Chapter Two

Through the Window of Opportunity: The Endgame Strategy

On July 23, two days after the London conference, U.S. Air Force General James Jamerson and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense Joseph Kruzel, accompanied by a British Air Force Marshall and a French General traveled to Belgrade to meet Bosnian Serb General Ratko Mladic and personally deliver the London ultimatum. The commander of the Bosnian Serb forces had masterminded the Serb assault on Srebrenica and Zepa.[1] Two days after this meeting, Mladic and Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic were indicted by the Hague War Crimes Tribunal for genocide.

The Allied military delegation was met in Serbia with a much warmer welcome than they had expected. Mladic had planned a formal dinner and had made accommodations for them to spend the night. Realizing that such an invitation was at odds with the sharp message they had come to deliver, the delegation declined. When they finally saw Mladic, it seemed as though he did not know why they had come -- he greeted them warmly, as comrades in arms. As the British chaired the London conference, their Air Chief delivered the message to the Bosnian Serb leader: The Serbs must understand what will happen if they attack Gorazde. NATO will launch a comprehensive air attack, and no military targets would be exempted. Mladic must not mistake their focus on Gorazde for a lack of concern with the other safe areas, added U.S. General Jamerson. NATO would still take action to uphold UN Security Council resolutions protecting them as well.

Mladic rejected their message with a 90-minute diatribe full, in Kruzel's words, of "Balkan history, culture, and politics." Bosnia-Herzegovina had never been an independent state; the Serbs were doing nothing more than fighting for their own territory. Though the West had taken actions that were "not quite sensible," the Bosnian Serbs did not regard them as enemies. Mladic even denied that his army had ever killed an UNPROFOR soldier. The Bosnian Serbs were not the brutes the Western press claimed; they treated their enemies as they were treated. "As we have, so others will be given the same," Mladic said. Although the Serb General had heard their ultimatum, he would not accept it. The Allies should instead press his enemies (the Croats and Muslims), who were the true foes of peace. The military commanders listened patiently to Mladic and then departed.[2]

Although the Allies had agreed in principle on the American plan at London, NATO's political committee, the North Atlantic Council (NAC), still had to implement the details of the agreement. The U.S. remained at odds with the British and French on

[1] As assessed in a State Department INR analysis. See memorandum to Secretary Christopher from Toby Gati (INR), "General Mladic's role in the Current Crisis," July 13, 1995.
[2] For Kruzel's report of the meeting, see his "Memorandum for the Record," July 23, 1995.

UN Secretary General Boutros Boutros-Ghali's control over his half of the dual key. The dual-key system reflected the duplicate hierarchies of NATO and UN commanders in Bosnia. Before NATO could take any offensive action, the UN leaders would have to give their assent, and vice versa. The British and French had strongly supported this arrangement, as it was the safety of their troops that the UN protected. But the fecklessness of the UN civilian leaders (Boutros-Ghali and Akashi) testified to UNPROFOR's appearance of impotence, and the United States believed the removal of the UN key from their civilian leaders a critical step towards restoring the international community's credibility.

On July 22, NATO leaders in Brussels began fleshing out the technical details of the London Agreement. In the days since the London conference, the NAC had come under intense pressure from Boutros-Ghali who had begun calling key allied leaders to voice his concerns. While not explicitly addressed in the "Chairman's Statement" summarizing London's conclusions, U.S. leaders had left the conference with the clear impression that an understanding had been reached to modify the dual-key to remove UN civilian officials from military decision-making. The Europeans had consistently been unwilling to remove the UN's key; however, at London, "they had made very clear that under certain circumstances they expected the [UN] key to be turned on automatically."[3] Secretary Perry had reported to the President that a "key feature [of London] is that we have agreed to remove the UN civilian authorities from the decision process on airstrikes," and, in his remarks to the press after the conference, Secretary Christopher stated that the "existing command-and-control arrangements for the use of NATO air power will be significantly adjusted to ensure that responsiveness and unity -- our purposes -- are achieved. The new [decision-making] system is a much improved system."[4] Since this understanding seemed clear, U.S. officials saw no need to address it formally or explicitly in the concluding statement.

Despite U.S. officials' perception of unanimity, others -- notably the UN Secretary General himself -- had different views.[5] Boutros-Ghali was genuinely conflicted about his role in the dual-key system. To U.S. officials, the Secretary General was troubled by the fact that he was getting inconsistent advice from the Allies and his UN military commanders on the ground in Bosnia. "I could see that the British and the French [were] saying one thing in the Contact Group, another in NATO, and blowing another in Boutros' ear," Albright recalled. UN military commanders, "who were preoccupied with the protection of their troops and thus [against] an air campaign," were also considered a source of Boutros-Ghali's reluctance. Notwithstanding the inconsistencies among the Allies, the bottom-line seemed to be, as Albright later explained, that Boutros Boutros-Ghali was playing games. "I don't think we'll ever know the absolute truth as to whether Boutros-Ghali was telling the British and French that he was reluctant to [give up his key] because Akashi was telling him that it would have a certain effect. [But] then, Boutros-Ghali blamed it on the British and French to me."[6]

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[3] Tarnoff interview.

[4] Perry memorandum for the President, July 21, 1995; Christopher statement, US Department of State *Dispatch*, July 24, 1995.

[5] After London, the US believed that Boutros-Ghali would present no problem on relinquishing his key. Christopher told Clinton this during the July 22 meeting to review London at the White House. See Vershbow interview, September 26, 1996.

[6] Albright interview; see also Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

[redacted]

On the morning of the 24th, Boutros-Ghali called his counterpart, NATO Secretary General Willy Claes. In a heated conversation, Boutros-Ghali told Claes that he opposed the decision on broad airstrikes, which he claimed violated UN Security Council resolutions. Boutros-Ghali protested that the U.S. was rushing the international community's deliberations in an effort to "force the play before a Senate vote on lift."[7] In Claes' words, Boutros-Ghali would not agree to relinquish his key until "he heard personally" from each head of state, noting that "a decision of your sixteen NATO ambassadors would not be enough." Aware of the problem Boutros-Ghali could create, Claes asked the "Quad" NATO representatives -- U.S., UK, France and Germany -- to begin lobbying the UN Secretary General.[8]

President Clinton and his advisors soon began to consult with their Allies to establish where the UN key would go. The President phoned Chirac on July 24 to argue that the authority should go to the British Lt. General Rupert Smith, who commanded UN ground forces in Bosnia.[9] The U.S. expected that placing the key in the hands of the military would make the UN less of an obstacle. Chirac shared the President's view, but he believed it was more logical to assign the key to Smith's superior, General Bernard Janvier, who was the overall UNPROFOR commander. To Chirac, the fact that Janvier was a French General would no doubt enable the French government to retain a strong influence over the course of the airstrikes.

Additionally, Chirac believed that the UN delegation authority should be split according to the three phases of the bombing worked out at the NAC planning level. These three "options" organized NATO bombing plans into three rungs of escalation. *Option One* airstrikes would target specific military positions involved in attacking a safe area. This first option offered little more than the "pin-prick" targeting that had defined past NATO air operations in the region. Chirac argued that authority to conduct these could rest with the local commander; Janvier could subdelegate such authority to those on the ground as necessary. The next level, *Option Two* airstrikes, were the "substantial and decisive" airstrikes promised by the London Conference. This second option expanded the area of operations and target list to include weapons not directly involved in an attack. Chirac felt that authority for this option should remain in Janvier's hands. *Option Three* was the broadest level of strategic bombing, including attacks on Serb troop concentrations and equipment throughout Bosnia. In essence, this option outlined a full-throttled bombing campaign, not unlike that directed against Iraqi targets during the Gulf War. Chirac stressed that power to authorize this must remain in the hands of the UN

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[7] The US Senate was planning to vote on legislation known as the Dole-Lieberman Bill to lift unilaterally the arms embargo against Bosnia. For more details, see below.

[8] What the Secretary General told Claes was consistent with a discussion he had had at the UN with Albright and French and British representatives the night before. See "Bosnia: P-3 Meeting with UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali," Cable, State 176444, July 24, 1995. Claes recounted his conversation with Boutros-Ghali in a meeting with the ambassadors of the "4-key Allies" shortly after hanging up. See "Bosnia at NATO, July 24," Cable, USNATO 3029, July 24, 1995. See also, "July 24 NAC on Implementing London Meeting Conclusions on Bosnia," Cable, USNATO 3027, July 24, 1995; "Informal NAC, 22 July 1995, Situation in the Former Yugoslavia," Cable, USNATO 3016, July 24, 1995.

[9] "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation, President Clinton and French President Chirac," NSC memorandum, July 24, 1995.

[redacted]

Secretary General. Requiring a green light from the UN, he argued, would allow other nations with forces on the ground to have a voice in a decision to pursue Option Three.[10]

Although the Americans accepted Chirac's conditions on Options One and Two, they could not agree to his recommendations for Option Three. As Christopher told de Charette later that day, the Administration wanted to be able to tell Congress that they had removed Boutros-Ghali entirely from the chain of command.[11] The Senate was then debating legislation co-sponsored by Republican Majority Leader Robert Dole and Connecticut Democrat Joseph Lieberman that would call for the unilateral lifting of the arms embargo, and Clinton's effort to forestall a veto-proof majority would require him to convince the legislators that the London agreements represented a new departure in Western policy. The French Foreign Minister tried to reassure the Secretary that Boutros-Ghali would not be an impediment to airstrikes, but Christopher responded that this was "directly contrary to what we agreed to in London... under your proposal, [Boutros-Ghali] would have veto power over strategic air strikes in Bosnia."

The British again leaned toward the American position on the dual-key, although Major reiterated that UN military commanders still had to have a significant role: "It is they who are best placed to judge when the lives of their troops are at risk," he wrote the President.[12] The British, however, proved troublesome on another front, as they were resistant to the American hope to expand the "Gorazde rules" to protect the remaining safe areas. Foreign Secretary Rifkind had expressed as much to Christopher in a phone call on July 23.[13] The British feared particularly that extending the rules to Bihac, which was then under heavy attack, would likely draw the Allies into war against the Serbs. The French, in turn, had given provisional acceptance to the American plan to extend NATO protections. In his conversation with Christopher on July 24, de Charette accepted the need to reinforce the UN commitment to the other enclaves. But the implementation of that agreement still hinged upon NAC approval of the London decisions as they applied to Gorazde alone.

The UN Secretary General was able to use these divisions among the British, French, and Americans to rationalize delaying his support for the agreement. He refused to meet with the three UN ambassadors on July 24 until they presented him with a proposal outlining the likely agreement between NATO and the UN.[14] That day, the Deputies Committee (DC) met at the White House to discuss Boutros-Ghali's request and approved a draft of the proposal to be sent to the UN. When British and French representatives met with Albright to discuss the draft, they reflected the different

[10] The specific NAC planning decisions concerning these options were based on plans made in August 1993. For details, see Fax from Bob Clarke (USNATO) to George Glass (EUR/RPM), July 28, 1995, enclosing NAC decision for the July 25, 1995 meeting; and "Operational Options for Air Strikes in Bosnia-Herzegovina," Memorandum of the NAC Military Committee to the [NATO] Secretary General, August 8, 1993.

[11] "The Secretary and French Foreign Minister de Charette, July 24, 1995," Cable, State 178191, July 26, 1995.

[12] See Letter from Major to Clinton, British Cable (faxed from White House Situation Room to DoD and State), July 25, 1995.

[13] See "The Secretary and UK Foreign Secretary Rifkind, July 23, 1995," Cable, State 177396, July 25, 1995.

[14]. See "Summary of Conclusions for the July 24 NSC Deputies Committee Meeting," NSC memorandum, July 27, 1995; and "Perm-3 Non Paper For the SYG Regarding Use of Air Power in Bosnia," Cable, USUN 2907, July 25, 1995.

positions of their respective governments -- the French against delegation below Janvier, and the British against an airstrike mandate wider than the defense of Gorazde. On July 25, Secretary Christopher called Boutros-Ghali to discuss his support for the London Agreements, but while Secretary General avoided the threatening tone he had used earlier with Claes, he told the Secretary of State that he could not give a "blank-check" to the Americans until the NAC reached agreement. Likely reflecting the conflicting recommendations that the British and French were giving him, Boutros-Ghali stressed that while he did not wish to complicate the situation, he had yet to receive a clear understanding of where the Allies wanted him to go. Secretary Christopher expressed his hope for a resolution within twenty-four hours, noting that "things seem to have fallen back" since the London Conference.[15]

Because of these outstanding differences and the pressure from the UN Secretary General, the NAC meeting on July 24 was unable even to discuss the London follow-on.[16] Thus, the NAC met again on July 25, as the sixteen Allies pursued extensive and exhaustive discussions both in Brussels and among their capitals. Early on in the meeting, U.S. Ambassador to NATO Robert Hunter called Washington to tell Assistant Secretary of State Holbrooke that it was "fifteen-to-one against the U.S.," and that he was worried that the NAC would never agree. Holbrooke recalls telling Hunter to keep the NAC up all night if necessary, and to accept no less than the decisions authorized by the London Conference. "Otherwise," Holbrooke said, "the West's decision would be revealed as a charade."[17] Returning to the NAC, Hunter led a marathon meeting, and after almost thirteen hours, the NAC finally agreed to implement the conclusions of the London Conference.[18] The three substantive issues that had to be settled at this meeting focused on 1) concerns about attacking massing Serb troops; 2) delegation of authority for the Option Three airstrikes; and 3) possible retaliation to Serb hostage-taking.[19]

On the first outstanding issue, the British were concerned by the American suggestion that NATO could attack concentrations of Serb troops before they had attacked a safe area. The U.S. argued that if the Serbs were clearly massing in an effort to attack the enclave, NATO needed the flexibility to preempt the assault, rather than waiting until it had already begun. The French supported the American position, arguing that it was not realistic to distinguish between attacking heavy weapons and troops. The British Ambassador, supported by the Italians and Dutch, argued that a preemptive assault on troop concentrations should require a NAC decision. But this would undermine the purpose of the Gorazde rules, which sought to place military decisions in the hands of the commanders on the ground. The U.S. suggested that since the UN military authorities would still have to authorize the strikes, the Allies did not have to worry that NATO commanders would act precipitously. But the British were obstinate, and it was only after high-level consultations among allied capitals (which included Secretary Christopher speaking with Foreign Minister Rifkind) that they relented.[20] It

[15] "The Secretary and UN SYG Boutros-Ghali, July 25, 1995," Cable, State 178623, July 26, 1995.
[16] As explained in "Bosnia at NATO, July 24," Cable, USNATO 3029, July 24, 1995.
[17] Holbrooke interview with author (notes), October 17, 1996.
[18] For full review of the meeting, see "July 25 NAC on Bosnia Air Operations (Gorazde)," Cable, USNATO 3059, July 26, 1995.
[19] Hunter interview; USNATO 3059.
[20] See "The Secretary and British Foreign Minister Rifkind, July 25, 1995," Cable, State 178624, July 26, 1995.

was decided that the military commanders, and not the NAC, would decide when to initiate an attack on troop concentrations.

Concerning Option Three airstrikes, the French reiterated their position that authorization must require a UN political decision from Boutros-Ghali. None of the ambassadors argued against delegating Options One and Two authority to the local UN military commanders (thus taking Boutros-Ghali's civilian key away). However, the nations with troops on the ground believed that an escalation to Option Three, which would likely augur all-out war against the Serbs (and therefore leave UN troops throughout Bosnia vulnerable to Bosnian Serb reprisal), was a crucial political decision that could not be made by the theater commanders alone. In order to avoid scuttling the entire agreement, the U.S. agreed that this one point could be deferred for further discussions.[21]

The final and most contentious issue debated at the NAC was how to respond to hostage-taking. This was the subject which had most divided the ministers four days before in London. They recognized that suggesting that NATO would stop the bombing if the Serbs took hostages would provide the Serbs incentive to attack UNPROFOR. They wanted to send the Serbs a strong message that NATO air operations would continue even in the face of hostage-taking, but those nations with troops in Bosnia remained deeply concerned about their safety. Several of them, especially the French and British, argued that the Americans had no standing to tell them what to do (without U.S. troops on the ground). The NAC finally worked out an ambiguous compromise: the resolution would include an intra-alliance understanding that recognized the need for UNPROFOR troops to take risks, but allowed local commanders to suspend air operations if they determined that the safety of their troops was at stake.[22]

In the early hours of July 26, the NAC approved their resolution on defending Gorazde. The NAC would support the rules agreed to at the London Conference and, significantly, they charged their military planners with examining how to extend those rules to the other safe-areas -- like Tuzla, Bihac, and Sarajevo. The U.S. had tried to get this done, but agreed to defer the issue because of heavy British opposition.[23] Although

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[21] Frasure, in a cable to Hunter sent July 24, claimed that since it would be difficult to get the NAC to approve a military decision over Option Three, the NSC advised pushing for this deferral. Additionally, a DC meeting on the morning of the 25th concluded that "in light of French opposition to delegating authority for Option 3... to Janvier, we would agree to defer a NAC decision on the modalities for UN-NATO coordination until the time Option 3 authority was sought." See, respectively, Draft Cable from Frasure to Hunter, EUR files, July 24, 1995; "Summary of Conclusions for Meeting of the NSC Deputies Committee," NSC Memoranda July 24 and 25, 1995.

[22] Ambassador Hunter later noted that, although the NAC did not realize it at the time, the hostage-taking issue was moot. Due to the fall of Srebrenica and Zepa and the withdrawal of UNPROFOR troops from vulnerable areas that had been going on since May 1995. See Hunter interview.

[23] Secretary Christopher told Bosnian Prime Minister Silajdzic this on July 26. See, "Follow-up to Secretary's Call with Silajdzic," Cable, State 179135, July 27, 1995. The "Gorazde Rules" were extended by the NAC on August 1 to the remaining safe-areas of Sarajevo, Tuzla and Bihac. The decision still left unresolved, however, the question of who could authorize Option Three bombing. On August 10, UNPROFOR Force Commander Janvier and NATO Commander Admiral Smith, concluded a Memorandum of Understanding on prosecuting the air campaign which filled in some of the targeting and planning details left unaddressed by the earlier decisions. Among these details was the inclusion of close-air-support for UN personnel theaterwide and making an Option Three decision, vaguely, "subject to political approval." See "August 1 NAC- Texts, Agreed Decisions and IAU on the Safe Areas of Sarajevo, Bihac and Tuzla," Cable, USNATO 3107, August 1, 1995; and "Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

things had seemed touch-and-go for much of the lengthy discussion, some believe that there was actually little danger in leaving the NAC session that night without agreement. In retrospect, Hunter believed that while the long meeting allowed the Allies to vent their resentments, they all recognized that they would have to come to agreement. Otherwise, the West would again be accused of making empty threats.[24]

Finally, the NAC representatives debated how they should present their decisions to the UN. Should they "invite" the UN Secretary General to support the decisions, or should the language in effect demand his compliance? The Americans were determined to remove the UN civilian leaders from the decision-making process and so did not want to invite defiance, but several of the ambassadors feared pushing the UN into a confrontation. In the end, the NAC reached a compromise, whereby its resolution would "stress the importance" of Boutros-Ghali delegating his authority to his military commanders.[25]

NATO Secretary General Claes called Boutros-Ghali shortly after the NAC meeting and sent him a copy of the resolution. But even after the NAC had reached agreement, Boutros-Ghali still seemed reluctant to delegate his authority, particularly on Option Three strikes. Early the morning of July 26, Christopher told Holbrooke and Tom Donilon that in his view, Boutros-Ghali was again "dragging his feet" on delegating the UN authority. Normally, contacts with the UN Secretary General were handled by UN Ambassador Albright. But since she was traveling, Holbrooke and Donilon advised that Christopher take the unusual step of calling Boutros-Ghali himself. The Secretary of State did so, telling the Secretary General that the Administration expected his support.[26] "I told him that the London Conference represented the leading participants in the UN as far as Europe was concerned, and [that] he shouldn't stand in the way of NATO taking action if there were another safe area attacked," Christopher recalled. Boutros-Ghali, having abandoned his threats to confront the Allies, told the Secretary of State that he would give his consent to the decision, but he needed time to work out the details with his UN staff. When Boutros-Ghali had taken no action by noon, Christopher called him again.[27] Boutros-Ghali's wavering was wearing the Secretary of State's patience; Holbrooke later described these two conversations as "hammer calls," while Christopher more diplomatically characterized them as "not unfriendly, but firm." Finally, at 2pm that afternoon, the UN Secretary General finally announced that he would delegate his "key" to General Janvier.[28]

The Croatian Offensive

On July 22, the presidents of Bosnia and Croatia met in Split, Croatia to discuss military cooperation. After a long stalemate with the Serbs, the Bosnians were amidst a

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Between CINCSOUTH and FC UNPF Pursuant to the North Atlantic Council (NAC) Decisions of 25 July 1995 and 1 August 1995 and the Direction of the UN Secretary General," August 10, 1995.

[24] Hunter interview.

[25] For text of NAC decision on "Gorazde rules," see "NATO: Text of Decision Sheet on Bosnia Air," Cable, USNATO 3044, July 26, 1995.

[26] "The Secretary and UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, July 25, 1995, (9:57am)" Cable, State 179742, July 27, 1995.

[27] "The Secretary and UN Secretary General Boutros-Ghali, July 25, 1995, (12:30pm)" Cable, State 179743, July 27, 1995.

[28] "Bosnia: SYG Statement on Air Strike Authority," Cable, USUN 2938, July 26, 1995.

series of reverses on the military front. The Muslim Government's major offensive near Sarajevo, which they had launched in June, had gained no ground. They had lost the Srebrenica enclave, and Zepa's fall would come only in a matter of days (it fell on July 25). Now the enclave of Bihac in northwest Bosnia was under assault from several fronts. There, the Fifth Corps of the Bosnian Army was besieged from all sides -- by the Bosnian Serb forces, the Muslim army of separatist Fikret Abdic, and now the Croatian Serb Army, operating out of the neighboring Krajina territory. Although the London conference had discussed the safety of Bihac, the volatility of the situation prevented the United States from gaining a firm commitment to its defense.[29]

The United States had supported cooperation among Bosnia's Muslims and Croats, helping to negotiate the "Federation Agreement" in March 1994. Although criticized by some observers as a "shotgun wedding" amounting to "nothing more than a glorified cease-fire," the U.S. believed that the Muslim-Croat Federation was the only chance for the Muslims in Bosnia to develop the resources to balance Serb power.[30] The Croatian Government wielded a strong influence on the Bosnian Croats, and the improvement of relations between Bosnian President Izetbegovic and Croatian President Tudjman could only help ties within the Federation. But the Americans also knew that the July 22 meeting meant more than strengthening diplomatic ties. The Croatians had told the U.S. Ambassador, Peter Galbraith, that they were planning on sending their forces into Bosnia in order to relieve pressure on the Bihac enclave.[31] This meeting between the two presidents that day in Split ratified the agreement on military cooperation that would invite the Croatians to reenter the war.

Now Croatia was willing to come to the defense of Bihac. The fall of the enclave would connect Serb territories in Croatia and Bosnia, strengthening the Krajina Serb position and potentially leading to the region's unification with Bosnian Serb territory. Croatia could not allow the Krajina territory, which accounted for more than 20 percent of its land and was key to its economy, to remain in Serb hands much longer. President Tudjman was convinced that he would have to get it back, one way or another. But first, he had to ensure that the Serb rebels did not strengthen their position by capturing Bihac.

Ambassador Galbraith was at the meeting in Split as part of a delegation of foreign emissaries.[32] He reported back to Washington on July 23 on the agreements. That same day, Bosnian Foreign Minister Mohamed Sacirbey called Under Secretary Tarnoff to discuss the military pact. The Croatians would attack Serb positions in the Livno River

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[29] See Silber and Little, pp353-357.

[30] One of the more astute critics is the journalist Misha Glenny. See The Fall of Yugoslavia (Penguin, 1993) p247.

[31] Galbraith interview, August 2, 1996; Galbraith Diplomatic Diary, pp19-21. On July 20, Croatian Foreign Minister Granic sent a letter to the UN Security Council about the situation in Bihac, warning that if "the status of Bihac as a safe-area becomes threatened, the Republic of Croatia may be compelled to undertake necessary measures to secure its status and security." See "Letter from Croatian Foreign Minister Granic on Bihac," Cable, USUN 2867, July 21, 1995. Also on July 21, Galbraith had met with Tudjman, Foreign Minister Granic and Defense Minister Susak on the island of Brioni. While there, the Croatians informed Galbraith that they intended to intervene to save Bihac. Galbraith cabled this information to Washington on July 22. See "Tudjman Decides for Direct Military Intervention To Save Bihac, Says Susak," Cable, Zagreb 2758, July 22, 1995.

[32] Galbraith interview; August 6, 1996. At the London meeting, Croatian envoy Miomir Zuzul had asked Frasure and his deputy, Chris Hill to attend the Split meeting. Frasure and Hill declined, suggesting that Galbraith should attend in their absence. See Hill comment, Dayton History Seminar.

valley, south of Bihac, in an effort to draw the Bosnian Serb forces away from the enclave. Tarnoff welcomed Bosnian-Croat cooperation in defense of Bihac, but told Sacirbey that the U.S. was concerned "how Croatian troops might be used apart from Bihac." The U.S. believed that Tudjman might use the defense of Bihac as an opening to attack the Krajina. If he did so, Washington worried, Serbia may be forced to respond, sparking a wider Serb-Croat war.[33]

In Washington, the interagency DC met on July 24 to discuss how to respond to the Bosnian-Croat agreement. The United States was then hoping to convince its Allies to expand the London decision on Gorazde to the other safe areas, including Bihac, but believed an agreement would take some time to achieve. The Deputies decided that since the international community was not willing to take immediate strong action to protect Bihac, the United States could not justifiably dissuade the Croatians from doing so. However, they also agreed that Croatia should be warned against taking this opportunity to launch an attack against the Krajina.[34] U.S. intelligence estimated that in that event, the Croatians would likely face tough resistance from the Krajina Serbs. While the Croats might ultimately win, it was thought that the conflict would be protracted and costly.[35] Galbraith was instructed to urge restraint with the Croatians, asking them to limit any military action with Bihac. When the ambassador delivered this message on July 25, the Croatians agreed, reassuring him that they had no intention of expanding their operations into the Krajina.[36]

As the U.S. expected, on July 25 Croatian forces launched an offensive into the Livno Valley in an effort to save Bihac. In the two years since Croatia had been largely removed from the war, its military had been rebuilt and modernized, both technologically and strategically. All of this was accomplished in the face of the international arms embargo on the region, which Croatia easily skirted.[37] Part of Croatia's rearming included the now notorious flow of weapons from Iran into Bosnia, of which U.S. intelligence reported that Croatia skimmed nearly 30%. Despite this blatant violation of

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[33] "Under Secretary Tarnoff's Conversation with Bosnian FM Sacirbey," Cable (draft), July 23, 1995.

[34] See "Summary of Conclusions of Deputies Committee Meeting, July 24, 1995," NSC memorandum, July 27, 1995. Moreover, the July 17 draft NSC endgame paper pointed out that the US should consider using economic carrots to deter Tudjman from attacking the Krajina in the near term. In a July 28 phone call with Russian President Boris Yeltsin, President Clinton said that both he and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl had cautioned the Croatians "to exercise restraint and avoid a wider war." Clinton urged Yeltsin to tell the Serbs the same in an effort to prevent a Croat-Serb conflict. See "President's Discussion with Yeltsin on Bosnia, Chechnya, July 28, 1995 " NSC memorandum, July 31, 1995.

[35] Vershbow interview, September 23, 1996; Kerrick interview, July 15, 1996; Perry interview with BBC, January 18, 1996.

[36] See, respectively, "Urging Croatian Restraint in Bihac," Cable, State 177066, July 25, 1995; and "Croatia Welcomes US Demarche," Cable, Zagreb 2785, July 25, 1995; and Galbraith Diplomatic Diary, p20.

[37] The US had some knowledge of Croatia's rearming, although it remains unclear whether the US actively helped. See, for example, Cable, Zagreb 2758 for reports of artillery shipments from Turkey for Croatia. Also, former US military personnel, working as independent contractors, were hired by the Croatian government to help reformulate their military strategy. The US knew of these discussions, and often used these contractors to pass back-channel messages to the Croatian government. This was done, for example, in late August 1995 to send the message of Washington's concerns about continued sabre-rattling by the Croats, and the danger that this may escalate the war. See "MPRI Back to Zagreb," Memorandum to Holbrooke from Chris Hoh (EUR/SCE), August 25, 1995; and Roger Cohen, "US Cooling Ties to Croatia after Winking at its Buildup," *New York Times*, October 28, 1995.

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the UN arms embargo, U.S. officials took a "don't ask, don't tell" position toward Croatia's rearming -- they understood that restoring a military balance of power among the three Balkan parties may help bring a settlement.[38] From the moment Croat forces entered the Livno, the rearming effort proved successful. Croatia easily overran the Serb forces, sending an estimated 8,000 Serb troops and civilians fleeing.[39]

Soon after Croatia began its offensive, Tudjman's eyes turned to the prize, Knin. The small town in the middle of Krajina became a trigger for the disintegration of Yugoslavia beginning in 1991, when local Serbs declared the region autonomous from Croatia. On July 29, Croatian forces mobilized around Krajina and began to shell Knin. Tudjman threatened to retake all of Krajina if the Bosnian Serbs did not end their siege of Bihac. A peace negotiation game followed, but it appeared clear that Tudjman had no intention of coming to any deal with the Serbs -- he wanted Krajina back.[40]

On August 4, Croatian troops attacked Krajina.[41] The State Department again instructed Galbraith to advise Tudjman against attacking Krajina, a message which the Croat President disregarded rather cavalierly.[42] In a matter of days, the military strike aptly titled "Operation Storm" had run Serb troops and civilians out of Krajina, sending a stream of refugees out of the area and toward Serbia. The Krajina Serbs did not fight and, significantly, Milosevic's response to the attack was conspicuously muted. On August 6, a victorious Tudjman raised the Croatian flag over Knin. For the first time in the four-year Balkan conflict, Serbs were the victims of a massive military defeat.[43]

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[38] For details of US intelligence on Croat rearming, see INR's "Morning Summary" for Secretary Christopher, September 24, 1995; and Galbraith interview, October 2, 1996.

[39] See, respectively, "Updates on Livno Valley Bihac," Cable, Zagreb 2805, July 25, 1995; and "Croat Operation Against 'RSK' -- Probable, But Only Several Days From Now," Cable, Zagreb 2807, July 26, 1995.

[40] Peace negotiations were started by Yasusi Akashi, the UN Civilian Representative for the Balkans. Akashi formulated a six-point plan for peace, which Tudjman rejected on July 31. According to Galbraith, Tudjman never really intended to reach a settlement, but rather went through the motions to satisfy the international community. See Galbraith interview; "Six Points from July 30 Negotiations in Knin," Cable, Zagreb 2867, July 31, 1995; "text of SRSG Akashi's Clarification on the Six-Point Plan," Cable, Zagreb 2872, July 31, 1995; "President Tudjman Responds to Akashi on the Six Points From Knin Negotiations," Cable, Zagreb 2881, July 31, 1991; and Galbraith Diplomatic Diary, pp23-32.

[41] In a letter to Clinton, Tudjman cites the reasons for the attack as: the defense of Bihac; the failure of the Krajina Serbs to accept peaceful reintegration into Croatia; the inability of Croatian refugees to return to their homes; military provocation's by Krajina Serbs; and the inability of the Croatian economy to develop normally under the present circumstances. See "Tudjman Letter to Clinton," Cable, Zagreb 2970, August 4, 1995; "Croatia Informs USG of Decision to Begin War, Provides Unconvincing Justification," Cable, Zagreb 2969, August 4, 1995.

[42] Tudjman did admit to Galbraith that the US had not provided Croatia with a "green light." See Galbraith interview, August 2, 1996; Galbraith Diplomatic Diary, pp28-29; Silber and Little, p356. In a July 31 meeting in Washington, Leon Fuerth, Vice President Gore's National Security Advisor, similarly counseled for Croat restraint with Miomir Zuzul, Tudjman's Special Envoy to the Federation. See Vershbow interview, September 26, 1996.

[43] See State Department Operations Center Spot Reports, "Military Action in Croatia," August 4, 1995, 1600 EDT; August 5, 1995, 1600 EDT; August 7, 1995, 1300 EDT. For overview of Croat offensive, see

[redacted] and Galbraith Diplomatic Diary, pp33-37.

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[redacted]

The American Diplomatic Initiative

Despite American pleas for restraint, the successful Croatian offensive changed the situation dramatically in Bosnia. "In hindsight, one can see that there were some useful results accomplished by these offensives in the Krajina," Christopher recalled, "but I think the record would show that we were not supportive [of the Croats] during that period."[44] The Bosnian Muslims had appeared only weeks from defeat in July, when Bihac was under assault, Gorazde was vulnerable, and UNPROFOR withdrawal seemed imminent.[45] Then, the London Conference had placed Gorazde off limits for the moment, and the Croatian victory had helped liberate Bihac, resupplying its civilians and its Bosnian defenders. Now the Croatian military appeared ready to advance with its Federation Allies deeper into western Bosnia.[46] Diplomatically, the Croat offensive created the ideal opportunity for the Administration to push forth its "endgame" process.[47] As Perry explained later: "It must have been evidently clear to the [Serbs] -- with the threat of bombing being real now and with the loss to the Croats on the ground -- that they had already passed their high-water mark and were better off by making peace. So it seemed to me it was an opportunity to go in with a diplomatic initiative."[48]

Importantly, Milosevic had stood by as the Croatian Army rolled into Knin, producing more than 100,000 Serb refugees. While his forces had mobilized near Eastern Slavonia, the remaining Serb-held territory in Croatia, Milosevic's inaction signaled that he did not wish to expand the war further.[49] Even before the Croatian offensive, Milosevic seemed to have relaxed his position, allowing his negotiations with EU envoy Carl Bildt to bear fruit. The 46-year-old Bildt, formerly Sweden's youngest Prime Minister, had been negotiating with Balkan leaders (including the Bosnian Serbs)

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[44] Christopher interview, October 22, 1996.

[45] In mid-July, things looked so dire for UNPROFOR that Holbrooke bluntly told Christopher that "UNPROFOR is dead," and that the US should begin planning for a "leaner, meaner" UNPROFOR II. See "The Death of UNPROFOR, Not the Death of Bosnia," Memorandum to Christopher from Holbrooke, July 19, 1995.

[46] On August 6, Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Granic told Galbraith that Croatia and Bosnia would cooperate militarily in Bosnia, as Croatia would "supplement" Bosnian troops. He stated that this proposed military follow-through in Bosnia could create conditions for a peace agreement -- "the new realities in Bosnia could mean an end to the war by the fall." See "Foreign Minister Says GOC and GOBH Cooperation Will End the Bosnian War by Fall," Cable, Zagreb 2989, August 6, 1995.

[47] Bass interview. Only a few weeks prior, internal State Department discussions focused on preparing for a situation in which diplomatic efforts would implode. Presciently, an internal memorandum read, "in the short run, our only possibility may be to mark time on the diplomacy until the battlefield situation produces a new reality." By early August, that new reality was at hand. See "Bosnia – Diplomacy in Crisis," State Department memorandum, EUR/SCE (Frasure electronic files), no date.

[48] Perry interview with BBC, January 16, 1996.

[49] The most Milosevic did in reaction to the Krajina offensive was to condemn the attack publicly and urge the international community to stop the fighting; see Cable, Belgrade 3808, August 5, 1995. As the Livno offensive commenced, the US instructed its Belgrade Charge Rudolph Perina to inform Milosevic that the US had urged caution with the Croats, and that he should not let tensions over Bihac escalate into a wider conflict. See "Urging Serbs Restraint in Bihac and ICFY Caution in Serbia," Cable, State 181865, July 29, 1995.

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throughout the summer.[50] By modifying the language of the Frasure-Milosevic package, Bildt had managed to secure Milosevic's agreement to a complicated, if somewhat Byzantine, agreement that traded recognition of Bosnia for partial sanctions relief. But time was of the essence. As the U.S. Embassy in Belgrade cabled to Washington, the Serb setbacks could evolve into a more realistic attitude toward negotiations, but could "also develop into a martyr complex and resentment of the outside world that will lead to thousands of more victims before the conflict ends." If anything, it would be vital for the U.S. to move as quickly as possible "to show the Serbs the right direction to take."[51]

Bildt's proposal had received Milosevic's approval, but had run aground with the Sarajevo government. For its part, the Clinton Administration was not willing to settle for the Bildt package. Milosevic's position hadn't changed that much since his negotiations with Frasure -- and Bildt had essentially accepted what Frasure would not.[52] Moreover, too much had been lost in Srebrenica for the U.S. Government to conclude a deal with Milosevic that would not directly bring peace. "We no longer have the luxury of simply granting Milosevic sanctions relief and hoping that, over time, he will bring what influence he has to bear on the Bosnian Serbs," Steinberg advised Christopher during this time. Any sanctions relief for Milosevic must include tangible improvements in Bosnian Serb behavior.[53]

On August 2, Bildt came to Washington seeking the Administration's support for his deal with Milosevic. The Foreign Policy Team (minus Secretary Christopher, who was then in Southeast Asia) met the day before in the White House to consider how to respond to the envoy's overtures. The mood in the room was strongly against concluding such an agreement; Secretary Perry argued that Bildt's efforts were a "sideshow" and that the U.S. should "squeeze off this discussion with minimum damage." The Principals felt that Bildt's plan allowed too much flexibility for Milosevic. There was too much in it for him on sanctions relief with little in return from the Serb leader.[54]

One of the few voices in support of Bildt came somewhat unexpectedly from Assistant Secretary of State Holbrooke. Holbrooke had been one of the most outspoken critics of "muddle through" within the Administration, yet he now argued that at this point the U.S. must back the Bildt agreement in order to prevent a "crack-up" with its Allies. He felt that since the Bildt plan would fail without the Bosnian Government's agreement (which he believed was unlikely), the U.S. should support it for "tactical reasons" to make the Europeans happy. Holbrooke was concerned that if the U.S. cut Bildt off at the knees, Chirac and Major would use it as a pretext to pull out of Bosnia all

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[50] For details of Bildt's negotiations that summer, see "Bildt's July 6 Meeting with B-H leadership," Cable, Sarajevo 360, July 7, 1995; "ICFY Chairman Bildt's July 7 Meeting with Milosevic," Cable, Belgrade 6403, July 8, 1995; "Message for the Secretary from Carl Bildt," Cable, Belgrade 3432, July 15, 1995; "Negotiating With Milosevic and Each Other: Bildt, Stoltenberg and Akashi Meeting," Cable, Belgrade 3434, July 15, 1995; "Message From ICFY Negotiator Carl Bildt," Cable, Belgrade 3435, July 16, 1995; "Bildt Close to Agreement with Milosevic on Bosnian Recognition," Cable, Belgrade 3525, July 19, 1995; "Bildt Report on July 19 Meeting with Milosevic," Cable, Belgrade 6547, July 20, 1995; and Frasure's readout of Bildt's proposal, "Background Paper: Diplomatic Strategy," July 14, 1995, EUR computer files.

[51] See "Pointing the Serbs in the Right Direction," Cable, Belgrade 3837, August 7, 1995.

[52] Chris Hill interview with author (notes), December 19, 1996.

[53] Steinberg interview.

[54] Vershbow interview, September 26, 1996.

together. "We should send Bildt back to Belgrade," Holbrooke said, "so the Europeans can't blame" the U.S. for scuttling the agreement.[55]

While the Principals weren't too interested in accommodating Bildt, they took seriously Holbrooke's point about not antagonizing U.S. Allies. Accordingly, they didn't reject Bildt's overtures out of hand, but rather informed him that they would support his initiative only if certain conditions were met. These new conditions became known as the "Bildt Plus" plan. For example, the American reply -- contained in an August 4 letter from Acting Secretary of State Tarnoff to Bildt -- explained that given events since Frasure's efforts that spring, there needed to be sharper focus "on broadening the [Frasure] package to include tangible improvement in Bosnian Serb behavior." Also, the U.S. demanded that 1) Bosnia-Serbia mutual recognition be approved in both Belgrade and Sarajevo; 2) specific commitments by Milosevic on sealing Serbia's border with Bosnia; 3) a clear path to reimposition of sanctions on Serbia (which would be lifted according to Bildt's plan); 4) a country-wide cease-fire and commitment by the Bosnian Serbs to end all offensive operations; and 5) agreement to resume comprehensive negotiations on the basis of the 1994 Contact Group plan. U.S. officials didn't believe that Bildt would ever be able to get the Serbs to agree to these positions, but by structuring their response in this way, they assured that the perpetrators of Bildt's failure would be in the Balkans, not Washington.[56]

While Bildt's plan seemed doomed, the U.S. was instead working on its own strategy for a comprehensive settlement, prompted by Lake's July 17 request for "endgame" strategy papers. This work had taken on a new sense of urgency, as Congress had recently approved the Dole-Lieberman bill to lift the arms embargo unilaterally. Without any clear diplomatic direction, such a move would almost certainly prompt the withdrawal of UNPROFOR. Clinton promised to veto the measure, but it appeared that opponents in Congress could muster the votes to override. Congress had adjourned for the summer and planned to take the matter up in September. The Administration figured that along with the Croatian offensive, the congressional recess had created a window through which a diplomatic initiative could be sprung.[57]

As each agency worked on its own version of an "endgame" paper, an informal inter-agency group emerged to refine the differences between the four proposals, so that in the end the President would be presented with distinct options, not just finely nuanced differences. The inter-agency talks began in late July, as Berger and Vershbow at the NSC worked with Steinberg, Tarnoff, and Frasure from State, and Walter Slocombe and Joe Kruzel from the Pentagon.[58] Not only did such collaboration aim to ensure that each

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[55] Vershbow interview, July 23, 1996.

[56] The "Bildt Plus" plan was presented in a paper entitled "US Position: Bildt Plus," NSC memorandum, August 2, 1995. For US response to Bildt, see "Letter from Acting Secretary Tarnoff to EU Negotiator Carl Bildt," Cable, State 185716, August 4, 1995. See also Vershbow interview, September 26, 1996; Holbrooke interview with the author (notes), October 17, 1996.

[57] Background on Dole-Lieberman legislation and its impact on policymaking from Elaine Sciolino, "In Washington, Defiant Senators Vote to Override Bosnian Arms Ban," *New York Times*, July 27, 1995; and Lippmann and Devroy. According to Woodward (pp264-65), Dole had told Secretary Christopher that the embargo vote was intended to provide the Administration some leverage to deal with the Europeans -- Administration officials could now claim that since their hands were being tied by Congress, a bold diplomatic action was necessary. See also Wendy Sherman interview, December 11, 1996.

[58] Slocombe was Under Secretary of Defense for Policy; Kruzel the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for European and NATO Affairs.

paper outlined different approaches, but to produce a three-page cover note to the package that summarized each paper and highlighted key differences. The product of this work was the package of "endgame" papers -- representing the views of State, USUN, DoD and the Joint Chiefs, and the NSC -- which Lake submitted to the President on August 5.[59] These papers were to be discussed by the President and his top advisors at a Foreign Policy Group meeting scheduled for August 7.

The four agencies' papers concluded that the U.S. should make a determined effort to pursue a diplomatic initiative in the coming weeks. On the future of UNPROFOR, all agencies agreed that, as had become a mantra that summer, "muddling through" was no longer an option. If a settlement could not be reached or if UNPROFOR's credibility continued to stagger, the U.S. should fulfill its commitment to help it withdraw, lift the arms embargo and move to a "post-withdrawal" strategy (providing, for example, arms, training and economic assistance to the Bosnians with NATO air support).[60]

Although all the agencies agreed upon the need for a new diplomatic initiative, the major point of divergence hinged on what kind of Bosnian state any negotiation should seek. This was primarily a political question, although it obviously had implications on the parameters of the military support that the U.S. would need to provide for implementation. State and Defense argued for a limited commitment: the U.S. should help the Bosnians consolidate the territory they had, but feared the costs of supporting Bosnian efforts to recover lost territory. Both agencies worried that if the United States were to go that route, the U.S. would ruffle relations with its Allies and Russia, and at worst, become militarily entangled into the Bosnian conflict. The NSC and Albright papers, on the other hand, supported the view that an initiative should work to preserve Bosnia along lines broadly consistent with the Contact Group Plan -- such as a single state with roughly 51-49 percent territorial breakdown in favor of the Muslims. "Anything less," Lake wrote to the President, "would be tantamount to ratifying aggression and would, in any case, be rejected by Sarajevo."[61] Such support could be provided by creating an "arm and train" initiative along with NATO airstrikes against Bosnian Serb positions.

The conceptual gulf between the NSC/Albright position and the State/Defense were the risks the U.S. should run to bring a lasting peace to Bosnia. Albright felt that the stakes were so high, the U.S. had no choice but to accept considerable risk. Her view, which she had forcefully articulated back in June, was that the continued failure to end the conflict in Bosnia was undermining the Clinton Administration's leadership, both at home and abroad. If the President could not bring a solution to Bosnia, then his political opponents would seize on the issue as evidence of his inability to guide the most powerful nation on earth. The issue had become bigger than America's more limited strategic interests in Bosnia -- or even broader interests in Europe. As Albright argued in her memorandum, the West's approach toward Bosnia has "caused serious erosion of the credibility of the NATO alliance and the United Nations. Worse, our continued

[59] Endgame papers were contained in thirty-one page package sent to President on August 5, 1995. See cover note from Anthony Lake to the President, "Balkan Strategy: Options for Discussion at Foreign Policy Group Meeting, August 7, 1995," August 5, 1995.
[60] Overview of papers from Lake cover note, August 5, 1995.
[61] Lake cover note, August 5, 1995.

reluctance to lead an effort to resolve a military crisis in the heart of Europe has placed at risk our leadership of the post-Cold War world."

Moreover, on the eve of the 1996 presidential election season, Bosnia threatened to engulf all other areas of the Clinton Administration's foreign policy. "We should recognize that," Albright continued, "notwithstanding our successes in trade, Russia, and the Middle East and despite general agreement regarding Bosnia's complexity -- our Administration's stewardship of foreign policy will be measured -- fairly or unfairly -- by our response to this issue. That is why we must take the lead in devising a diplomatic and military plan to achieve a durable peace. If we agree that American troops will be in Bosnia sooner or later, why not do it on our terms and our timetable?"[62]

In contrast, while both State and Defense recognized the possibility that a renewed diplomatic initiative could reinvigorate U.S. leadership abroad, their papers were less ambitious. Their proposals seemed driven by the fear that the U.S. would become entangled in the conflict. Consistent with the line Frasure had pushed in late June, the State Department's main objective was to avoid carrying the U.S. over the wrong part of "the waterfall." As the State Department memorandum explained, the Administration should pursue a "limited approach" -- working to end the conflict, yet doing so without risking its fundamental strategic and political interests in the process. The Pentagon plan concurred, explaining that "the Administration's central problem is to find a policy that will meet American goals and get the support of the American public, not that of the Bosnians." The Defense Department likewise agreed that the top priority was to avoid a sustained military presence in Bosnia. DoD planners saw too many echoes of Vietnam in the arm-and-train and airstrike proposals -- they feared that the Bosnians would come to expect U.S. support to win back lost territory. This was too close to a quagmire scenario for Pentagon policy-makers. The U.S. would have to make it clear to the Bosnians that it would not back a war of reconquest.[63]

While these talks proceeded, Christopher was away from Washington on August 5, meeting with the Vietnamese in Hanoi to establish American ties for the first time in twenty years.[64] The August 5 NSC decision memo had been faxed to Christopher in Hanoi, and he approved it. Nevertheless, from the perspective of several officials in Washington, the Secretary feared that the Lake plan might promise more than the United States could deliver.[65] The American public was wary of intervening in Bosnia, and its European Allies would not support taking a strong role in aiding offensive operations in the Balkans. While Christopher supported a new initiative and believed that the Administration should get the Bosnia issue behind it, he urged the President that this should not be done by shifting attention from its other accomplishments in foreign policy, such as in Asia or Latin America. Moreover, the Secretary was uneasy with the NSC's willingness to strong-arm the Bosnians to accept an agreement or to modify the Contact Group map. The parties themselves should negotiate the map, Christopher felt, rather

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[62] "Memorandum for the National Security Advisor," from Albright, August 3, 1995.

[63] See, respectively, "Bosnia Endgame Strategy: What Kind of Bosnian State?," OSD/JCS memorandum, August 2, 1995; and "Endgame Strategy: A Sustainable Defense of a Viable Bosnia after UNPROFOR Withdrawal," State Department memorandum, no date.

[64] According to State Department Operations Center Telephone Logs (Shift III, August 5, 1995, 2325EDT), Christopher called the President. They discussed the historic events in Vietnam; according to Christopher, Bosnia did not even come up.

[65] Vershbow interview, July 26, 1996; Bass interview.

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than U.S. diplomats proposing new solutions that might be perceived as selling-out the Bosnians. The State Department's more modest goals would "not only lessen our exposure, but are more likely to enjoy the support of others," the Secretary argued.[66]

On August 7, President Clinton met with the Foreign Policy Team -- Lake, Albright, Perry, Shalikashvili, and Peter Tarnoff (in the place of the traveling Christopher) in the Cabinet Room to discuss the endgame strategy papers.[67] Lake presented the options proposed in the four endgame papers. Should the U.S. risk the commitment advocated by the NSC and Albright, or should it hedge its bets and pursue the more limited objectives proposed by State and Defense? The President's frustration with Bosnia, his determination to take control of the issue, led him to his decision. "We should bust our ass to get a settlement within the next few days," he apparently said. "We've got to exhaust every alternative, roll every dice, take risks."[68] The London Conference, Croatian offensive and congressional recess had created a window of opportunity that might soon close. The President believed the United States now had the credibility to win a settlement, if they were willing to push hard enough. Clinton decided that the mission would encompass the bold goals set forth in the NSC and Albright papers -- the U.S. would commit itself to a unified Bosnia, and if that were not attainable at the negotiating table, it would be willing to assist the Bosnians in winning their share on the battlefield.[69]

After deciding on the broader aim of the mission, the talks turned to its specific form. Both the NSC and State endgame papers had detailed the outline of a potential diplomatic mission. The NSC proposal advocated launching the initiative by visiting with key European Allies, telling them that the Americans were willing to work on a modified Contact Group plan and to open talks with Pale if necessary. The idea was to get the Allies on board first so that the plan could be presented to the parties with a unified front.[70] But the paper was vague on how to approach the Balkan leaders, suggesting only that the United States should broaden negotiations with Milosevic -- either with Bildt or with an American mission -- to encourage him to bring his Pale clients to the negotiating table; should begin a bilateral dialogue with the Bosnians, pressing them to be more flexible; and should send a secret envoy to open talks with Pale.

The State paper presented a modified version of the earlier Steinberg/Frasure proposal to reach a three-party conference by combining the Milosevic track with Sarajevo-Pale talks and broadening the negotiations to include Croatia. The goal would be to offer Milosevic the prospect of sanctions suspension once progress was made towards a negotiated settlement within Bosnia. After this, talks would begin between

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[66] Although Christopher and the President did not discuss Bosnia, talking points for Christopher's phone call were prepared by Steinberg. See "Talking Points for the Secretary's Conversation with the President on ex-Yugoslavia," no date, Steinberg S/P files. In an August 13 meeting, Christopher told the President that "While we urgently need to get Bosnia behind us, we must not neglect the main themes [or] accomplishments of your foreign policy." See Christopher hand-written notes for meeting with the President, August 13, 1995, Secretary's August 1995 out-box files/Bosnia. In his October 22 interview, Christopher recalls supporting the NSC plan almost without reservation; however, some NSC officials remember differently.

[67] For details, see Tarnoff interview.

[68] Woodward, pp265-66.

[69] The President had been receiving regular briefings from Lake since July 17, leading one official to observe that the August 7 meeting was "pre-cooked" toward the NSC approach. See Bass interview.

[70] Bass interview.

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Izetbegovic and Milosevic on principles for a Bosnian settlement that would govern talks between Sarajevo and Pale. The initiative would then be broadened to include Croatia as well.

The Foreign Policy Team finally decided to combine elements from both papers in developing both the strategic and logistic form of the mission. The initiative would begin, as the NSC had suggested, with an American team traveling to at least London, Bonn and Paris. But would the purpose of the mission be to seek the Allies' views on the American proposals, or would it simply be to inform them of decisions the U.S. had already made? The Principals debated the issue at length, and in the end, the President selected the latter.[71] This would not be a mission, as had happened with Secretary Christopher in the May 1993, where the U.S. would allow its Allies to reject its proposals. A U.S. delegation would instead tell the Allies what actions the President had decided to take, and then request their support.

Since Lake was considered the godfather of this initiative, it was agreed (apparently, at Albright's suggestion) that he should be the one to carry it to Europe.[72] He would be accompanied by an inter-agency team, representing the Bosnia expertise of the entire Administration.[73] After the visit to Europe, the American mission would continue on to the region, conducting "shuttle diplomacy" between the three Balkan capitals. A high-level American delegation would talk directly with the parties, pursuing a comprehensive settlement for the entire region, not just in Bosnia. Although the Principals were willing to relax the strict U.S. policy against talking with Pale, they decided that there was no need to rush things. The shuttle team would meet with the three Balkan presidents on its first mission, but it had no immediate plans to meet with the Bosnian Serb leaders.

The Team also agreed that it would not be practical for Lake to spend his time conducting the potentially protracted shuttle negotiations that would hopefully follow his European trip. He would bow out after briefing our partners in Europe, and Assistant Secretary of State Holbrooke would lead the team to negotiate in the Balkans.

The choice of Holbrooke to lead the mission raised some eyebrows among the President's senior advisors. As the Assistant Secretary of State for Europe, Holbrooke seemed to be the logical choice. Yet, he had the reputation for being something of a maverick within the Administration, and both Lake and Albright expressed some reservations about his taking over the American initiative. Holbrooke had not hidden his disdain with the direction of the Administration's Bosnia policy, nor was it a secret that he wished to return to the private sector in New York City, where his family lived.[74] Newly married, Holbrooke had spent the latter part of July and early August -- a time of

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[71] Steinberg interview; Bass interview.

[72] Vershbow interview; Bass interview; Albright interview; Tarnoff interview.

[73] Christopher recalls calling Lake while returning to the US from Asia. "I talked to him about the basic thrust of the [diplomatic mission's] instructions and urged him to take Peter Tarnoff with him, which he was very glad to do." They also discussed the substance of the trip, as well as the decision to have Holbrooke lead the Balkan shuttles. Christopher interview, October 22, 1996. Note: a record of this call will not be found in State Department Operations Center Telephone logs; it was placed directly from Honolulu.

[74] Indeed, in a widely quoted statement in the March/April 1995 issue of the influential journal *Foreign Affairs*, Holbrooke had declared that Bosnia represented "the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930's." See *Foreign Affairs* 74, p40.

intense political decision -- on a long-scheduled vacation. Holbrooke had opted out of most of the policy debates on Bosnia that summer (deferring to Frasure), believing that it was mostly wheel-spinning. To him, it was one thing to create tough policies on paper, but quite another to implement them. Holbrooke still doubted whether the Administration had the will to implement the tough choices. Lake was concerned whether or not Holbrooke's "head was in the game." He briefly considered giving the lead to Tarnoff, Frasure, or even Charles Redman, the former Balkan negotiator who had replaced Holbrooke as the American ambassador to Germany. Christopher had told the President that he had confidence in Holbrooke and believed that his aggressive Assistant Secretary would be well-suited for dealing with the equally contentious and stubborn Balkan leaders. In the end, Lake agreed. The President approved Holbrooke as chief negotiator for the initiative.[75]

The meeting adjourned, and that afternoon the President called his three key Allies -- Chirac, Major, and Kohl -- to inform them of his decision and to tell them that Lake and Tarnoff would be coming. The President did not discuss specifics of Lake's presentation, but all three leaders expressed enthusiasm for the Lake visit.[76]

Over the course of the next day, August 8, Vershbow and his staff worked with other officials, including Steinberg and Frasure, to draft the talking points for Lake's effort. The points were carefully crafted, as they were intended to be used as a "script" to be read rather than reminders to be referred to.[77] During these drafting sessions, the four endgame papers evolved into a single U.S. strategy for Lake's mission. The talking points could indeed be read as the final strategic product of the "blue-sky" thinking Lake had asked for two months ago.

Clinton met with his Foreign Policy Team that evening, where he personally went over the talking points, focusing in particular on the proposed "carrots and sticks" to be used in gaining bargaining leverage.[78] Addressing the absolute worst-case scenario -- that the U.S. initiative failed and both Bosnians and Serbs were to blame, thus undermining the "carrot and stick" approach -- the President decided that the U.S. couldn't force UNPROFOR withdrawal on its Allies. "I don't think we would have a strong enough rationale to shoot [UNPROFOR] down." the President said. Yet, if the Allies refused to make UNPROFOR more robust, the U.S. would withdraw support. "We will shut it [UNPROFOR] down in the blink of an eye if it isn't tough enough," the President declared.

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[75] While away, Holbrooke had deferred most of his duties on Bosnia to his deputy Bob Frasure. Before leaving on vacation, the Assistant Secretary had told Tarnoff that if he was not appointed as the chief negotiator, he would resign from the Administration. Holbrooke felt that he had been brought back from Germany in 1994 to broker a peace in Bosnia, but that the Administration had not given him a chance. See Holbrooke interview with author, September 19, 1996 (notes); Vershbow interview; Bass interview (author's notes); Tarnoff interview; Christopher interview; Albright interview.

[76] See "Memorandum of Telephone Conversation Between the President and British Prime Minister Major; French President Jacques Chirac; and German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, August 7, 1995," NSC Memoranda (3 separate telcons), August 8, 1995. Christopher also cabled his counterparts in Europe to inform them of the mission, see "Secretary's Letter to Counterparts, RE: Lake Trip," Cable, State 190102, August 10, 1995.

[77] Bass interview.

[78] Woodward, p266; "Talking Points on Bosnia for Consultations with Allies," Draft version, August 8, 1995.

[redacted]

On territorial issues, Perry and Shalikashvili stressed that Gorazde was indefensible and the Bosnians should be pressed to trade it for other areas -- thus making Bosnian territory more militarily defensible. Lake replied that the Bosnians "have a right to Gorazde," but not at the cost of destroying the rest of the plan. They agreed to "punt" the Gorazde issue for the time being. Moreover, the President decided that if diplomacy failed, any U.S. military commitment to the Bosnians would be conditional; acquiescing to the Pentagon's concerns, the U.S. would not support Bosnian efforts to regain territory (but would help the Bosnians defend the territory they had).[79]

The Foreign Policy Team met one final time at 7:40am August 9, with the Lake delegation scheduled to depart at 10am. Although the press had gotten wind of the upcoming mission, the Administration had been careful not to raise expectations too high. All that was known was that the Americans were presenting "ideas" to their Allies; as far as the press knew, they did not have a formal plan, nor a new map. The details of Lake's "script" were likewise kept strictly confidential. The Administration did not want the press claiming that the Americans had abandoned the Contact Group plan and were betraying their Bosnian partners in the process.

The nine-page "script" Lake would use began with the broad themes under which the U.S. approached the crisis.[80] U.S. policy, the points read, "is still guided by several enduring principles and interests: maintaining our relationships with Allies and credibility of NATO; avoiding conflict with Russia that could undermine reform and international cooperation; and preventing the spread of the Bosnian conflict into a wider Balkan war." The points recognized that Croatia's recent action, although "not endorsed by any of us," created a unique strategic opportunity by mitigating Bosnian Serb strengths and reducing their territorial holdings. Lake would tell the Allies that this opening provided a chance to pursue a bold initiative: "We don't have the time to think in terms of partial solutions or muddling through. We should think boldly and make an all-out effort to reach a settlement."

The talking points then outlined the terms for a settlement in Bosnia. In the days following the August 7 meeting, these terms had been focused into seven points: 1) The settlement would be comprehensive, leading to lasting peace within Bosnia and the region. 2) It would include three-way mutual recognition among Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia with a country-wide cease-fire and end to offensive military operations. 3) The Americans would push the parties to negotiate more viable borders reflecting the recent changes on the ground in Bosnia, but not rejecting the Contact Group map out of hand. Although the NSC and Defense papers had advocated pressing the Bosnians to trade Gorazde for Serb-held territory, State officials had successfully lobbied to tone down the language. The Americans would suggest flexibility, but not press the Bosnians to trade Gorazde if they demurred. 4) Constitutionally, Bosnia would remain one state, but would be composed of two highly autonomous entities (most likely, one majority-Serb and another majority-Muslim/Croat), the details of which would be worked out in talks with the parties. 5) Rather than the limited sanctions suspension package for Serbia proposed in the Frasure and Bildt talks, the United States would be prepared to take a "bold approach" to sanctions relief. The Americans would be willing to accept a "suspension"

[79] Vershbow interview, September 26, 1996.
[80] "Talking Points on Bosnia for Consultations with Allies: August 10-14, 1995," Final version as delivered, August 13, 1995.

[redacted]

of economic sanctions against Serbia once an agreement was signed, with complete lifting of sanctions when an agreement was implemented. 6) The settlement must include a Croat-Serb agreement on Eastern Slavonia, a section of resource-rich land between Croatia and Serbia that the two countries fought over in 1991 and the Serbs now occupied. This would, of course, be a prerequisite for winning mutual recognition between Serbia and Croatia. And lastly, 7) the settlement would include a comprehensive program for regional economic reconstruction. This last point was particularly significant to the diplomatic initiative, because although the United States would lead the negotiations, European contributions to the reconstruction program would be a substantial "carrot" for agreement.

The keys to this new initiative were the "carrots" and "sticks" that would be used with both sides to entice them to come to the negotiating table. In addition to economic reconstruction, the carrots were: enforcement of the peace terms by NATO and military assistance for the Bosnians; movement toward integration into European institutions for the Croats; sanctions relief for the Serbs; and legal territorial rights for the Pale Serbs. In contrast to earlier plans, the initiative's innovation was its threat of sticks, which Lake understood as a valuable tool to gain negotiating leverage.[81] The carrots were necessary for reaching a settlement, but not sufficient. Specifically, the U.S. would outline to the Balkan leaders the consequences of the "failure scenario" -- not reaching a settlement and UNPROFOR withdrawal. The use of sticks would be calibrated to the particular failure scenario. If the Bosnians negotiated in good faith, but the Serbs proved obstinate, the Bosnians would get "lift and strike" and "equip and train," i.e., NATO air strikes against the Serbs during UNPROFOR withdrawal, a lifting of the arms embargo, and American military training. But if the Bosnians were cause for failure, they would be faced with "lift and leave;" i.e., the U.S. would lift the arms embargo, but provide no airstrikes, arms, or training. This latter "stick" was crucial, because the Americans feared the Bosnians would otherwise find the former failure scenario --leading to "lift-and-strike"-- more attractive than agreeing to a settlement. The U.S. would have to make it clear to Sarajevo that American support was not unconditional.

At the morning White House meeting, Lake restated his understanding of the mission. He was to inform the Europeans of what the President had decided to do and to ask them to come on board. But while the Americans were willing to listen to suggestions, they were committed to go ahead -- with or without their support. Christopher, who had just returned from Asia, expressed his support for the mission, although he remained somewhat guarded about the difficulties the U.S. would face should it have to implement the failure scenario. His concerns about the failure scenario reflected many of those in the room, but they decided to push forward. The President remained convinced that the United States had to take advantage of this opportunity. If they did not act now, they would not have the chance later. The meeting reviewed the mission one last time, and Clinton suggested that Lake present the Europeans with his carrots before the sticks, which he eventually did. Then Lake left for the airport with his interagency delegation -- Tarnoff and Frasure from State; Vershbow and Peter Bass of the NSC; Lt. General Wesley Clark of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Joseph Kruzel, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Europe and NATO Affairs.[82]

[81] Vershbow interview, July 23, 1996; Bass interview.
[82] Woodward, p267; Bass interview; Christopher interview, October 22, 1996; Tarnoff interview.

[redacted]

The Mission to Europe

As the Lake delegation departed, the only scheduled stops of the trip were London, Bonn and Paris. They were uncertain about the reception they were going to get, particularly in London and Paris, and wanted to test the initiative with these three key Allies before moving further. In London on August 10, they met at the Foreign Ministry, where the British expressed enthusiastic support for the U.S. plan. After the first meeting, the team understood that the reaction to the plan was likely to be positive. "As we got out there," Tarnoff recalled, "the idea seemed to gain favor. Tony in particular felt that the time had come to touch as many bases as possible." Therefore, the delegation began to add to the schedule visits to Rome, Madrid (who then held the chair of the EU presidency), Ankara, and Sochi, Crimea, where they would consult with the vacationing Russian Foreign Minister, Andrei Kozyrev.[83]

That evening, the team met in Bonn with the Germans. While the Germans accepted the U.S. plan, they "made a slight play" at asserting more leadership. Their representative to the Contact Group, Michael Steiner, had been one of the more active members in pursuing a Balkan settlement, and the Germans seemed to want to be included in a diplomatic negotiation. This struck some in the team as an effort by the Germans to force the Americans to prove how committed they really were.[84] Nevertheless, the Germans supported the plan with some minor suggestions. They were concerned that the diplomatic "sticks" not be used too forcefully; they did not want the Bosnians compelled to accept an "unreasonable" agreement. As a corollary to the arm-and-train component of the plan, the Germans suggested creating an arms control regime for the region.[85]

On August 11, the team arrived in Paris, for what they thought would be the most contentious of the consultations. During the talks surrounding the London Conference a few weeks prior, negotiations with the French had proved the most difficult. Chirac had taken an acute and vocal interest in shaping the West's approach toward Bosnia, and the U.S. feared that the French would have reservations. Surprisingly, French officials expressed "One-hundred percent support" for the U.S. initiative, welcoming the "new U.S. determination."[86] Yet, the French, like the Germans, were leery of the perception that this was an "American" initiative rather than one of the Contact Group or the UN. They suggested pursuing a joint plan, possibly through the Contact Group, with Carl Bildt taking a prominent role. Lake reassured them, explaining that the first American shuttle would be "exploratory," after which the negotiations would be conducted under the aegis of the Contact Group.[87] This comment was a bit of diplomatic finesse -- the U.S. had no intention of letting the Europeans lead this negotiating effort, but were willing to stamp the imprimatur of the Contact Group on the negotiations to satisfy the Europeans' need to feel involved. The French, who were also impressed by the U.S.

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[83] The team knew that they wanted to consult the Russians, but were not sure how or where when they departed Washington; Tarnoff interview; Bass interview.
[84] Clark interview; September 18, 1996.
[85] These points were formally relayed to the US a few days later. See "Germany Supports US Bosnia Initiative," Cable, Bonn 16359, August 14, 1995.
[86] Report of Paris meetings in "Lake Delegation's Talks in Paris, August 11," Cable, Paris 19356, August 16, 1995.
[87] Clark interview.

[redacted]

commitment to deploy 20,000 troops to implement an agreement, eventually accepted this approach.[88]

The next day, August 12, the Lake delegation visited both Madrid and Rome. Spanish Prime Minister Felipe Gonzalez and Foreign Minister Javier Solana "warmly welcomed" the U.S. plan, as did Italian officials Sergio Vento and Ferdinando Salleo.[89] The only surprise of this day was some news the delegation received from back home. Holbrooke, who was supposed to rendezvous with the team in London on August 14 for the "baton-passing," was featured in the *New York Times* voicing his frustration with U.S. policy.[90] When the delegation received this article by fax in Rome, it was met with incredulity, anger and concern. Such a development was exactly what the National Security Advisor had feared: the man who was supposed to take over this mission was publicly talking about leaving the Administration. Lake had already planned to have a private meeting with Holbrooke in London, and he knew now that it would be more than a discussion on the substance of the negotiations. It would have to be a frank discussion to see if the Assistant Secretary was emotionally prepared to lead the initiative.[91]

From Rome the Lake delegation traveled to the Crimea, where on August 13 they met with Kozyrev at his beautiful summer home on the Black Sea. Of all the meetings, this was expected to be the trickiest; the Russians were hypersensitive partners, and had recently sought to carve out a role for themselves in negotiating a Balkan settlement.[92] They were historically tied to Serbia and had actively engaged the Bosnian Serbs. Moreover, if NATO troops were going to be used to implement an agreement, the U.S. would likely have to work very hard to secure Russia's cooperation. In spite of these concerns, the talks with Kozyrev went well. As Lake read through the talking points, the Russian Foreign Minister was surprisingly placid -- he had fewer problems with the plan than even the French. Kozyrev explained to the U.S. delegation Russia's own domestic pressures (at the time the right-wing dominated Duma was putting pressure on Yeltsin to lift the embargo against Serbia). On the specifics of the strategy, Kozyrev recommended that the U.S. deal directly with Milosevic in order to "deliver" the Bosnian Serbs, and

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[88] During this meeting, Lt. General Clark raised the need to begin looking at what military assistance would be required to implement a peace settlement. Clark suggested that an informal political-military working group be created to discuss such issues, to which the French agreed. See Clark interview; Paris 19356.

[89] See "Visit of APSNA Lake to Spain, August 12, 1995," Cable, Madrid 8551, August 17, 1995; "NSA Lake Meetings with Italian Officials On Former Yugoslavia," Cable, Rome 11349, August 14, 1995.

[90] See Tim Weiner, "Clinton's Balkan Envoy Finds Himself Shut Out," *New York Times*, August 12, 1995.

[91] In retrospect, the *New York Times* incident was more innocent than it seemed at the time. Holbrooke had been interviewed over a month earlier for the article, and the reporter had held onto the story since. Early the morning of August 11, Strobe Talbott called Holbrooke in Colorado, asking him to return to Washington to lead the Balkan shuttle. When Holbrooke first saw the *Times* article, he was already in the Salt Lake City airport on his way back to Washington. Of course, no one in Lake's group in Rome knew of these finer points. See Holbrooke interview 3 (notes); Vershbow interview, July 23, 1996; Bass interview.

[92] On August 1, Christopher and Kozyrev met in Brunei on the margins of the annual APEC Ministerial Conference to discuss the Bosnian situation, particularly Kozyrev's recent trip to Belgrade and Russian support of the Bildt Plan. See "Meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev," Cable, SECTO 16019, August 3, 1995; "Your Meeting with Kozyrev: Bosnia," Memorandum to the Secretary from Tarnoff (P), July 31, 1995. On August 8, Christopher sent a letter to Kozyrev to inform him that the US had crafted a new initiative, and that the Lake delegation may come calling. See "Message for Foreign Minister Kozyrev," Cable (draft), August 8, 1995.

urged the U.S. to push for an early cease-fire between the parties.[93] But overall, Kozyrev told Lake that "we don't want to argue about ideas, we just want to engage with you to search for solutions."[94]

Following a stop in Ankara in which discussions focused on Turkey's participation in the proposed arm-and-train initiative for the Bosnians, the delegation arrived in London late the evening of August 13.[95] There they were met by Holbrooke and NSC aide Nelson Drew, who were to comprise the regional shuttle team along with Frasure, Clark and Kruzel.[96] The talks with the European partners had gone very well, and the U.S. initiative could now be presented to the Balkan parties with the full force of the international community behind it. The next day, which included a brief follow-up meeting with British officials, the U.S. delegation briefed Holbrooke on their trip and reviewed his strategy for his Balkan interlocutors.[97] Also that morning, Lake and Holbrooke went off to a private room in the American Embassy to talk.

By all accounts, this "hand-off" meeting was important both strategically and emotionally. Strategically, Lake and Holbrooke discussed the Allied response, as well as the goals of the regional shuttle. Holbrooke recalls telling Lake that the U.S. needed to prepared for failure: "We should not let expectations outrun reality. We [will] give it our best, but it [will] be a very difficult process." he said.[98] Lake handed Holbrooke his own talking points for the parties, which had been finalized by the delegation the night before. The points reviewed the seven terms of the settlement and outlined the "carrots" and "sticks."[99] Lake urged Holbrooke to use the points not as guidance, but as a script.

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[93] As the Lake team brought the initiative to Europe, officials in Washington continued high-level contacts with both the Croatians and the Bosnians, urging them not to allow the military conflict to escalate. While their military successes had helped open the window, US officials remained concerned that their diplomatic efforts would be undermined if the Croats and Bosnians overplayed their hand. In calls to Croatian President Franjo Tudjman and Defense Minister Gojko Susak, Vice President Gore and Defense Secretary Perry asked that the Croats cease further military actions, so as "not to lose all the positive benefits of the last week." They also informed the Croatians of the US initiative and the planned regional shuttle. Gore repeated these same points in a call to Bosnian President Izetbegovic. See, respectively, "Telephone Conversation: Secretary of Defense Perry and Croatian Defense Minister Susak," DoD memorandum, August 11, 1995; "Vice Presidential Telephone Call: Vice President Gore, Croatian President Tudjman," State Department Operations Center Telcon, August 12, 1995; "Vice-Presidential Telephone Call: Vice President Gore and President Izetbegovic of Bosnia," State Department Operations Center Telcon, August 13, 1995.

[94] Clark interview, September 18, 1996; see also Vershbow interview, September 26, 1996; Bass interview; and "Kozyrev-Lake Balkan Meeting in Sochi," Cable, Moscow 26215, August 17, 1995.

[95] See "NSA Lake's Meeting with FM Inou," Cable, Ankara 9594, August 17, 1995; and "Official-Informal (memcon of Lake's meeting with PM Ciller)," Cable, Ankara 9384, August 14, 1995.

[96] Lake, Vershbow and Bass would return to Washington; Tarnoff had already split off from the trip after the meeting in Madrid.

[97] On August 13, Clinton and Major had discussed the positive response to the initiative, as well as next steps. See "Telcon with British Prime Minister John Major," Cable, State 198591, August 21, 1995. At the Lake meeting on August 14, British officials raised some questions about Serbian sanctions, the timing of lifting the arms embargo, and the need to push for closure on the map. Lake expressed concern about General Janvier's reported private comments that an airstrike on Gorazde would mean the end of UNPROFOR. If such views were made publicly, Lake asserted, "our deterrence would lose all credibility." See "NSA Lake's August 14 Bosnia Meeting with HMG Officials," Cable, London 11621, August 17, 1995.

[98] See Holbrooke, "The Road to Sarajevo," *The New Yorker*, October 21 & 28, 1996.

[99] "Talking Points for the Bosnian Government," NSC Memorandum, August 13, 1995.

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Emotionally, the discussion turned to the opportunity this initiative presented. Holbrooke and Lake had been linked for over thirty years personally and professionally; both entered the Foreign Service in 1962, served in Vietnam during the 1960s, and held high-level State Department posts in the Carter Administration.[100] They were simultaneously genuine friends and fierce rivals. After the events of the summer and the unkept secret that Holbrooke was unhappy, Lake wanted to be sure he understood the stakes. This was what Holbrooke had been preparing for his entire life, Lake told him. This was his moment -- he had been trained his entire professional career for such a negotiation. If it went well, he would garner the glory.[101]

[100] Lake as Director of the Policy Planning Staff, Holbrooke as Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs.

[101] Details of meeting from Bass interview; Vershbow interview, July 23, 1996; Holbrooke interview with author (notes), October 16, 1996; and Woodward, pp268-69.

[redacted]