

⁹ In an article written in the journal *Survival*, British representative Pauline Neville-Jones summed up the European role at Dayton this way: "The elaborate American [negotiating] construction enabled the U.S. negotiator, supported by a very large team, to organize the agenda and run the negotiation as he wished, with the acquiescence of the rest. They were informed but not consulted, and their primary role was to assist as far as needed, witness and ratify the outcome. But they were not to interfere." See Neville-Jones, p48.

¹⁰ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), November 26, 1996; Holbrooke, Hill, Owen comments, Dayton History Seminar.

¹¹ This anecdote attained near legendary status among the U.S. delegates at Dayton.

¹² Gallucci interview, October 2, 1996.

¹³ For a report on these problems, see memorandum to Holbrooke from Jack Zeikulic, "Euro-Handling: 1) OSCE Consultations; 2) Bildt's Pique," November 12, 1995; and "French Line on Bosnia: U.S. Wants the Credit But Not the Bill," Cable, The Hague 5952, November 8, 1995.

them, and, of course, receiving healthy doses of their anger. Holbrooke joined these meetings occasionally, but Kornblum's presence in Dayton substantially freed him to focus on the Balkan parties themselves.¹⁴

Despite the lack of progress on maps and problems with the Europeans, the weekend brought one positive development: a final agreement on Eastern Slavonia. The parties delivered the text Saturday in Dayton, and on Sunday it was signed by Galbraith, Stoltenberg and local officials in Zagreb and Erdut. As Christopher and Holbrooke had negotiated two days before, the final document struck compromises on the last dividing issues. The UN Transitional Authority would govern the area for at least twelve months but no longer than twenty-four months. When the UN's mandate expires, the region would be reintegrated back into Croatia. Local elections would be held toward the end of the transitional period; and the international community would monitor human rights and refugee relocation.¹⁵

The Eastern Slavonia agreement was hailed from Washington by President Clinton and Secretary Christopher as a source of momentum for the negotiations.¹⁶ Yet, the one issue that remained unsolved was mutual recognition between Serbia and Croatia. During their Friday meeting with Christopher, Milosevic and Tadjman had said that they had reached an agreement "in principle" on mutual recognition to be announced at a later date. But as of Sunday, there was no final text, although Croat and Serb experts had convened to go over a draft. The U.S. wanted to make sure that an agreement was finished before the end of Dayton. If this did not get done, one analysis explained, "we leave the door open to backsliding by Belgrade, which would be grounds for Zagreb to renounce the East Slavonia agreement. The results would be disastrous for the people of the region, and for our diplomatic prestige."¹⁷ These concerns turned out to be partially correct: mutual recognition negotiations did indeed become protracted, continuing long after Dayton; but neither side reneged on the Eastern Slavonia agreement. The Croats and Serbs finally agreed to mutual recognition on August 23, 1996.

¹⁴ See Holbrooke interview with author (notes), November 26, 1996; Holbrooke, Owen, Hill comments, Dayton History Seminar; Kornblum/Owen interview, June 18, 1996; Kornblum interview, July 26, 1996; Zejkulic interview, July 19, 1996; Gallucci interview; and *War Report*, pp34-35.

¹⁵ For text, see "Basic Agreement on the Region of Eastern Slavonia, Baranja, and Western Sirmium," November 12, 1995. See also "Fact Sheet on Eastern Slavonia," no author, Pardew Dayton Notebook; and "GOC and Eastern Slavonian Serbs Sign Agreement on Eastern Slavonia," Cable, Zagreb 4509, November 12, 1995.

¹⁶ See "Statement by the President," White House Press Office, November 12, 1995; and "Statement by the Secretary of State Warren Christopher," U.S. Department of State, Office of the Spokesman, November 12, 1995.

¹⁷ Along with mutual recognition, the U.S. had to begin planning with the UN on the specifics of an implementation force, which, according to this same analysis, "needed to demonstrate that this operation is different from the unsuccessful UNPROFOR and UNCRO operations in Croatia [and] is a credible military force that can deal decisively with breaches of government. Provision of U.S. forces would provide such credibility...[but] obviously, the U.S. troop question requires high-level consideration in Washington." See memorandum to Holbrooke from Chris Hoh (EUR/SCE), "East Slavonia Issues," November 12, 1995. For Galbraith's assessment of the tasks ahead for implementation, see "Implementation of the Eastern Slavonian Accord," Cable, Zagreb 4509, November 14, 1995; and "Further Views on Implementing the Eastern Slavonian Agreement," Cable, Zagreb 4561, November 15, 1995. For U.S.UN's views, see "U.S.UN Views On How to Implement the November 13 Agreement On Eastern Slavonia," Cable, State 267095, November 14, 1995.

The families of Robert Frasure, Joseph Kruzal and Nelson Drew visited Dayton that Sunday. It was an emotional moment, serving as a stark reminder of the real human sacrifices that were behind this massive negotiating effort. There was a small luncheon for them with the U.S. delegation, and they met with the three Balkan Presidents in their respective VOQs.

Day Thirteen: Monday, November 13

In preparation for Christopher's return to Dayton, the pace of negotiations that day was hectic on all fronts. The drafting experts from all delegations worked to get as many of the annexes cleaned up as possible, while Holbrooke and his core team conducted intense shuttling between the three Presidents on the map. Despite their ability to get along cordially in social settings, such camaraderie had yet to translate into the negotiations.¹⁸ The Bosnians and Croats continued to bicker over many issues. Izetbegovic was reportedly in an awful mood, refusing to see either Tudjman or Milosevic, while Tudjman refused to see Milosevic. "That is why they call these proximity talks, of course" Holbrooke wrote to Christopher that night. "But it did constitute retrogression."¹⁹

While all three parties were difficult, the Bosnians were proving the most aggravating. Izetbegovic was still unable to bring his delegation to a united position. Holbrooke referred to the Bosnian delegation as a "mini-Yugoslavia" in constant internal dispute. Silajdzic emerged briefly as the most level-headed and cooperative. But every time the Prime Minister tried to move forward and conduct a coherent negotiation, he was undermined by either Izetbegovic or Sacirbey.²⁰ "Time and again," Holbrooke reflected, "Silajdzic's frustrations became so intense that his emotions took over and prevented him from making rational decisions." Seeing the psychological toll such constant undercutting was having on the Prime Minister, Holbrooke tried to help him relax, taking him for a mid-day walk that Monday around Wright-Patterson's grounds.²¹

As they strolled along the perimeter of the VOQ area, Holbrooke told the Bosnian leader that as "the leading proponent at Dayton of a multi-ethnic Bosnia," Silajdzic had an "historical role" to play. If progress was not made quickly, Holbrooke said, Secretary Christopher would consider ending the talks -- with serious consequences for the Bosnians. Silajdzic exploded, angrily saying that he should never threaten a Bosnian in such a manner; "it would only stiffen their spines." After an hour of this rather sullen conversation, Holbrooke told Silajdzic that the U.S. would finally put forth another map that afternoon. "I told him that we would no longer negotiate from their map, or Milosevic's, or the Contact group map."²²

After the Croats, Serbs and Bosnians saw the map that afternoon, American negotiators spent the rest of the day peddling different ideas and options back and forth.

¹⁸ Tudjman had hosted a dinner on Sunday night for, as Kerrick put it, his "two amigos" -- Milosevic and Izetbegovic. As Kerrick explained to Lake, the team "remain[ed] amazed at their ability to turn the charm on socially while spouting venom in negotiations." See Kerrick report to Lake, "Dayton SITREP #9; November 14, 1995, 1:10am."

¹⁹ Memorandum for Christopher from Holbrooke, "Your Long Day in Dayton, November 14," November 14, 1995.

²⁰ Holbrooke and Hill comments, Dayton History Seminar; Menzies interview.

²¹ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), November 26, 1996.

²² As Kerrick informed Lake the previous day, the U.S. team had already planned to put forth their own map. Holbrooke also told Christopher that the delay in presenting a U.S. map "were caused by G B-H (Bosnian) refusal to talk about the map until after the Federation agreements were completed."

The Bosnians pressed for swaths of land in northwest Bosnia (for key railroad lines) and areas south of Gorazde (for key power plants). They insisted on having the northeast Bosnian town of Brcko. Milosevic fought all of these demands, only giving up areas which were already in Federation hands that he had intended to relinquish anyway. The one bright spot was on Sarajevo. While unresolved, consensus seemed to be forming around the "Washington, DC" option.²³

By the time the map negotiations ended around midnight, most of the U.S. delegation was fed up with the Bosnians. They exhibited a great reluctance to compromise on anything, leaving some American negotiators with the impression that they were "clearly prepared to return to war." Yet, oddly enough, Silajdzic himself thought that the negotiations that day had taken a turn for the better. Earlier, Holbrooke found the Prime Minister "emotional, gloomy, and threatening." But during a second walk with Holbrooke that night, Silajdzic said that "it had been the best day of Dayton so far." Holbrooke, tired and frustrated, "thought [Silajdzic] must be on some controlled substance, since it seemed to me that the tortoise of our progress was being outrun by the hare of the calendar. But he was serious, and perhaps he is right."²⁴

While these map talks were underway, officials in Dayton and Washington conducted an important review of the IFOR annex. On Sunday, the U.S. delegation had sent back to Washington the Bosnian and Russian edits of the draft military annex back to Washington for review. Since the comments dealt with the U.S. military role in implementation, they had to be subject to high-level review. The Bosnian changes were primarily the handiwork of Richard Perle, and had been vetted by both Holbrooke and General Clark. Holbrooke explained in a memorandum to the DC that their review had been aimed at preventing changes that would entangle U.S. forces into a Bosnian war through "mission creep." Some of the Bosnian suggestions, Holbrooke explained, could be accepted "at no cost to the key elements of the annex," while the delegation strongly recommended rejecting others.²⁵

The "Perle markup," as the American delegation had begun to call it, reflected the Bosnians desire for a stronger, more interventionist IFOR mandate.²⁶ Perle had added language that would oblige the IFOR commander to carry out the force's mandate "to the maximum extent consistent with its resources" to improve the climate for elections, remove the one-year limit for deployment and apprehend war criminals. Although Holbrooke and Clark warned that several of these suggestions were the ingredients for mission creep, some items (like elections protection and removing the one-year limit for IFOR) were acceptable.²⁷ The Russian edits, in contrast, emasculated IFOR, tailoring the

²³ For details on discussions that day, see memorandum to Christopher from Holbrooke; and Kerrick SITREP #9.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Memorandum for the Deputies Committee from Holbrooke and the U.S. Delegation, "Changes to the Military Annex to the Peace Plan," November 12, 1995. For Holbrooke and Clark's line-by-line response to the Bosnian changes, see "Delegation of Bosnia and Herzegovina Proposed Changes to Annex I," November 10, 1995, 1:30pm. Holbrooke and Clark responded to the changes in three ways: changes that they would approve but had to be cleared by Washington; changes that they approved that could be done in Dayton without Washington's clearance; and changes that should be rejected outright.

²⁶ See Pardew interview, July 26, 1996.

²⁷ The Dayton delegation strongly supported language on threatening non-military sanctions for non-compliance and for full investigation and apprehension of war crimes suspects, but recommended that it be placed in the Framework and Human Rights annexes, respectively.

agreement to provide for a larger UN role, curtailing the authority of IFOR's commander, and limiting the use of force to self-defense only (not enforcing the agreement).²⁸

That afternoon, Clark and Pardew joined the DC meeting via video teleconference to discuss the "Perle markup." The Russian changes were not dealt with extensively, instead being handled directly with the Russians by DOD and State channels (Talbot took the lead on this; if any changes came out of these talks, Holbrooke simply asked to be informed). The DC took many of Holbrooke's recommendations on the Bosnian suggestions, only rejecting provisions that radically altered the scope of IFOR (such as the removing the force's one-year limit, or creating a "mechanism" to investigate suspected war criminals). Perle's efforts had succeeded in bringing some specificity to IFOR's mission, but it still essentially remained a force of nearly unlimited authority with few concrete responsibilities. With the draft now cleared by Washington, negotiators in Dayton began work to put on the finishing touches.²⁹

Also that day in Washington, President Clinton sent a letter to Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich which outlined the rationale for the current and future U.S. role in the Bosnian peace process. This nine-page letter was considered the President's "strongest and most detailed case" yet as to why the U.S. should be involved.³⁰ Although the Administration had been keeping Congress apprised of the status of the shuttles that fall, it began a concerted effort in late October gain Congress' support for the negotiations in Dayton. Christopher and Perry both testified on Capitol Hill, and officials from State, DOD and the NSC began to contact former government officials and other opinion leaders to seek their help to speak out in support of the Administration's efforts. Further, a "buddy-system" strategy was established in which officials from each agency and the White House were assigned to stay in touch with each member of Congress.³¹ The most critical challenge concerning Congress was attaining legislative support for U.S. troop participation in IFOR, which Gingrich and Senate Majority Leader Dole had said was "virtually nil."³² That week, the White House had held several briefing sessions

²⁸ For an overview of the changes and the documents, see memorandum to Talbot from Komblum, "Deputies' Committee Meeting, Monday, November 13, 1995," and attached "Checklist to Military Annex I (Bosnian Comments)" and "Checklist to Military Annex I (Russian Comments)," both drafted by George Glass (EUR/RPM).

²⁹ Pardew interview, June 27, 1996; Holbrooke interview with author (notes), October 19, 1996; Slocombe interview; Perry BBC interview.

³⁰ See Elaine Sciolino, "Clinton Makes Case to Congress For Putting U.S. Troops in Bosnia," *New York Times*, November 15, 1995.

³¹ Some details of the Administration's Congressional strategy were to be discussed at the November 7 PC; see memorandum to Christopher from Komblum, November 7, 1995; and Wendy Sherman interview, December 11, 1996. For Secretary Christopher's testimony in October, see "The United States Must Continue to Lead in Bosnia," Statement before the House International Relations Committee, October 18, 1995, U.S. Department of State *Dispatch*, October 23, 1995, pp755-756.

³² Apparently the secrecy of the negotiating process upset many members of Congress. Secretary Christopher reflected that "there was always some tension in that we were not disclosing the twists and turns of the process to anyone, particularly when operating under the Dayton rules of confidentiality. But with Congress having been pressing us on [Bosnia] for years, I thought it was time to respond by saying, 'We're doing something about it; we need your support.'" Christopher interview, October 30, 1996.

on the subject with the President, Vice President and other senior officials for key members of Congress.³³

The President's November 13 letter was in response to an October 26 letter from Gingrich which was co-signed by the House Republican leadership. Stating that "it would be a grave mistake" to introduce U.S. military forces into Bosnia without Congressional approval, the Gingrich letter asked over forty questions in twenty-two different areas concerning U.S. policy toward Bosnia. Most of questions dealt with IFOR, including such issues as the timing and duration of deployment, command and control of forces, role of Russian troops, funding sources, and impact on U.S. military readiness worldwide. Other questions concerned areas like economic reconstruction aid, regional arms control, the Federation's viability, and the equip-and-train initiative.³⁴

In all, the Gingrich letter was one of the most exhaustive probes of U.S. policy on the issue, and the Administration decided to reply in kind. The idea was to respond with a comprehensive statement "that could then be used subsequently as the Administration position, something which we could use to explain 'why we're sending your kids and money to a strange place a long ways away.'³⁵ Almost immediately, the State Department's European Bureau began to work on the response; and a first draft was completed on the eve of Dayton.³⁶ In the meantime, the President sent another letter to every Member of Congress outlining briefly the Administration's rationale and asking for support.³⁷ While the negotiations were underway in Dayton, officials at the State Department's European Bureau continued to work with their NSC counterparts to fine-tune the response. Finally, by the weekend of November 11-12, the comprehensive letter was ready to go.³⁸

The letter framed peace in Bosnia squarely within U.S. interests. If the negotiations underway in Dayton were successful, the President explained, the U.S. had a "real opportunity not only to end the dreadful humanitarian suffering and outrageous atrocities that we have seen in Bosnia, but also to advance our goal of an undivided, peaceful and democratic Europe -- with benefits for our own security and prosperity... this result, however, can only be achieved by U.S. leadership." The President also outlined specifics, pledging to seek Congressional support for IFOR, and projecting that the force would be deployed for approximately one year at the price of \$1.5 billion. Although "atrocities unknown in Europe since the Second World War have occurred," the President would "not allow 'mission creep' that could involve IFOR in a nation-building role." In addition, the letter stated that the U.S. would seek to balance military forces in

³³ This sentiment was expressed in a letter sent to the President also on November 13. For details of this letter and the Administration's efforts to attain Congressional support, see Helen Dewar, "In Bid for Hill Backing on Troops, Clinton Faces Tougher Task Than Bush," *Washington Post*, November 14, 1995.

³⁴ See Letter to President Clinton from Newt Gingrich, et al., October 26, 1995. That week, the President also published a brief article in *Newsweek* outlining his rationale for U.S. involvement in Bosnia. See "Why Bosnia Matters to America," *Newsweek*, November 13, 1995, p55.

³⁵ John Price interview.

³⁶ John Price of the State Department's European Bureau was the primary drafter of the reply letter. On October 31, he faxed his draft to Holbrooke in Dayton. On the cover-sheet message, Price wrote that the NSC wanted the letter to go out the next day. See fax to Holbrooke from John Price, "Draft Gingrich Letter," October 31, 1995 (distributed at Dayton to Hill, Clark, Kerrick, Pardew, Jack Zetkovic and Aric Schwan [EUR/PA]). For details, see Price interview; Sherman interview.

³⁷ See letter from President Clinton, November 2, 1995.

³⁸ Price interview; Sherman interview.

Bosnia by lifting the UN arms embargo, pushing for regional arms control, and employing an equip-and-train effort. For economic reconstruction and relief, the Administration would ask Congress for \$500-\$600 million.

"Unquestionably, there are costs and risks to all involved making peace," the President wrote. But the costs of not trying to make peace, he argued, would be far greater.

"The human costs of continued war in Bosnia would be another cruel winter of starvation and suffering, followed by a Spring of renewed, bloody conflict. The economic costs of a continued war would be additional millions of dollars in humanitarian aid, in funds for ongoing sanctions and No-Fly-Zone enforcement, and in the efforts of our Allies to accommodate hundreds of thousands of refugees throughout Europe. The security costs would involve the risk of wider and even more dangerous conflict, as well as serious damage to the credibility and effectiveness of NATO and U.S. leadership if the war resumes. Moreover, if the war resumes, NATO and the U.S. could be called upon to undertake a potentially dangerous mission involving the withdrawal of UNPROFOR under hostile circumstances."³⁹

The next day, the President met with members of Congress in the White House to present and discuss the details of these intentions.⁴⁰ Within two days, the contents of this letter were leaked to the press.⁴¹ Although the President stated that he reserved final judgment until the terms of an agreement were clear, the very act of writing this letter, in effect, established public parameters -- such as \$1.5 billion for IFOR; 12-month deployment; 20,000 U.S. troops; \$500-\$600 million in economic aid -- for the U.S. role in implementing any settlement.

Finally, November 13 also saw the return of Assistant Secretary Shattuck to Dayton, fresh from his investigations into atrocities in the Banja Luka area. Shattuck remained through November 21, working with the legal team on the Human Rights annex and the role of the War Crimes Tribunal in the final settlement. As Shattuck recalled, prior to Dayton there were concerns within the human rights community that the role of the Tribunal "might be dealt away" in the effort to reach an accord. But both Christopher and Holbrooke fully supported it. As Shattuck notes, Holbrooke believed the Tribunal would have a "very important practical...value," in that he could use it "to isolate Karadzic and Mladic." Christopher, on the other hand, "took a broader approach," believing that the institution itself had to be defended and language included in the agreement requiring all sides to cooperate in its investigations. In fact, as Shattuck notes, this was "one of [the Secretary's]...non-negotiable" demands. Shattuck also used his remaining time in Dayton to lobby the three Balkan leaders personally to release war prisoners.⁴²

³⁹ Letter from President Clinton to House Speaker Newt Gingrich, November 13, 1995.

⁴⁰ Vershbow interview, July 23, 1996.

⁴¹ In addition to the Sciolino article (cited above), see Michael Dobbs and Thomas Lippmann, "Cost of U.S. Bosnia Force Put at \$1.5 Billion; Clinton Raises Estimate in Letter to Gingrich; Saying Some Personnel May Be Sent Before Debate," *Washington Post*, November 15, 1995.

⁴² Quotes from Shattuck interview, July 25, 1996. See Shattuck interview July 30, 1996.

Day Fourteen: Tuesday, November 14

When Christopher arrived in Dayton for the third time, the mood was turning quickly from frustration to desperation. The press described his visit as a "last ditch attempt" to prod the parties toward an agreement.⁴³ Such a characterization was consistent with the private views of the U.S. delegation. "There is a certain feeling among most people that success here is highly likely because of the momentum we had going into Dayton and the effort and commitment of the U.S.G has put into these talks," Holbrooke wrote Christopher in a briefing memorandum. "As you know, I do not share this view -- and not because I am 'low-balling' expectations."

To Holbrooke, progress had been achieved at Dayton, but much too slowly. "My concern over the situation here is based on the amount of time we have lost on such issues as sanctions arguments, the time spent on Federation-building (although it was productive and unavoidable, it consumed eight days), and, above all, the immense difficulty of engaging the Bosnian Government in a serious negotiation... So, on Day 14, we are about where we should have been on Day 8 or 9." Each of the parties challenged the prospects for success in their own way: the Bosnians were disorganized, Milosevic dishonest, and Tudjman disinterested. "While the Bosnians are the sort of friends that try one's patience, Milosevic has often lied outright about factual data or changed his position after we thought we had locked something in. As for Tudjman, he is fast becoming the King of Dayton (well, only after [Dayton native] Strobe moved to Cleveland, of course)."

Initially, the Secretary planned to visit Dayton on his way to Asia to close a deal. But given the remaining differences on almost all the core issues, the negotiations needed a middle-reliever, not a closer. "We have to recast your trip," Holbrooke wrote to the Secretary. "Initially conceived as a closer trip, it now becomes a last warning to get serious." Christopher would leave Dayton that night to attend the APEC ministerial meeting in Osaka. After APEC, he was supposed to join the President in Tokyo for an official state visit. However, given the bleak status of the negotiations, he decided to cut his Asia trip short to return to Dayton immediately after APEC.⁴⁴ Thus, Holbrooke advised the Secretary to leave the parties "with the clear message that when you return [from Japan] we must have either closure or close-down... That, pure and simple, is the message of your trip."

Holbrooke hoped that "by a combination of pressure, rhetoric, and [his] direct involvement," Christopher could break the logjam on some issues. Holbrooke wanted the Secretary to concentrate on the big problems -- such as the map, elections, and Sarajevo -- while also quickly finishing some small ones. By doing so, Christopher could "establish his ability to move the process forward." Holbrooke still believed that the parties genuinely wanted peace. They just didn't know how to get there. "They look forward to your helping them stop killing each other -- and so do we."⁴⁵

In preparation for Christopher's return, the U.S. delegation drafted a detailed status report on the General Framework Agreement and eleven annexes. None of the

⁴³ See Roger Cohen, "Christopher Sets a Last-Ditch Push for Bosnia Peace," *New York Times*, November 14, 1995.

⁴⁴ In the end, President Clinton canceled his own visit to the APEC summit, remaining in Washington to deal with the budget crisis. Vice President Gore participated in his place.

⁴⁵ See memorandum to Christopher from Holbrooke, "Your Long Day in Dayton, November 14," November 14, 1995.

annexes had been completed, but most had been approved at the working level and were in the latter stages of negotiating. Among these nine annexes -- on the constitution, arbitration, human rights, refugees, national monuments, public services, civilian implementation, police, and IFOR -- the Secretary did not need to intervene as they could be managed by the experts in Dayton. The areas in which Holbrooke wanted Christopher's involvement were those that had dominated the talks during the past few days -- the map, the elections annex, and Sarajevo.⁴⁶

After a morning briefing with the U.S. delegation at the Hope Hotel, Christopher and Holbrooke headed to the VOQ's to begin the first of three separate meetings with each of the Balkan Presidents. Shuttle almost continually until he left around midnight, Christopher saw both the highs and lows of Dayton. As Holbrooke had recommended, Christopher made clear to the three Presidents that when he returned from Japan, "we had to come to agreement or [the talks] would be closed down."⁴⁷ Although he left that night with no real breakthroughs, Christopher reported to the President that the day "offered tantalizing hints that a peace agreement might indeed be possible."⁴⁸

As planned, Christopher and Holbrooke's bilaterals concentrated on the map and Sarajevo. The map talks were where the spiraling relations between the parties were most apparent. Christopher prodded Izetbegovic and Milosevic to begin exploring possible territorial trade-offs. Although doing so "in an angry and vitriolic manner," he found that the two Presidents exposed enough common ground to provide a glimmer of hope. "It is possible, in the good moments, to see the final shape of the final map," Christopher wrote to the President. "But it is a very fragile system."⁴⁹

The Bosnians and Serbs were deadlocked on Sarajevo. The Bosnians supported the most recent variant of the U.S.-formulated "Washington, DC" plan, in which Sarajevo would be a united, independent federal city. However, Milosevic remained skeptical, tabling yet another proposal that tried to compromise between the division and unification of the city. This latest idea called for a central multiethnic government to oversee such city-wide needs as utilities and transportation, but would allow the citizens of each Opstina to decide if their local government would operate under the laws of the Federation or Srpska. In this way, Sarajevo would remain undivided through its municipal government, yet remain divided in its national politics, culture and legal system.⁵⁰ Holbrooke saw this as a non-starter, certain to be rejected by Izetbegovic. Christopher, however, seemed somewhat amenable to this compromise, describing to President Clinton that it "may be attractive when we understand it more fully."⁵¹

In terms of the other annexes, Christopher's report to the President that night echoed Holbrooke's own assessment. Most annexes were generally in good shape. Negotiations would continue among the various working groups, with high-level

⁴⁶ See memorandum to Christopher from Holbrooke, "Briefing Materials for Your Visit to Dayton, November 14," November 14, 1995.

⁴⁷ Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

⁴⁸ Memorandum for the President from Christopher, "Night Note en route to Osaka," November 15, 1995.

⁴⁹ Ibid. For a similar assessment, also see Kerrick report to Lake, "Dayton SITREP #10; November 14, 1995, 11:10pm."

⁵⁰ For the two proposals on Sarajevo, see "Elements of Agreed Principles on Sarajevo (Bosnian Position)," and "Agreed Principles on Sarajevo (Milosevic's position)," both attached to memorandum to Christopher from Holbrooke, "Briefing Materials for Your Visit to Dayton."

⁵¹ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996; Christopher to Clinton, "Night Note."

intervention as necessary. The only issues the Secretary raised specifically with the President concerned the military components of an agreement. He asked that Russia's comments on the IFOR annex be handled outside of Dayton through the Perry-Grachev or Talbott-Mamedov channels, and that the Administration come to closure on an equip-and-train program for the Bosnians.⁵²

Christopher recognized that while the issues alone were difficult, the parties' internal divisions weren't making things any easier. As Holbrooke had forewarned, the Secretary found that the problem was particularly acute with the Bosnians. "The Bosnians are very divided among themselves and still not fully convinced that a peace agreement is in their interest," Christopher explained to the President. He believed that Izetbegovic was most reluctant because "he was giving up sole leadership of his country - - flawed as it was -- for a power-sharing arrangement."⁵³ During one of their three meetings that day, Christopher had had a "heart-to-heart" discussion with the Bosnian President "to remind him of all the benefits that a genuine peace would bring." He also wanted to reiterate the stakes involved for noncooperation -- that President Clinton had "put an enormous amount on the line for peace" to save Bosnia, and therefore would not assist the Sarajevo leadership if they blocked a reasonable settlement.⁵⁴

When the Secretary departed that night, it was clear to him that whether heading toward success or failure, the talks had entered the endgame. He later characterized that day "as one of those times when you can feel [that] the negotiation is either going to succeed or fail in a few days." He could see the fatigue on the faces of the Balkan leaders as well as those of his own delegation. Despite the camaraderie generated during the past two weeks, Christopher thought that "they were reaching the point where they were getting on each other's nerves. However attractive Dayton was...they were beginning to get 'cabin fever'; it was beginning to get cold."⁵⁵ Thus, as Christopher and Holbrooke had previously arranged, the Secretary informed the President that he would cut short his Asia trip to return to Dayton. Christopher told the President that "I believe we should take a shot at bringing these [talks] to a conclusion." Although he admitted that success was "a very optimistic scenario that may well not happen," he rated the "prospect good enough to justify missing the state visit to Japan." If talks were successful, Christopher suggested that they aim to conclude them as the President returned from Tokyo, "so that you could be involved in any possible announcement." On the other hand, if they failed to reach closure by early the next week, "it will probably be necessary to suspend the negotiations on the best basis possible."⁵⁶

Day Fifteen: Wednesday, November 15

While in Japan, Christopher hoped that under Holbrooke's "aggressive tutelage," negotiators would be able to "fill in the success" of his visit.⁵⁷ Yet, at the end of the fifteenth day, little had changed. The American team still felt as though things were going in circles. "Everyone has a sense of progress," Kerrick reported to Lake that night, "but [it's] hard to put a finger on concrete achievement... [we] seem to be near a deal, but

⁵² Christopher to Clinton, "Night Note."

⁵³ Christopher interview, October 30, 1996.

⁵⁴ Christopher to Clinton, "Night Note."

⁵⁵ Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

⁵⁶ Christopher to Clinton, "Night Note."

⁵⁷ Ibid.

far away at the same time." Moreover, as the weather at Dayton got colder and more blustery, the "temperature in negotiations [was] not much warmer."⁵⁸

As the map talks stilled, the drafting experts continued to work on the annexes. The Bosnians showed some renewed flexibility on the elections annex, as did both the Contact Group and the Serbs on the most recent IFOR draft (incorporating the DC's recent alterations).⁵⁹ For the final editing of the annexes, the Serbian delegation suggested that the drafting experts meet in plenary working sessions rather than in U.S.-led individual meetings with each of the parties. This would not help only streamline the process, but guarantee that each parties' views were heard. "If we could hear each other and hear the arguments of other parties," the proposal explained, "maybe the delegations could revise their respective attitudes and accept the attitudes of other parties." The Americans thought the idea was a good one; it would help reduce the amount of time-consuming shuttling. They planned to begin such sessions in the next few days.⁶⁰

The Bosnian Serbs, who Christopher had described to in his "Night Note" to President Clinton as "present but quite invisible," began to clamor more loudly for attention.⁶¹ By this point, it was no secret to anyone that Milosevic was ready to sell them out for any deal.⁶² Although he was the delegation head for all Serbs, Milosevic was rarely seen with them. Looking for an outlet for their frustrations, the Bosnian Serbs began to offer unsolicited suggestions directly to the Americans. In a memorandum to Roberts Owen that day, Bosnian Serb leader Momcilo Krajisnik commented on the "unacceptable provisions" of the latest draft constitution. This memorandum showed that the Bosnian Serbs remained opposed even to the most fundamental aspects of an agreement; most of their changes would have reversed the Geneva principles, and every one of their changes further divided Bosnia. Complaining of being shut out of the process, Krajisnik said he "wondered whether there is any point" in making any comments, observing that the "method of work adopted by the international mediators is, needless to say, seriously threatening to undermine the overall peace effort in Dayton."⁶³

In Washington that day, the Principals Committee met at the White House to discuss the progress of Dayton and related implementation issues.⁶⁴ They were briefed by General Wes Clark, John Kornblum and Bob Gallucci, who participated from Wright-Patterson via secure video. The PC reaffirmed the U.S. commitment to coordinate an equip-and-train program, but decided that any American military role should be "behind the scenes," with the weapons supplied by others. While overseen by the U.S.

⁵⁸ Kerrick report to Lake, "Dayton SITREP #11; November 15, 1995, 9:10pm."

⁵⁹ See, respectively, memorandum to Holbrooke from Jack Zetkovic, "Elections Update," November 15, 1995, 5:00pm; and Kerrick SITREP #11.

⁶⁰ The proposal was explained by Serb Foreign Minister Milutinovic in a November 15 letter to Holbrooke. See Letter to Holbrooke from Milutinovic, November 15, 1995.

⁶¹ See Christopher to Clinton, "Night Note."

⁶² This was not only obvious to the negotiators, but had been widely reported in the press. See, for example, Roger Cohen, "Draft Charter For Bosnia Bars Leader of the Serbs," *New York Times*, November 6, 1995; and Christina Spolar, "Analysts Say Milosevic Would Back Ouster of Bosnian Serb Leaders," *Washington Post*, November 12, 1995.

⁶³ Memorandum to Roberts Owen from Momcilo Krajisnik, "Remarks on Draft 'Constitution' of 12 November 1995," November 15, 1995.

⁶⁴ For background, see memorandum to Talbott from Richard E. Hecklinger (EUR), "Principals Committee Meeting, Wednesday, November 15, 1995," November 15, 1995; and NSC memorandum, "Bosnia Issues for Discussion at November 15 PC Meeting," November 15, 1995.

Government, the program would be implemented mainly by contractors. On economic sanctions against Serbia, the Principals reaffirmed that they would ask the UN to suspend them upon the initialing of a peace agreement and to lift them fully upon implementation. The lifting of the arms embargo would be similarly phased; although juridically terminated with a peace agreement, any arms shipments would be prohibited during the first 90 days of IFOR deployment, with larger equipment banned for six months.⁶⁵

The PC also discussed Gallucci's efforts at Dayton on the police and civilian implementation annexes. While deciding to keep the mission of an international police task force separate from IFOR's (except in the event of gross human rights violations or attacks on civilian aid organizations), they approved Gallucci's drafts. With this in hand, Gallucci was able to go back to the parties the next day in Dayton for the finishing touches. Shortly after midnight the morning of November 17, the parties reached final agreement. Of the eleven draft annexes, these were the first two finished.⁶⁶

Lastly, the PC assessed the details of implementing the Eastern Slavonia agreement. The Croatians wanted implementation to begin as soon as possible. On his way out of Dayton that night for the second time (this time to oversee the opening session of the Croatian Parliament), Tudjman announced that he wanted the command structure of the UN Transitional Authority (to be acronymically referred to as UNTAES) to have both a civilian implementation chief and senior military commander. Since a U.S. officer would be unacceptable for the Russians, the Croats wanted an American civilian chief. The PC agreed to both these points, deciding to begin work with the UN Security Council to draft the mandate for this new peacekeeping force.⁶⁷

Day Sixteen: Thursday, November 16

With Christopher scheduled to return Friday evening, Holbrooke hoped to use several "drop-by" visits by other senior U.S. officials to help push the talks toward conclusion. The purpose of these high-level visits was not to engage in actual negotiations. Holbrooke wanted such officials there to achieve two goals: strategically, to impress upon the parties that the negotiations were in the endgame, and bureaucratically, to "educate" these officials and provide them with the sense that they were involved in the process.⁶⁸ Lake would arrive that afternoon, and Secretary of Defense Perry, NATO Commander General George Joulwan, and Major General William Nash, the Commander of the First Armored Division in Europe, were scheduled to come the next day. As the senior U.S. military leaders in Europe, Joulwan and Nash would lead the IFOR effort.

Before Lake arrived, the U.S. team helped to orchestrate an important tête-à-tête between Milosevic and Silajdzic. For the past few days, Holbrooke had hoped that the Bosnian Prime Minister would emerge as the key to a settlement. On the big issues that remained -- the map and Sarajevo -- Izetbegovic and Sacirbey were unrealistic and

⁶⁵ See "Summary of Conclusions, Principals Committee Meeting on Bosnia, November 16, 1995, (misdated: November 15, 1995)" NSC memorandum, November 18, 1995.

⁶⁶ See *Ibid.*; and Gallucci interview.

⁶⁷ The U.S. would later name Jacques Klein, a Foreign Service Officer who was also a Major General in the U.S. Air Force Reserves, as head of UNTAES. See Memorandum to Slocombe from Pardey, "Forces in Sector East," November 15, 1995; "Tudjman: Mutual Recognition With FRY, Belgian/Russian Troops in Eastern Slavonia, Blaskic Relieved of Command," Cable, Proximity Talks 000021, November 16, 1995; and the NSC's "Summary of Conclusions," November 15, 1995.

⁶⁸ Holbrooke interview, November 18, 1996.

unyielding, while Silajdzic would at least listen to compromise offers. The problem was, as the intra-Bosnian struggle escalated, so did the psychological toll on Silajdzic. He was exhibiting mercurial, somewhat manic-depressive behavior. To John Menzies, who had had a lot of experience with the Prime Minister, Silajdzic had so much nervous energy that at times he was like a "caged panther." But as he continued to be undercut by Izetbegovic and Sacirbey, Silajdzic grew more depressed and fatalistic. Oftentimes, the Prime Minister would simply go into a deeply depressive funk, essentially disappearing from the talks.⁶⁹

Considering that Silajdzic had emerged as the most reasonable of the Bosnian negotiators, Holbrooke was concerned by his depressed state. He had asked Menzies and Rosemarie Pauli-Gikas to befriend the Prime Minister to help him relax, spending time with him, taking him for walks, joining him for a meals, or talking with him about his family and future. Holbrooke's wife, Kati Marton, also befriended Silajdzic, and they talked about her books or ones he wanted to write. On Wednesday night, Holbrooke and Marton had even taken Silajdzic off-base for a private dinner at L'Auberge, the best French restaurant in Dayton.⁷⁰

On that bitter cold Thursday morning, Menzies and Pauli-Gikas took Silajdzic for a walk outside the VOQ compound. Holbrooke and Hill, meanwhile, set out with Milosevic on a long stroll around the base, ending up at the Officers Club for lunch. Sensing that the talks were going nowhere and that the Bosnian delegation's negotiating troubles were not improving, Holbrooke wanted to enlist Milosevic to push things forward. Braving the winter weather, the Americans asked the Serb leader what kind of gestures he could make to break the map impasse. They did not press for any specific territorial concession, but rather a symbolic goodwill gesture, "ala Anwar Sadat" to show the Bosnians that he was willing to go the distance and make real sacrifices. One idea was to offer a special highway connecting Sarajevo to Belgrade. Milosevic seemed amenable, replying that he was also "thinking" about what kind of move he could make.⁷¹

Holbrooke, Hill, and Milosevic arrived at the Officers Club shortly before noon. The Club was becoming sort of a second home to the Serb leader, who seemed to enjoy the country club ambiance (the club was on a golf course) compared to the crowded VOQ quad and bar-food cuisine at Packy's. Soon after they arrived, Menzies and Pauli-Gikas came in with Silajdzic from their walk and sat at the opposite end of the large, wood-paneled dining room. Before he had left with Milosevic that morning, Holbrooke had called Pauli-Gikas to tell her where he was going, and she had decided to invite Silajdzic to the Officers Club. At one point over lunch, Holbrooke went over to Silajdzic's table to say hello, and they began to discuss some points Milosevic had raised on the status of Gorazde. They began to draw different options out on table napkins and, as other diners

⁶⁹ Menzies interview; Holbrooke interview, November 18, 1996.

⁷⁰ Ibid. This internecine struggle within the Bosnian delegation was also being played out through press leaks, particularly through *New York Times* reporter Roger Cohen. On November 16, Cohen reported that Silajdzic had emerged as the "swing man" for any agreement, causing Sacirbey to claim angrily to Holbrooke that "President Izetbegovic is the only swing man here." For the next few days, Cohen's reports were scattered with Sacirbey's gibes against Silajdzic as someone who "wants to claim all the credit he can" for any agreement. See, for example, "Bosnia Asks U.S. Arms Aid as Part of Any Peace Accord," *New York Times*, November 19, 1995; and "For Bosnia's President, An Agonizing Choice," *New York Times*, November 20, 1995; and Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

⁷¹ See Holbrooke and Hill comments, Dayton History Seminar; Holbrooke interview, November 18, 1996; Hill phone interview with author (notes), December 5, 1996.

looked on in astonishment, Holbrooke shuttled the ideas between the two leaders. After several trips back and forth across the dining room, Holbrooke finally got Silajdzic to join Milosevic at his table. Sitting down together for one of the few times since the Bosnian war had begun, the two leaders talked in Serbo-Croatian about a land corridor between Gorazde and Sarajevo. Although nothing was solved, the conversation served as a useful ice-breaker for the two. Milosevic, charm machine in full-gear, at one point told Silajdzic that after withstanding three years of shelling by "Bosnian Serb cowards," the Muslim government had "earned" Sarajevo.⁷²

After this dramatic lunch, Tony Lake and Sandy Vershbow arrived at Wright-Patterson. Holbrooke took Lake to meet with Izetbegovic and Milosevic (Tudjman was still away), while the rest of the U.S. team provided Vershbow with a crash review on the status of the annexes.⁷³

With both Presidents, Lake strongly emphasized the need for closure in the next few days. America's patience with the entire effort was waning, Lake explained, and if success was not achieved here, then Europe would assume more responsibility in any future negotiations. "Tony said there was no second chance for the U.S.," Holbrooke described in a report to Christopher that night. "[He said] that this was our last, best shot and that Congress was going south on us; that if they don't reach agreement when you get here we will turn them over to Pauline [Neville-Jones, the British Contact Group representative], Jacques [Blot, the French representative], and Wolfgang [Ischinger, the German representative], and our role will greatly diminish." The parties took this threat very seriously. No one -- not Milosevic, not Izetbegovic -- wanted the Europeans to be in charge. After two years of European ineptitude, the parties believed that their respective interests were best served with U.S.-brokered settlement. As an additional carrot, Lake explained that if they succeeded in reaching agreement that weekend, President Clinton might visit Dayton. This point intrigued Milosevic (who dreamed of being a pariah-turned-partner, like Yasir Arafat), but not Izetbegovic. Instead, the Bosnian President asked if it would be possible to visit Congress after Dayton.⁷⁴

As expected, Milosevic pressed Lake on sanctions, precipitating what Holbrooke described as a "fierce argument."⁷⁵ "I understand you're the most anti-Serb official in Washington," Milosevic said to Lake with his typical brio. The National Security Advisor explained the policy that had been reaffirmed the day before in the PC: while suspension would come with initialing, complete lifting of sanctions would only come with full implementation. Milosevic finally agreed to accept this (apparently calculating that in real terms, suspension, not lift, would bring relief to Serbia), but then argued with

⁷² See Menzies interview; Holbrooke interview; Holbrooke, Hill, Pauli-Gikas comments, Dayton History Seminar.

⁷³ In his report to Lake the night before, Kerrick recommended that he send such a signal: "[I] suggest you be prepared to discuss views on how to close Dayton either with or without an agreement." See SITREP #11.

⁷⁴ See memorandum to Christopher from Holbrooke, "Closure or Close-down: The Situation as of 2 AM," November 17, 1995. Kerrick's view, as reported to Lake, was that regardless of the outcome in Dayton, an announcement must come from the White House. See SITREP #11.

⁷⁵ Although the Serbs expressed happiness that the U.S. had decided to allow limited gas flows in Belgrade, they still asked to conduct a grain-for-oil swap. As earlier, the U.S. refused this request -- the American embassy in Belgrade explained that "while it is true that Belgrade lacks the hard currency to pay for fuel... [their plea] strikes us as another lever for asserting pressure to lift sanctions." See "Belgrade Reaction to Humanitarian Fuel," Cable, Belgrade 5616, November 15, 1995.

Lake and Holbrooke about the exact meaning of "implementation." After debating this for awhile, they could only agree to discuss the issue later. Holbrooke worried that the issue could explode again, and later advised Christopher that he would have to deal with Milosevic on it. Work in New York on a Security Council resolution to remove these sanctions was underway (which would be needed on any sanctions deal, since they were administered by the UN), although Albright's efforts had been hampered by mixed messages from Washington. At the end of the day, Holbrooke and Lake agreed to recommend that Albright divide her efforts toward two UN resolutions: one solely on the sanctions questions, and the other on lifting the arms embargo and other matters.⁷⁶

Throughout the day, another unfolding drama was the threatened resignation of Federation President Zubak. Although he was still angry at his Muslim counterparts over the lack of Croatian representation in the Federation, Zubak's ire was focused more toward his Croat brethren from Zagreb. With his Eastern Slavonia prize pocketed, Tudjman was ready to leave the Serbs key territorial areas in the now Federation-held Posavina "pocket" in northwest Bosnia (where Zubak was from). Zubak insisted that the Federation hold onto the land, and in a fit of anger that day, announced that he would resign and leave Dayton. He apparently felt that the Croat President had sold him and the Bosnian Croats out. Holbrooke's instinctive first response was good riddance. Zubak had been a problem throughout the negotiations, and they frankly didn't have time for his antics. Croatian Defense Minister Susak had told Holbrooke to ignore Zubak, that someone else from the Federation could sign. Yet, Izetbegovic and some U.S. team members disagreed, urging that Zubak be brought back into the fold. Such open dissension could not help the Federation. Later, after Tudjman and Susak talked to him, Zubak grudgingly agreed to remain in Dayton.⁷⁷

That evening, after dinner with Milosevic, Lake and Vershbow left Dayton. But the night was far from finished. During the meal, Holbrooke had invited Milosevic over to the American VOQ to negotiate further on territorial issues, particularly the Sarajevo-Gorazde land corridor they had discussed at the Officers Club with Silajdzic. In the "map room" set up in the U.S. VOQ, General Clark used the Defense Mapping Agency's highly technical, highly classified 3-D imaging system called "PowerScene" to show Milosevic the terrain between Sarajevo and Gorazde. In September, this \$400,000 computer system helped NATO planners choose targets in the bombing campaign; now, it helped negotiators at Dayton plan for peace.⁷⁸ By rendering scenes from actual terrain imagery down to two yards in detail, PowerScene enabled the negotiators to "travel" through Bosnia in virtual reality, visually surveying the geographic details via computer. All the delegations at Dayton were completely fascinated with PowerScene; the U.S. quickly saw that the computer program had at least as much value psychologically as it

⁷⁶ SITREP#1. See also Vershbow interview, July 23, 1996; Fuerth interview. The sanctions and arms embargo resolutions were eventually treated as two separate issues by the UN Security Council. See "Sanctions Suspension Resolution," November 19, 1995, 1:45pm draft, COS files. Also see Albright interview; and "Bosnia: Contact Group Counsellors 'Brainstorm' On The Suspension/Lifting of FRY Sanctions," Cable, U.S.UN 4620, November 17, 1995.

⁷⁷ See Holbrooke to Christopher, November 17, 1995; Holbrooke interview, November 18, 1996; Vershbow interview, December 17, 1996; and *War Report*, pp36-37.

⁷⁸ For a press account of the wonders of PowerScene, see Eric Schmitt, "High-Tech Maps Guided Bosnia Talks," *New York Times*, November 24, 1995. Not surprisingly, the technology was used later during IFOR's deployment. See Dana Priest, "For Bosnia Pilots, Virtual Reality is Reality; Air Force Launches Devices That Simulate Terrain, Detail Ground Action," *Washington Post*, December 12, 1995.

did substantively. It was an impressive reminder of American technological-military prowess, and representative of the U.S. commitment to peace. PowerScene also became one of the rare forms of entertainment for many at Dayton, who passed what little spare time they had "flying" through Bosnia. The map room became such a popular attraction that the U.S. delegation began to refer to it as the "Nintendo Room."

Milosevic had offered the Bosnians a thin, frail two-mile road corridor to connect Sarajevo to Gorazde, which, as Clark's PowerScene tour of the mountainous terrain revealed, was almost completely unviable. Two hours and a bottle of Scotch (of which Milosevic had four glasses) later, they reached an agreement on a wider corridor that would vary with the mountainous terrain. After checking with the Pentagon, Clark promised that NATO would upgrade the dirt road in the corridor. Because of the circumstances surrounding this event, many began to call this agreement, suitably, as the "Scotch Road" or the "Clark Corridor." Although Holbrooke deliberately downplayed this as a "minor concession," it did represent the first substantive breakthrough on a key issue in days. The U.S. team hoped that it might be the first crack in the dam blocking a final settlement.⁷⁹

As the negotiations entered their third week, the key question was rather simple: Whether these leaders would summon the courage and will to make the final decisions necessary to reach an agreement.⁸⁰ Each day brought more evidence that of all the parties, the Bosnians were furthest from a decision. In many ways, the problems the Holbrooke team had run across during the two months of shuttle diplomacy were replayed more intensely in Dayton. Tudjman, who had already gotten his primary objective in Dayton -- Eastern Slavonia -- astutely played along, helping the Bosnians when it was in his interest but otherwise remaining aloof. His lack of interest in the details of other issues was evident in the amount of time he spent away from Dayton -- ten of twenty-one days. Milosevic, on the other hand, had intense interest in success at Dayton. Desperate for sanctions relief and acceptance from the West, he had proven willing to make concessions. His idiomatic (and frequently vulgar) command of the English language and desire to please the U.S. made him, in many ways, the easiest of interlocutors. The Bosnians, with their internal strife and uncertain goals, seemed dangerously close to torpedoing the peace, however flawed it may be, that Milosevic and Tudjman were ready to give them.

"The Bosnians still wish us to believe that they are getting a lousy deal," Holbrooke wrote Christopher that night. "But they know it is not only a good deal but the best they will ever get." While Holbrooke believed that it would seem logical that the Bosnians take this best chance for settlement, their diverse personalities and competing visions of a just peace made success a very close call. To Holbrooke, Izetbegovic was more of a "movement" leader than a practical "governing" leader. "Izzy spent nine years of his life in jail," Holbrooke wrote to the Secretary, "he has no understanding of, or interest in, economic development or modernization -- the things that peace can bring." Izetbegovic struck Holbrooke as concerned not about the Bosnian people, but about an

⁷⁹ For details of this meeting, see Kerrick report to Lake, "Dayton SITREP #12, November 17, 1995, 11:10am," and Holbrooke to Christopher, November 17, 1995. This meeting also received considerable attention in the BBC television documentary, "Yugoslavia, Death of a Nation," Episode 6; *War Report*, p39; and *New York Times*, November 23, 1995.

⁸⁰ See memorandum to Secretary Perry from James Pardew and Mark Sawoski, "Dayton Talks -- Beginning the Third Week," November 16, 1995.

abstract idea: "He shows remarkably little concern for the suffering his people have endured; after all, he has suffered greatly for his ideals. To him, Bosnia is an abstraction, not several million people who overwhelmingly want peace." Silajdzic, on the other hand, seemed to be more realistic about governing, and had concentrated on establishing viable political structures and engaging such issues as economic reconstruction. Yet, Silajdzic's mood swings undermined his ability to take the lead. "If Haris did not have such an unpredictable personality, he would have played the hero here; we still have hopes that he will do so." Finally, Sacirbey, who had assumed such an important role when America's shuttle diplomacy was launched in August, had become increasingly isolated as Dayton went on, creeping further behind Izetbegovic's shadow. Holbrooke saw Sacirbey as driven by two contradictory motives: "he wants to be liked by the Americans, but his primary goal seems to be to undermine Haris at all times." In all, Holbrooke thought that Christopher's return to Dayton might force the Bosnians to unify, at least momentarily, to finish a deal.⁸¹

Day Seventeen: Friday, November 17

Defense Secretary Perry and Under Secretary Walt Slocombe arrived at Wright-Patterson shortly before 10am that morning. Generals Joulwan and Nash arrived at noon. Holbrooke planned this display of U.S. military leadership to impress the other parties — Balkan and European alike — "that we were serious" about using U.S. troops to lead military implementation. Moreover, like Tony Lake, Perry and Joulwan could continue to ratchet up the pressure on the three Balkan leaders to close a deal.⁸² "Lack of a Settlement would be a problem for the U.S.. It would be a catastrophe for your country," Perry's talking points for Izetbegovic and Milosevic read.⁸³

Perry's toughest meeting that day was with Izetbegovic. The Bosnian leader was prickly, probing the Secretary of Defense on U.S. military commitments toward Bosnia. Perry confirmed that the U.S. would honor its promise to help the Bosnians restore their army through an equip-and-train program, as long as the parties agreed to a suitable arms control agreement.⁸⁴ "I told them that I believed, and that our government believed, that the imbalance of forces back in 1992 had been a contributing factor to the war starting in the first place," Perry recalled. "Therefore, when NATO forces left in a year, we did not want to leave an imbalance... we would work with them to get a balance of forces."⁸⁵

In a troublesome comment, Izetbegovic told Perry that he could not be a party to an agreement signed by the Bosnian Serbs; like the Nazis, he said, the agreement should be imposed on them. In response, Perry bluntly said that unlike Allied Forces during

⁸¹ See Holbrooke to Christopher, November 17, 1995; Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

⁸² Holbrooke interview, November 18, 1996. In a memorandum to Slocombe, Pardew recommended that Perry stress four main points to Holbrooke during meetings that day. First, to assure that the parties agree to map boundaries precisely defined on a 1:50,000 scale map signed by all parties; second, that Milosevic should sign the military annex as a participant, not witness; third, that Milosevic and the Bosnian Serbs offer explicit assurances that the BSA will not threaten IFOR troops; and fourth, to force Milosevic to prove that he can actually force the Pale Serbs to implement an agreement. See Pardew memorandum to Slocombe, "SECDEF Visit to Dayton," November 16, 1995.

⁸³ "Talking Points for SECDEF at Dayton," Pardew Dayton notebook. For a similar sentiment on this visit, see Kerrick report to Lake, "Dayton SITREP #13, November 17, 1995, 7pm."

⁸⁴ See *Ibid.*, and Cohen, *New York Times*, November 19, 1995.

⁸⁵ Perry interview with BBC, January 18, 1996, transcript.

World War II, the Bosnians had not defeated the BSA militarily.⁸⁶ Bosnian "occupation" was no option -- the Sarajevo and Pale leaders would have to learn to cohabitate. Both Joulwan and Nash reemphasized this last point in a brief meeting with the Bosnian Serbs, who were visibly nervous in their presence.⁸⁷

While Holbrooke and his core team were involved with these high-level visits, work continued on the annexes. By the evening of the 17th, five of the eleven annexes -- those covering Human Rights, Refugees, National Monuments, Civilian Implementation, and Police -- were completed. The General Framework Agreement, plus annexes concerning Arbitration and Public Services, were near completion. Most of the work on the military annex was finished; the big remaining issue was whether arms control provisions should be covered in a separate annex, as the Europeans wanted. That night, the U.S. agreed to do this, and the military annex became two, Annex 1A and 1B.⁸⁸

The three most contentious issues remaining were the constitution, elections and, of course, the map. Drafting on the constitution was almost complete, although some at Dayton wondered whether it would ever be worth more than the paper it was on. Roberts Owen, the chief constitutional negotiator, felt that the document had yielded more than he initially expected, although not enough to guarantee an effective central government. While it looked good in principle, most U.S. negotiators realized that, like the Geneva and New York agreements, the constitution masked fundamental disagreements between the Bosnian Serb and Sarajevo leaders on the desirability and role of a central government. Quite simply, the Bosnian Serbs had not yet accepted that Bosnia would be a unified state controlled by the center. "The Serbs would prefer to give maximum powers to Republika Srpska but know that this is out of the question," Pardew reported to Perry. "So they have sought to sabotage the central government... [keeping its] the powers limited." On the positive side, while the constitution alone could not guarantee a viable, multiethnic and democratic Bosnia, it would "provide the Bosnians the opportunity to build such a state." But "for this opportunity to be realized," Pardew observed, "the current leadership in Pale will have to change; this, either through election or indictment."⁸⁹

On the elections annex, the Bosnians and Serbs were at loggerheads over two issues: voting rights for refugees or displaced persons and the responsibilities of the OSCE in overseeing the elections. Holbrooke considered the first issue a potential deal-breaker. Milosevic was taking the hard-line position that voters must be physically present to register to vote. The Bosnians, in contrast, wanted voters registered (and have their votes applied) to where they lived in 1991, the last time a census was taken in Yugoslavia. The U.S. had tabled a compromise solution, recommending that voters themselves be able to determine where their votes would be applied. If both sides remained inflexible, a fail-safe option would be to defer the issue for decision by the OSCE. On the latter point, though, the Serbs were reluctant to allow the OSCE full oversight for the elections -- including handling the ballot boxes. U.S. negotiators felt

⁸⁶ See handwritten notes (no author) from Secretary Christopher's briefing at the Hope Hotel, November 17, 1995, EUR files.

⁸⁷ Pardew interview, June 17, 1996.

⁸⁸ Update from "Status Report" prepared for Secretary Christopher's arrival, November 17, 1995; and "List of Peace Settlement Documents," U.S. Delegation, Miriam Sapiro files, November 17, 1995; 11:30pm.

For separation of arms control component of Annex 1, see Kornblum interview; and Neville-Jones, p51.

⁸⁹ See Pardew report to Perry, November 16, 1995.

they needed to be firm in order to assure that the elections were free and fair and to keep election protection with the OSCE, not IFOR, but agreed to additional language about relying on "local authorities" as much as possible. In any event, both election issues were considered important enough that Holbrooke wanted to use Christopher's visit to close them.⁹⁰

The issue of the OSCE's role in the Bosnian elections had provoked two long-running debates -- one with the Europeans, especially the French; the other with Milosevic. In both cases the U.S. wanted a strong hand for the OSCE in conducting the elections, as the EU and Belgrade sought to minimize the role of outsiders. In addition, Holbrooke had some of his own disagreements with other U.S. officials on this point. For example, UN Ambassador Albright argued for the UN to conduct the elections, as they had in Cambodia, but Holbrooke and Kornblum -- a former Ambassador to the OSCE -- held out for the OSCE, believing that it would be a way to strengthen the organization.⁹¹

Both the Europeans and Milosevic argued vehemently with Holbrooke on the exact nature of the OSCE's role in the elections. Each sought to limit their role to that of "observers and monitors." Holbrooke, who had examined the UN's more active role in Cambodia, believed that such a passive role for the OSCE would doom the elections -- perhaps the most critical political benchmark of any settlement. Holbrooke stood firm for words that gave the OSCE responsibility for "supervising" the elections. Since the word "supervise" could be interpreted in different ways, Holbrooke argued that no matter which other civilian implementation jobs were headed by Europeans, the OSCE representative overseeing elections had to be an American.⁹²

On territorial issues, the Bosnians had yet to approve Milosevic's concession on the "Scotch Road," although Silajdzic seemed to like it. In exchange, Milosevic began to press for a wider corridor south of the town of Brcko. Discussions on Sarajevo had been at a standstill since Christopher left on the 14th; however, it seemed that the Bosnians might accept Milosevic's variant of the "Washington, DC" plan, in which there would be a weak central government empowered only to regulate city-wide services. Essentially, this plan would cause ethnic zoning of Sarajevo, as citizens of each local *Obstina* would

⁹⁰ Explanation of elections issues from "Status Report," November 17, 1995; Pardew to Perry, November 16, 1995; memorandum to Holbrooke from Jack Zetkovic, "Elections: Endgame Tactics," November 16, 1995; and Zetkovic interview. On war criminals running for office (that day, the International War Crimes Tribunal formally indicted Karadzic and Mladic for genocide), Zetkovic advised that as long as language prohibiting such was contained in the constitution, there was no need to repeat it in the elections annex. On a related point, Sacirbey wrote a letter to the U.S. and Contact Group that day formally requesting that any agreement, but particularly one that "relates to any potential easing of sanctions," include a commitment from the parties to cooperate with the Tribunal and its orders. See Sacirbey letter to U.S. and Contact Group, November 17, 1995; EUR files.

⁹¹ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

⁹² *Ibid.* The issue of OSCE representative was not resolved until December 13, when Holbrooke met privately in Paris with French Foreign Minister de Charette and warned him that when President Clinton arrived the next morning he would take the issue up with President Chirac. As they waited for the Presidents the next day, de Charette told Holbrooke that they would accept an American diplomat, Robert Frowick, as the senior OSCE representative in Bosnia. For an update on OSCE planning for peace implementation, see "OSCE: OSCE Role in Bosnia Taking Shape," Cable, State 268884, November 17, 1995. For a European view, see Neville-Jones, p52.

be able to decide whether they wanted to be governed under the laws of the Federation or Srpska.⁹³

The U.S. delegation hoped that all of these issues would be closed by the end of the weekend, so that they could get home in time for Thanksgiving. "Saturday," Holbrooke wrote to Christopher, "will shape up as the decisive day of Dayton." Then, for the first time, the Assistant Secretary suggested that the U.S. consider setting a firm deadline to end the talks, to "make them realize we mean it is our only chance for success." After two days of warnings by high-level U.S. officials, Holbrooke saw that "both sides are fully primed for this [deadline] approach; indeed, they half dread it." Holbrooke recognized this as "a high-risk strategy," but he now thought it was probably going to be essential. The Secretary of State returned to Wright-Patterson from his whirlwind, 72-hour trip to Osaka around 5:00 that afternoon, shortly after Perry and Joulwan left. Following quick "I'm back" meetings with Izetbegovic and Milosevic, Christopher joined the rest of the senior delegates at the Officer's Club for the second lobster dinner hosted by Milosevic and Chris Spirou. In many ways, this dinner provided a slight respite before the final drama.⁹⁴

Day Eighteen: Saturday, November 18

Starting at 8:00am that morning, Christopher and the rest of the U.S. delegation began what they promised to be the final weekend of negotiations -- succeed or fail. As he had during his three previous visits to Dayton, the Secretary of State spent the full day shuttling among the parties, devoting most of his time on the elections annex, the constitution, and the map. As a negotiating ploy, Holbrooke and Christopher decided to tell the parties that the talks would end at midnight Sunday.⁹⁵ Holbrooke had always felt the U.S. might have to consider forcing the parties into a "pay or play, drop-dead time" to close the talks. "These people had fought one another for a long time," Holbrooke recalled, "and were ready to sit in Dayton for a long time and just argue." In addition to the parties evident intransigence, Holbrooke was influenced by his experiences in the corporate world, where such deadline-oriented negotiations are more commonplace than in diplomacy. That night, the U.S. delegation began to organize for completing the document production and conducting a signing ceremony.⁹⁶ If the talks were successful,

⁹³ See "Status Report," November 17, 1995.

⁹⁴ See Holbrooke to Christopher, November 17, 1995; Kerrick SITREP #13; and Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

⁹⁵ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), November 26, 1996. For press reports, see Michael Dobbs, "Negotiators May Be Near Bosnia Deal; U.S. Sets Deadline As Dayton Talks Reach a 'Defining Moment,'" *Washington Post*, November 20, 1995; and Elaine Sciolino, "U.S. Tells Leaders of Balkan States to Wind Up Talks," *New York Times*, November 20, 1995.

⁹⁶ Most of the work was done by the inter-delegation "Document Preparation Group," chaired by John Kornblum but conducted primarily by Miriam Sapiro. This group met several times that day to go over all annexes and discuss outstanding items for decision. See "Summary of Plenary Meeting of Document Preparation Group: re: Outstanding Items," November 18, 1995 4:00pm; and *ibid*; November 18, 1995; 11:00pm; and "Documents for Concluding Ceremony of Proximity Peace Talks," no date, Sapiro files. Also that day, Secretary Christopher called French Foreign Minister de Charette to discuss the arrangements for initialing an agreement. The French had suggested that if an agreement was achieved at Dayton, there be a series of conferences to sign an agreement held in different Contact Group capitals. Asserting that although a final deal should be far from assumed, Christopher stressed that he would not want to take the risk of leaving Dayton without an initialing. De Charette then added two points: 1) that a meeting "of experts" be held in Paris to discuss any issues left unresolved at Dayton, and 2) in order to

one draft plan for a ceremony had President Clinton traveling to Dayton to oversee the signing.⁹⁷

While still whittling away on territorial issues, Christopher, Holbrooke and Owen worked to close the door on the constitution. Late Friday night, the Bosnian delegation again threatened not to sign the constitution on undisclosed "political grounds" -- presumably, because the Bosnians Serbs would sign as well. Additionally, the Bosnians proposed that the chair of the three-person joint presidency be the member who receives the most votes in country-wide elections. Because the largest vote-getter would likely always be a Muslim, the Croats and Serbs wanted to have a regular rotation. The compromise struck was that the first chair would be the highest vote-getter (presumably Izetbegovic); after two years, the method of selecting a chair "by rotation or otherwise," would be determined by the Parliamentary Assembly.⁹⁸

Not much had changed in the elections annex. In negotiations led by U.S. Delegation member Jack Zetkovic, the three parties had come back with "minor and technical" changes to the draft text. The Bosnians insisted that the OSCE run the local elections (regardless what the OSCE wanted to do). In a message to Holbrooke, Zetkovic explained that the Bosnians had to be told not to let the "perfect be the enemy of the good. 'Big Bang' may not happen at all if the OSCE is compelled to run local elections. Let's leave this up to the OSCE."⁹⁹ On the rights of refugees to vote, what Holbrooke considered the "most difficult aspect of the election issue," both sides remained fixed. Judging that the issue could be solved only at the highest levels, Zetkovic turned the remaining negotiations over to Christopher and Holbrooke.¹⁰⁰

The Bosnian Serbs also resurfaced, trying to assert themselves on elections issues. In one of two letters that day to Roberts Owen, Bosnian Serb leader Momcilo Krajisnik complained that he had not been allowed to discuss with Holbrooke his position on the topic. To no one's surprise, Krajisnik was opposed to the most fundamental aspects of the annex. Although the Bosnian Serbs' intransigence was counter-productive, their obvious neglect was concerning. Milosevic's method of "handling" his Bosnian Serb delegation was merely to ignore them. To the U.S. team, Krajisnik's letter was "more proof of how the Bosnian Serbs are cut out of the process" -- and ominously, further evidence that they could be a significant "problem when it comes to initialing."¹⁰¹

For now, the U.S. team's main concern was getting the Sarajevo government to cooperate. In an attempt to allay some of the Bosnians' concerns, Holbrooke asked Menzies to put together a sales pitch to present to Izetbegovic and Silajdzic. In it, the U.S. listed eight ways in which the Bosnians would benefit under what had already been

provide some "content" to the Paris signing, hosting a meeting of the Contact Group and Organization of Islamic States. Commenting that these proposals were worth discussing, Christopher explained that he and the U.S. team was "crashing" to finish Dayton and they would have to take the issue up later. See "The Secretary and Foreign Minister de Charette, November 18, 1995" Cable, State 269204, November 19, 1995.

⁹⁷ See "Closing Scenario for Proximity Talks," November 18, 1995 draft, 7:00pm.

⁹⁸ "Constitutional Issues for Izetbegovic," November 18, 1995; R. Pauli files.

⁹⁹ Memorandum to Holbrooke from Zetkovic, "Elections Update -- Saturday, November 17, 6:00pm."

¹⁰⁰ Ibid; and Zetkovic interview; Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

¹⁰¹ The second Krajisnik letter that day concerned IFOR, in which he ridiculously insisted that NATO troops in IFOR not be deployed on Bosnian Serb territory. For letters, see Pardew Dayton notebook; for details, see Zetkovic hand-written note to Holbrooke, November 18, 1995; Zetkovic to Holbrooke, "Elections Update"; and Zetkovic interview.

agreed to at Dayton: 1) a single national government with democratic constitution and central institutions; 2) an economic reconstruction package; 3) a NATO-led implementation force under an American command; 4) a greatly strengthened Federation; 5) a territorial gain from 50% of Bosnia to over 55% during Dayton, 6) an extensive civilian police structure, 7) additional human rights protections, and 8) a commitment by Belgrade to normalize relations, including additional confidence building measures. That afternoon, the U.S. delegation presented this package to the Bosnians with two large charts, which they left behind with Izetbegovic.

In addition to this effort, Christopher and Holbrooke enlisted several key international allies to weigh in with the Bosnians. That night, British Prime Minister John Major called Izetbegovic. The British Prime Minister emphasized that "now was the time to secure an agreement. If this moment was lost, the opportunity might not easily come again." The Bosnian leader responded that although Milosevic had given them a wider land corridor to Gorazde, they needed more land to make up for the lost enclaves of Srebrenica and Zepa. His delegation could not go back and tell their people that they had given these up for nothing. Major did not engage in specific negotiating, but rather reassured Izetbegovic that Great Britain would provide public support as well as a significant number of troops to IFOR.¹⁰²

Holbrooke also asked that the French and Turkish governments also lobby the Bosnians to sign. As a key Muslim country and NATO ally, Turkey's support for the Bosnians would be essential for any agreement. The Turks and the Bosnians had already begun to coordinate economically and militarily, and Turkey would play a critical role in an equip-and-train program. Holbrooke hoped that a phone call from President Demeriel would convince Izetbegovic not to leave Dayton empty-handed.¹⁰³

That night, Milosevic delivered a critical and totally unexpected concession. After dinner, the Serb leader paid Holbrooke an unannounced visit in the American VOQ. Without prompting, Milosevic began to discuss Sarajevo, explaining his desire to keep it unified. Holbrooke welcomed the discussion, but was surprised. He thought that Milosevic's previous idea to create maximum local control of the city would be the compromise solution. The Bosnian delegation seemed to like it, as long as each local Obstina (whether Federation or Srpska) was allotted equal power. Now, though, Milosevic wanted to talk about unifying the city, and he was prepared to give total control to the Muslim government.¹⁰⁴

The Bosnians would get Sarajevo. Hearing words that he thought would never be uttered from Milosevic's mouth, Holbrooke pressed for details. To Milosevic, it was quite simple: in exchange for some minor territorial concessions in northwest Bosnia, the

¹⁰² "Bosnia: Prime Minister's Conversation with President Izetbegovic," UK memorandum written by Roderic Lyne, Resident Clerk, Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 10 Downing Street, London; November 18, 1995.

¹⁰³ Demeriel did call Izetbegovic that weekend. See fax to Ambassador Marc Grossman, U.S. Embassy Ankara, from Jack Zetkovic, November 19, 1995. For Turkey's support for Bosnia, see, for example, "Ankara to Play 'Active Role' to Establish Order in B-H," Cable, FBIS Tel Aviv 18573, November 11, 1995;

[redacted] and Holbrooke interview with author, November 26, 1996.

¹⁰⁴ See Holbrooke, Hill, Pardew, Owen comments, Dayton History Seminar; Menzies interview; Holbrooke interview with author, November 26, 1996. This meeting has also been well-reported in the press. See, for example, *War Report*, pp37-38; *New York Times*, November 23, 1995; and BBC television program, "Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation," Episode 6.

Federation would get total control over Sarajevo. No "Washington, DC" plan, no ethnically divided city. Holbrooke "could not believe what was happening." With one dramatic decision, Milosevic simply caved in on one of the most divisive issues of these negotiations. By doing so, he also completely undercut his Bosnian Serb colleagues. In retrospect, Holbrooke believed that Milosevic's move had more to do with the internal dynamics of post-Dayton Serbian leadership than a genuine desire to reach agreement with the Bosnians. This was "a strategic decision to break the base of the Pale Serbs," Holbrooke reflected later. In this way, Milosevic's move aimed to weaken the current Srpska leaders (namely, Karadzic and Krajisnik --who had pledged to make Sarajevo their own) thus, importantly, preserve Belgrade's power over Serbs in Bosnia. At that time, Holbrooke could not see how Milosevic would convince the Bosnian Serbs to accept this asymmetrical "deal" without having a mutiny on his hands. Clearly aware of this, Milosevic asked Holbrooke not to tell them anything about this conversation -- he would have to break the news to them himself.¹⁰⁵

However welcome it was, Milosevic's dramatic concession on Sarajevo did not resolve the issue. In addition to the territorial concessions he wanted from the Federation in northwest Bosnia, he had carefully omitted from his version of a "unified" Sarajevo the area of Grbavica, more properly known as "sniper's alley," that gave the Serbs a clear line of fire into downtown Sarajevo. Milosevic had also withheld key parts of the hills that surrounded the city, including a Volkswagen factory and a critical hillside southeast of the city.¹⁰⁶

When Holbrooke presented Milosevic's new proposal to Izetbegovic, the Bosnian President reacted favorably but hardened his position at the same time. Sensing that Milosevic was now making his greatest concession, Izetbegovic pressed for more. Not unreasonably, he rejected Milosevic's offer unless it included Sniper's Alley, the VW plant, and the southeastern hills. Milosevic reacted angrily when Holbrooke returned with the news, but kept his promise to cede Sarajevo proper and continue to negotiate on trading these other areas.¹⁰⁷

Crescendo -- Days Nineteen and Twenty: Sunday and Monday, November 19-20

With the deadline set for midnight, Sunday promised to be a day of furious negotiating. To add to the atmosphere of impending closure, Christopher and Holbrooke asked the U.S. delegation to pack their bags, requesting that the other delegations do the same. They also told everyone that the phones would be disconnected the next day, and began to collect bills. As the suitcases lined up outside the American VOQ, it became clear that the other delegations saw right through the bluff. Deadline or not, they didn't take the U.S. threat to leave seriously.¹⁰⁸

It was by now obvious that in terms of success at Dayton, it really didn't matter what the parties agreed to on the various political or legal issues, no matter how important they would be for the future of Bosnia. The negotiations hinged on territory. These people had fought for three years about land -- if they could not reach consensus on

¹⁰⁵ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

¹⁰⁶ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Holbrooke, Pauli-Gikas comments, Dayton History Seminar. Indeed, the bluff had been made in such haste that the bags on the second floor of the U.S. VOQ were not collected -- causing some in the U.S. delegation to become concerned that they would be left behind.

a map, then there would be no peace. Given this fact, while talks continued at the working levels to finalize annex language and organize for a ceremony, Christopher and Holbrooke zeroed in almost exclusively on the map. But for every step forward, they seemed to take two back. That weekend, Milosevic's two significant territorial concessions -- on the Gorazde corridor and Sarajevo -- came back to haunt them. This was not the outcome of any ill intent on the part of any of the parties. Rather, it was the result of plain bad luck.

For the U.S. presentation outlining the reasons why the Bosnians should sign an agreement, the Wright-Patterson graphics staff had produced large posterboards detailing the points. After the presentation, Holbrooke and Menzies left the posters with the Bosnians, who innocently placed them near the couch in Izetbegovic's suite. On Saturday night, Milosevic entered Izetbegovic's suite for a meeting. From behind the couch, only the top edge of one poster could be seen -- what the Serb President saw, in large bold letters, was: "Federation Territory has been increased from 50% to 55% during Dayton Talks." Milosevic stopped dead in his tracks. His concessions over the last few days had meant that Srpska would get less territory than allotted by the 51-49 Contact Group plan, and his Sarajevo concession made the percentages even worse. Furious, the Serb President went right to Holbrooke's suite, complaining that the Americans had tricked him (for the past day, the U.S. delegation, knowing they had gotten the Bosnians 55% of the territory, had deliberately withheld the percentage from Milosevic). Anything other than 51-49 was totally unacceptable, he said. He could compromise a great deal, but "he would not be able to survive or impose a deal" which was not based on the 51-49 Contact Group map. Once again, since Christopher had personally signed the 51-49 arrangement at Geneva in 1994; he and Holbrooke felt they had no choice but to yield. As Holbrooke later recalled, the somewhat arbitrary division of the Contact Group map had become "theological" to Milosevic and the Bosnian Serbs. In order to prevent Milosevic from renegeing on his key territorial concessions, Christopher and Holbrooke worked with Wes Clark and others to shave the map back to 51-49.¹⁰⁹

As if to even the score, Milosevic again asked for a wider land corridor in northeast Bosnia, near Brcko, the thinnest part of Srpska territory (at the time of the talks, the corridor was only 5km wide). Under the original 1994 Contact Group map, the Brcko corridor, also referred to as the "Posavina corridor," would narrow to about thirty meters, consisting entirely of an underpass below a railroad bridge. It was clear that the Serbs would never accept this incredibly thin "land corridor," but Izetbegovic held firm in insisting on it, reminding Christopher each time they met that the Secretary had agreed to this personally in 1994. From Milosevic's point of view, a wider corridor would reduce the vulnerability of dividing Srpska in two (and isolating the Banja Luka region within the Muslim-Croat Federation). Holbrooke concluded that, given the immense amount of bloodshed over the corridor, maintaining the status quo -- a 5km corridor -- would likely be the solution. In discussions with Milosevic that day, Silajdzic agreed to be flexible on the corridor, and, apparently with the reluctant approval of Izetbegovic, conceded to the

¹⁰⁹ For details, see Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar; Holbrooke interview with author (notes) November 26, 1996; Menzies interview; Silber and Little, p374; and BBC television program, "Yugoslavia: Death of a Nation," Episode 6.

Serbs the town of Brcko. As it turned out, Izetbegovic had not really signed on to Silajdzic's concession -- but the deal was done.¹¹⁰

Beginning at 8:30am Sunday morning, the map talks went almost continuously throughout the day and into the night. Christopher and Holbrooke tried all sorts of negotiating combinations, whether meeting separately with Izetbegovic or Milosevic, bringing the two of them together, or including Silajdzic and Sacirbey.¹¹¹ Tudjman returned to Dayton shortly before 10pm that night, and Christopher and Holbrooke met with him for an hour. Finally, at around 11:30pm Sunday night, Holbrooke had Milosevic and Silajdzic come to the U.S. conference room. While Holbrooke, Christopher, Wes Clark and others waited down the hall in Holbrooke's suite, Milosevic and Silajdzic set out to finish the map. Chris Hill, who was fluent in Serbo-Croatian, moderated the meeting.¹¹²

Milosevic and Silajdzic began horse-trading, seeking to gain slivers of land oftentimes more valuable symbolically than strategically. Milosevic asked to have Mladic's hometown back, and Silajdzic searched to acquire as many historically Muslim areas as possible. At one point, when Silajdzic asked for a town with an old Mosque, Milosevic said it was no use: "Oh Haris," Milosevic said, "didn't you hear those [Bosnian Serb] idiots blew it up."¹¹³ Silajdzic held firm against giving up any more territory in the Posavina, and Milosevic conceded to give up sniper's alley and some of the key hills around Sarajevo. They also decided on the final shape of the Gorazde Pocket, and concluded the lines for the "Scotch Road." Finally, the discussion turned to Milosevic's desire to assure that Serb territory reached 49%. As Hill recalled, it was clear that if Silajdzic couldn't deliver on this, it would be hard for the Serbs to concede.¹¹⁴

According to Christopher's schedules, these talks broke off shortly after 2am Monday morning so that Silajdzic could get some maps. While they waited to resume, Holbrooke asked to see the draft "failure" statement. Over the last few days, Christopher speechwriter Tom Malinowski worked with John Burley of the European Bureau to draft two statements -- one praising success, another regretting failure -- that Christopher could read at the conclusion of the talks. Malinowski, who kept both draft statements with him, had become a sort of Dayton weather-vane; many gauged the prospects for an agreement by whether Secretary Christopher or Holbrooke wanted to see the "success" or "failure" statement. At this late hour, things looked bad. Holbrooke asked to look at the failure statement, and after giving it a quick read, he threw it up in the air. As the pages floated

¹¹⁰ On the Sava river, Brcko was supposed to have been the Muslim's foothold in Posavina. As such, it had been considered a deal-breaker for the Bosniacs. However, apparently realizing that Milosevic could not concede any more and needed something in exchange for Gorazde and Sarajevo, Silajdzic was given clearance to deal on Posavina and Brcko. Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996; Hill interview with author (notes), December 19, 1996. See also Silber and Little, p375; and *War Report*, p35.

¹¹¹ Late the night of November 17, Sacirbey nonchalantly announced that he would resign his post as foreign minister in order to make way for an ethnic Croat. He did so while drinking with journalists in an off-base hotel bar -- a blatant violation of the conference's media restrictions. See Michael Dobbs, "Bosnia Foreign Minister Resigns; Ethnic Rivalries Emerge as Final Push Begins at Peace Talks," *Washington Post*, November 19, 1995.

¹¹² Chris Hill phone interview with author (notes), December 5, 1996.

¹¹³ See Hill comment, Dayton History Seminar; and *War Report*, p38.

¹¹⁴ Chris Hill phone interview with author.

to the ground, he said the statement was not "final" enough: the parties needed to be told that the U.S. was out of the game.

Standing over a computer in the U.S. workroom, a visibly agitated Holbrooke dictated the language to Malinowski while other U.S. delegation members looked on, some in astonishment. His redraft reflected the frustration of the moment. "To put it simply," the statement concluded, "we gave it our best shot. By their failure to agree, the parties have made it very clear that further U.S. efforts to negotiate a settlement would be fruitless. Accordingly, today marks the end of this initiative... the special role we have played in the recent months is over. The leaders here today must live with the consequences of their failure."¹¹⁵

But that night's roller-coaster ride was not over yet. The momentum suddenly shifted. After the 45-minute break, Milosevic and Silajdzic got back together in the American VOQ with maps and an interpreter. This time, the two joined Christopher, Holbrooke, Hill and Clark in the conference room, while other staffers waited in the corridor. Silajdzic had an idea how to get the Serbs up to 49%. The Federation would give Srpska a wide swath of territory in a mountainous, relatively unpopulated area in western Bosnia. Since the area had few towns (which both sides were loath to give away), the exchange seemed acceptable to both. Suddenly, slightly before 4am, Milosevic and Silajdzic shook hands, turned to the Americans, and said they had a deal. Christopher had a bottle of his favorite California Chardonnay opened to celebrate the breakthrough.

Silajdzic went off to get Izetbegovic. Minutes later, the Bosnian President appeared, clearly annoyed and sleepy, wearing an overcoat over his pyjamas. Meanwhile, Christopher, Holbrooke, Clark and Hill studied Milosevic and Silajdzic's map. Upon close inspection, Christopher and Holbrooke were troubled by their agreement. "It didn't look quite right," they felt, and even as they drank Christopher's wine, they sent Chris Hill into the night to get Tudjman or Granic. Since Silajdzic had conceded Federation territory, Croatian approval would be needed.¹¹⁶

Hill returned to the American VOQ with Foreign Minister Granic, who explained that Tudjman was sleeping. Granic refused a drink, asking only to see the map. As soon as it was explained to him, the celebration bubble burst. "Impossible, impossible," Granic yelled, slamming his hand against the map. "Zero point zero zero chance that my President will accept this." He left abruptly, got Defense Minister Susak, and returned to continue his tirade.

Somewhat deviously, Silajdzic had given away predominantly Croat-held territory, land conquered by Croat forces during that fall's western Bosnia offensive. Christopher, Holbrooke and Hill had been worried about how the Croats would react, but did not expect such a venomous outburst from the normally mild-mannered Dr. Granic. The foreign minister was beside himself that Silajdzic had the audacity to trade territory that the Croats had won back. "You have given away the territory we conquered," Granic screamed at Silajdzic.

Despite Granic's emotional rejection, Holbrooke still hoped that a compromise could be salvaged. He thought that as long as they altered the territory to even the

¹¹⁵ For details of this episode, see Tom Malinowski interview, October 30, 1995; and draft failure statement, no date (John Burley EUR/SCE files; Malinowski PA/S files; COS files).

¹¹⁶ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996; Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

balance of sacrifice between Croats and Muslims, "shaving a little but here and a little bit there," they could finish a map by sunrise. While the fuming Granic paced nervously, Holbrooke turned to Izetbegovic to ask what he thought. Izetbegovic told the group that he concurred with Granic. "I cannot accept this agreement," he said quietly. "I stand with our Croatian allies." At this point, Silajdzic exploded. He had once again been undercut by his President, this time in front of the Americans, Croats, and Milosevic. "I can't take this anymore," he screamed, throwing his papers down on the table. Glowering at Izetbegovic, Silajdzic stormed out of the room and into the night. The "agreement" had lived a life of 37 minutes.¹¹⁷

What little optimism that had existed at 4am was completely shattered. These early morning hours seemed to encapsulate all the anger and passion of the Balkans. Christopher, still remarkably composed and impeccably dressed at such a late hour, went back to his suite, showered, changed clothes, and prepared to return to the drawing board.¹¹⁸

When clearer heads (following some sleep) prevailed, U.S. negotiators saw that their initial hunch was right: Silajdzic's "concession" had been a bit too devious. And, as long as the Croats were angry, there was no way the "37 minute-map" could be the solution. As Holbrooke reflected, Izetbegovic "couldn't endorse it, because he knew it was a non-starter as far as the Croats were concerned."¹¹⁹ If Izetbegovic had supported Silajdzic against the Croats, the Federation would've been doomed. "If he had said anything else," Menzies recalled later, "the Federation would've collapsed at Dayton, right then, right there. If [Izetbegovic] had sided with Milosevic against Granic and Susak, people upon whom the Bosnians had to rely on for their existence, the peace process would've been over."¹²⁰ The challenge, then, would be to get the Croats to agree to the territorial exchange.

Shortly after daybreak Monday morning, Christopher and Holbrooke resumed talks, first with Izetbegovic, then with Milosevic. Since the midnight deadline had long passed, they decided that the parties would be given one more day. If things were not solved by Tuesday morning, the talks would end.

Christopher and Holbrooke decided that after the "37-minute map" debacle, President Clinton needed to get involved. That morning, they called the President and "told him that this was a time when we thought his intervention would be very important." They recommended that the President call both Izetbegovic and Tudjman, wanting him to press the two to accept the territorial proposal agreed to by Silajdzic and Milosevic only hours before. Christopher believed that Tudjman's "desire to make Croatia part of the community of Western Europe would make a call from President Clinton very effective."¹²¹ Pressure also needed to be brought on Izetbegovic.

¹¹⁷ For details, see Holbrooke, Hill comments, Dayton History Seminar; Christopher interview, October 22, 1996; Hill interview, December 5, 1996; BBC television program; *War Report*, p39; Silber and Little, p376; and *New York Times*, November 23, 1995. Details of this event were also leaked to the press the next day. See Roger Cohen, "The Mirage of Peace," *New York Times*, November 21, 1995.

¹¹⁸ Christopher interview, October 22, 1995.

¹¹⁹ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

¹²⁰ Menzies interview. In addition, the incident provided dramatic evidence of the bitterness between Izetbegovic and Silajdzic, who, only ten months later, would run against each other for the Bosnian Presidency.

¹²¹ Christopher interview, October 22, 1995; see also Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

"Izetbegovic is on the verge of collapse," Tom Donilon reported that night to Vershbow, "it's clear that Izzy has zero commitment to life in one [multiethnic] state." From Washington, Lake strongly opposed a Presidential call to Izetbegovic, fearing the appearance of undue American pressure on the Bosnians to concede. Finally, officials in Washington and Dayton decided that Clinton would only call Tudjman and try to get him to agree to the "37-minute map." Kerrick and Holbrooke wrote the talking points and relayed them to Washington.¹²²

"I must say I'm impressed with how much has been achieved in the overall agreement and the benefits that will come to all of the parties," President Clinton said to Tudjman in a phone call that afternoon. "I understand a very difficult trade-off will have to be made to resolve the map. I'm calling you again to ask you to give back a small percentage of non-traditional Croatian territory in western Bosnia to bring the map back in line with the basic 51-49 territorial concept." Surprisingly, Tudjman told the President that the Croats had already made such a proposal, explaining that they hoped to reach final agreement in one to two hours. Thanking Tudjman for his cooperation, Clinton urged him to close things out. "We have to get an agreement. We don't want to go back to the killing."¹²³

What Tudjman didn't tell the President was that his proposal had a price — he would only agree if the Bosnians also made some minor territorial concessions. Once again, the burden was placed on the fractured Sarajevo leadership.

By 9pm Monday night, it looked as though the negotiations would end in failure. The U.S. had tried to get the Bosnians to give up some land, but they were reluctant to budge. The only compromise they offered was to sign an agreement without a map, a choice that was unacceptable to all the other parties at Dayton. When the U.S. core team gathered in their VOQ that night, they discussed what the next steps in the peace process should be. Ironically, they reflected, the "good" guys and the "bad" guys had reversed roles in Dayton. While the Serbs and Croats were the main perpetrators of the war, the Bosnians had become the chief impediments to the peace agreement. This was an excruciatingly frustrating moment for the Americans. The Bosnians, who the U.S. supported for both political and moral reasons, seemed blind to the fact that the agreement, while not perfect, was a good one. Indeed, it was the best offer they would ever get.

The fundamental question they debated that night was what the level of American involvement should be in any future diplomatic efforts. Was it in the U.S. national interest to pursue peace if the parties weren't genuinely committed to it? And, crucially, if Dayton failed, how much control would the U.S. retain over any future negotiations? Holbrooke argued that they should terminate the talks and step aside from Bosnia altogether; as his version of the failure statement read, the U.S. had given its best shot, and it was time to back off. "Holbrooke doesn't want to restart shuttle diplomacy -- he says this should be the end of our initiative," Donilon reported to Vershbow by phone. Secretary Christopher, on the other hand, felt that the U.S. should keep the process going,

¹²² See Holbrooke, Kerrick comments, Dayton History Seminar; Vershbow interview, December 17, 1996; Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

¹²³ "Telephone Conversation with Croatian President Tudjman, November 20, 1995" NSC memorandum, December 4, 1995.

that they could agree to preserve the cease-fire (which was scheduled to end on December 11 if peace talks failed) and possibly resume shuttle diplomacy.¹²⁴

The Americans decided that the Bosnians deserved one last chance to compromise. That night, the U.S. would present them with one last ultimatum: they would have one hour to decide, after that, the conference was over. On a secure phone line, Christopher called President Clinton at 9:30pm to ask his approval. "[I] Told the President that there was a very substantial chance that we would not succeed," Christopher recalled. "Basically, he gave me authority to do the best I could. In my judgment, trying to keep it going longer would there [in Dayton] would set back the ultimate [peace] process."¹²⁵ With the green light from the President, Christopher and Holbrooke prepared to meet the Bosnians.

Shortly after 10pm Monday night, the two senior American negotiators met with Izetbegovic, Silajdzic and Sacirbey in the Bosnian VOQ. For the Secretary of State, this was the last straw. He tried to persuade Izetbegovic that the agreement was a good one, and that the U.S. had obtained almost everything he had asked for. Yet, the Bosnians President remained unwilling to commit. Visibly angry, the ordinarily reserved Christopher raised his voice and told Izetbegovic that they had one hour to decide.¹²⁶

Five minutes after Christopher and Holbrooke left the Bosnian VOQ, Silajdzic burst into Holbrooke's suite in a rage, almost completely out of control. "You and Christopher have completely ruined everything," he screamed at Holbrooke. "We can't ever give in to a U.S. ultimatum, we can't ever accept it." Firing back, Holbrooke told Silajdzic that the Bosnians had 95% of what they sought from Dayton, and that the U.S. was not about to "piss it away." He asked Silajdzic to leave and use the next hour to get his President to accept this final offer before it was too late.¹²⁷

As the hour mark approached, Holbrooke and others put the finishing touches on the failure statement. Based on Christopher and Donilon's suggestions, the fatalistic tone of Holbrooke's earlier effort that morning was scaled back considerably, and they returned to Malinowski's original draft. This statement was a better reflection of Christopher's views -- that Dayton was largely a success, that the parties work to build on the progress achieved there and continue the peace process. Explaining that they had reached an understanding on every major issue but the map, the statement read that "the future of these negotiations is wrapped in the details of the map we are negotiating. But we did not want an agreement that was artificially reached, for such an agreement would surely fall apart." They decided that if the talks indeed failed, the parties would sign an interim agreement to extend the cease-fire, reaffirm the Eastern Slavonia and Federation agreements, lock-in the commitments made in Geneva and New York, and pledge to resume negotiations at a later date -- but not in the U.S.. "In the final analysis," the draft statement concluded, "as our experience in Dayton makes so very clear, only the parties

¹²⁴ For details of this meeting, see Rosemarie Pauli-Gikas notes, Dayton notebook 3; and Christopher interview, October 30, 1995. See also Vershow interview, December 17, 1996.

¹²⁵ Christopher interview, October 30, 1995; and Holbrooke, Hill and Kerrick comments, Dayton History Seminar.

¹²⁶ See Christopher interviews, October 22 and 30, 1995; Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

¹²⁷ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

can make the critical choices that peace requires. We will continue to help them in any way we can."¹²⁸

At 11:30pm, John Kornblum went to the Bosnian VOQ to get their answer. Meeting Kornblum, Sacirbey appeared in the hall and announced that the Bosnians would agree to a final settlement only on one condition: that they get Brcko. In a heated discussion, Kornblum told Sacirbey that this was a new condition. Brcko's status had already been decided -- the Serbs would get it -- and could not be reopened. Kornblum then gave the draft failure statement to Sacirbey. As Kornblum later recalled: "I said that we had been trying valiantly all day, [but] there just seemed to be too many issues that could not be bridged, in particular, that the Bosnians had just been coming up with one point after another." Sacirbey refused to accept the deal without Brcko, and Kornblum told him that the talks would be over the next morning.

Kornblum returned to tell the rest of the U.S. delegation that the Bosnians would not agree without Brcko. Holbrooke called Christopher -- who had gone off to his suite in the Hope Hotel for some needed and well-deserved rest -- to tell him "it's over but it's not over," pending a miracle concession on Brcko. "I recommend you get some sleep, and we'll keep working it from here." Christopher, though, felt that the introduction of Brcko into the endgame was "finally the [deal]-breaker." After long hours of negotiating in other areas, this "new issue, in addition to [Izetbegovic's] general reluctance, might be the final straw," Christopher later recalled.¹²⁹ Chris Hill delivered the failure statement to the Croats, who were in the middle of a card game. Tudjman, relaxed and confident as ever, chuckled when he read the statement, asking Hill if the U.S. was really prepared to blame the Muslims publicly for failure. Hill responded that they had not decided how to handle that aspect of closing the talks.¹³⁰

In the final act before going to bed himself, Holbrooke asked Hill, Kerrick and Pardew to deliver the failure statement to Milosevic. They did, and were later joined by Kornblum, Rudy Perina, and Wes Clark. Holbrooke, who felt that he should not go himself to avoid engaging in another negotiating session, asked them not to pressure Milosevic directly, but merely tell him that Dayton was over unless the Serb leader took action immediately. When presented with the news, Milosevic was very upset. "You can't do this," he said, almost desperately. "We've got this agreement, you can't let this happen. You're the United States, you can't let Bosnia push you around that way. Just go back and tell them the way it's going to be." The group responded that the U.S. had done all it could; incredulous, Milosevic pleaded, "you try some more, you try some more." Around 2am, they left, telling Milosevic that he had to be the one to try more: "we've done everything we can."¹³¹

The End -- Day Twenty-One: Tuesday, November 21

At daybreak on Tuesday, November 21, the weary negotiators awoke to a fresh blanket of snow on the ground. It seemed as a fitting note to end on, as if mother nature herself was telling everyone that it was time to go home. At 6:30am, the phone blared in

¹²⁸ See draft "failure" statement, PA Malinowski files; for interim agreement, see "Draft Closure Statement," Pardew Dayton notebook.

¹²⁹ Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

¹³⁰ Holbrooke, Hill comments, Dayton History Seminar.

¹³¹ For details, see Kornblum/Owen interview, June 18, 1996; and Holbrooke, Kerrick, Hill, Pardew comments, Dayton History Seminar; Hill phone interview with author (notes).

Holbrooke's room. On the line was David Martin of CBS News. It was the first time a reporter had been able to get through directly to Holbrooke's room, but that morning, it really didn't matter. Martin said that Sacirbey had been at the Holiday Inn all night and was telling everyone that the U.S. had given them an unacceptable ultimatum. Dayton had failed. Holbrooke didn't confirm Martin's story, but implied it was true, saying "we're at the critical moment." A press conference was planned for 11:00am, where Christopher would announce that Dayton was over but had not "failed." As Holbrooke dressed that morning, he prepared in his own mind a personal statement announcing that he had done the best he could, but was now turning over the negotiations to the Europeans. Thinking the talks were over, most negotiators in Dayton finished packing, and several in the U.S. delegation met at Packy's for a last breakfast. In Washington, Sandy Vershbow told his NSC colleagues during that morning's staff meeting that the talks had broken down over Brcko. Everyone should start thinking about next steps.¹³²

But soon after Holbrooke dressed that morning, Chris Hill burst in to tell him that Milosevic had gone to see Tadjman, apparently to suggest that the two of them sign the agreement -- with or without Izetbegovic. Milosevic had mentioned this the night before, but at such a late hour, the U.S. negotiators hadn't really taken him seriously. Holbrooke wasn't sure whether this was acceptable, but at least it was another opening. As he and Hill discussed, it would put incredible pressure on Izetbegovic -- enough so that he might actually break down and sign.¹³³ Holbrooke notified Christopher immediately, and then joined the rest of the senior U.S. delegation for the 8am staff meeting -- which was supposed to be the "shut-down" meeting.¹³⁴

The Americans debated the merits of Milosevic's gambit. Christopher strongly opposed the idea. He felt that it directly contradicted the U.S. goal of only accepting a comprehensive peace. He believed that the talks had gone too far to simply give up and exclude the Bosnians. Moreover, from a legal perspective, the Secretary argued that you could not have a viable contract with only two of three parties as signatories. And, finally, he was uncomfortable with the position in which Izetbegovic would be left. The Secretary saw the move for what it was: a desperate tactic by Milosevic to put pressure on the third party, a party that the U.S. had entered the peace process to protect.¹³⁵

During the morning staff meeting in the American VOQ, Holbrooke's wife, Kati Marton, burst into the conference room to tell them that a coatless Milosevic was standing alone outside in the snowy parking lot. He wanted to see Christopher and Holbrooke immediately. Marton ran out in the quad to catch Milosevic (who had already turned around to leave), bringing him back to Holbrooke's suite. In the room alone with Christopher and Holbrooke, Milosevic made his proposal that the Serbs and Croats sign without Izetbegovic. Christopher rejected it. Pushed to this last brink, Milosevic made a final offer: that the status of Brcko be deferred for later, pending the decision of an appointed international arbitrator.¹³⁶

¹³² Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar; Vershbow interview, December 17, 1996; Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

¹³³ Hill phone interview with author (notes).

¹³⁴ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

¹³⁵ Christopher interview, October 22, 1996; and Rosemarie Pauli-Gikas, Dayton notebook 3.

¹³⁶ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar; Christopher interview October 22, 1996. There is some debate on exactly who came up with the arbitration idea. The BBC has reported that the idea actually came

Christopher felt that this would be enough to bring the Bosnians back. "Suddenly [Milosevic] was prepared to agree to arbitration and did not insist on trying to define the [Brcko] corridor, [which would] enable us to reach agreement."¹³⁷ Milosevic asked Christopher to be the arbitrator. Christopher explained that he couldn't be, but would support an arbitration process headed by an respected international lawyer. The Secretary then asked Roberts Owen to draw up the language for an arbitration clause for Brcko, to be decided within one year. Working with Jim O'Brien, Owen drafted the language. Meanwhile, Christopher and Holbrooke went to see Tudjman.¹³⁸

Tudjman, hearing Milosevic's arbitration offer, said emotionally that the Americans had to "get peace now" by forcing Izetbegovic to accept. They agreed. Christopher and Holbrooke walked through the light snow to the Bosnian VOQ where they met with Izetbegovic, Silajdzic and Sacirbey in Izetbegovic's suite. As they met, over 700 journalists waited at the press center across the base, all reporting imminent failure. The press conference was scheduled for 11am; it was already after 9am.¹³⁹

Christopher and Holbrooke outlined the latest offer from Milosevic, urging Izetbegovic to accept. Everything agreed to at Dayton would be implemented, he explained, but Brcko, whose future would be decided by arbitration. Otherwise, the end of Dayton would be announced in less than two hours. Christopher said that there was no more time for new deadlines. They needed a response immediately. After a long pause, Izetbegovic said "it's an unjust peace." Then, as if forcing the words out, he quietly muttered his answer: "but my people need peace." The Bosnians had agreed. Holbrooke, realizing that things could quickly unravel if he and Christopher stuck around to talk about details, he whispered to the Secretary, "let's get out of here fast!"¹⁴⁰

Christopher and Holbrooke immediately called President Clinton, who said that he was ready to fly out to Dayton to participate in the announcement. Feeling that this was too risky, they recommended that the President stay in Washington to make the announcement from the Rose Garden. "Mr. President," Holbrooke said, "you don't want to be anywhere near these people today. They are wild." The President said he would make the announcement as soon as possible, in order to lock-in the agreement and avoid any last minute shenanigans before the afternoon signing ceremony in Dayton.¹⁴¹

With the parties finally in agreement on the core issues, there were still several other issues that needed to be ironed out before the signing ceremony that afternoon.¹⁴²

from Tudjman and Granic, who in turn gave it to Milosevic. U.S. officials recall that the idea came from Milosevic. See BBC television program; and *War Report*, p40.

¹³⁷ Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

¹³⁸ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar; and Kornblum/Owen interview.

¹³⁹ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996.

¹⁴⁰ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar; Kornblum/Owen interview. Before the signing ceremony, Policy Planning Staff Director Jim Steinberg told Menzies to tell Izetbegovic not to repeat the "unjust peace" line in his closing remarks. Nervous how the Bosnians were going to portray the agreement to the world, Steinberg did not want them to create the impression that the U.S. had strong-armed them into a bad deal. Despite Menzies' request, Izetbegovic went ahead and publicly made the comment anyway; and the sky did not fall. Tom Malinowski interview with author (notes), January 23, 1997.

¹⁴¹ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar. According to Secretary Christopher, there was always the possibility that President Clinton would come to Dayton. To prepare for such an event, the White House even dispatched an advance team to Dayton. In the end, though, "scheduling problems" got in the way of a Clinton visit. See Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

¹⁴² Owen and O'Brien had finished the Brcko arbitration text, which was then placed into Article V of the map annex. Since they were unsure of exactly what the "Brcko area" was to be arbitrated, they asked Wes

Wes Clark and Mo Sacirbey got together to shave the map by a percentage point -- reflecting the Bosnian sacrifices that Tudjman had demanded -- to guarantee 51-49.¹⁴³ Kornblum, Owen and Miriam Sapiro brought the three Balkan foreign ministers to the American VOQ to conclude the final details on the text. The legal experts had already conducted a line-by-line edit of every annex, and this meeting was intended to close-out the few issues left. The refugee voting issue had been solved the over the weekend (with both sides accepting U.S. compromise language) and the IFOR annex had been approved.¹⁴⁴ Of the four remaining issues left on the annexes, the group was able to come to agreement on three (on weapons ratios for the arms control annex, rotation of the presidency's chair, and arbitration rights). The only remaining issue was Serbia's reluctance to recognize formally Bosnia and Herzegovina in the framework text. Kornblum decided he would have to take this to the Presidents.¹⁴⁵

President Clinton made the preliminary announcement from the White House Rose Garden at 11:40 that morning, as Christopher, Holbrooke and Donilon watched on a television in the Secretary's Hope Hotel suite. "After nearly four years of 250,000 people killed, 2 million refugees, and atrocities that have appalled people all over the world, the people of Bosnia finally have a chance to turn from the horror of war to the promise of peace," the President stated. With an agreement achieved, he called on the American people to support implementing peace -- particularly through the use of U.S. troops in IFOR. "We are at a decisive moment," he said. "The parties have chosen peace. American must choose peace as well. Now that a detailed settlement has been reached, NATO will rapidly complete its planning for IFOR... Now American leadership -- together with our allies -- is needed to make this peace real and enduring. Our values, our interests, and our leadership all over the world are at stake."¹⁴⁶

Milosevic was absolutely ebullient about the deal. When Christopher and Holbrooke met with him to explain Izetbegovic's agreement, the Serb leader could barely contain his excitement. He told Christopher that "they will hang your portrait in Belgrade" and, for some reason, hugged Don Kerrick.¹⁴⁷

At noon, Christopher and Holbrooke briefed the Contact Group representatives on the details of the final compromises. Throughout the tumultuous last few days, the Europeans had been completely isolated from the Americans' last-ditch negotiating

Clark to help put together a map to be included in an annex. They never did get a map, and almost a year later, the parties still dispute what the Brcko boundary lines are. On arbitration timing, Owen had written that the decision must be completed no later than one year after the agreement entered into force. The night of the 21st, as Christopher and Owen discussed the agreement in the Secretary's car in Washington, they realized that Christopher had meant for Owen to write the language so that arbitration would *begin*, not end, in one year. See Owen comment, Dayton History Seminar; and Owen/Kornblum interview.

¹⁴³ Holbrooke comment, Dayton History Seminar.

¹⁴⁴ On solving the elections annex, see Zejkulic interview; Kornblum/Owen interview. The issue of voter eligibility was solved by outlining that citizens would be "expected" to vote in the region where they resided in 1991 (what the Bosnians wanted), but that they may apply to an electoral commission to attain the right to cast their ballots elsewhere (what the Serbs wanted).

¹⁴⁵ These four remaining issues had lingered for the last day. See "Open Issues as of Monday November 20 at 6am," Miriam Sapiro files; "Unresolved Issues: 4:00am," Sapiro files; and Sapiro, Kornblum, Owen comments, Kornblum/Owen interview.

¹⁴⁶ See Statement by President Clinton, "Agreement Reached on Peace in the Balkans," U.S. Department of State *Dispatch*, December 1995, p18.

¹⁴⁷ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1995.

effort, and at best, had heard only snippets of rumored details about an agreement. They had been neither consulted nor informed about the negotiating endgame.

After Holbrooke and Christopher's quick briefing for the Contact Group, they joined the three Balkan Presidents in the Hope Hotel for a celebratory lunch. President Clinton called, and over a speakerphone, congratulated the group on the accomplishment. "Following this long, scratchy negotiation," Christopher reflected, "there was an aura of some modest good feeling."¹⁴⁸

As the Presidents ate, Kornblum and Owen entered the room to announce that they had just finished meeting with the three Balkan foreign ministers, and there was one issue left hanging -- mutual recognition between Bosnia and Serbia.¹⁴⁹ Holbrooke and Kornblum blocked the door so that no one could leave the room until it was resolved. Izetbegovic already had his coat on to leave, and Milosevic asked to have his foreign minister deal with it. Kornblum said no, "your foreign minister just told me to turn it back to you."

Milosevic backed down, revealing that he had already worked up a draft text on the subject. Pulling a tattered sheet of paper from his jacket pocket, Milosevic read the language to the group. Izetbegovic immediately rejected Milosevic's proposal. "I can't buy that," he said. "It makes it sound as if [Bosnia] seceded illegally from Yugoslavia."

"Well, you did," Milosevic rejoined. It was as if the two of them were about to return to the origins of the war and start all over again.

Kornblum suggested that they solve the problem by placing a very general statement in the framework agreement. As Kornblum thought out loud, Christopher grabbed a yellow pad and began to write out some suitable language. The result was simple. Bosnia and Serbia would recognize each other as sovereign, independent states within their international borders with "other aspects" of mutual recognition to be "subject to subsequent discussions." The two sides agreed to the compromise, and the new language was rushed down to the U.S. staffers who were furiously preparing the official text for the initialing ceremony.¹⁵⁰ Meanwhile, Holbrooke drafted an additional letter from each Balkan President to President Clinton giving a personal pledge as to the safety of U.S. and NATO troops that would be deployed in Bosnia. The letter was designed to bolster U.S. public support for the agreement.¹⁵¹

The initialing ceremony took place at 3pm, in the same room where the conference had opened three long weeks before. The small circular table from the opening ceremony had been replaced by a long table where the three Balkan Presidents sat alongside Christopher, Holbrooke and Bildt on a dais facing an enormous crowd. The room seemed twice as packed as three weeks before, with hundreds of journalists wedging into any tiny space they could find. While Holbrooke had advised against President Clinton's attendance, he did ask several senior Washington officials, including General John Shalikashvili and Deputy Secretary of Defense (then Acting Secretary) John White, to fly out to Dayton that afternoon.

Consistent with almost every other step in this peace process, the ceremony went forward while chaos raged on the sides. Shortly before the event began, Milosevic

¹⁴⁸ Christopher interview, October 22, 1995.

¹⁴⁹ For details of this episode, see Kornblum/Owen interview.

¹⁵⁰ The text became Article X of the framework agreement.

¹⁵¹ Holbrooke interview with author (notes), December 20, 1996; and Michael Dobbs, "U.S. Gains Assurances on Troops; Balkan Presidents Promise Security," *Washington Post*, November 24, 1995.

presented the maps to the Bosnian Serbs. Until that moment, they didn't know that he had given away Sarajevo. When the Krajisnik saw the map -- and the fact that not only had he lost Sarajevo, but his cherished villa in western Bosnia -- he fainted. When asked what happened, Milosevic chortled, "he went into a coma." By all accounts, the Bosnian Serbs were outraged by what Milosevic had done -- not only on the map, but on the elections, constitution, and the IFOR annex. Accordingly, they refused to initial the Dayton agreement, and would not participate in any part of the closing ceremony. Reminded that the U.S. held him responsible for their actions, Milosevic promised that he would get their signature within the next week.¹⁵²

"Today, you will leave Dayton with a comprehensive agreement in hand," Secretary Christopher said to the teeming crowd in the Hope Convention center's B-29 room, while the three Presidents at the dais looked on. "On this Thanksgiving weekend, our joint work has made it possible for the people of Bosnia to spend New Year's Day in peace for the first time in four years." Then, in a scene that filled the next day's airwaves and newspapers around the world, the three Presidents initialed the Dayton agreement.¹⁵³

* * *

Although most of the comments made at the ceremony that afternoon reflected the sense of accomplishment and relief brought by success, everyone recognized that the challenges ahead were the most important. Indeed, the American diplomatic effort had brought a comprehensive agreement, but its value was nothing more than the paper it was on until its terms were implemented on the ground. President Clinton expressed as much that morning from the Rose Garden, and Christopher and Holbrooke reiterated this point that afternoon in Dayton. "The agreements and territorial arrangements initialed today are a huge step forward, the biggest by far since the war began," Holbrooke said in his concluding remarks. "But ahead lies an equally daunting task: implementation. On every page of the many complicated documents and annexes initialed here today lie challenges to both sides to set aside their enmities, their differences, which are still raw with open wounds... To make [peace] work is our next and greatest challenge."

Secretary Christopher echoed this sentiment. "This victory will not be secure unless we all get to work to ensure that the promise of this moment is realized. The parties have put a solemn set of commitments on paper. In the coming days and weeks,

¹⁵² See Owen, Pardew comments, Dayton History Seminar; and Pardew interview, June 27, 1996. Ironically, while Milosevic's played peacemaker in Dayton that week, Belgrade was talking about the recently published memoirs of Milosevic's former deputy and close confidant, Borisav Jovic. As the U.S. mission in Belgrade observed, "Milosevic's attempt over the past year to discard his nationalist past and redefine himself as a peace-minded progressive figure is not well served by Jovic's memoir. Jovic, who loyally helped Milosevic break up Yugoslavia and consolidate power in Serbia by waving the nationalist flag, is an awkward reminder of those days that Milosevic and his wife [Mira Markovic, the influential head of the neo-communist Serbian left] would like to forget." "Belgrade Buzzing Over Memoirs of Milosevic Crony," Cable, Belgrade 5680, November 20, 1995.

¹⁵³ The Europeans continued to create problems to the bitter end -- even as the ceremony was underway and everyone was seated on the dais. At his turn to initial the framework agreement, Ivanov said -- in contrast to his cooperative behavior earlier in Dayton (see fn 45) -- that he could not initial Annex 1 (the IFOR annex) because of its references to NATO. Since this clearly reopened an issue that had been solved at higher levels (and likely reflected bureaucratic differences internal to the Russian government), the Americans agreed to let him initial the agreement and write "except for Annex 1" below his signature. In Paris on December 14, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin formally signed the agreement without this caveat.

they will have to put them into practice -- extending them to every mayor, every soldier, every police officer in their territory." In three weeks, President Clinton would join the rest of the Contact Group leaders in Paris to witness the formal signing of the Dayton Accords. But on November 22, the next stage of the U.S. diplomatic initiative had already begun.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁴ Holbrooke and Christopher quotes from U.S. Department of State *Dispatch*, December 1995, pp14-17.