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Dayton History Project

INTERVIEW

FINAL

WARREN CHRISTOPHER

U.S. Secretary of State

October 22, 1996

Participants:

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
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Contents:

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Warren Christopher Interview
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DEREK CHOLLET (DC): ...actually, as background, I've read the book you were involved with on the Iranian hostage crisis with the council, which is sort of a model for this sort of project. To begin, I guess, we could either start this with the questions or if there is anything in particular that's fresh in your mind that you might want to begin with, that'd be great.

WARREN CHRISTOPHER (WC): I might begin by saying that in the Spring of 1995, it began to appear that UNPROFOR had run its course or was outliving its usefulness. We had based our policy for a rather long time on UNPROFOR, defended it stoutly, and felt that it was the best of the poor alternatives that we had available. But in early 1995, it became apparent that the rules of engagement and the attitudes of the commanders of UNPROFOR were rendering it quite ineffective. At the same time, Derek, there was increasing pressure from the Congress to unilaterally lift the embargo, and resolutions to that effect. We opposed those on the ground that they would inevitably lead to the termination of UNPROFOR and that they'd make the United States responsible for the situation in Bosnia. But they had very strong Congressional support, and, more than that, I think we were growing increasingly frustrated with UNPROFOR as a way to address this problem.

The election of Chirac in the spring brought new emphasis on a bolder approach. As you know, Chirac came here -- I don't remember the exact date [June 14th] -- with his proposal for a Rapid Reaction Force which he pressed on the President and which we agreed to support. There was the series of calls between the President and Speaker Gingrich and Senator Dole and then the visit by Chirac to Capitol Hill. Now, that was a very important part of the background, and I would say that the arrival of Chirac on the scene coincided with our own frustration over the effectiveness of UNPROFOR and caused us to begin to look for new ways to address the problem.

The situation, then, was seriously aggravated by the fall of Srebrenica which caused Prime Minister Major to take a bolder step than he had ever taken before by calling the London Conference. Just before the London Conference, we began to get word of the French proposal that Gorazde be resupplied by helicopter train -- a number of helicopters flying missions into Gorazde and basically to relieve the siege of Gorazde. That was analyzed by our military, and they found it defective for various reasons. At about the same time, because UNPROFOR was regarded as ineffective and also because there was the threat of unilateral lift, there was increasing talk among the Allies about the need to withdraw UNPROFOR. The British, French, and others indicated that they had about lost their own patience with UNPROFOR and were prepared to withdraw it, or, at least, threatened to withdraw it, but that was associated with the idea that perhaps withdrawal, ironically enough, would become impossible. The Serbs would oppose it for their own reasons; some women might oppose it by

lying down in front of the troops, for quite different reasons. In any event, withdrawal seemed very difficult.

NATO, however, felt an obligation to assist in any withdrawal -- that had been a long-standing commitment -- so a discussion began on NATO's Op-Plan number 40-104. I felt that Op Plan 40-104 was not sufficiently nuanced, that it was an all-or-nothing approach to the matter. It assumed that the NATO troops in assisting the withdrawal would have to fight their way in and fight their way out. The proposal envisioned the number of troops that would be necessary to do that and assumed the need basically to occupy the country in order to assure the withdrawal. At least, that was a way to characterize or caricature the plan. I frequently talked in inter-agency circles about the need for a more nuanced approach, but the military planners at NATO were quite determined to follow this course that I described.

That was the background for the comments made that night [June 14] after the Chirac dinner. We were just standing around with the President a few minutes after the Chiracs had left, and Dick Holbrooke commented on Op Plan 40-104, basically taking the same position as I did, but also telling the President that he didn't think we had any practical opposite options but to go along with it because of the commitment we earlier made to support the withdrawal if the troops got in trouble.

Srebrenica, as I said, produced the London Conference, and the London Conference was a very significant event because, for the first time, the NATO allies were prepared to contemplate heavy air attacks. The United States' role at the London Conference was a very significant one. On the one hand the French were proposing

the helicopter train into Gorazde, to rescue Gorazde; the British were prepared to be more forward-leaning on air power than before but we were doubtful as to how far would you go. Many other of the Europeans were very reluctant to be more robust. Foreign Secretary Rifkind had just recently taken over from Douglas Hurd; this was his first big international conference. He was in the chair. So it was a time when the United States had to assert its leadership, and we did. I talked to Prime Minister Major about the need to support a vigorous air campaign if Gorazde should be attacked. Part of the history here is that after Srebrenica fell, the whole focus was, would Gorazde be next? And was there some way we could protect Gorazde? It was too late to protect Srebrenica or, indeed, Zepa, but we should lay down a marker on other safe areas. I talked to the Prime Minister and urged him along those lines. Foreign Secretary Rifkind did a very good job of managing the conference at which there was no great enthusiasm for the course we were advocating. But the United States was behind it, Britain got behind it, so we were able to produce a significant commitment that in the event of an attack on Gorazde, it would be met by "substantial and decisive air power." That was the phrase. It was also part of the thesis of the London Conference that we would not be deterred by the fact that there might be some hostage-taking or that there might be some risks to UNPROFOR.

So, the London Conference was a watershed event in terms of what NATO was prepared to do. Now, two things happened after that, that had not been accorded -- at least in my judgment -- sufficient weight. First NATO met the following Monday and Tuesday and basically not only acted on the results of the London Conference, but

extended it. And if you look at the NATO documents, you will see that NATO endorsed the use of air power -- substantial and decisive air power -- in the event that Gorazde was attacked, but also brought the same concept to bear on the other safe havens, and that turned out to be a very important factor.

DC: Now, did you go into London hoping that that would be the result, or, in terms of not just Gorazde rules, but rules protecting all the safe areas?

WC: We came out of London hoping to protect all the safe areas.

DC: Right.

WC: But we didn't get that at London.

DC: Right. But you went into London hoping to get it?

WC: Right.

DC: I see.

WC: But we didn't get it there. And also, in the first days of that next week, in addition to what happened at NATO, we had serious conversations with the United Nations to try to ensure that they would not stand in the way of taking the actions as agreed on at the London Conference, that is, substantial and decisive air power in the event of an attack. In practical terms, that meant that the Secretary General would no longer retain his dual-key, that he would no longer exercise his second key, and that he would put that in the hands of NATO. I had conversations with Boutros Ghali which were firm -- not unfriendly, but firm -- to emphasize that this was the thrust of the London Conference. I told him that the London Conference represented the leading

participants in the UN as far as Europe is concerned, and he shouldn't stand in the way of NATO taking this action if there were another safe area attacked. And...

DC: Was he standing in the way?

WC: The UN always had been a barrier to the exercise of air power except in a very limited fashion. The Secretary General was relying on his generals on the scene, and they were always preoccupied with the protection of their troops and thus did not want to have an air campaign. I have this chronology over here.

CHRIS HOH (CH): This is the calendar.

DC: That's it. The calendar. Yes, the NAC decision is in...the dual-key and the extension aren't in the calendars.

WC: Right. *(looking through calendars)*

DC: Well, then, right at the same time, that same week, we had the beginning of the Muslim-Croat offensive in western Bosnia. What were your views or concerns on that?

WC: Well, it's certainly complex and my memory may also be somewhat blurred. But my recollection about it is that, to the extent that the Muslims and Croats were trying to relieve the Bihac pocket -- which had been attacked at that time -- the offensive seemed to us to be justified and we supported it. There was limitation on our support because we thought that moving on to attack Banja Luka was a bridge too far. And then, at the same time, we had the Croats attacking the Krajina. As I recall, our position was that this was an attack into a UN safe area and so we criticized it. In hindsight, one can see that there were some useful results accomplished by these

offensives in the Krajina, but I think the record would show that we were not supportive during that period.

Now, during this period, after the London Conference, and actions by NATO, and Boutros Boutros-Ghali, we were turning our attention to developing a new strategy. This is basically the strategy that led to the Lake-Tarnoff mission. At the end of that month I left for an extensive trip to Asia, ending up in Hanoi. Hence I was following matters at a distance, but I was getting drafts of memoranda that were being presented to the President. The most important paper, I think, was the one with the instructions that Tony Lake took with him. As often happens, the background papers merged into the instructions, and the instructions become the decision document.

DC: Right.

WC: Some of the interagency differences we had in the preparation of the papers disappeared when we were able to formulate the instructions. In my next direct encounter with the issue, I was talking to Tony Lake on the telephone from the plane on my return, or conceivably from Hawaii, I'm not sure which. I talked to him about the basic thrust of the instructions and urged him to take Peter Tarnoff with him as the State Department representative, which he was very glad to do.

DC: Do you remember when this might have been?

WC: It was, like, on the 7th of August.

DC: OK.

WC: Conceivably the 6th, Derek, but probably the 7th. And then I returned on the night of the 7th and attended a meeting, I remember, in the Cabinet Room on the 8th.

DC: Eighth? OK. Was that the evening meeting when you went over the points with the President?

WC: No. That was the morning meeting.

DC: OK.

CELINA REALUYO (CR): Actually, the 9th.

WC: Was it the 9th?

DC: Right before Lake and Tarnoff were to go off.

WC: Right, right. I had just returned. I returned on the 8th?

CR: You returned on the night of the 8th by about 11 o'clock, and the first appointment you had was a pre-scheduled meeting at the White House, on that Wednesday, where you met with Mr. Lake and then the President.

WC: Derek, it is likely that the call was, basically, one day before I returned.

DC: OK.

WC: I remember that meeting quite vividly because the President asked me what I thought about this approach. I said I was clearly supportive of Tony's mission and had been kept abreast of it as I'd been traveling. So why don't I stop there and let you ask questions you might have.

DC: OK. I guess, just a quick follow-up: Did you have a conversation with the President before this August 9th morning meeting on the points?

WC: No.

DC: No. OK.

WC: That assumption was in your prepared questions, but I don't think I did.

DC: OK. Someone else had thought maybe you did.

WC: I talked to Tony from either Hawaii or the plane.

DC: OK. Well, that's good. And then, actually, one other follow-up related to the papers, I think, you got this morning. You mentioned already your concerns about the inflexibility of the 40-104 plan and relaying those concerns to the President. You also relayed those concerns, again, in your night-note of July 6, in which he clearly agreed with you.

WC: Right.

DC: Do you know if anything was ever acted upon? I mean, it looked as though the President was willing to listen to this.

WC: I believe Tony Lake followed up on my recommendations. In any event, however, my suggestions quickly became overtaken by events on the ground which made Op Plan 40-104 unnecessary. I think the night notes may have been a spur to energize him to try to find a different strategy. I had always thought that we were committed to NATO to carry out 40-104 but that it was the worst of all possible choices.

DC: Right.

WC: Because we would have to put our troops on the ground to crown a failure and not to achieve a success.

DC: Right. I see. And then one final follow-up: On July 1st -- on another one of the papers that was given to you this morning -- you got a memo written by Bob Frasure with a cover note from Tarnoff about a new diplomatic initiative calling for a two-president conference of some sort and renewed negotiations at a higher level with

Milosevic. Tarnoff, on the cover, relates that his recommendation would be for you to raise this with Lake as soon as possible. Did that ever occur?

WC: We were talking all through that period about a new approach. I'm sure I mentioned the Frasure approach because it was really part of the give-and-take -- a lot of discussion -- during that period.

DC: I see.

CH: You mentioned, if I could jump in, this give-and-take and your sense that the military plan was a sort of all-or-nothing approach, but, what do you think were the determining factors in persuading the President that we really had to pursue a new initiative? To what extent, particularly, did the Chirac visit make a difference, do you think, in his thinking?

WC: I think the Chirac visit was a significant factor in his being energized on this subject, but there were a number of others including the situation in the Congress, the deteriorating situation on the ground, and the fall of Srebrenica. The President just felt that we did not have a strategy for a final outcome but we were, as he said, "kicking the can down the road." So, he was frustrated by where we were and was urging us to develop a new strategy. Of course, this is a problem that had vexed many of us for a long time. But there were a number of things that came into focus, I think, that caused this renewed effort. As I said, particularly in my mind, in the Spring of 1995, it appeared that UNPROFOR simply did not have a satisfactory approach for the future at this time, and so our stalwart support for UNPROFOR was losing its broad basis.

CH: I see.

DC: Well, then, we'll move on to what I've been calling the "getting-to-Dayton" phase, which are, essentially, the shuttles led by Richard Holbrooke. One thing that I'm curious about is, after the Mt. Igman accident we had the inclusion of Roberts Owen on the negotiating team. I was wondering, what were your thoughts about including a lawyer on the team? Because, to me, this is a departure in our negotiating strategy that rather than just negotiating a settlement among all parties, we're trying to create a settlement and create lasting institutions in Bosnia. And Owen, obviously, was intricately involved in that.

WC: I was on vacation at the time of the Mt. Igman accident. I remember getting a call from Strobe Talbott on the morning, foreshadowing this very tragic result. I knew immediately that I needed to come back to Washington. I saw that a principal reason for my coming back was to reorganize the team so that the team could go back to Bosnia. I talked to the President that morning, the Mt. Igman morning, and it was clear that he wanted us to continue this effort. From the conversation between him and Dick Holbrooke, he certainly understood Dick's desire to come home with the bodies. So I immediately came back to Washington and was engaged in the discussions to put together a new team. I felt that the initial discussions in Europe had gone well enough and then far enough that now we needed to think of the proposed governmental structure that might come out of this shuttle. It seemed to me that we lacked anybody on the team who had had significant experience in drafting international documents, anyone who was basically an international lawyer. Of course, I'd had experience with Roberts Owen's skills, not only as a draftsman, but in

bringing discordant elements together in the drafting process in Algiers in 1980. So, in addition to the other members of the team, I suggested Owen because I felt the time was coming when these "Getting-to-Dayton" documents would have real significance. The things that were being put on paper there in the course of the shuttle were going to have a profound effect on the government structures of the future. Dick was fully supportive of this effort to get somebody who would be thinking ahead as to what kind of a structure we should be aiming for.

DC: I see. Incidentally, did your experiences with the Iranian negotiations help you sort of look for certain sink holes?

WC: I guess that's...

DC: I mean, probably unconsciously they did, but...

WC: I've been in a number of difficult negotiations over the years. The Iranians were among the most difficult, and these parties presented their own rather high obstacles to results.

CH: You put that in the past tense. *(laughter)*

DC: OK. I guess the first major event related to the shuttles was, of course, the Sarajevo marketplace shelling of the 28th of August. Do you recall any ways in which you pressed for NATO air strikes to begin? We know, say, what the shuttle team was doing. We have less of a sense of what was going on here in Washington in reaction to this.

WC: I remember our discussions here. I remember the contact we made with NATO, saying that here's the precise case that we had in mind when the Gorazde rule was

extended to other safe havens. And so we were advocating and supporting strong action by NATO.

DC: But did you talk with Secretary Perry, or the President, or...?

WC: I'm sure I talked to Secretary Perry about it. I don't remember having talked to the President. I was in very close contact with Willy Claes. I had talked to Claes about broadening the London results; getting the Gorazde rules more broadly applied. I probably talked to him, either directly or through Ambassador Hunter, and said now is the time for NATO to act; you won't be hamstrung by the dual-key; now is the time.

DC: I see. And then, another sort of very confusing stage of the air strikes was when we had a pause only after two days of strikes to allow the Bosnian Serbs time, in Janvier's words, "to comply." And then we worked very hard to get the pause ended and the strikes to resume. Do you recall any conversations you might have had during that period?

WC: Not specifically, Derek. I have a recollection of talking to Dick Holbrooke about it, and Dick saying, "Well, we can take a day off." And our military advisers, I think were saying to us that there were some military reasons that a day off would fit their operational plans. I also do remember that when Serb compliance was deemed unsatisfactory by Holbrooke and our team, we got behind the continuation of the bombing.

DC: I see. Now jumping ahead a few weeks to your first and very crucial involvement in the negotiations in the final talks to get what have become known as the "Further Agreed Principles," the New York principles, worked out September 25th and 26th at

the UN. And these, by all accounts, were very late night, tense negotiations in which each side was trying to whittle away a little bit of what they had already promised. Do you recall anything specific from any conversations you might have had?

WC: I recall making a telephone call to Izetbegovic in New York urging that he agree to the proposal we had made relating to the Principles. I recall feeling that he had agreed with me, only to have Sacirbey tell me in Ambassador Albright's office later that morning that there was some doubt about it. I had a firm exchange with Sacirbey about this, telling him that the matter had been agreed to by his president, and that we would proceed on that basis.

DC: And then, if I recall correctly, you went into a Contact Group meeting, opened it, and then closed it right away to go back and work this out.

WC: Right.

DC: And was the Contact Group apprised of this?

WC: I think I simply said that we'd found this difficulty and we thought it was essential to resolve it. I don't remember how much we revealed to them about the details.

DC: I see.

CH: And they weren't involved, really, in trying to resolve it.

WC: Right.

CH: I remember, having been there as well, that you spent a lot of time in going back and forth and trying to, essentially, get the Foreign Minister to accept what his president had accepted.

DC: And this had been something he had accepted, I think, in an early morning phone call with you, right?

WC: Right.

DC: At this time, the Croats and the Muslims were continuing their offensive in western Bosnia, and Holbrooke had been able to get agreement on September 19th from Izetbegovic and Tudjman not to take Banja Luka, but he felt it might be advantageous to the negotiations if the offensive went on for a few more days because they could take up some towns that were provided to them by the Contact Group map. He actually wrote to you saying, this was what he thought ought to happen. Now, he expressed that there was some reluctance to do this here in Washington. Do you recall any conversations you might have had with him or with others about when to try to seek a cease-fire?

WC: Derek, I can't recall more except that I thought Banja Luka was further than they should have gone.

DC: Right.

WC: And I do have a recollection that Dick was pressing the envelope, that he wouldn't have been disappointed if they had gone further.

DC: Right. Do you recall feeling that was wise?

WC: His pressing on that?

DC: Yes, his view to press the envelope a little bit.

WC: I felt that they had gone as far as they should go; that we had reaped the benefits of their actions. But I can't attach my view to a particular city.

DC: Right.

WC: Exactly where they should have stopped...my memory is not that refined.

DC: OK. Well, shortly after, or actually simultaneously with Holbrooke actually getting a cease-fire, we had an agreement to get the parties to come to an international conference and it was decided that it would be in the U.S. Now, do you recall your opinion on whether a conference should be in the U.S. or Europe? What sort of models were you looking to, in terms of types of conferences?

WC: We considered a wide variety of models. I, ultimately, felt that this is an instance where we should give great weight to the views or the recommendation of the negotiator. Holbrooke had been with the parties; he had a firm recommendation as to where the U.S. could be most effective, and that was in the United States. So when we came to look for locations, I think that the idea of a location some distance from Washington perhaps came as much from others here at the State Department as from me. A search was made by the people here in this Department for various sites. Dayton was not the first one we looked at, but it seemed to have by far the most advantages, especially the living arrangements. In fact, at Dayton each party could have its own building and we could have a central place to meet and a central place to eat. It was, in many ways, tailor-made for our needs. I remember in White House meetings, taking a strong position that this is an instance where we should respect the views of the negotiator, and that was the view that prevailed. Not that it was my independent view, but my view that Dick's views were entitled to great weight.

DC: I see. What about your opinion on just holding a conference, period. I mean in the sense of, when did you feel that the time was ripe for a conference?

WC: Oh, I was strong for holding a conference, getting the people in a single place. I thought that Dick had brought it to that point where a conference was indicated.

DC: I see. Now actually to Dayton. Opening day, November 1. You were there, and the first thing that I remember seeing on TV was the opening handshake. Was that orchestrated in any way? Had you thought about that?

WC: We thought about it. We wanted to provide an opportunity for the parties to shake hands. We thought it would be a constructive beginning. We didn't know the way the parties would come into Dayton, that is, what their attitudes would be. It seemed likely there would be a good deal of tension in the room when they first got together and so it would be symbolically important for them to shake hands. As it turned out, of course, these people have known each other over the years, often with great hostility, but nevertheless, they found it possible to shake hands and talk to each other.

DC: Right. And, if I'm not mistaken, I think you saw an example of the long relationships in one of your first meetings after the opening ceremony, with Tudjman and Milosevic, in which they started to talk in Serbo-Croatian and you just let the interpreter go. They reached a deal on Eastern Slavonia -- or, they at least pursued a deal on that. Do you recall, from that opening meeting, that was your first real chance to get a flavor of what these discussions were going to be like?

WC: I took Tudjman and Milosevic off to a separate guest house, and they sat in the living room. Basically, they had come at my invitation, to talk about Eastern Slavonia or the

eastern sector. As you rightly said, they began to talk through an interpreter so I could understand and follow. Then, it seemed to me, that my presence was becoming an impediment to the speed of their conversation. So when they began exchanging views without waiting for the interpretation, I withdrew. They took a big first step in that meeting to try to work things out on Eastern Slavonia.

DC: Do you recall any other meetings that first day? Did you meet with Izetbegovic?

WC: Yes, I characteristically would have met with each of them. I think the Tudjman-Izetbegovic was probably the only joint meeting bilaterally on that first day. But I do remember going over to the Officers Club, where everyone was eating dinner, and seeing them there, seeing them getting settled down into this effort.

DC: And then you returned to Washington that night, right? And then ten days later, you came back out to Dayton to preside over the Federation signing. But apparently there was some negotiating left, particularly on Eastern Slavonia.

WC: Yes, there certainly was. It had to do with the timing issues: How long the international force would stay; one wanted two years and the other wanted one year. Trying to formulate a concept to bridge that difference. But there were also other difficult issues: How the elections would be held, and so forth. So I think my return there enabled me to help them reach agreement on those issues.

DC: And incidentally, during those first ten days but also throughout all of Dayton -- how did you keep in touch with the negotiations? Did you have a daily call with Holbrooke?

WC: Yes, at least daily. Almost always with Dick, at least once a day, and then with the others on the team. We followed the negotiations very closely.

DC: OK. And then, again, November 10 was a one-day visit. You then returned back to Dayton on the 14th, on your way to Japan. And by this point, there's evidence that, at least Holbrooke was getting a little concerned that things weren't going so well. And he asked you in a note to send a stern message to the parties. That it was either going to be close out or close down.

WC: I spent most of that day there, as I recall, and I told them I was going on to Japan and I would return and I felt that either we had to come agreement when I returned or it would have to be closed down. Now, you know, this was an exceedingly complicated agreement; they had made tremendous progress. But they were reaching the point where they were getting on each other's nerves, somewhat. However attractive Dayton was in many ways, they were beginning to get "cabin fever;" it was also getting cold. It was one of those times when you can feel the negotiation is going to either succeed or fail in a few days. After I returned from Japan, I stayed there for several days until this time we completed it.

DC: Right. Do you recall after that visit on the 14th that you had the impression the parties got the message that things were going to be done, or did you get back on that plane to Japan thinking, obviously, this is a mess?

WC: No. I continued to have confidence. I felt that they were making progress and probably would reach a conclusion.

DC: I see. As you said, you returned on the 17th and stayed until the end. And it was during this time that some of the very well publicized events in Dayton occurred. Including something we've been calling the "37-minute map agreement," which was early the morning of the 20th, or late the night of the 19th, whichever you prefer.

WC: When I returned from Japan, there were many open issues. Dick Holbrooke basically used me as the "closer," a senior person to come in and bring about the agreement. That happened on many issues, including the voting procedures and the map. The "37-minute agreement" was early the morning of the 20th. It all took place after midnight and well into the morning hours.

DC: Right.

WC: Working agreement had been reached as to how to achieve the 51-49 split by transfer of territory from the Croats to Srpska. But when Tudjman or Granic saw the size of the transfer of territory, they objected to the agreement that had been reached. Even though it accomplished the 51-49, it accomplished it in a way (the bubble in western Bosnia) that they found unsatisfactory. So, what began as a celebration broke down very quickly.

DC: Right. Was that unexpected? Were you legitimately surprised by Granic's reaction?

WC: Yes. Well, I believe I was the one who insisted that we get a Croat leader to attend our brief celebration. I had some skepticism as to how they would feel about it because, on the map, it looked like a lot of territory. And, indeed, they did object.

END SIDE A, TAPE 1

BEGIN SIDE B, TAPE 1

WC: I don't want to claim to have been prescient about that, but I was concerned enough to kind of make sure they attended. I asked that Tudjman be awakened, and he sent Granic.

CH: They tended to be *(inaudible)* of Granic's reaction was somewhat surprising as well.

DC: Right.

WC: But Granic had been a very constructive person through all of this, and so his absolutely firm negative on this point made it clear that we would have to approach it in another way.

DC: Now, you went to bed very late that night and woke up very early the next morning. How did you set out after a couple of hours of sleep to try to get this agreement back? I know there was a call that the President made to Tudjman later that day, of course.

WC: As I recall, I did not go to bed, but showered, changed clothes, and went back to work. We did call and brief the President and told him this was a time when we thought his intervention would be very important. President Tudjman's desire to have Croatia be part of the community of Western Europe would make the call from President Clinton particularly effective, and it proved to be so. Tudjman had not come to that early morning meeting; he was unwilling to get up and dress and come to the meeting. But after the President's call, he helped to find a solution.

DC: The 4:00 a.m. meeting.

WC: Yes. Though Tudjman did not attend, I had no doubt that Granic was expressing a view that reflected Tudjman's views. I think the President's subsequent intervention with Tudjman was crucial.

DC: And then once, of course, you thought you had the deal, the problem with Brcko arose. How did that play into things and how did you find a solution?

WC: President Izetbegovic had serious last-minute doubts and misgivings. That's perhaps not surprising, and certainly it's something that we've seen echoed many times since then. He has a problem because under Dayton, he is sharing leadership of his country, and so he walks up to it and then he recoils. My very difficult late-night meeting with him was to basically reinforce him and to try to persuade him that he should not withdraw, that he should support this agreement. We had obtained everything he asked for in our prior conversations, but still he was unwilling to commit. I did get somewhat upset, and he apparently subsided and agreed. However, later that night, he sent word that he also wanted more favorable treatment on the Brcko corridor, an issue we thought had been settled. So I felt that this new issue, in addition to his general reluctance, might be the final straw. However, it was the following morning that Milosevic, who clearly wanted this agreement, came over to our building and proposed binding arbitration. Suddenly he was prepared to agree to arbitration and did not insist on trying to define the width of the corridor, and that enabled us to reach agreement. That had been the last open point.

DC: Right. Was the arbitration your idea?

WC: You know, Derek, I don't know. It emerged from several discussions on this difficult trip.

CH: Well, it seemed in many respects like it came first perhaps from Granic. At the time, the Croats had been talking to the Serbs, and in response to the Serbs saying, "Well, why don't we just sign it? We'll leave the Bosnians out of this." And at that point the Croats said, "No, we can't do that." And we know that Granic went to the Bosnians and the idea of arbitration came out of that. Whether Granic picked that up from Milosevic or what the exact genesis is, nobody really seems to know.

WC: That's right. Two of the parties came to me and said that they were willing to sign without the third party, and I said we are not going to do that; we have come too far to do that.

DC: The Croats and the Serbs?

WC: Yes. We had come this far and we were not going to exclude the other party. The threat of two parties to sign was a tactic to put pressure on the third party, and I thought it was not appropriate.

CH: But part of this was this difficult meeting you alluded to with Izetbegovic. As I recall, the basic map, perhaps except for Brcko, had been settled. Brcko hadn't quite arisen as a sticking-point issue. To what extent do you think it was perhaps a psychological reluctance for Izetbegovic, rather than any specific issue...just to finally make the leap to a natural settlement?

WC: I think that was certainly a major part of it. But, you know, it was after that difficult meeting, after he finally did accept, that the Bosnians brought Brcko into the picture

again. Dick and I thought, "Oh, this is finally the breaker." Then we went over and told Milosevic that this had come up and we almost assumed that this was going to be too much for him but he came back the following morning and said, "Let's do it this way" (meaning the arbitration).

DC: So did...

CH: That was...excuse me. That was, then, the following morning.

WC: Right. November 21.

CH: The night before, if I recall, you basically said to them, "You know, you have to give us a final yes or no answer by before midnight, 11:35, or whatever, or else this is over." And I think it was at that point where -- I'm not sure -- Sacirbey went out and told the press that it was over.

WC: Right. I had briefed the President and told him that the negotiations might finally break down. He understood, told me to make a final effort, but to use my best judgment if the parties were unable to agree.

CH: What was your sense of that meeting? It was one of the most critical meetings in terms of Izetbegovic and yourself.

WC: Well, my sense was that there was, as I said, this reluctance to put his final stamp of approval even though he'd agreed to all the steps along the way. It came home to him that this was going to finally commit him to take the power-sharing steps of the Dayton Agreement. We've seen echoes of that attitude in each one of these subsequent phases where he has to do something. It's hard for him to take the last step. And so, finally, he took on board what I said in my impatience, but his response

to that was to raise a further issue -- Brcko. We were all concerned that it would be fatal. So we went over and told Milosevic and he came back the following morning with the arbitration solution to the Brcko problem. Since that was the only problem that Izetbegovic raised, we felt his requirements had been met.

DC: Right.

WC: Hence, he was preparing to approve.

DC: Right.

CH: I wonder if you can give us a flavor of that meeting then, when you got him to accept the Brcko deal? I know Dick Holbrooke's told the BBC that, basically, as soon as he said yes, you two flew out the door before he changed his mind.

WC: Yes. We went over and told him about Milosevic's proposal. As soon as he agreed, we told him we were going to have a lunch for the presidents and that President Clinton would call and congratulate them. The next thing that happened after that mid-morning meeting was the lunch at which the President came on the speaker phone and congratulated them. There was an aura of some **modest** good feeling...*(laughter)*...following this long, scratchy negotiation.

DC: I guess, in conclusion, seeing as one of the mandates of this project is to distill from this negotiating process some lessons that could be used for the future, either in negotiating with the parties or organizing the government to do these types of negotiations, is there anything -- just off the top of your head -- that you would think went well, but if we could do it again we would do a little differently?

WC: I think it went amazingly well. It vindicates the importance of bringing leaders together in a remote, controlled location where they have access to each other but are not right on top of each other every minute. These three men have long histories of antagonism to each other but they were put into this situation where, for each of them, there was something to be gained -- including the end of the fighting. But, in addition, Tudjman was looking for acceptance in the West; Milosevic was looking for a way to end the sanctions and to try to restore the economy of his country; and Izetbegovic was looking for an opportunity to retain Bosnia as a multi-ethnic entity. Each of them made compromises. I think it never would have happened if we hadn't had the three leaders and persuaded them to stay in one location that long. An important part of that chronology is Tudjman's returning. He left for a period of time and his returning was important.

CH: Yes. The calendar has those dates.

WC: All I want is to make sure that in your chronology...

DC: Yes. Right.

CH: But I think, of course he was there when you got the Eastern Slavonia agreement.

DC: Actually, he left on the 15th and returned on the 19th.

CH: Right.

CH: The Eastern Slavonia agreement had been on the 10th and you left that evening and Tudjman left not long thereafter, but was prepared to come back when his team told him there would be enough progress. And finally, then, he came back on that Sunday, the 19th, which is our first deadline to end the talks.

WC: That's interesting. I hadn't realized that he really didn't return until the 19th.

CH: Well, the interesting thing there, I think, was he had really empowered Granic to negotiate authoritatively on behalf of Croatia. Whereas on the Serb side, Milosevic was the only person you could really talk to get a commitment on a difficult issue. Others could lay the groundwork.

CH: But it's an interesting contrast, I think, Mr. Secretary, with the Bosnians where even when you have the president there, sometimes the agreements don't stick. Not that the Croats are easy to deal with either.

WC: Well, there's no doubt that Tudjman has a dominance in Croatia. On the other hand, there is an ambivalence on the part of Izetbegovic. It runs through all of this as to whether we can bring him to go ahead and overcome his second thoughts. So, when some of the people around him raise questions, he is susceptible to those questions, and that continues to be a problem to this day. But still you have to admire his courage in reaching the agreement and going forward.

DC: Right.

WC: OK.

DC: Well, thanks a lot for your time.

END OF INTERVIEW

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