

Epilogue

Implementation Begins

With the conclusion of the Dayton talks, the implementation phase of the peace process began. Although implementation would not officially begin until the formal signing at the Elysee Palace in Paris on December 14, the next three weeks would be critical for all sides -- the Balkan leaders, the United States, the Europeans and NATO -- to prepare for the ambitious peace Dayton outlined. Each Balkan leader had returned home with much of what they wanted. Tudjman got Eastern Slavonia, Milosevic received sanctions relief, and the Bosnians gained an equip-and-train program, over fifty per cent of Bosnian territory, and a unified Sarajevo. However, there were also some serious losers, particularly the Bosnian Serbs, who had stormed out of Dayton with just about everything but peace on their minds.

American officials were satisfied that they had forged an enormous diplomatic achievement. This sense of accomplishment, however, was offset by the daunting commitment and countless uncertainties that lay ahead. Twenty-thousand U.S. troops would be in Bosnia by early 1996. The Clinton Administration, often criticized for being a prisoner to polls and domestic politics, had defied the conventional wisdom by putting combat forces in a dangerous environment during an election year. Therein lay one of the great challenges ahead. Before the Paris signing and IFOR's deployment, the Administration had to set out to "sell" this policy to the American people.

The Europeans also had a great deal at stake. Although their influence throughout the negotiating process had been limited, their role in implementation -- in which they would man the bulk of IFOR and run civilian implementation -- was to be paramount. They had left Dayton bruised but relieved, setting out to organize three "implementation conferences" to be convened before the end of December.¹

Gaining American Domestic Support

After Dayton, the Clinton Administration intensified its efforts to convince the American people and skeptical members of Congress to support the numerous military and economic commitments made in the agreement -- above all concerning the 20,000 troop commitment to IFOR.² Earlier that autumn, the Administration had judged that it

¹ These included a December 8 implementation conference in London, a December 18 arms control conference in Bonn, and a December 20 economic reconstruction conference in Brussels.

² The President also sought to clarify the Administration's position on the equip-and-train program for the Bosnians. In a December 10 letter to Senator Robert Dole, the President explained that "the Bosnian Serb advantage in heavy weapons relative to the defensive capability of the Bosnian Federation has been a major reason for the fighting in Bosnia and remains a potential source of instability. We believe that establishing a stable military balance within Bosnia by the time IFOR leaves is important to preventing the war from resuming and to facilitate IFOR's departure... Even with Arms Control, we anticipate there will

did not need formal congressional approval to authorize U.S. participation in IFOR. However, like the Bush Administration's approach toward a Democratic Congress during the 1990-91 Persian Gulf conflict, the Clinton Administration decided that it wanted approval from the new Republican Congress to guarantee that the mission had bipartisan support.

In early November, senior officials began a vigorous lobbying campaign directed at Capitol Hill. This included inviting key members to the White House to meet with the President, conducting an exhaustive telephone campaign to lobby others, and sending such officials as Secretary Christopher, Secretary Perry and General Shalikashvili to Capitol Hill to appear before congressional committees. The Administration also helped organize numerous congressional delegations, or CODELS, to visit the Balkans and meet with Bosnian, Croat and Serb leaders. Throughout early December, several CODELS traveled to the region, receiving assurances from all three sides that they wanted peace and, importantly, would do all they could to reduce the risks to IFOR troops.³

Further, the Administration launched an intensive media campaign to rally public support, with officials appearing on television shows and writing op-ed articles to argue the case for Dayton implementation.⁴ Significantly, this media effort embraced such so-called "new" media outlets as talk radio and the Internet. Almost everyone involved in the Dayton peace effort participated at one point or another, with such officials as Jim Steinberg facing skeptical listeners on radio call-in shows or Strobe Talbott answering questions in one of America Online's cyberspace "chat-rooms." This massive outreach campaign -- which also included officials from the NSC and Pentagon -- was launched by the State Department's Public Affairs bureau, coordinated by spokesman Nick Burns and his staff.⁵

The most important public articulation of America's interest in implementing the Dayton agreement was President Clinton's prime-time televised address to the nation the evening of November 27. In the speech, he sought to ease concerns that the IFOR mission was a dangerous, open-ended military effort. "America's role will not be about fighting a war," the President began. "It will be about helping the people of Bosnia to secure their own peace agreement. Our mission will be limited, focused, and under the command of an American General." The President's remarks placed participation squarely within the U.S. role in the post-Cold War world: "America's commitment to leadership will be questioned if we refuse to participate in implementing a peace agreement that we brokered right here in the United States, especially since the presidents

be a deficiency on the part of the Federation. Accordingly, we have made a commitment to the Bosnian Federation that we will coordinate an international effort to ensure that the Federation receives the assistance necessary to achieve an adequate military balance when IFOR leaves." See Clinton Letter to Dole, December 10, 1995.

³ See Wendy Sherman interview; Phil Goldberg interview with author (notes), January 6, 1997.

⁴ See, for example, Op-eds by Lloyd Cutler, "Our Piece of the Peace; Sending Troops to Bosnia: Our Duty, Clinton's Call," *Washington Post*, November 26, 1995; and Warren Christopher, "No Troops, No Peace," *New York Times*, November 27, 1995.

⁵ For press reports of these efforts, see Elaine Sciolino, "To Confront Call-In Critics, U.S. Aides Take to the Airwaves," *New York Times*, December 7, 1995; and Michael Dobbs, "In Selling Policy to the Public, State Department Enters a New Stage," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1995. See also Nicholas Burns interview; Wendy Sherman interview.

of Bosnia, Croatia, and Serbia all asked us to participate," he said. "When America's partnerships are weak and our leadership is in doubt, it undermines our ability to secure our interests and to convince others to work with us... when America does not lead, the consequences can be very grave, not only for others, but eventually for us as well." Finally, he asked every American -- and, importantly, every Member of Congress, Democrat and Republican alike -- to make "the choice for peace" and support U.S. participation in IFOR.⁶

While impressive in scope and energy, the Administration's media campaign did little to dent the public's skepticism about sending U.S. troops to Bosnia. Public opinion polling showed that the American people remained concerned that a Bosnia mission would turn into another Somalia, or worse, another Vietnam. Sharp divisions remained on Capitol Hill, where Senator Robert Dole grudgingly supported U.S. deployment while other Republicans -- particularly those on the House side -- were opposed.⁷ Despite these difficulties, Congress narrowly blessed the Bosnia mission on December 13, 1995. The Senate voted 69 to 30 to support the troop deployment, while the House voted 287 to 141 to oppose the President's policy while supporting the troops. Both chambers rejected measures to cut off funds for the Bosnia mission. White House Press Secretary Michael McCurry explained that such lukewarm results were "probably the strongest statement of support they could possibly make. Having voted overwhelmingly not to shut off funding is, in a sense, supporting the President's judgment."⁸

Regional Shuttles to Maintain Momentum

In the turbulent Balkan atmosphere, the three weeks between Dayton and Paris provided the parties with a dangerous amount of time to scuttle the agreement. After twenty-one fast-paced days, Dayton had ended suddenly, and not everyone was completely happy with their concessions. U.S. officials were understandably concerned that some of the parties might begin to backtrack. Moreover, Dayton had ended incompletely -- one party to the settlement, the Bosnian Serbs, had not yet signed the agreement. Milosevic had assured Christopher and Holbrooke not to be concerned, pledging to have their initials on the agreement within ten days. He got their agreement

⁶ For President's remarks, see "U.S. Support for Implementing The Bosnian Peace Settlement," U.S. Department of State *Dispatch*, December 1995, pp19-21. See also Elaine Sciolino, "Clinton's Bosnia Stand: Political Risks Remain," *New York Times*, November 29, 1995.

⁷ For press reports, see Dana Priest, "Fear of Casualties Drives Bosnia Debate; After Recent Troop Missions, Americans Expect Almost Bloodless Battles," *Washington Post*, December 2, 1995; Katherine Q. Steelye, "Congress and White House Barter Over Support for U.S. Mission," *New York Times*, December 5, 1995; Elaine Sciolino, "Dole Backs Plan to Send U.S. Force on Bosnia Mission," *New York Times*, December 1, 1995; Steelye, "Some GOP Senators Refusing to Back Dole on Bosnia Mission," *New York Times*, December 7, 1995; Steelye, "Nearly Half of House Members Sign Letter Opposing Bosnia Deployment," *New York Times*, December 8, 1995; and Stephen Engleberg, "Bosnia Highlights A Republican Split," *New York Times*, December 10, 1995. See also Sherman interview.

⁸ For press reports on debate and results, see Helen Dewar, "Senate Set For Debate on Bosnia; Republican Concerns Addressed By Clinton," *Washington Post*, December 12, 1995; Dewar, "Dole Predicts Mixed Message From Senate on Deployment," *Washington Post*, December 13, 1995; Dewar and Guy Gugliotta, "Senate Backs Troops to Bosnia; House Retreats on Fund Cutoff," *Washington Post*, December 14, 1995; and *New York Times* editorial, "Congress and Bosnia," December 15, 1995.

in two. Nevertheless, the Bosnian Serbs were clearly unhappy about the peace Milosevic had signed. This was particularly the case with his concession on Sarajevo, where in early December violence had already broken out between Muslims and Serbs.⁹

In order to assure that the momentum created by Dayton remained strong through the Paris signing, two U.S. delegations conducted shuttles in the region. During November 29 and December 1, a delegation including Hill, Pardew and Kerrick visited the three Balkan capitals. To their surprise, all three parties seemed happy with Dayton's outcome. "The war is over," Milosevic told the team during their first meeting on November 29. As Pardew later reported back to Washington, this "was a theme reflected by Izetbegovic and Tudjman as well." Milosevic was "upbeat and positive," saying that the Dayton Agreement and sanctions suspension were well-received by the Serb public. Izetbegovic and Tudjman expressed similar sentiments, and Pardew described them "as animated and jovial as I have ever seen them. They are all looking forward to Paris and implementation."¹⁰

In Belgrade, Milosevic said that he thought the Bosnian Serbs were coming around to accept Dayton. Three months after Milosevic presented Holbrooke with the Patriarch letter, the U.S. was still unsure exactly what leverage Milosevic had (or was willing to use) over the Bosnian Serbs.¹¹ He had delivered them at every critical point of the negotiations thus far, and his continued support throughout implementation would be essential to Dayton's success. In meetings on November 29 and December 1, Milosevic

⁹ All the Pale leaders signed except for General Mladic, who had an aide sign instead.

¹⁰ See Pardew report to Perry and Slocombe, "The War is Over," December 1, 1995. For Chris Hill's readout of these talks see memorandum from Chris Hoh (EUR) to Distribution (including Talbot, Tarnoff, Steinberg, Donilon, Bradtke, Scheffer, Gallucci, Ely-Raphel), "Report from Chris Hill," November 29, 1995; and "U.S. Talks with Bosnian Officials," Cable, Zagreb 4841, December 1, 1995.

¹¹ A State Department INR report judged that Milosevic still retained some ability to influence Pale's policy decisions, although he had no alternative to the present Pale leaders. The report stated that while Milosevic was relatively secure in power, he "would risk reaction from his hypernationalists, especially in the VJ [Yugoslav Army], if he further 'betrayed the brother Serbs of Bosnia.'" In terms of Bosnian Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic, the report estimated that Milosevic had several options to remove them from Bosnia -- including assassination (which was doubtful in order to avoid creating martyrs to Serbian nationalism) or, more likely, offering them sanctuary outside Bosnia. Finally, the report concluded that "Milosevic will want the peace process, including the IFOR mission, to proceed as smoothly until he is confident that sanctions and any other strictures on the "FRY" have ended irreversibly. Confident of his leading role in Serbdom, Milosevic has a major interest in containing Bosnian Serbs' rebelliousness. Over the longer term, Milosevic's primary concern must be with his own realm, currently Serbia/Montenegro, where he continues to consolidate his power. As for expanding that realm, well, tomorrow is another day." See memorandum to Secretary Christopher from Toby Gati (INR), "Strings and Levers -- Milosevic's Options in Bringing Bosnian Serbs Into Line on the Peace Agreement," December 1, 1995.

Milosevic's effort to consolidate power at home was evident in a November 28 purge of five leading members of his ruling Socialist Party of Serbia (SPS), including former top aide Borislav Jovic. As Embassy Belgrade cabled to Washington, "In the best Orwellian fashion, Milosevic is attempting to remove all traces of his nationalist past. Just as he used Serbian nationalism ruthlessly to defeat rival Serbian Communist Party leaders in 1989, he has now returned to the policies that he then ridiculed... For the moment, Milosevic has sent a powerful signal that he is in complete control as the Dayton Accords move towards implementation and that opposition, even from old comrades, will not be tolerated." See "Milosevic Coup From Above Signals he Will Brook No Opposition To Implementation of Peace," Cable, Belgrade 5899, December 1, 1995.

pledged that he would get the Pale leaders to support IFOR publicly, and would require them to request formally that IFOR deploy in Republika Srpska.¹² Further, he promised to work to calm tensions in and around Sarajevo and rein in the Bosnian Serbs who were creating problems.¹³

In Sarajevo, Izetbegovic and Sacirbey explained that despite some "pockets of opposition," the Dayton Agreement was well received throughout Bosnia. Of all the issues discussed during that hour-long meeting -- including the situation in Sarajevo the progress of implementing the Federation agreement -- the most sensitive concerned the continuing presence of Iranian-backed Mujahadeen fighters in Bosnia. While the Dayton Accords mandated that all foreign troops leave Bosnia, the Mujahadeen were viewed as the greatest threat to IFOR troops.¹⁴ Congress was particularly concerned about such forces, demanding assurances that these troops would be out of Bosnia by the time U.S. troops hit the ground. When pressed, Izetbegovic reassured the U.S. team that he could control the Mujahadeen -- he knew their number and whereabouts. He pledged that they would depart within thirty days (as mandated by the Dayton agreement), stating plainly that "if there is peace, these people will leave."¹⁵

True to form, Tudjman showed little interest in anything other than Eastern Slavonia. Nevertheless, his general enthusiasm about Dayton's outcome, combined with the high spirits in Belgrade and Sarajevo, gave the U.S. team reason to feel optimistic. "I come away from this quick visit through the capitals in the former Yugoslavia much more optimistic about reaching a settlement and peaceful implementation than before I left Washington," Pardew explained. "The Bosnian Serbs are still an issue, but the general atmosphere in the area is positive and the leaders seem to be looking toward implementation and beyond."¹⁶

Many of these issues were revisited a week later, when Holbrooke and his core team reunited for their sixth and last three-capital shuttle to the region. Meeting briefly with the three Balkan leaders during December 8-9, Holbrooke wanted to make sure that there were no loose ends before they joined the five Contact Group Presidents for the

¹² See Pardew to Perry, December 1, 1995; "Report from Chris Hill," November 29, 1995; and Pardew Report to Perry, "Meeting with Milosevic," November 29, 1995.

¹³ In a letter dated December 2, Holbrooke expressed to Milosevic that "I am extremely concerned by credible reports of Bosnian Serb agitation against the Dayton Accords, particularly the Sarajevo provisions. It is essential that the peace process be managed smoothly, as any action that enflames the situation could be devastating. Vice President Gore, Chris Hill and I have all stressed to senior members of the Bosnian Government the absolute necessity of making public, reassuring statements to the Serb population of Sarajevo that they can remain and live in peace with full respect for their rights. But we cannot ask the Bosnian government to make the necessary statements and decisions if Bosnian Serb leaders continue to foment fear and unrest." See "Message to Milosevic on Sarajevo," Cable, State 278882, December 2, 1995. When given the letter later that day, Milosevic responded that he "had been meeting with Bosnian Serb leaders all week, pressing them to go along with the Dayton Accord." See "Message to Milosevic on Sarajevo," Cable, Belgrade 5939, December 4, 1995.

¹⁴ For press reports of the Mujahadeen presence, see "Dana Priest, 'Foreign Muslims Fighting in Bosnia Considered 'Threat' to U.S. Troops,'" *Washington Post*, November 30, 1995; and Elaine Sciolino, "What's Iran Doing in Bosnia Anyway?" *New York Times*, December 10, 1995.

¹⁵ See Pardew report to Perry, "Mujahadeen Presence in Bosnia," November 30, 1995; Pardew report to Perry, December 1, 1995; and Zagreb 4841.

¹⁶ Pardew report to Perry, December 1, 1995.

formal signing in Paris. In Belgrade, they pressed Milosevic on the lingering Serb unrest in Sarajevo and handling Mladic and Karadzic; in Zagreb, they discussed with Tudjman issues related to Eastern Slavonia and the future of U.S.-Croatian military relations; and in Sarajevo, they discussed the Federation with Izetbegovic and insisted that he do more to address the Mujahadeen problem.¹⁷

Of all the meetings during this forty-eight hour swing, Holbrooke was most impressed by the change of atmosphere among the Bosnian leaders. "The mood in Sarajevo is dramatically different than in the past," he reported to Secretary Christopher that night. "Izetbegovic seemed a different man than he had been either in Dayton or my earlier trips here. Almost upbeat at times, he was unexpectedly focused, took notes as we talked, and responded reasonably precisely to our comments and questions." Izetbegovic remained angry about the continuing presence of Hague-indicted war criminals, stressing that if "Karadzic and Mladic go, reconciliation can move rapidly." Notwithstanding these legitimate concerns, Holbrooke was encouraged by what he saw in the Bosnian capital, satisfied that there was sufficient momentum for implementation to begin successfully. Yet, he recognized that "everything depends on a vigorous implementation by IFOR from the first day. A slow start would be a mistake."¹⁸

The Paris Signing

On December 14, the three Balkan presidents joined President Clinton, Prime Minister Major, Chancellor Kohl, President Chirac, Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and EU negotiator Carl Bildt at the Elysee Palace in Paris to sign the Dayton Accords. After the dramatic end of Dayton, the Paris event seemed almost anticlimactic. This was exactly the way the U.S. wanted it -- Paris was to be nothing more than a formal blessing, a bit of diplomatic theater to launch the peace that was now known simply as "Dayton."

Before the official signing ceremony, President Clinton met with the three Balkan Presidents at Ambassador Harrimann's residence. Although these meetings were important to all three Balkan leaders -- each regarded a meeting with the American President as an important symbol of international prestige and legitimacy -- the U.S. did not want to draw significant press attention to them, preferring instead to focus the spotlight on the Elysee signing.

The President began by meeting all three presidents at once. He urged them to adhere to every aspect of Dayton. "There can be flexibility in implementation," he said, "but we should not change the terms of the Dayton agreement. Genuine freedom of movement needs to be guaranteed as soon as possible. The elections need to be carried out. The removal of foreign forces is very important... [as is] the right of refugees to return; the protection of the human rights of every ethnic group; and the ability of the work of the War Crimes Tribunal to go forth and be respected."¹⁹

¹⁷ For full details of these meetings, see Pardew report to Perry, "Final Peace Shuttle to the Balkans," December 9, 1995; and Kerrick's personal notes, December 8-9, 1995.

¹⁸ Message to Christopher from Holbrooke, "Official-Informal," Cable, Zagreb 8296, December 8, 1995.

¹⁹ Christopher, Lake, Holbrooke, Berger and Vershbow attended these meetings with the President. See "Memorandum of Conversation: Quadrilateral Meeting with Presidents Franjo Tudjman of Croatia, Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, December 14, 1995," NSC

Izetbegovic mentioned that "perhaps the most important provisions of all" concerned the future elections in Bosnia. President Clinton agreed fully. "The elections are important not only to eliminating those who may not run for office from political life, but to show every ethnic group that their voices will be heard," he responded. "One of the missions of IFOR is to create a secure environment so that the elections can be held. We want the IFOR mission to be terminated in an appropriate way. We can't do that unless free elections are a fact."

Milosevic and Tudjman concurred with these comments. "After the first elections, I'm convinced that we will be able to define the situation as normal. Elections will be a turning point," the Serbian President said. "It is also important that all three constituent peoples be equal during and after the elections," the Croatian President explained. "[This equality] is important for Bosnia's future."

President Clinton also outlined the importance of focusing on the "good news" during implementation -- the three presidents, he explained, needed to "find ways to demonstrate to the people who live in the region and throughout the world that ordinary people want peace." Similarly, he closed the meeting by stressing the critical role of public perceptions. By publicly communicating their confidence for success, he said, "you can change the psychology of the situation." Comparing the situation to Northern Ireland, President Clinton said that "now that we have had over fifteen months without fighting, it is unthinkable for most people that they could go back. With the growth in confidence, the whole situation had changed. In the face of skepticism about peace in Bosnia, you need to voice confidence in your public statements."

After this twenty-five minute quadrilateral meeting, the President spent ten minutes with each leader in one-on-one "pull-aside" meetings. Such "pull-asides" were standard tools of diplomatic art. Well short of a formal bilateral, they were more symbolic than substantive. Both sides would have an opportunity to raise only one or two important issues. These brief meetings were chosen intentionally -- they were just enough to suffice the three Balkan leaders desire to have a private audience with the American President, but sufficiently short to guarantee that the parties couldn't engage in any last-minute negotiating.

The first "pull-aside" was with Tudjman.²⁰ As he had at almost every turn throughout this peace effort, Tudjman raised his concerns about East Slavonia. As Pardew reported to Perry, "Paris was not Tudjman's theater. The event was about Bosnia." Tudjman was happy that the U.S. civilian administrator -- Retired Air Force General Jacques Klein -- had been named to administrate the UN Transitional Authority, but expressed dismay about the number of troops the UN planned to deploy in the region. When Secretary Christopher raised the Federation, Tudjman simply said that "I am sure the Croats [in Bosnia] will do all they can to make the Federation work. [But] you need

Memorandum, December 29, 1995. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations following quotations are from this document.

²⁰ Tudjman was joined by Granic, Susak, and Zuzul.

to convince the Muslim leadership. For example, there need to be more Croats representing the Federation abroad.”²¹

Next, the President met with Izetbegovic.²² While the Bosnian leader had seemed “almost upbeat” during Holbrooke’s meeting with him five days prior, his dour and aloof disposition had returned. President Clinton sternly pressed the Bosnian leader to take action against the Mujahadeen elements in Bosnia. “If any action were taken by these forces against our troops,” he said, “it could shatter the whole operation. It could jeopardize our ability to equip and train your forces... I want to do what I promised to do, but this is the one area that could undermine my commitment.” Izetbegovic assured the President that these forces had been completely dismantled, giving his word that a majority of such personnel “have already left.” On the Federation, Secretary Christopher stressed that “providing a real role for the Croats is going to be very important.” The Bosnian President responded that “things are moving forward” on organizing fully functioning Federation structures.²³

Finally, the President met with Milosevic.²⁴ While President Clinton had met several times before with Izetbegovic and Tudjman, this was his first meeting with Milosevic. Of all three meetings that morning, this one was the most carefully engineered to avoid publicity -- officials were wary about photos of the two men shaking hands appearing in the press.²⁵ Although far from a Rose Garden handshake Holbrooke had tempted the Serb President with months before, Milosevic was “ecstatic” with being on the world stage in Paris, trying to charm the Western leaders at every turn. “The Paris signing placed Milosevic on the same international agenda as President Clinton,” Pardew wrote to Perry. “He was at center stage with the most significant presidents and prime ministers in the western world. Milosevic clearly saw this as a major step toward his goal of international respectability.” The Serb leader was so pleased, Pardew reported, that he had given up his effort to quit smoking. As Pardew described to Perry tongue-in-cheek, “the Serbian President was last seen in the magnificent hall of the Quai d’Orsay puffing on a cigar half the size of a fence post while making one last -- but futile -- effort to charm the U.S. President.”²⁶

During the “pull-aside,” President Clinton reminded Milosevic that he had an important role in implementing Dayton. “I just wanted to say that I know this agreement would not have been possible without you. Whatever our differences in the past, you made Dayton possible. Now it is important to make it work.” The President said that he was counting on Milosevic to keep the Bosnian Serbs from derailing implementation, and

²¹ See Pardew report to Perry, “Atmosphere at the Paris Signing,” December 15, 1995; and “Memorandum of Conversation: Pull-Aside Meeting with President Franjo Tudjman of the Republic of Croatia, December 14, 1995,” NSC Memorandum, December 29, 1995.

²² Izetbegovic was joined by Zubak, Sacirbey and Hasan Muratovic.

²³ See Pardew report to Perry, December 15, 1995; and “Memorandum of Conversation: Pull-Aside Meeting with President Alija Izetbegovic of the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, December 14, 1995,” NSC Memorandum, December 29, 1995.

²⁴ Milosevic was joined by Bulatovic, Milutinovic, and Goran Milinovic.

²⁵ See Vershbow interview, December 19, 1996.

²⁶ Pardew report to Perry, December 15, 1995.

urged him to work with Izetbegovic and the Bosnian leadership to assure that the Sarajevo situation remained calm.

Milosevic conceded that the "only dangerous spot" was Sarajevo, but that the key to "solving all problems are in the Dayton agreement." The Serb leader finally pressed President Clinton to restore full normalization of ties between the U.S. and Serbia. Now that he had brought the Serbs to an agreement, Milosevic wanted the payoff. Full normalization was entirely out of the question for the U.S., and Clinton and Christopher deflected the Serb President's request.²⁷

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Immediately following these meetings, the four presidents departed for the Elysee Palace. There, during a brief ceremony in the Palace's ornate ballroom, the three Balkan leaders put their signatures on Dayton Peace Accords. However imperfect the peace, the parties for the moment preferred it to the resumption of a bitter war with all its costs. "You have seen what war has wrought. You know what peace can bring. Seize this chance and make it work," President Clinton implored the parties.²⁸

Within two days, U.S. General George Joulwan formally ordered NATO forces to deploy into Bosnia.²⁹ Over four years after then-Secretary of State James Baker proclaimed that the U.S. "didn't have a dog" in the Yugoslav fight, over 20,000 American troops were on the ground in Bosnia. The Clinton Administration had indeed gone over the Balkan "waterfall," but it had steered a course that few thought was possible during the summer of 1995. With Dayton, there was now genuine hope that a lasting peace could be accomplished. Implementing the Dayton peace would not be simple; as Warren Zimmermann aptly noted, the agreement "mirrored all the complexities and contradictions" of the Balkans.³⁰ Beginning with Tony Lake's trip in August and ending with that ceremony in Paris, U.S. negotiators had spent over eighteen weeks preparing this complex blueprint for peace. Now they had to set forth and build it.

²⁷ See "Memorandum of Conversation: Pull-aside Meeting with President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia, December 14, 1995," NSC Memorandum, December 29, 1995.

²⁸ For details of the signing, see Craig Whitney, "Balkan Foes Sign the Pact, Dividing An Unpacified Bosnia," *New York Times*, December 15, 1995; and William Drozdiak and John Harris, "Leaders Sign Pact to End Bosnia War," *Washington Post*, December 15, 1995.

²⁹ The mission had been formally endorsed at a December 5 meeting of NATO foreign and defense ministers in Brussels.

³⁰ See Zimmermann, pxii.