

- Bosnian Muslims: led by President Alija Izetbegovic
- Army of Bosnia and Herzegovina (ABiH): led by General Rasim Delic
- Serb Republic Army, VRS
- North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO)/NATO Implementation Force (IFOR)
- Contact Group: France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States
- European Union
- United Nations

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1992: fighting breaks out between Serbs and Croats, Croats and Muslims, and Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnia Army
- March 1994: Bosnian Federation formed, Croat-Muslim war ends
- March 18, 1995: Friends of the Federation is launched
- Summer 1995: Muslim and Croatian forces take large portions of western Bosnia after NATO air strikes against Bosnian Serb targets
- December 14, 1995: Dayton peace accords signed at Paris
- 1995-96: NATO begins implementation of the Dayton agreement

KEY AGREEMENTS REACHED

- Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna to be dissolved
- Refugee repatriation to begin
- Federation government, army, and payments system to be created

PRINCIPAL OUTCOMES

- Fighting between Croats and Muslims has been halted
- The Bosnian Federation government is functional, with cantons, municipalities, a constitutional court, and an assembly
- The federation provided a temporary solution to part of the Bosnia conflict until the Dayton peace process could take hold

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A Bosnian Federation Memoir

DANIEL SERWER

There will be many memoirs of Bosnia. This one is written from my own peculiar point of view. From October 1994 to July 1996, I was the primary U.S. State Department official responsible for the Bosnian Federation. I worried daily about how to keep the Croats and the Muslims (also known as Bosniaks) from fighting again, as they had in 1993-94. I helped them build common institutions that would contain their conflict within civil bounds. And I tried to firm up the federation even as a much weightier structure, the Dayton peace agreement, was built on top of this shaky foundation.

The pursuit of these objectives took me to Bosnia about twenty times. I met with all the key Muslim and Croat participants in the Bosnia crisis (but never with Serbs, except for those loyal to the Sarajevo government). President Alija Izetbegovic, Vice President Ejup Ganic, President Kresimir Zubak, Prime Ministers Haris Silajdzic, Hasan Muratovic, and Mehmed-beg Kapetanovic; Foreign Minister Jadranko Prlic and his deputy, Hasan Dervisbegovic; Interior Minister Avdo Hebib and his deputy, Jozo Lutar; and Defense Minister Vladimir Soljic and his deputy, Hasan Cengic—all knew me as “Mr. Federation.” So, too, did the many European capitals I visited, as well as officials in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Tokyo.

Croats formed the Croat Defense Council (HVO), which defended Mostar from the Serbs and included among its ranks a significant number of Muslims.

With Mostar saved from Serb attacks, in the fall of 1992 Croats and Muslims started fighting each other throughout central Bosnia, including Mostar. I have heard many versions of how this second war started, and why. My own take is that issues people really cared about—language, education, religious and national symbols—were exploited by nationalist leaderships, which in a bizarre perversion of democratic principles decided they could become a majority and get their way by chasing members of the other “ethnic” group out. The fighting was most intense where the Muslims and the Croats, who in fact are all Slavs and mostly irreligious, were closest to equal in population (many considered themselves “Yugoslavs” or had intermarried, making ethnic identity ambiguous, at least for their children). The fighting was exacerbated by Croatian security goals, which included the creation of a band of Croat-dominated territory along the Herzegovinian border of Bosnia with Croatia, and by Muslim nationalists, who aimed for a Bosnia that Muslims would control. Fifty thousand Muslims and one hundred fifty thousand Croats were displaced by the Croat-Muslim war.

It was this second war that ended with the signature of what is known as the Washington (or Federation) Agreement in March 1994. A cease-fire had been negotiated earlier by the United Nations, and a cessation of hostilities agreement was reached with the help of former supreme allied commander John Galvin. The Croats wanted to end the fighting because they were losing. The HVO was not then or later an impressive fighting force, though it was good at frightening civilian populations and ethnic cleansings. The Muslims wanted to end the fighting because they could not win their war against the Serbs while fighting the Croats. There was no love lost between the Croats and the Muslims, but under intense pressure from Washington—which wanted to simplify the equation before trying to resolve the Serb/Muslim conflict—they agreed to set up the Bosnian Federation. This was on paper a set of governing institutions delicately balanced between Croats and Muslims (with little room for Serbs). On all issues of importance, both groups had to agree for action to be taken—this was not Jeffersonian democracy but a classic “power-sharing” arrangement. The federation institutions were supposed to govern the territory controlled by the HVO and the Bosnian Army, which originally was planned to be 58 percent of the total territory of prewar Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United States, for reasons that are obscure to me, reduced this territory

I worked “alone”: at most I had a secretary and one professional diplomat working with me. But it was clearly impossible to do what needed to be done without enlisting the cooperation and combined efforts of many others. This was a multiparty effort. Before Dayton, the other key players were the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the civil affairs officers of the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR), and the World Bank. After Dayton, they were joined by the NATO implementation force (IFOR) civil affairs and the office of the High Representative, who had overall responsibility for Dayton implementation. Throughout, I had a strong relationship with the Germans, who took a particular interest in the federation, and with the European Administration of Mostar, the south Bosnian city where the war between the Muslims and the Croats had been particularly intense.

Mine was not a role that caught the public eye outside Bosnia, but no one dealing with Bosnia at the time doubted the significance of the mission. If I failed, the Croats and the Muslims would go back to war and multiethnic democracy would die in Bosnia, consumed by the flames of nationalism on all sides and resulting in three-way partition. If I succeeded, the ramshackle barrier against war that I worked to build would impress no one. It would always be called weak, fragile, likely to collapse.

I succeeded. On my watch, the federation did not collapse but strengthened. When I departed in June 1996, the federation had a government, many of its ten cantons, and most of its municipalities, as well as a constitutional court and an active assembly. The federation has made more progress since, though it is still difficult to predict whether the relative success will last. Maybe not. Few days pass that do not bring evidence of continuing tension within the federation. But with little fanfare, the Croats and the Muslims have built up functioning common institutions and so far have managed to keep from relapsing into suicidal fratricide. Those who bemoan the continuing tensions between them should remember that the federation, for all its faults, has kept the peace for five years. I can only hope that it will continue to do so.

SO WHAT IS THIS FEDERATION?

A short history is required to set the stage for my role, which was part mediator, part cheerleader, part nation builder.

Bosnia suffered three wars in the early 1990s. It started in 1992 with Serb attacks on Croats, an extension of the Serb attacks on Croats inside Croatia. Bosnian Croat appeals for help from Sarajevo went unheeded—the Sarajevo government had no army to speak of. It was then that the

Agreement in March. He arranged for my appointment to be covered in Al Kamen's *Washington Post* column, which was helpful in making me at least appear to be of some importance. He suggested that I drop the "special" from my title, as it implied my job was a temporary one. I would be needed for a long time, he thought. And he suggested, in dire terms, that if I did not get busy quickly the federation would come apart, perhaps while I was still standing in his office.

The special envoy for former Yugoslavia, Charlie Thomas, was helpful. The federation would get nowhere, he believed, unless it was pushed from abroad. The United States would have to push hard. But we were all too obviously limited in means—we had recently dredged up a paltry \$20 million from the U.S. Agency for International Development (AID) to support reconstruction in the federation and underlying ethnic reconciliation. Western Europe and the Islamic countries would have to provide the bulk of the assistance money, which would eventually amount to billions. Thomas passed on a thought left to him by Chuck Redman, who had negotiated the Washington Agreement: organize some sort of commission, under U.S. leadership, to push the federation ahead. This idea became what I called "Friends of the Federation," an informal group of countries that would offer assistance to the federation if the Croats and the Muslims would get on with it. I proposed, and Holbrooke accepted, launching the Friends on the first federation anniversary, March 18, 1995, at a meeting in Washington hosted by Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Holbrooke was not satisfied. He felt a sense of urgency about the physical situation on the ground in Bosnia. The federation, he often said, had to survive physically before it could thrive politically. Most of the front between federation forces and the Serbs was relatively quiet, and in fact the military situation had not changed significantly in over a year. There were two real problems. One was Bihac, the Muslim-dominated enclave located in the Croatian "V," where the Bosnian Army overextended itself in victory late in the summer and by fall was tasting defeat. Little could be done for Bihac, where the conditions of the population were dreadful. But complete defeat was unlikely because the Croats—who did not want a Serb victory close to their borders—could be expected to try to avoid it (which they did, by resupplying the Bosnian Army there through the winter). Sarajevo was the second of the acute physical problems. Conditions for the general population in Sarajevo were better than those in Bihac, but that was small comfort. People were leaving the capital, and its travails were well covered by the international press. Food was not the issue, and even the water situation was by then acceptable, because of the efforts of engineers

to 51 percent and convinced the "Contact Group" (then France, Germany, Russia, the United Kingdom, and the United States) in the spring of 1994 to endorse that number, which in any case appeared overly optimistic. At the time, the Bosnian Army and the HVO controlled only about a third of the territory, and it seemed unlikely that they would ever control much more. As part of the federation arrangements, the European Community—as the European Union was then known—took on the unenviable task of administering Mostar.

The Bosnian Federation at the time of its formation was split between areas controlled by the HVO and areas controlled by the Bosnian Army (ABiH). Checkpoints and separation zones were still in place when NATO troops arrived to implement the Dayton agreements in the winter of 1995–96. Moreover, the Croats had set up a political counterpart to the HVO, which became known as the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna, a parastate with no legal claim that nevertheless was the only civilian governing authority in areas controlled by the HVO. In areas controlled by the Bosnian Army—which included most of central Bosnia as well as the northwestern enclave of Bihac and the eastern Bosnian enclaves of Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde—the writ of the internationally recognized Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Sarajevo government, nominally ruled. With the signature of the Washington Agreement in March 1994, the Croats reentered the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, whose government ministries were at the same time "double-hatted" as Bosnian Federation ministries.

The third war in Bosnia is the one most of us remember from the headlines: the war that began in 1992 between the Bosnian Serbs—assisted extensively by the Yugoslav National Army (JNA)—and the Bosnian Army, which was controlled by the Muslim-dominated government in Sarajevo. This was the war that saw the siege of Sarajevo, the massacre of Srebrenica, and the NATO bombing of Serb positions. And it was this war that the Dayton agreements reached in November 1995 ended with the division—but not partition—of Bosnia into the Bosnian Federation (51 percent) and the Serb Republic (49 percent).

A WINTER OF NEAR COLLAPSE

Richard Holbrooke, assistant secretary for Europe in the State Department, asked me to serve as special coordinator for the Bosnian Federation in October 1994. He had returned from his first official trip to Bosnia a few weeks before and believed that the federation had to be saved. It was the only good thing that we had done in Bosnia, he thought, and it was a mistake to have left its future to chance after the signing of the Washington

Landcruiser, sorry he was late—no one had let the embassy know which plane we were on until almost its arrival time.

The drive into town was not the one used now and before the war. The Serbs were known to be looking for Americans, so we did not go through their checkpoints. Sierra 4, on the short route in from the airport, was notorious, not the least because a member of the Bosnian presidency had been taken from a French armored personnel carrier there earlier in the war and murdered. So we drove, until after the end of the war, through the shattered neighborhood of Dobrinja, built for the Sarajevo Winter Olympic Games. Barricades protecting the crossroads, a Bosnian Army checkpoint, little traffic, a few scurrying people, destroyed apartments, shattered glass. Then into the main street, trams no longer running, blast marks in the asphalt, more destruction, past armored personnel carriers ineffectively protecting pedestrians from snipers (there are the high-rise apartments, less than 200 meters away, from which they fire!); a U-turn at high speed and suddenly calm as we approach the rear of the Holiday Inn, protected by the building from snipers.

I would later spend many weeks in the Holiday Inn, but again some moments of that first stay are unforgettable. The embassy was still located there, a few rooms facing a side street past which gunfire crackled day and night. I was quickly installed in the room of one of the embassy officers who was away. I slept well enough until about 3:00 A.M., when the gunfire stopped. I woke up cold, put my overcoat over the many blankets already covering the bed, and lay awake for some time, waiting for the gunfire to start again. Later, I would sleep through both gunfire and lulls. The morning the Dayton agreement was signed in Paris I awakened to a clattering fusillade of anti-aircraft fire smashing into the facade of the hotel, rolled over, and went back to sleep. I had learned, as did every Sarajevan, that if you could hear it, you were probably okay and should ignore it. There was certainly no point in going to the window to look out, as it increased the risk.

I met Ambassador Victor Jaskovich for breakfast the next morning and learned that he grew up speaking Serbo-Croatian with his extended family in Iowa and that he would accompany me to see the prime minister. Off we went at the usual breakneck pace (thought to be too fast to allow snipers to get their aim), screeching to a halt in front of the red-brown, nineteenth-century Presidency, sedate in the midst not only of gunfire but the ravages of Sarajevo's hideous modern buildings, one more garish than the last. I later commented to a Bosnian prime minister, Hasan Muratovic, that some of the destruction was probably an aesthetic plus for the city. He agreed. The Presidency, though, was always dear to me, sitting casually on the street

who worked for George Soros's Open Society Institute. Fuel was the problem: irregular supplies of Russian natural gas, which had to cross Serbia and Bosnian Serb-held territory before reaching Sarajevo, were insufficient. What was needed, the Bosnians told us, was an electrical cable from Bosnian government-controlled territory in central Bosnia, over Igman, through the tunnel they had secretly dug under the airport and into the city. The Bosnians had prepared the basic specifications and had started the trenchwork over Mount Igman using "civil defense" labor (required labor by civilian males not in military service). Would the U.S. government and Soros pay the few million dollars required to procure the equipment abroad and install it by the end of 1994?

The question was still unanswered when I visited Sarajevo for the first time in November 1994. I was determined not to go empty-handed. On the electrical cable, I could do no more than assure the Bosnians that it would get a fair hearing. I had, however, solidified a consensus behind a strong U.S. position on natural gas: it would go to Serbia only if sufficient supplies arrived in Sarajevo. I was also able, despite a good deal of resistance, to carry with me two draft agreements: one for economic development cooperation and one for military cooperation. They were both boilerplate, but getting our bureaucracy to clear them for delivery to the Bosnians was no small matter. It was odd indeed for the United States to propose agreements for the benefit of the Bosnian Federation, a subnational entity that existed only on paper. It was an unusually friendly and inventive State Department lawyer who managed the clearance process. I also carried to Sarajevo the idea of the Friends, which was sure to please the Bosnians.

I later made the trip to Sarajevo so many times that it is hard to remember much about the first one. But some things are unforgettable: As we stumbled out of the airplane in Sarajevo, soldiers stood pointing at the tail, saying we had been hit by small arms fire. We all gathered to take a look but were quickly shooed off the tarmac by UN Blue Berets, who warned that the shooting could still be going on. I glimpsed the airport: shattered glass, massive berms of dirt, sandbags. A movie set, but so wretched and miserable it had to be real. Our suitcases were deposited in a mud hole beyond the sandbags, and we carried them around to the front of what was left of the terminal, where no one met us. Mortars could be heard in the distance. I tried to hitch a ride in an armored personnel carrier, but the French soldiers said it was going to Mount Igman, not downtown. We waited nervously. Soon John Menzies, the cheerful newly appointed deputy chief of mission at the American embassy bounced up in a Toyota

During this conversation, Ambassador Jackovich began to speak to the Bosnians in their own language. To get back into the conversation, I commented on how good his command of Serbo-Croatian was. A tense silence ensued, with everyone looking to Izetbegovic. "You mean," the president said directly but with good humor, "his excellent Bosnian," precipitating a relieved laugh all around.

As soon as we were done, the ambassador rushed us to the car and all but forcibly delivered us to the airport for a flight back to Zagreb. We should not stay another night—it appeared both sides were building up for a battle over Sarajevo, and the UNPROFOR flights might be suspended. He was right. They were suspended a few days later and did not resume again for more than a month.

Back to Zagreb we went, stayed overnight, and headed for Washington the next day, a pattern I would follow for the next eighteen months. We had seen Foreign Minister Mate Granic on the way into Sarajevo. Thoughtful and positive about the Bosnian Federation, he chose his words carefully but always somehow managed to convey that if it were up to him the federation would come alive faster than Croatian president Franjo Tudjman was permitting. Just as President Tudjman, whom we called on in the splendor of his faux Western palace, a Titoesque shrine to modernity furnished in the traditional fashion of monarchs, always gave the impression that the federation caused him heartburn, no matter how enthusiastic his words.

After I returned to Washington, my immediate task became the electrical cable into Sarajevo, the need for which Prime Minister Silajdzic had confirmed with his usual guilt-inducing flagellation. He had also wanted propane tanks to provide cooking fuel to that part of the population that lacked electrical connections, but no one ever figured out how we could safely transport trucks full of propane past the Serb gunners into the city. The Soros people undertook a technical evaluation of the underground electrical cable. The results were essentially positive, though only a small proportion of the population could be served. George Soros, who had been the first to mention the cable project to the State Department, was ready to fund half, but only if the U.S. government would take the lead with the other half.

AID dragged its many bureaucratic feet. The humanitarian-relief people said it was a development project. The development people said it was humanitarian relief. The intelligence people said the cable would be cut easily by the Serbs. The U.S. government could not make up its mind, and some suggested Soros lead the way. Weeks started to drag into months. Weather conditions would not permit the project to be completed in midwinter. I

in modest dignity, its soldier-guards attentive but relaxed, its protocol officers friendly but proper, its shabby gold carpet bespeaking less the glory of the past than the hope for being replaced in the future, a container of lilies on the main landing trying to speak eloquently of national aspirations. After being ushered into what I later discovered was the all-purpose reception room, we installed ourselves in the standard-issue gold-painted and red-upholstered chairs that seem so ubiquitous in European diplomatic establishments, arranged in a semicircle so that we could talk without inhibiting the camera angles. In swept the prime minister, the anti-mated but always unhappy Haris Silajdzic, as angry with his friends as with his enemies. He trailed cameras. The press would leave after a few silent shots, he explained, and would not be allowed to talk with us afterward.

I did my points—Friends of the Federation, energy supplies for Sarajevo, agreements on military cooperation and reconstruction—and tried to appear as helpful and attentive as possible. Silajdzic complained about the Croat failure to implement agreements on border guards and federation police and asked that we help build a truck tunnel under the airport. The bullet holes in the wall were hard to miss, as was Silajdzic's peculiar charm. Eyes rolling, he would wind himself up for a denunciation of the world and its cruelty to the Bosnians, including those who would pretend to be their friends. I rejected his charges, told him we would do the best we could, and knew that in fact he had good reason to be upset. We got up after half an hour, the doors opened, and of course the press was there in full force. Silajdzic took most of the questions. CNN asked me if the prime minister didn't sound mighty gloomy about the Bosnian Federation and I gave my best State Department reply: I was sure the prime minister saw many problems, as did I, but we both looked hopefully to the future.

Silajdzic tugged at my elbow and took me off down the hallway, around a corner, and into President Alija Izetbegovic's large but sparsely furnished office. Then and later I had the sense that I was talking with someone's immigrant grandfather—halting English, tired skin, few words, a puzzled look. Izetbegovic was impressed that my plane had been hit—this made me courageous in his view. I thought not, as it seemed to me there was no courage in discovering after landing that your plane had been hit but a great deal of courage in sitting for several years in a Presidency room that you knew your enemies were targeting (and in fact hit several times). If there was courage in the room, it was among the Bosnians. But the courage did not come with statesmanship: Izetbegovic heard me out on the federation, but it was only later that I would realize how little store he set in it, and how little he was willing to do to bring the Croats back into Bosnia.

of sorting out. These ranged from tax collection to criminal justice, to payment of pensions and dissolution of the wartime Croat Republic of Herzegovina, which was supposed to have been dissolved with the formation of the Bosnian Federation. After late-night and early-morning meetings with Silajdzic and Susak, Galbraith was able to convince Holbrooke that we might convince the Bosnians—both Muslim and Croat—to accept binding arbitration by a U.S. arbitrator. I had some doubts about the wisdom of getting the United States too deeply engaged in this way and thereby removing the burden of finding solutions from the Croats and the Muslims, but Holbrooke bought the idea, pacing barefooted as we discussed Bosnia's future late into the night in his hotel room.

The formal meeting opened the next day, cameras rolling. Holbrooke had invited several U.S. senators—I believe they were Joe Lieberman, William Cohen, and Sam Nunn—to address the group. They lambasted the Croats, who were thought to be plotting with Serbia to divide up Bosnia. Holbrooke then shooed the press from the room and asked the Croats if they wanted to reply (without the cameras present). To his credit, Cranick said unequivocally that Croatia would not try to divide up Bosnia, a reply he repeated in front of the cameras later.

The main issue at the meeting was whether the Bosnians would accept binding arbitration of any issue that either side brought to the arbitrator. Zubak resisted, knowing full well that his vision of a segregated Bosnia would not have much of a chance with an American arbitrator. The meeting had to be adjourned briefly while Susak literally took Zubak into a corner and told him what to accept. This was all done under enormous time pressure, as Holbrooke had arranged for Secretary of Defense William Perry to say a few words to the group (part of his already considerable effort to get the Pentagon to lean further forward on Bosnia). Zubak came back and agreed, and I ran off to complete the final version of the communiqué.

Thus, the United States took another step in the direction of deeper involvement in Bosnia, or at least in the one-third of Bosnia then controlled by the federation. While the Germans thought the arbitrator's job should go to them (and we eventually agreed to their appointing the affable Christian Democrat Christian Schwarz-Schilling as federation mediator), and we went through the motions of preparing a list of candidates, Secretary of State Warren Christopher quickly chose his friend Roberts Owen for the job. A former State Department legal adviser and partner at the prestigious Washington law firm Covington and Burling, Owen undertook the effort with enormous enthusiasm and intelligence.

urged, pleaded, begged, first our own people and then Soros, asking them to go ahead even without the U.S. government. That, in the end, is what happened. To their credit, AID's humanitarian-relief people eventually anted up their portion as well. Later, in the spring of 1995, when the city was completely cut off by the Serbs, electricity delivered through this cable saved Sarajevo (though at the time it was said that the electricity came from diesel generators in the city, as the cable project was still regarded a secret).

Although Richard Holbrooke was pleased with this effort for the electrical cable, it did not satisfy his need at the time for some sort of public triumph. The anniversary of the Bosnian Federation in March was not soon enough, he said (I can only imagine what sorts of pressures created this sense of urgency). On a week's notice, he called a Contact Group meeting for February 18 in Munich, during the annual Wehrkunde meeting of defense ministers, with the Bosnians and the Croats to discuss the federation.

They came. Prime Minister Silajdzic led the Bosnian delegation, which included President Kresimir Zubak and Vice President Ejup Ganic of the Bosnian Federation. This was the first time I met them. Zubak, who always appeared cautious, was then firmly committed to ethnic separation in Bosnia. The exuberant Ganic had hopes for the kind of multiethnic democracy he had observed firsthand during his years teaching and doing research in the United States. Neither was surefooted politically: Zubak came from central Bosnia (near Doboj) rather than from the nationalist heartland near the Herzegovinian border with Croatia; Ganic, though known as a Muslim nationalist, came from Sandzak (in Serbia) and betrayed his birthplace, I was told, with every word he spoke. There was a big difference, however: Zubak took orders from Zagreb (though he denied it vehemently), while Ganic repeatedly ran risks by pushing the federation harder than Izetbegovic liked (all the time insisting he was acting with the president's approval).

Zubak and Ganic were not, however, big players at the Munich meeting. Silajdzic was the key Bosnian and came to the meeting with the idea of getting the Americans much more deeply involved in making the federation work. The other protagonists were Defense Minister Goyko Susak and Foreign Minister Mate Granic of Croatia. Among the Americans, Richard Holbrooke and the U.S. ambassador to Croatia, Peter Galbraith, were the key players, but several senators and the Contact Group played cameo roles. Silajdzic arrived in Munich with a long list of action items that were required to make the federation work. Galbraith interpreted this list as an invitation for the United States to reengage with the federation, and in fact to decide many of the issues that the Bosnians themselves seemed incapable

bring the entire process to a crashing halt. Many items would appear and reappear in these implementation packages, with new dates but little progress. Overall, however, the packages crafted under German and American pressure and guidance slowly pushed the process forward. If nothing else, the Croats and the Muslims became used to dealing with each other without staring down the barrel of a gun.

THE GENERAL AND THE DIPLOMAT

U.S. appointment of a military adviser for the Bosnian Federation was one of the other specific items announced at the Munich meeting. This, too, was part of Holbrooke's effort to get the Pentagon more involved. The Defense Department only reluctantly agreed to allow a retired general to be appointed—jointly by the State Department—to replace John Galvin, who had been instrumental in negotiating the cessation of hostilities and disengagement of forces that preceded the Washington Agreement on the federation. The Pentagon's first choice for the job backed out at the last moment, not wanting to help only one side and thinking if anything the federation was the wrong side. Much scurrying at that point turned up General John Sewall, a retired two-star and former Rhodes scholar, who was vice director of the Institute for National Strategic Studies at the National Defense University.

Sewall was enthusiastic about supporting the federation. There was not much concrete that he could do—the UN arms embargo was still in place, and both the Pentagon and the Allies were watching carefully to ensure that we did nothing to affect the military balance. But just by appearing and insisting that there be a federation military to be advised, Sewall had a positive impact on the relationship between the HVO and the ABiH. We made several trips into Sarajevo and central Bosnia together. These trips helped me to understand the causes of the Croat-Muslim conflict in terms that were not available in the diplomatic reception rooms of the Presidency in Sarajevo.

The first was in the spring of 1995, when it was still impossible to get into Sarajevo because of the siege. We flew first to Stuttgart, where the European Command's General Charles Boyd was conducting a verbal campaign against the federation—especially the Muslims—and in favor of the Serbs. My remark to this effect to his political adviser—Jacques Klein, later to be the UN transitional administrator in eastern Slavonia and deputy high representative in Sarajevo—won me a one-hour private session with the general. Had I heard anyone who was pro-Serb during my day's briefing with his intelligence folks? No, I said honestly, we had had a good and

The issues to be arbitrated were incredibly complex, involving the formation of dozens of municipal and cantonal governments. We sent out an "observer group" to gather basic data and try to resolve as many disputes as possible, drawing its staff from the American and German embassies and including a professional mediator and a Covington and Burling employee. This enabled Owen to issue during the summer of 1995 a long series of "options" intended to resolve many outstanding questions. Who should be the members of a municipal council? How were cantonal governments to be formed? What role would people displaced from their homes play in the postwar governing arrangements? More generally, he quietly gained respect and became one of the key players at the Dayton negotiations the next fall.

Friends of the Federation met in March 1995 in Washington, on the occasion of the first anniversary of the Washington Agreement that had established the Bosnian Federation. Secretary Christopher's staff refused to commit him to the event until the last moment, despite Holbrooke's urging. I was sent off on an around-the-world trip to encourage participation, stopping throughout Europe as well as in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, and Tokyo. Only the Japanese were truly negative. Our Tokyo embassy sent a cable after I left saying that the Japanese would never get seriously involved in Bosnia financially (the embassy was dead wrong, as the Japanese later paid some big bills). I got back a few days before the event and was sent off again overnight to Vienna, where U.S. ambassador Swane Hunt—who had hosted key federation negotiations a year earlier—had organized a federation anniversary meeting.

The Friends of the Federation event itself was a disappointment: Secretary Christopher's commitment to attend came too late to encourage foreign attendees (local embassies sent representatives). There was lots of gift-giving but Holbrooke decided to try for an agreement on Mostar and failed, leaving the actual meeting of the Friends sitting in a different room and accomplishing very little.

More successful was a meeting the Germans convened shortly thereafter in their official guest house at Petersberg (near Bonn), where they—working with Charlie Thomas as the American representative—persuaded the Croats and the Muslims to agree to the first in a long series of implementation timetables. The pattern established there was repeated many times: the mediators would listen to complaints from each side about the other and craft a balanced package of mutually agreed concessions. The trouble was that everything was linked to everything else, so the smallest dispute over whether something had been adequately implemented would

(raised recently from 100) while the Bosnian Army was unpaid but received ample food rations. It was obviously going to be difficult to merge the two armies into a single force unless the soldiers were paid the same amounts. The differences of course were greater than Prlic led us to believe. The fundamental problem was that the Croats were not prepared to give up a separate military force while the Muslims wanted a single army under Izetbegovic's control. I was later to spend many hours mediating this problem, resolving some aspects but not others. Only with the advent of the Equip and Train program aimed at arming and training the federation forces were the issues resolved, and even then with great difficulty.

John Sewall, our European Command (EUCOM) colleague, and I proceeded on what was to be a tour of the federation, at peace with itself but still at war—at least its Muslim portion—with the Serbs. We drove north from Mostar, past still-contested power plants, to the gloomy Muslim town of Jablanica, where we sat down for our first talks with majors and colonels who had once fought each other but were now nominally allied in the federation. It was not sweetness and light. A Muslim major vigorously accused the HVO of continuing to hold Muslim war prisoners in Croatia and offered as proof the testimony of recent returnees. The Croats were relatively restrained in response, but took us aside afterward to explain that these were Muslim deserters who told such stories to explain their disappearance during the war. This was close to the truth, we later concluded—the prison camp turned out to be a refugee camp, out of which the Muslim returnees, who probably had deserted, simply walked. Distrust caused both sides to tape the entire conversation.

Several hours of mutual accusations later, Sewall and I were whisked into a Herzeg-Bosna-plated BMW and taken up the hill to the Bosnian Army's local guest house. Luxurious it was not, but as we later found out much more comfortable than the "hotel" where our colleagues, anxious about whether they would ever see us again, remained. Sewall and I hesitated to talk much, as we were reasonably sure of being listened to, but we took a stroll in the small village and appreciated the truly spectacular mountains facing us, which gave us some security from the Serb lines not too many kilometers away. We noted a few positive signs from this first day: the Croats and the Muslims quarreled, but they were blunt and open with each other; we were being escorted, as we had requested, by officers of both armies (something the CIA had told us was impossible); the escorts had traveled in each other's territory previously (that is, without foreigners present); and both Croats and Muslims agreed that the Serbs were the enemy, much as they might not like each other.

The general then proceeded to lecture me on how the Serbs had been blamed for too much and the Muslims for too little, a lecture he later published in large part in *Foreign Affairs* (in the September-October 1995 issue). The publication happened to coincide with the U.S. revelation in the Security Council of a mass grave in eastern Bosnia, containing several hundred Muslims murdered by Serbs. The stop in Stuttgart served its main purpose: to cushion Boyd's opposition to our activities. We picked up two of his intelligence people to travel with us, which helped the mission look a bit weightier. I had already had some pro-federation language inserted in a UN Security Council resolution and Sewall wisely used his acquaintance with Kofi Annan to ensure UN logistical support. We went into Bosnia (after the obligatory stop in Zagreb) by UN helicopter from Split, landing at Medjugorje, site of Bosnia-Herzegovina's most famous Catholic shrine.

We met almost immediately with Jadranko Prlic (later foreign minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina), whose bald head and glassy stare convinced many Westerners that he looked like a war criminal. His imminent indictment by the Hague Tribunal was rumored for months. Prlic in the spring of 1995 was the defense minister of the Croat Republic of Herzeg-Bosna, the parastate the Croats created during their war with the Muslims, as well as deputy defense minister of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (the Muslim-controlled government in Sarajevo). Reporters later told me that he had been in charge of the siege of Mostar, a particularly brutal effort in 1993 to chase the Muslims from the western part of the city and to destroy the eastern part. I later discussed the accusations with him. He thought himself not guilty of sins of commission, though he felt some guilt about omissions. In any event, he would go to The Hague if indicted, a declaration he later repeated in public.

During my first meeting with Prlic, the main topic was the basic defense law of the federation, which had been under discussion for more than a year between Prlic and his Muslim counterpart. Only three problems remained in the text, Prlic said, presenting us helpfully with an English translation: the name of the army (would it be called *Armija*, the name used by the Bosnian Army, or *Vojaska*, the name preferred by the Croats?); the commander in chief of the army (the Croats would not accept President Izetbegovic); and how it was to be decided whether someone would serve in the Bosnian Army component of the federation forces or the Croatian Defense Council portion (the HVO), it having already been decided to preserve the two separate components. Only casually did he mention another big problem: the HVO was being paid about 300 deutsche marks per month

aimed to conquer 100 percent of the territory, an aim the Croats did not share because there were no Croats in most of eastern Bosnia before the war. Delic's response was revealing: to enable all those who want to return to their homes in 100 percent of the territory of Bosnia-Herzegovina to do so. For all their mutual hostility, this was an aim the Croats and the Muslims could share.

The response did not entirely surprise me. We had already met with General Mehmed Alagic, one of the corps commanders, in Travnik. Alagic's headquarters were decorated with bucolic landscapes, in oil. We asked about the paintings. They were of his hometown near Sanski Most, he said, and he was fighting to go home. So, too, were many of his men, whom he had organized into units to fight for the recovery of their hometowns. I was to think of this response the next fall, when the Bosnian Army failed to observe the Dayton cease-fire around Sanski Most and fought on for several days, much to the dismay of some in Washington. It was Alagic, fighting to go home. The issue of repatriation of displaced people and refugees, regarded so often in America and Western Europe as a romantic desire of old women in babushkas to return home, in fact involves men with guns. The failure to fulfill their desires is still the major unresolved issue of the Bosnian war.

We flew on from Kakanj to Tuzla and from there to Tomislavgrad, passing over many villages in central Bosnia whose roofs had been blown, from the inside, during the Croat-Muslim war. My military colleagues found this fascinating, and appalling. I found myself intrigued by the lunarlike landscape above Tomislavgrad, not the least because it helped take my mind off a stomach that found the ride in fog and rain rougher than it liked. It seemed somehow fitting that people who lived in this strange place had strange habits and conducted their wars in ways that were difficult to comprehend.

By then, though, I had a pretty good idea of what had motivated the Muslims and the Croats. Their fighting was essentially over political control and in fact was most intense where control was most uncertain: in those areas where Muslims and Croats were close to equal in population. Tomislavgrad had seen no war between Muslims and Croats, because all understood that the Croats (with 85 percent or so of the population) had the upper hand there. Likewise, in Tuzla the Muslims were clearly in control, and in addition a common enemy stood close by, so Croats and Muslims did not fight each other around Tuzla. But in Novi Travnik, Bugojno, Mostar, Gornji Vakuf, Vitez, and other places in central Bosnia, they fought to establish who would be in charge, seeking (in a peculiar perversion of democratic principles) to chase out as many of their opponents as possible. It is true that the Muslims were on the whole less vicious about it, but that

The next day we were off to Vitez, where I came to appreciate the profound absurdities of the war, and the peace. Our host was an HVO colonel, whose forces still surrounded the old Muslim center of the town but were in turn surrounded by much stronger Muslim forces outside the town. Sourced but professional, he took us and our Bosnian Army escorts to the confrontation line above Vitez, showing us the trenches separated by no more than a hundred yards and nothing carefully the minefields, which had not been cleared. That evening I talked at length with one of the HVO generals and the local Croat potentates about why they had gone to war with their Muslim neighbors. The fundamental issues were surprisingly familiar: which language (or dialect, depending on your perspective) should be used in the schools, what should be taught there, and who was going to decide. When I asked how the Croats, a minority on the newly formed federation city council, would pursue their interests, the response was telling: the federation rules gave them complete equality—they were not a minority—and nothing could be decided without their consent.

In the morning, we stopped by the Catholic church. The Croat part of town was visibly more prosperous than the Muslim part, and much more damage had been done to the mosque than to the church. "No," the Franciscan priest said, he had no regular contacts with the local imam, though they had spoken once since the fighting (the mosque was no more than a couple of hundred yards away). Nor had he offered any assistance in rebuilding the mosque. My military colleagues pressed the point: Why not organize a reconciliation picnic, parading through both parts of town? The priest looked at them with disbelief and assured them that he had no role to play in local politics (and that he had never seen any of the HVO officers present in church). Vatican officials later told me their frustration at not being able to convince the Franciscans to play a more positive role.

We met General Rasim Delic, the Bosnian Army commander, for the first time in Zenica and traveled together to Kakanj. Imposing and unamiable, he had doubts about a civilian like me and felt more comfortable talking with General Sewall. Delic was clear and realistic about military matters and profoundly ill equipped on civilian questions. He did not hide his distaste for the HVO, which he regarded as illegal and illegitimate, even if unavoidable and necessary as an ally in the current situation. Nor did he mince words about the West's failure to prevent the Serbs from getting military assistance from Belgrade, which paid the Serb Army officers—the Bosnian Army found their pay stubs in the pockets of the dead—and provided at night lots of equipment across pontoon bridges on the Drina. I got a chance to ask Delic a key question: What was his army's war aim? The intelligence community and EUCOM had told me the Bosnian Army

was because they had a majority in central Bosnia as a whole. The Croats were literally fighting to avoid being a minority, believing that there could be no worse fate for their national identity. Neither adversary appeared to have the slightest notion that a minority could thrive in a democracy, or that they were doing harm to themselves by destroying each other. One of my colleagues later told me the story of a meeting with Muslims and Croats at which the Muslims claimed that a decision had been made democratically; the Croats responded that it was not true. "They outvoted us," said that defeated side.

Our wrap-up meeting was in Mostar, where for the first time we were able to talk with HVO commander Tihomir Blaskic, later indicted for war crimes committed during the Croat-Muslim war, and on trial as of July 1999. Tall, young, and good looking, he had replaced the wartime HVO commander—Ante Roso—who gave fascist salutes to his troops. Blaskic deferred on all but strictly military questions to Vladimir Soljic, who was then defense minister of Herzeg-Bosna and later defense minister and president of the federation. Soljic delivered long historical tirades on Croatian culture, of the history of Bosnia—which he doubted really existed—the difficulties of overcoming past events, and the Croats' strict adherence to NATO principles of civilian control over the military and more generally to Western culture, which they were prepared to defend against onslaughts from Islam. Our task at this point was to deliver some sort of sensible idea about how to reconcile the HVO and the Bosnian Army and begin the process of building up a federation army. John Sewall had concluded that integration below the corps level would not be possible in the foreseeable future, but that the civilian and military command structures should be brought together and a combined defense ministry and joint staff formed. This ministry and joint staff might begin to focus not so much on military issues per se, but rather on civilian/military issues, such as war prisoners (or allegations thereof), repatriation of displaced persons, reconstruction of basic infrastructure, and elimination of checkpoints, and only gradually move on to real military command and control once the war was over. It was a modest proposal, one both sides could accept, even in their current state of continuing tension. It was to become an important step toward the Dayton accords.

Sewall and I returned to Bosnia a couple of months later to visit the newly established joint staff at Novi Travnik. It was not much: largely empty rooms in a town where an HVO officer at one end of the main street told me that the arms factory at the other end had been closed for some time, though I had just come back from a run during which I had seen dozens of Muslims headed for work in the clearly active facility. We found it difficult

to get Blaskic and Delic into the same room at the same time. When we succeeded, Delic complained bitterly that Blaskic was not really in charge of the HVO, which was commanded by a Croatian army general who was calling the shots in the campaign to retake large portions of western Bosnia. Muslim officers failed to find the restaurant the Croats took us to, though we had all sat peaceably enough at the meetings during the day.

The Bosnian Federation was, however, winning the war, with the HVO and the Bosnian Army fighting in parallel—and even competing for territory—and without combining their operations. As Sewall and I headed out once again to visit the federation forces in August 1995, President Clinton launched his peace initiative. I immediately called to see whether we were still doing the right thing in supporting the federation, since the peace initiative (the details of which were secret) might not have included it. I was assured that the peace initiative did and that we were doing the right thing, but we received a call in Stuttgart a few days later. Washington was concerned that we not be seen as encouraging the federation to pursue its military success when the White House was calling for a cease-fire. Our efforts on behalf of a federation army were over until Dayton.

I suspected then, and believe now, that the federation—with Croatian support—would have taken Banja Luka within weeks if the HVO and the Bosnian Army had been allowed to fight on. Stories of stiffening Serb resistance were invented to frighten Izetbegovic, who had ample reason to wonder if his army was overextending itself. The American insistence on a cease-fire ended the fighting and saved President Clinton's peace initiative, but it also saved Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic from a vast influx of Serb refugees from Bosnia who would have threatened his hold on power. And it left Bosnia a divided country, one where war criminals are still at large and hundreds of thousands of displaced people and refugees are prevented from going home.

GETTING READY FOR PEACE

The Bosnian Federation was already at peace. I had felt for some time that we had to do more to support reconstruction, reconciliation, and repatriation. The essential ingredient was economic recovery: Croats and Muslims would never really be reconciled until they prospered, preferably together. The Croat-controlled portion of the country had not suffered as much as the Muslim-controlled portion. The thriving Croat wartime economy—based in part on arms smuggling and other black marketeering—threatened to cause a kind of economic partition to parallel the political partition between the Sarajevo government and the Herzeg-Bosna authorities in

Mostar. AID was already at work in Bosnia, channeling very limited resources (now increased to about \$30 million) into federation projects through nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) with a clear focus on ethnic reconciliation (separate but equal projects were forbidden). But Bosnia needed much more than an AID: it needed the U.S. Treasury, and it needed the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

The World Bank and the IMF had already begun meeting with federation officials. I first met the soft-spoken duo of Bosnian financial stability—the aging Muslim central bank governor Kasim Omicevic and the young, soccer-playing Croat finance minister Neven Tomić—on a visit they made to Washington in the early spring of 1995. Tomić, later the Croat deputy prime minister of the post-Dayton Bosnia and Herzegovina, had kept the Croat tax system as close to the Muslim one as possible during the Croat-Muslim war, when he was finance minister of Herzeg-Bosna, in anticipation of reconciliation. Omicevic also seemed committed in that direction and had the additional virtue of having refused to print money for the Sarajevo government—he would issue only local currency during the war against hard currency deposits in the bank. This policy avoided serious inflation in the Muslim-controlled areas (it was avoided in Croat-controlled areas by the use of the Croatian kuna, which closely followed the deutsche mark) and made economic reconciliation a real possibility, though the road to it turned out to be long and hard.

The IMF and the World Bank refused, however, to send people into Bosnia. I managed to convince the U.S. Treasury to do so, using initially a professor from the University of Connecticut, Robert Kravchuk. He was hesitant about entering a war zone, but after a lot of encouragement (and many difficult-to-make phone calls to arrange his appointments in Bosnia), he finally went to Mostar and caught the bug of providing support for the Bosnian Federation. Tax, budget, and other experts followed, paving the way for the much-needed international financial institutions (IFIs). What were they trying to do? There were several big problems: the currencies used in the Croat- and Muslim-controlled areas were different, the payment system that would allow checks to be written in Mostar and cashed in Sarajevo had broken down, the federation had no revenue at all, and customs—when collected—were being deposited to the accounts of Herzeg-Bosna and the Muslim-controlled Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina (not to the federation). The currency problem, we decided early on, was difficult, and a proposition I liked won the day until Dayton (and as it turned out for a long time afterward as well): the deutsche mark, in use throughout the federation, should be allowed to continue to circulate as its de facto currency,

while the Bosnian dinar and Croatian kuna circulated in parallel. The problem, as I (and many others) saw it, was that Bosnia had joined the deutsche mark zone; no federation currency was going to be attractive enough to chase it (or the kuna) out of circulation, and no state existed that could enforce its use. The system was functioning reasonably well, and Bosnia was in fact monetarily where most of Western Europe wanted to be (in the deutsche mark zone), so why fix it?

The payment system, revenue, and customs were more intricate problems. The federation could not begin to operate without revenue, which was all going to two other governments: Herzeg-Bosna and the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the first illegitimate and the second not in control of the territory it claimed. The payments system was essential to reviving commerce within the federation, which all too obviously was still limited to the Croat-controlled areas. So our Treasury experts set out to try to reestablish a common payments system, find some revenue for the federation, prepare its first budget, and reestablish legitimate customs authorities.

It would take much longer than we anticipated, largely because of the enormous political obstacles in the way, and because Dayton interrupted the process. The political obstacles became more difficult as Dayton approached in the fall of 1995. Neither Croats nor Muslims wanted to give up anything in advance of what they expected to be the crucial deal making. The Croats held on to Herzeg-Bosna, the de facto government of the part of the country that the HVO controlled, giving it up was their ultimate bargaining chip. The Muslims held on to the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which in their view was the government of all of Bosnia-Herzegovina and had the right to represent Bosnia abroad, even if it controlled only a small portion of the country. As the second meeting of Friends of the Federation approached in September 1995 in Madrid, I was hectoring them to square this circle, getting the Croats to give up Herzeg-Bosna in favor of the federation and the Muslims to delegate authority over all but essential issues from the republic to the federation.

In Washington, the importance of what I was trying to do was clear enough. Without a strong federation, the peace process to come would be built on an infirm foundation, one that could easily collapse and leave Bosnia in three pieces: Croat, Muslim, and Serb. It was the Muslim ministrate that caused the State Department, the White House, and the Pentagon to be concerned. Partition would likely lead to a greater Croatia and a greater Serbia, a process that would suggest to others (in particular the Kosovars Albanians) that national aspirations could be satisfied through the use of force, and that of course was to be avoided. But it was the “rump” Muslim

Croats. I went to Sarajevo once again, but this time decided to go see Ganic in Fojnica, where he was recuperating in an orthopedic hospital.

My trip there was the first I made overland through Serb lines, the cease-fire having taken full effect. Sarajevo for me had always been an island, a small one surrounded by sharks—not even a toe stuck out in the wrong direction. It was an adventure to climb into an armored Humvee, squat and uncomfortable, and drive up the main street, past the Muslim and Serb checkpoints. Landmines were still visible (they were put on the road at night) as we left the all but leveled Croat neighborhood of Stup and entered the Serb neighborhood of Ilidza, at one end of the airport runway—probably the place from which Serb snipers took potshots at UN aircraft landing in Sarajevo. There was clearly less destruction in these neighborhoods than in Sarajevo, but lots of obvious misery, with packages of cigarettes and gasoline in quart glass jugs and gallon plastic containers the main signs of commerce. Curiosity, anger, dismay greeted the sight of this American-flagged vehicle moving quickly through the streets and on into the countryside. We crossed Croat checkpoints, refusing to stop, and then back into Muslim-controlled territory and the pleasant mountain village of Fojnica, streets crowded with Muslim males, many of them on crutches or showing other obvious signs of war injuries. The bullet-scarred hospital looked out over a Catholic church on the hillside, still guarded by the HVO. I asked Ganic, who was well into his recovery, what he thought the Croats and the Muslims could bring to the meeting in Madrid that would convince the Serbs that the Bosnian Federation was real and would be a serious interlocutor in Dayton. Zubak had been less than forthcoming during our discussions in Sarajevo, though he had made reference to party discussions among both Croats and Muslims that might lead in a good direction. Ganic explained that the major nationalist parties were close to agreement on a scheme that would separate the federation government from the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Ministers were still “double-hatted.” The idea would be to appoint two separate sets of ministers, defining their distinct functions clearly, and divvying up the portfolios in both governments according to an ethnically based formula.

This would be a major step, one that would begin the inevitable process of thinning out the functions of the republic and devolving authority toward the cantons and the municipalities. Why inevitable? Because reducing the functions of the central government was clearly the only way of convincing the Serbs to remain in Bosnia (other than force of arms). It would also help with the Croats, who resented Muslim domination of the national government and, like minorities in many other situations, argued for

state that was expected, under Iranian sponsorship, to cause chronic security problems for Europe and the United States.

The Serbs had already managed to carve out an area largely cleansed of Muslims and Croats. The creation of the federation in March 1994 suggested that Bosnia would be divided between the federation and the Serbs, on the basis of the Contact Group's already-agreed 51/49 split, though many still hoped the federation would become all of Bosnia in due course, and that possibility was purposely left open. Richard Holbrooke began discussions within the State Department as early as the spring of 1995 on how to approach a possible peace negotiation. In a brainstorming roundtable of Bosnia hands, including Roberts Owen and Lloyd Cutler from outside the department, he put forward the notion that the “map” that is, the way in which Bosnia was to be divided internally, could be left to the last, as it would be very difficult to draw. Instead, he wanted to begin with what he termed “constitutional arrangements.” Both our ambassador in Zagreb, Peter Galbraith, and I objected, on grounds that this would lead to the recognition of the Serb Republic and acceptance of ethnic cleansing. Galbraith argued that the “Serb Republic” should be recognized only if it clearly met international human rights standards. We were not only overruled, but also treated thereafter as threats to Holbrooke's broader enterprise, however useful we might be in our more narrowly assigned roles. Criticism was treated as disloyalty.

The American readiness to accept Bosnia's division between the federation and the Serb Republic made the federation even more critical. Only by preserving the integrity of the federation could the collapse into three-way partition be avoided. But Holbrooke, while eager to see the federation preserved, was unwilling to put his own growing prestige behind it. After insisting that the Spanish go ahead with the Friends meeting in Madrid (they were hesitant to do so as the broader negotiation approached), he refused to attend it. I was sent off to Bosnia to prepare for the meeting, it having been made plain to me that no one in Washington would lift a finger but would be glad to place the blame on my shoulders if the federation did not get to Dayton in good shape.

It got there, and in reasonable shape, but it was not an easy road. Nor was the one I traveled in Bosnia. Ejup Ganic, the vice president of the federation, was clearly one of the keys to moving forward politically, but he had been severely injured earlier in the year in an automobile accident (and saved by Croat police, who transported him to a hospital in Split). His interim replacement, Edhem Bicakcic, was a man of serious political weight in Muslim Bosnia, but he was unwilling to move far in dealing with the

to Bosnia the repatriation agreement Holbrooke had announced to the press—though years of constant effort by many people have not yet led to its full implementation. The federation army would be created along the lines John Sewall proposed. We brought in the Muslim and Croat mayors of Mostar, and the Germans took the lead in getting them to agree on a unifying statute for the divided city.

The work went well in an environment that I would describe as a sleep-away camp for adults, some of whom had just finished a war. Holbrooke had chosen the air force base at Dayton in order to isolate the participants and give himself maximum control, both of them and of the press coverage. This made it appear for a few weeks a kind of Olympus, where the gods gathered and occasionally allowed a few mortals in. The reality was of course more mundane. Some of the participants seemed to watch a lot of *America's Funniest Home Videos* in the "sports bar." I spent most of my many waking hours doing a gavotte from one room to another, working out the details of the federation agreement: from Prljic's messy bedroom, to Zubak's impeccable sitting room, back to Izetbegovic's identical sitting room, to the furious Silajdzic and the amiable but unreliable Bosnian ambassador to the United Nations Mohammed Sacirbey, a few words with the Muslim lawyers (always a last-minute stumbling block), back up to see Steiner and his ever-gloomy but profoundly committed associate, Christian Clages. Every once in a while there would be a group meeting, but they were unlike so many we had all attended: short, businesslike, and largely friendly. The Dayton magic Holbrooke had hoped for was working.

I came to appreciate during those ten days as I had not before the position of the Croats. Prljic was particularly effective in convincing me that the Muslims were blocking the federation, because they were holding on to the republic in preparation for an even tougher negotiation with the Serbs. This was true. John Sewall, who came briefly to Dayton to help out with the military portion of the federation negotiations, and I went to see Izetbegovic to ask him to accept eventual amalgamation of the HVO and the Bosnian Army, under a commander in chief who would be the president of the federation. He turned us down flat, insisting on the separate existence of the Bosnian Army and his own role as commander in chief. He did not soften in response to our argument that this would leave the HVO a separate army with its own commander in chief. Nevertheless, we persuaded the Muslims to agree to give up enough of the central government authority that the Croats agreed to give up Herzeg-Bosna and turn its functions over to the federation. It seemed a big triumph at the time, though implementation has taken years.

greater local control, especially of schools. The Croats wanted Izetbegovic to become president of the federation, even if he remained president of the republic, believing that only then would real power be devolved from the republic to the federation. The Muslims, however, thought the Croats were trying to trick Izetbegovic out of the republic presidency and refused to go along.

In order to convince the Muslims to "weaken" the central government, the Croats were going to have to give up Herzeg-Bosna and allow its functions to be transferred to federation institutions. This they refused to do in Madrid, where the German Contact Group representative Michael Steiner and I spent many hours trying to convince Zubak, who refused to budge a comma from what his political party had decided the week before. Madrid was nevertheless useful, as it was a well-attended meeting (about thirty-five countries and many international organizations), at which it was made clear to the Bosnians that they had to move ahead with the federation or risk the loss of aid and a weakened position in negotiations with the Serbs. The Spanish were disappointed, though, because Holbrooke did not come and Washington ignored the event, which unveiled the important idea of separating the federation and republic governments for the first time.

DAYTON FROM A DIFFERENT ANGLE

Dayton began not long after. I was not there for the opening. Holbrooke was continuing to ignore the federation: he wanted it there and knew the importance of it being there, but he wanted to expend none of his own physical energies or political capital on it. He soon found that the Muslims and the Croats were not ready to negotiate with the Serbs until they had sorted out some of their own problems. Holbrooke persuaded them to agree to repatriation of displaced people to four towns in central Bosnia so that he could announce something to the press, an agreement he quickly forgot about (and never wrote down). But he was not going to waste time on the federation. I received a call on the second day, asking me to come immediately, and I arrived in Dayton the next morning.

I was to continue working with Michael Steiner, and over the next ten days we fashioned with the Muslims and the Croats an agreement that foreshadowed much of what Dayton was ultimately about. Authority over all but functions essential to sovereignty and the need to interact with the rest of the world would be devolved from the central government to a separate federation government. Herzeg-Bosna would be dissolved, a federation payments system would be created, and refugees would be repatriated. I got the Muslims and the Croats to write down, sign, and transmit

My biggest problems at Dayton were with the American delegation. First, I was blamed for not having finished up the work on the federation before Dayton. Then, when Steiner and I began to succeed, we were re-sented for having success while the broader negotiation appeared to be falling. Indeed, the Federation Agreement reached after ten days at Dayton was the first real result there and, until the last moment, looked as if it might be the most significant. And there were several moments when the federation negotiations risked contradictions with the broader effort in Dayton, where the Americans were staking out a position in favor of as strong a central government as possible.

One row during the ten days or so I spent in Dayton concerned the central bank. Previous federation agreements had foreseen the formation of a federation central bank, and the federation payments system was an essential step in that direction. Holbrooke, however, had promised the Muslims that he would support the central government institutions, including a central bank (which he wrote into the Constitution that the Americans tabled at Dayton). I was convinced, as were the World Bank and the IMF, that the Serbs would not in fact implement a central bank for some time to come (no matter what they signed) and that one was essential for moving ahead with World Bank and IMF assistance. The federation bank, in this view, would be a stepping-stone, one that would eventually be expanded to include the Serbs and thereby become a central government institution in due course.

Holbrooke wanted none of this. Monetary policy and a single Bosnian currency would have to belong to the central government from the first, and the bank would begin operating within weeks. I was told to shut up about this, and to get World Bank official Christine Wallich to Dayton. I found Wallich somewhere in Germany, on her way back from Sarajevo. She somehow managed to arrive in Washington late that evening and in Dayton the next morning. An early convert to support for the federation, she repeated my line before I told her what it was: a federation central bank could be formed almost immediately and should act as a transition institution (to enable the IMF and World Bank to begin working in Bosnia) until the Serbs agreed to join. Holbrooke, told what she would say, refused to speak with her, even when we met around the quad, though she eventually managed to get in her pitch. He was unmovable. Two years later, there was still no functioning central bank in Bosnia, though eventually a rudimentary one began to operate.

The Germans caused a second row. Behind my back, Steiner began working with the Muslims and the Croats on the division of portfolios in the

new federation government, which we all understood was a precondition for implementing the separation of the federation government from the republic government. Holbrooke, seeing that the text of the federation agreement was finished but not knowing about this side negotiation, consulted directly with Steiner and decided to get Secretary of State Christopher to Dayton to witness the signing of the agreement. The Croats, realizing that this gave them enormous leverage, threatened the evening before the signing (after Christopher's presence had been announced) not to sign unless the personnel question was settled first.

Holbrooke turned on me, casting blame for this snafu (though Steiner had blindsided him as he had me). I was called at midnight to a meeting, asked to explain my having screwed up and was told, toward 1:00 A.M., to go get Steiner. I arrived at Steiner's door to find that the Germans had posted one of their military officers to protect him from being awakened, as Holbrooke had already called demanding that he come over for the meeting. Across the hall, the chief British delegate was having a loud tirade about how the Americans had cut the Europeans out of all the important negotiations. Though I was grudgingly forgiven for not physically engaging the German soldier, the next morning I woke Steiner up and began the process of getting the Croats to back off, or the Muslims to agree to a division of the ministerial posts. Steiner was enormously pleased with himself: he was using the leverage provided by the American secretary of state's visit to get the Muslims to agree on a division of posts in the federation government, but in the end Holbrooke got the Croats to back off their threat not to sign.

The Germans insisted that I sit on the dais with Steiner during the signing, something Holbrooke's people resented. Word of the agreement had been published the day before in the *Washington Post*, with an accurate description of its contents. This meant it could not have been Holbrooke who leaked, as one of his minions commented to me, since he did not understand the details of the agreement. I later realized that I was suspected, though in fact I did not speak with any reporters at Dayton until the briefing Steiner and I gave after the signing. Suspicion was all that was required. I was told to get on the secretary's plane and go back to Washington that evening. Dayton for me was over.

ANOTHER ROUGH WINTER

I was surprised, as nearly everyone was, when Dayton ended in success, but I also knew it meant more work for me on the federation. The agreement we had reached on separating the federation government from that of the

scourged from castoffs of other embassies, and inadequate personnel. I remember more than once having to ask someone to stand up because I needed a chair to sit at a computer.

My own role in the embassy was odd. Not quite staff, not really a visitor. I tried to stay out of the way, but all too often found I had to pitch in on non-federation work to help get the job done. I wrote the cable asking for Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown to visit, because a contact of mine warned that the French and the Swedes were taking the lion's share of new contracts in electric utility reconstruction. I also reported on Bosnian relations with Iran, because key officials would discuss the issue with me. Not everyone was pleased to have a fifth wheel around, and at one point I returned to Sarajevo unexpectedly and found my photograph had been put up on one of the computers as a screen saver, along with other disliked figures: Milosevic and Tudjman to be precise. I laughed it off—and took a copy of the photo home on a disk.

By mid-December 1995, I was eager to get out of Sarajevo in any event. The Croats and the Muslims were beginning to make progress, and I was afraid I would become part of the wallpaper—a familiar part of the surroundings that could be ignored. It was better, I thought, to go away, giving them a few things to get done, and come back in a week or two, the impending visit serving as a deadline for their efforts. It worked fairly well: though they as often as not fell short or missed deadlines, progress was still in the right direction.

On the day I was to leave, along with Air Force Lieutenant Colonel Tony Simpson, a heavy snowfall began. Off to the airport we went in any event. We spent the better part of two days there. The Norwegians who ran the passenger operation movement control (movcon) there explained laughingly that the French had neglected to begin plowing the runways until early in the morning, though any fool knew they should have been plowed almost from the first flake that dropped during the night. In addition, they failed to plow wide enough for the gigantic Russian Illyushins used by the United Nations to land. NATO was already moving in, so there were dozens of planes landing and taking off (though none from the United States as yet). But we had permission to fly only on UN aircraft. Simpson worked long and hard to get us out, talking with pilots and even phoning a secretary in the U.K. Ministry of Defence we had met a couple of months earlier for permission to board a Royal Air Force plane. All to no avail. We finally left on a UN High Commissioner for Refugees flight to Ancona, took the train to Rome, and watched the Dayton signing from the luxury of the Ambasciatori Hotel.

republic and dissolving Herzeg-Bosna would require constant tending and prodding from abroad. So too would many details—down to the color of the federation police uniforms. I was back in Sarajevo a few days after Dayton had ended. Now, though, the path was reasonably clear: the Dayton agreement on the federation had to be converted into legislation and the institutions of the federation nurtured, not the least with money. The Federation Parliament met often and at length, and I became a fixture at its sometimes dull, sometimes lively debates, listening through an interpreter whose understanding of the issues was limited and lobbying for the steps needed to build up federation institutions.

Snow was on the ground again and peace had supposedly arrived, but there was still shooting around the city. The embassy, inundated with congressional visitors whose support would be critical to obtaining essential resources, could no longer provide me with an armored car and a driver, as it had during wartime. I began walking and making my own appointments through “state protocol,” a couple of Bosnian officers who tried to keep up with the schedules of the harried inhabitants of the Presidency building. This worked well enough but gave me the occasional jitters. Walking back to the Holiday Inn one night with \$3,000 in my pocket—there was no way to pay for anything in Sarajevo except with cash, and nowhere to get cash, so it had to be carried in—I was passing the ruined towers of a Bosnian conglomerate when a slow-paced firefight broke out between Muslim snipers in the towers and Serb snipers on the other side of the hotel in Grabavica. The foolishness of what I was doing suddenly seemed obvious, though by the next day I had forgotten that realization. Sometimes people think of this behavior—ignoring danger to get a job done—as courage, but in fact it more closely resembles forgetfulness. I was always careful, at least to obey whatever security rules the embassy imposed, but I rarely thought about the risks or regarded the work as dangerous. Those who did avoided it.

A word about the American embassy is in order. For the next six months, I became more or less the embassy's most frequent visitor. John Menzies, who had picked me up at the airport on my first visit more than a year before, had become first chargé and then ambassador. The embassy had moved out of the Holiday Inn and into its renovated building. The half-dozen American staff had lived for a year in their offices. This was a courageous, hardworking team, with the easygoing, devoted Menzies providing a sense of purpose and mission. Unfortunately, Washington treated them with a lack of respect that made their job doubly difficult: phone calls at all hours every night, constant demands on minor issues, poor equipment

work was "troubleshooting"—removing obstacles one by one as they arose. One day it would be the removal of checkpoints on the road to Mostar, another it would be municipal boundaries for those towns that were divided by the Dayton Interentity Boundary Line that divided the federation from Republika Srpska or voting procedures for people no longer living where they had before the war. Washington was always impatient with the slow pace and the constant unraveling of agreements.

An example will help to illustrate. The Germans, eager as usual to be part of the federation game, scheduled another meeting in Petersberg for late winter 1996, outside Bonn, in the hope that they could take credit for resolution of some of the difficulties then facing the federation. The most dramatic was the question of a federation flag and a coat of arms. The Federation Parliament had held a contest for their design, one that had produced two or three attractive proposals selected by a committee of Croats and Muslims. But the committee did not want to take the political heat for choosing the winner and left it up to Croat president Kresimir Zubak and Bosniak vice president Ejup Ganic of the federation.

Zubak refused to accept any of the contest winners, and there ensued a lengthy and acrimonious debate. The Bosniaks, as was their wont, claimed to be flexible; the Croats insisted that the coat of arms include the entire Croat "checkboard," rather than merely a few squares. In the midst of this heated discussion, the Croat party chief suddenly proposed the coat of arms of the last king of Bosnia, who he knew was a Catholic. The Muslim prime minister, Hasaan Muratovic, remembered that this coat of arms was on the base of a statue in Vienna: an arm holding a sword, he said, noting that the international community might object to the sword. In which case, he suggested, they could use only the arm, cocked in a classic clench-fisted gesture that Europeans use for rude purposes. We all laughed as the prime minister demonstrated the gesture, but it was the only good moment in a long and tortuous discussion. It later turned out that the Muslims accepted the coat of arms of the last king: the sword was a curved Turkish scimitar, but the Croats of course rejected it and denied having proposed it.

At this point, with no prospect for positive results in Petersberg, Steiner decided to postpone the meeting. I had warned Washington that he would do so, several days before in a cable analyzing in detail all the unresolved issues we were then working on. But it turned out that the secretary of state was annoyed at the Europeans for threatening to postpone a Bosnia donors' conference because peace implementation was not going well enough. This additional postponement of the Petersberg meeting angered Warren Christopher. Assistant Secretary for Europe John Kornblum told everyone

On the morning that we had left for Rome, we had been awakened at the Holiday Inn by a louder volley of gunfire than I had ever heard before in Sarajevo, where the sound of distant mortars and machine guns had become background noise. I considered for a moment getting out of bed and looking out the window, but that seemed foolhardy. If I could hear it, I was alive. Why put yourself at risk looking out a window? I rolled over and went back to bed, as if the noise was no more consequential than my next-door neighbor's Harley on Saturday morning. I discovered later that the Serbs had drilled a round of antiaircraft fire into the facade of the hotel, just one empty room from where I was sleeping.

I had always stayed at the Holiday Inn, but that winter decided to try a hotel favored at the time by the journalists, the Bosa. Tucked into the older (but not the oldest) part of the city, the hotel not only was hidden from Serb gunners but also had more heat and electricity than the precariously situated Holiday Inn. But it was also directly across from a noisy discotheque, and the journalists' jeeps would be idling outside by 5:00 a.m. That left little time for peaceful sleep, in a room narrow enough for me to touch opposite walls standing in the middle.

In front of the Bosa one snowy morning, just after I had managed for the first time to change dollars to deutsche marks in Sarajevo, I happened to run into the finance minister, Neven Tomić. As we stood knee-deep in the snow I could see that he was clearly not in an accommodating mood. He asked me to come see him in an hour.

I rounded up a German colleague, Christian Clages, who was working on the federation, and crossed the street to the Finance Ministry. Tomić was furious. With so much work being done on the federation's finances, the Muslims had the day before convened a session of the Republic Parliament, a parliament that had supposedly gone out of business with the signing of the Dayton agreements. The Republic Parliament had granted financial benefits worth several billion dollars to the members of the Bosnian Army, ignoring entirely the HVO as well as the IMF and the World Bank. Jadranko Prlić called while we were with Tomić and gave me an earful. I could do little at the time, but the incident reminded me of how much the federation problems were two sided, and how important it was to get to work on building up a real defense ministry.

By late January or early February 1996 the new federation government had been formed and approved in the Federation Parliament. I was in Sarajevo a great deal during that period, trying to ensure that the new institutions were up and running, including the cantons and municipalities as well as the ministries, police, customs authority, and courts. A lot of the

controlled territory, where a quarter to a third of the total was said to be skimmed off.

At first, it was even difficult to find Cengic. After several abortive attempts, I complained to Ganic, who arranged a meeting. The bearded cleric with piercing eyes sat nervously at a table in his office, using a translator despite his more than servicable command of English. He wore a tie, an obvious concession to his new position and to the need to deal with the likes of me, as he had been described to me as always wearing the buttoned-up collarless shirt familiar as the uniform of Iranians.

As uncomfortable in his new position as he was in his tie, Cengic of course assured me that he supported the federation and would do his best to make it work. He also made it clear that he was not pleased that President Izetbegovic, with whom he had spent time in prison, had chosen this approach. It would be difficult, he resented the Croats' skimming off arms during the war, and blamed Soljic for it. Cengic would be a stickler, he made clear, for Muslim interests.

I expected nothing less and knew that Soljic felt the same way about Croat interests. At that point, they faced three fundamental issues: Who would be commander in chief of the federation armed forces? How integrated would the HVO and the Bosnian Army become? How would the Defense Ministry be organized?

I had already met repeatedly with the "defense experts," a group of Bosniak and Croat officials who had been charged with resolving these issues. Their proposed resolutions had met with political resistance. From my perspective, it was a godsend to have political heavyweights like Soljic, who was tied closely to Croatian defense minister Goyko Susak (they went to grade school together!), and Cengic, who was then notoriously close to Alija Izetbegovic and well connected with General Rasim Delic and others both by professional and family ties. But first I had to get them into the same room.

This proved difficult but not impossible. After several false starts and complaints by me to Zubak and Izetbegovic, Soljic and Cengic appeared on opposite sides of a table in the minister's conference room, each with his own retinue of experts, to expound their sharply differing points of view. Izetbegovic must remain commander in chief of the Bosnian Army, even after it became part of the federation forces, Cengic said; Izetbegovic had no business commanding a federation force, the Croats claimed, since he had no position in the federation. They wanted Zubak, president of the federation, as commander in chief of the Federation Army. Soljic wanted to protect Croats from being drafted into the Bosnian Army; they should

it was my fault, without mentioning that I had warned Washington what was about to happen and had been sent no instructions to resist the postponement.

This was typical. Most people in Washington cared more for what was happening there than for the reality on the ground in Bosnia. Each issue was confronted with an "action plan," one that would establish bureaucratic primacy, but no one ever worried about checking that something was being done to follow through. This approach came closest to disaster during early 1996 when the "Serb sububs" of Sarajevo, as they were known to the media, were to be handed over to the federation, as provided for in the peace agreement. This happened in the middle of a massive bureaucratic battle: Robert Gallucci, an ambassador at large, had been appointed to lead Dayton implementation, which Kornblum refused to give up. Kornblum had the usual "action plans" prepared, but nothing was really done because priority was given to the bureaucratic fight. I was in Sarajevo during this period and sat in on a meeting with the High Representative's office (the international group charged with overseeing Dayton implementation) and Ambassador Menzies. It was clear that the international community was ill prepared for the turnover, a fact that was reported to Washington. Michael Steiner, by then the number two in the High Representative's office, tried to prevent the Serb exodus from Sarajevo by getting agreement that the Serb police be allowed to stay during the transition. The Serbs then used the police to chase their own population out. The "Serb sububs," none of which had a Serb plurality before the war, burned.

SPRING DEFENSE

With peace came the very real need to move further in integrating the Muslim and Croat military establishments, the project John Sewall and I had already worked up until we were stopped in August 1995. When the governments of the republic and the federation were separated the next winter, Vladimir Soljic, the Herzeg-Bosna minister of defense, became minister of defense of the federation. Hasan Cengic became vice minister. Cengic was to me a great challenge. A Muslim cleric who headed the Islamic Center in Zagreb before the war, he was not seen in Sarajevo during the war but was at the hub of Muslim efforts to acquire arms, principally from Iran, Turkey, and Malaysia, in violation of the UN embargo. This he did with considerable success. He was reputed to be a mysterious figure according to the Croats, a Muslim extremist who had surely enriched himself with arms dealing. They might know, since all the arms he smuggled into Bosnia during the war came through Croatian and Croat-

This was workable, however, only if the Croats and the Muslims agreed to a more integrated chain of command below the level of the presidency. Both sides agreed, to my dissatisfaction, to exclude the president and the vice president of the federation from the chain of command. The Defense Ministry would be fully integrated, as would be the Joint Staff, as John Sewall had proposed, with separate components at the corps level and below. Some integrated special units would also be possible. As the presidency exercises its command authority over armies directly only in wartime, this arrangement—while peculiar—represented a major advance over the past.

The question of the draft proved extraordinarily complicated. While Soljic and Cengic had parallel interests—to avoid any member of their ethnic group being forced to serve in the other's army—they could not agree on how to achieve this goal. Cengic refused to concede to Soljic any right of draftees to choose; he wanted an appeals procedure that would in practice guarantee the same result, but without doing any damage, in his eyes, to the authority of the state.

We were close to resolving this issue when "train and equip" intervened and took the matter out of my hands. At Dayton, Holbrooke had promised the Muslims arms supplies and training to enable them to defend themselves against the other half of their country, controlled by the Serbs. The arms were to go to the federation. This program had trouble getting off the ground because the United States insisted on controlling it but at first did not want to supply any arms. By the spring, the Pentagon had agreed to supply weapons and the Islamic states had agreed to provide money. The program was put in the hands of Jim Pardew, a retired U.S. Army colonel who had been on Holbrooke's Dayton team.

There was no way I could compete with Pardew, who had several hundred million dollars of the arms and training that the Muslims and the Croats wanted. I continued to mediate the defense issues into May, when we held a meeting on the federation at Blair House. This was what Kornblum termed a "Federation Forum," namely a U.S.-only effort to support the federation, with some support from the Germans. He preferred this formula to the broader-based Friends of the Federation, believing that it would give him the clout needed to solve the federation issues he thought I had not resolved quickly enough.

Pardew nailed together an agreement of sorts at Blair House, though it included points on integration of the HVO and the ABiH that the Croats immediately disowned. It was enough for "train and equip" to proceed. I realized it was time to move on—successes of this sort were not my style. When the Bureau of Intelligence and Research called to ask me to direct

be allowed to choose, he thought, either the HVO or the army. Cengic viewed this "right to choose" as an unacceptable challenge to the authority of the state. He wanted complete integration, down to the unit level, in a unified federation force (under Izetbegovic's command), something Soljic was clearly not prepared to accept.

These were not easy meetings, and they were often made more difficult by events occurring outside the meeting room. At one point, I had to detour away from the main issues because Cengic thought two Muslims had been kidnapped by the HVO. It turned out they had driven their truckload of supplies across the Interentity Boundary Line that divided the federation from Republika Srpska into an area known for black marketeering. There the Serb authorities arrested them. But before we had sorted all this out, the Muslims had seized several Croats whom Cengic was threatening to do in if the Croats did not release the two Muslims unharmed. I had some very tough words with Cengic about this kind of misbehavior. Though he appeared to ignore me, his translator told me after the meeting that I had done well. The Croats were released the next day.

Cengic and Soljic did not disagree as much as they thought, but it took awhile to convince them. Both were strong nationalists, each interested in protecting his own "nationality." The more I listened, the more I thought they sounded alike: mirror images of each other. Soljic wanted the Croat President of the federation, Zubak, not to be subordinated to Izetbegovic, the president of a republic that was going out of business. Cengic would not tolerate Izetbegovic being subordinated to Zubak, or left out of the chain of command. Soljic wanted to ensure that no Croat was drafted against his will into the Bosnian Army; Cengic was no happier about the prospect of a Muslim being drafted into the HVO. Cengic wanted full integration, but only if the Federation Army was clearly under Izetbegovic's command. Soljic resisted integration, but could tolerate it if Zubak was in charge.

The question of commander in chief was resolved first. I told the Croats that they could not hope to choose the commander in chief of the Bosnian Army any more than the Muslims could choose the commander in chief of the HVO. The best they could hope for was equal treatment, which fortunately had been provided for in the Dayton Constitution. This put the Croat member of the collective presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina (presumably Zubak, though not yet chosen) on an equal level with the Muslim member of the collective presidency (presumably Izetbegovic). Izetbegovic would no longer be on a "higher" level and they therefore need not continue to oppose his role in the command structure. He would remain commander in chief of the Bosnian Army, just as Zubak would remain commander in chief of the HVO, with neither subordinated to the other.

of views. Steiner's instincts were more American than European—he truly believed a multiethnic Bosnia could be created despite the war. We were both approached repeatedly by the Croats about implementation of an agreement, made at the time of the Washington Agreement in March 1994, for division of Bosnia's ambassadorial posts between Croats and Muslims. I discovered only casually that Steiner was ignoring these pleas as assiduously as I was—the idea of ethnically divvying up the embassies was unappealing to both of us. Ignoring the Croat push—which would have led among other things to replacement of the Jewish ambassador in Washington—was our admittedly small protest against the many ethnically based provisions of the federation agreements.

More generally, U.S.-European relations on federation-building were helped by division of labor. While military matters were left entirely to the United States, the Europeans in March 1994 took on the southern Bosnian city of Mostar, the site of some of the worst fighting between Croats and Muslims, as their exclusive project. They set up a municipal administration, headed by the courageous and amusing Hans Koschnik, and poured money into reconstruction in an effort to showcase a distinct European contribution to the Croat-Muslim peace. The results were meager: well past Dayton, the city remained divided, though there has been gradual improvement, especially in freedom of movement and in the physical infrastructure. The Americans would occasionally try to tinker with Mostar—unsuccessfully at the first anniversary of the federation in March 1995 and a year later at the first Dayton implementation meeting in February 1996 in Rome, when a maddeningly trivial issue concerning the geographical definition of the central district of the city was resolved under extraordinary pressure from Holbrooke. But for the most part the Americans regarded Mostar as a European responsibility and left it to the Europeans to decide how to go about things. This was certainly true at Dayton, where I was briefed regularly by the Germans on the Mostar negotiations but purposely avoided attending the meetings.

My bigger problems were obviously with other U.S. mediators, who tended to ignore what I was doing at best and interfere at worst. As attention shifted away from the problems of the federation to ending the Serb-Muslim war, I found it more and more difficult to capture resources or influence the shape of the outcome, as illustrated by my failure to convince the powers that were at Dayton to allow the federation central bank to be formed as a transitional measure. This was to some extent understandable: there were higher priorities and I had to adapt to them. What was annoying was the failure to take the federation into account in the broader picture,

its European office, a job that entailed thinking and writing about the Balkans but did not require me to go there, I accepted.

I made one more trip to Bosnia, for the next meeting of the Federation Forum in June 1996. Much pomp, some ceremony, but no serious progress. Cengic showed up toward the end of the meeting and made it clear that any progress I had made in our many hours of talks had been blown because of Kornblum's refusal to have him in Washington for the Federation Forum meeting. He became totally obstructionist, and Washington convinced Izetbegovic to fire him a few months later.

LESSONS LEARNED

The Bosnian Federation was still shaky when I left, and I suppose it will always be, if it survives at all. But all things are relative. When I began, it existed only on paper. When I left, it had its own institutions: government, ministries, budgets, taxes, constitutional court, cantons, and municipalities. Some of these were truly functional, others not. But the direction was clear: more and more Muslims and Croats would resolve their differences within these institutions. Under constant international pressure, to be sure, but increasingly with a sense that their destinies lay in the same country.

The parties to the mediation efforts I undertook were not the tightest limit on my capacity to resolve conflicts: it was instead the lack of confidence and support—or at times interest—in Washington. I do not regret the effort—it was useful, and someone somewhere in Bosnia has reason to thank me for it. That will have to be enough of a reward.

Beyond that, relatively few problems arose specifically from the multiparty character of the mediation I was involved with. Friends of the Federation, UN and UNHCR officials in Bosnia and Croatia, European Union and High Representative officials, even Stabilization Force (SFOR) commanders and many others were generally supportive of the federation-building efforts I was engaged in, which were after all nothing but implementation of an already signed agreement. There were no vital interests for the United States or other major players in the details of how most of the federation issues were resolved. No one in Washington, Paris, or Bonn cared how the federation municipalities were formed, or what color the police uniforms were. It mattered only that the issues be resolved, sooner rather than later. While many people questioned whether the federation would last, most were willing to pitch in and help, if only because the alternative was a return to three-sided warfare.

I worked especially closely with the Germans, Michael Steiner and Christian Clages in particular. This was due in part to a remarkable convergence

unless forced to do so. Washington's focus was constantly on the next day's headlines, no matter how lofty the rhetoric about building up multiracial democracy. The federation provided mostly negative headlines—it was always on the verge of collapse or otherwise an embarrassment or hindrance—so Washington looked elsewhere for its triumphs. The slow progress that was made just was not sufficient to gain points with the press.

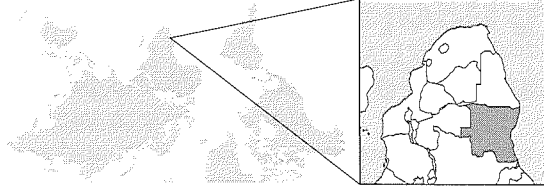
There were, of course, many setbacks, but in retrospect what really worked were those things that had a constituency in the international community. Virtually nothing was “self-enforcing” because the agreements had been imposed on unwilling parties. In the spring of 1996, for example, Steiner and I persuaded the Croats and the Muslims to agree to remove all the roadblocks and checkpoints within the federation. With the support of the NATO troops, who much preferred open roads, this happened overnight. We also persuaded the Croats and the Muslims to agree to divide the customs revenues between the federation and the central government, but nothing really worked until the European Union took its customs monitors, who during the war had been deployed on the border between Serbia and Bosnia to enforce sanctions, and put them on the Croatian-Bosnian border, where they managed over a period of months to direct most of the customs revenues into the right accounts. The American Bar Association set up the Federation Constitutional Court. UNHCR was the critical ingredient in almost all successful repatriation operations (as well as many unsuccessful ones).

The peace between Croats and Muslims is still a fragile one, though the many institutional forms it now takes are clearly more durable than the empty words of the past. What we have succeeded in doing in part is to channel their conflicts into institutional frameworks. Their mutual distaste and distrust are still strong, but not lethal. When the prime minister and deputy prime minister of the federation visited Washington in 1998, I asked—as the first person to be paid a full-time salary working on the federation—why we should have confidence in them now, after so many false starts and half-fulfillments. Amused by this reminder of ancient history, they responded that more than six thousand people now work for the Bosnian Federation. Institutions, not intentions, are what count.

NOTE

The views and opinions expressed in this chapter are solely the author's and do not necessarily reflect those of the U.S. Department of State.

Background to Chapter 22



The United Nations in Angola: Post-Bicesse Implementation

The long and costly war between the MPLA and UNITA turned toward negotiation when neighboring Namibia reached a peace agreement (see chapter 10) and the Cold War came to an end. The Bicesse Accords officially ended the Angolan conflict and signaled that it was time to prepare for the next phase of the peace process. Although mandated only to observe and verify, the United Nations both facilitated the implementation of the Bicesse Accords and intervened in an active conflict to forge a new settlement. This impartial two-year effort led to free and fair elections; subsequently, however, the civil war resumed. Renewed UN mediation led to the Draft Protocol of Abidjan, which eventually became the Lusaka Protocol. Despite these efforts, the civil war still rages.

MAJOR ACTORS

- MPLA (Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola): the government of Angola, led by President José Eduardo dos Santos
- UNITA (National Union for the Total Independence of Angola): the opposition, led by Jonas Savimbi
- United Nations
- Troika: the United States, the Soviet Union, and Portugal

IMPORTANT DATES

- 1975: Angola is granted independence