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Woodward

~~Boyer~~
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Boyer

in addition to the enclosed,
need memo from P. Bass
for Nancy.

Capitol Hill
Dec. 8, 1992

CLINTON NEWS CONFERENCE PAGE 6 12/08/92 .STX we began to move in here. Everybody accepts that. The issue is whether the United States will have to keep these ground forces that are going there now there longer than a few weeks -- one month, two months, whatever it is. I think that depends on how long it takes to accomplish the mission that has been established for them now, which is to establish secure and maintainable supply lines for food, for medicine, for other relief that's necessary.<

Everybody knows it's going to take longer than that to build some sort of political infrastructure in the country and keep law and order and keep safe havens for people to come and eat and get medical care, or whatever.< I think the question is whether that can be done in a second stage with a multinational peacekeeping force rather than a peace-making and alleviation-of-suffering force at a lower level, with perhaps support from us off-shore. I don't think anyone knows the final answer to that. I think that they've got a plan. They hope it will work. I think we have to give them a chance to see if it will work. But I am generally very supportive of the direction we have taken.<

With regard to Bosnia, I'm quite concerned about what is likely to happen there; the increase in violence, the impending loss of life. And I will review, at the appropriate time, what my options are. But I think it would be an error for me now to say much more, except to say that I am concerned about it and I think we need to look at -- I understand entirely why President Bush, General Powell, and others do not wish to make a commitment of ground forces of the United States. I quite understand that, and I understand why in that rationale this operation in Somalia is far more feasible and far less costly. But there may be other things which can be done. I am trying to learn as much about that as I can, and I'm sure they're looking at that, too. This is a matter of grave concern to me. But don't think I should say more about specifics at this time.<

(Cross talk.)<

Q (Inaudible) -- in terms of -- you talked here today and yesterday that the improvement of the economy -- (inaudible). What does that do for your discussion during the campaign for some tax relief for the middle class or perhaps front-loading some infrastructure in terms of a tax credit, a short-term stimulus of real jobs?<

PRESIDENT-ELECT CLINTON: Well, I still think there needs to be -- there's need to be an increase in investment. Of the dollars we get from the federal government, in my judgment, more should be invested and less should be consumed. Of the taxes we take from the people, in my judgment, the tax system we now have is too loaded toward consumption and too little loaded toward investment. So I favor, as you know, higher rates on upper income people with a modified investment tax credit and a long-term capital gains tax for those who make investments that generate new jobs. I think that those are structural changes that may have the benefit of giving us a short-term increase in the economy because they will lead to increased investments right away. But I believe they should be written into the fabric of the way we do business in America. .ETX

TALKING POINTS ON YUGOSLAVIAN ELECTION/ MILAN PANIC

-- If of Mr. Panic were elected and turned the Serbian Government away from the policies of aggression, ethnic cleansing and violence toward policies of peace and reconciliation, it obviously would be a welcome development.

-- The U.S. response will depend upon actions of a new Serbian Government in the direction of peace.

Foreign Policy Assoc Speech
NY April 1, 1992

Most of all, the President kept America largely on the sidelines in the democratic revolution that toppled the Soviet empire and is transforming the face of world politics. Time and again, the Administration sided with stability over democratic change. President Bush aligned the U.S. with Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to prop up the stagnant and despised Soviet center, long after it was apparent that hopes for democratic reform had shifted to Boris Yeltsin and the republics. Similarly, he poured cold water on Baltic and Ukrainian aspirations for independence and still has not recognized Croatia and Slovenia despite prodding from European allies.

By failing to offer a compelling rationale for America's continued engagement in the world, the Administration has invited a new birth of isolationism on the left and on the right, especially at this time of economic duress, when most Americans are properly demanding that we devote more attention and money to our needs here at home. But, putting our own people first cannot mean an uncritical withdrawal from the world. That's why we need a clear statement of purpose.

America deserves better than activism without vision, prudence without purpose, and tactics without strategy. America needs leadership of vision, values, and conviction.

I have called for greater American leadership to reinforce the powerful global movement toward democracy and market economies, as brave men and women fight for freedom in China, Haiti, and South Africa. If we succeed, the world will be a safer place. The spread of free institutions will make foreign rulers accountable to their people and check tyranny and external aggression. As nations free their economies from bureaucratic control they will become productive enough to satisfy more of their own material wants and rich enough to buy more American goods and services. We have seen the spread of democracy and more open economies in Latin America; now we should seek to increase their reach around the world.

We need to respond forcefully to one of the greatest security challenges of our time: to help the people of the former Soviet bloc demilitarize their societies and build free political and economic institutions. We have a chance to engage the Russian people in the West for the first time in their history.

The stakes are high. The collapse of communism is not an isolated event; it's part of a worldwide march toward democracy whose outcome will shape the next century. For ourselves and for millions of people who seek to live in freedom and prosperity, this revolution must not fail.

I know it isn't popular today to call for foreign assistance of any kind. It's harder when Americans are hurting, as millions are today. But I believe it is deeply irresponsible to forgo this short term investment in our long term security. Being penny wise and pound foolish will cost us more in the long run in higher defense budgets and lost economic opportunities.

Woodward

Schuker, Jill A.

From: Schuker, Jill A.
To: Berger, Samuel
Cc: /R, Record at A1; Cicio, Kristen K.; Vershbow, Alexander R.
Subject: woodward interview [UNCLASSIFIED]
Date: Monday, March 18, 1996 7:35PM

A few reminders, Sandy:

- Bob is looking for a blow by blow of the "putting green story" (as close to a he said/she said description). You said you'd try to rethink this.
- You were going to give him info re: Air Force Academy speech and events surrounding it
- He's probably going to press again for any "emotions" you can recall...who said what to whom, etc.
- He's also looking for a defining moment or ephiphany for POTUS if there is one...You mentioned importance of context and that there was a linkage in actions, ie they weren't just isolated decisions. I think this is important to re-emphasize.
- He's also looking for role of Dole amendment and whether/how this pushed the envelope or crystallized POTUS decision or timing

"

- turning point "

**DETERMINED TO BE AN ADMINISTRATIVE
MARKING Per E.O. 13526**

Sec. 3.2(C) Initials: VOA **Date:** 3/8/23
2008-0094-F-2

To: Tony Lake

From: Jill Schuker

cc. Sandy Vershbow, Peter Bass, David Johnson, Jim Fetig

February 27, 1996

~~(CONFIDENTIAL)~~

Per Bob Woodward's call:

. His book (which he hopes to birth before the Conventions this summer, but definitely before the November election) is on the 1996 election. He is focusing heavily on the Republican candidates. With the thesis that "action is character" he also is looking at Clinton, both on politics (how the campaign was set up in 1992; how he decided to run; how 96 unfolding) and policy. A key to his perception of Clinton in general (which he has openly expressed on television, etc.) is that Bosnia "is one of the few times" Clinton got tough; made up his mind and stuck to it on risky policy. (You might want to try to dissuade him of the fallacy of this thesis in general, but the good news is, he sees Bosnia as an example of Clinton with resolve)

. Woodward expects Bosnia will be a key policy issue to scrutinize as the campaign and candidates play out foreign policy themes/issues.

. He clearly has been briefed by everyone, but as you know comes on in interviews quite disarmingly. He projects the belief that Clinton was the guy who said "enough" and decided to get tough on Bosnia; and he sees you as the architect (with Holbrooke becoming Mr. Operational post bombing). He states that POTUS decided to turn away from the "muddle along strategy" (as Bob said it has been called) of spring to the "enough is enough...two track...end game strategy encompassing the bombing and the peace initiative that Tony developed".

. He wants to identify the turning points; your involvement as NSA; POTUS involvement. Demonstrating the working through of the policy--you with the President--would be helpful for Bob and helping clarify timing and dates and your role. As my grandmother would say, "don't hide your light under a bushel." I'm sure he's getting some painstaking description from others--including Dole, whose role he thinks is particularly interesting and important in relation to the arms embargo and how it "pushed" Administration policy.

. Bob describes "from a Pentagon source" a "great" scene after the Dayton Accord was settled with the President stating in the Sit Room that the "period of ambivalence was over....and looked directly at the military guys".....He may ask you to recollect/comment.

. This interview is ON BACKGROUND.

Bosnia Meetings

White House Breakfast Meetings among Principals - Bosnia discussed among other issues

July 17
July 19
July 27
August 2

POTUS meetings

August 2
August 7
August 8

Deputies Committee Meetings

July 11
July 12
July 22
July 24
July 25
July 26
July 27
July 28
August 2
August 3
August 4
August 5

Principals Meetings

June 6
July 14
August 1

BRIAN LAPPING ASSOCIATES

'DEATH OF YUGOSLAVIA'

INTERVIEW WITH SANDY VERSHBOW

ROLL C7

INTERVIEWER

Go back to June, end of May, how Tony Lake came to you and gave you command, come up with a new plan.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well all through spring, there'd been growing frustration with er the direction...

INTERRUPTION

SANDY VERSHBOW

All through...

All through the spring, there'd been growing frustration with the situation, UNPROFOR's credibility was a steady decline, diplomacy was kind of bogged down, going nowhere and pre-occupied with what were really secondary issues.

And so when the air strikes occurred in May,

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after the initial euphoria that we'd finally gotten tough again, we discovered that things had only gotten worse. The hostages were being held all over the country and Tony Lake said, we have to find a way out of this box, we're really trapped in a no win situation. 01 32

.../ So the term 'end game' came into play, that we really needed to look at the er conflict comprehensively and figure out a way not, not merely to get things started, but to get them to the finish line.

And as always, it was recognised that

01 49 the only way we had ever made any progress previously was when the NATO air strike threat was credible. So, bringing real military pressure to bear was seen as sine qua non, but as always, we faced the er difference of views across the Atlantic. 02 04

And er the, the change after the air strikes in May was that the debate began to shift in our favour.

Er, our own allies began to recognise that er the writing was on the wall for UNPROFOR, it needed to either get tougher or prepare for an orderly departure.

And so on that basis, we thought we had a new opportunity to go to the allies and begin to argue for an, an approach. So the design of such an approach began in earnest in June.

INTERVIEWER

Tell me a little bit about what you came up with.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, it, the strategy had basic elements which were reflected in the initiative when it was finally launched in August, that we needed to have er a credible threat of force, that we needed to er get out of the impasse that had developed over the contact group plan in which we were holding out for the Bosnian Serbs to say certain magic words, namely that they accepted the contact group plan as the starting point for negotiations. in saying this, we were not trying to change our commitment to the contact group plan, we still felt that it was the best er framework for a settlement.

But there was an increasing frustration that er we couldn't even find our way back to the negotiating table and that we needed to get around this semantic impasse and get down to, to real business.

INTERVIEWER

And as you began to think about an end game and how it might like, tell me a little bit about what you thought you ought to be doing with the map.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, with respect to the map, the feeling was that the contact group map as it existed, provided for a fairly unstable er solution.

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It had too many isolated pockets of territory, a er very irregular er border line between the Federation and the Serb Republic and that this could be a recipe for renewed conflict.

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So our guiding principle was that we should encourage the Bosnians to think about a more compact and territorially coherent territory for the Federation, still meeting the 51-49 criteria, but one that would provide a more viable basis for them to rebuild their country 04 20 and to defend themselves er in the event that the confederal relationship with the Serb, Serb Republic er proved er not sustainable.

INTERVIEWER

What did that mean about the three isolated enclaves, Srebrenica, Jepa, Gorazde?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, as the initiative was evolving, Srebrenic... Srebrenica was already under siege and was over-run and Jepa was soon to follow. Er, so although no-one wanted to abandon those enclaves, it was becoming a fait accompli on the ground that these, in respect of those two.

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And the sentiment was that we should encourage the Bosnians not to maintain their claim to Srebrenica and Jepa, but to concentrate on holding on to the territories they still possessed

and to add other areas that could make a more defensible territory overall.

Gorazde was a special case.

Er, we had on one hand decided after the fall of Srebrenica that we should draw the line in the sand at Gorazde and not allow the Serbs to over-run what was the strategically most important of the er safe areas in eastern Bosnia.

But there were some who felt that over the longer term,

05 32 Gorazde could only be tied to the Federation by a very tenuous corridor and that it might be better for the Federation to trade it for more er territory in central Bosnia. 05 43

Er, at the end of the day, we decided not to press this point, because it was very er neuralgic, politically and psychologically for the Bosnians, and at the end of the day in Dayton, we got a much better deal than anyone expected, a much wider corridor for the Gorazde um and we'll see how it works out in practice.

INTERRUPTION

INTERVIEWER

Before the fall of Srebrenica, when you were looking at the map, what did you think you should do about the three enclaves and about the fact that there was this area in the west as well?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, already in June, the er, the, the fate of Srebrenica seemed pretty gloomy.

The Serb siege had er already been mounted.

Er, in the preceding months it was er picking up steam and
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there was no sign the Serbs felt deterred by UNPROFOR at that point.

So, 06 43 we already then were considering that some kind of swap for at least the smaller of the eastern enclaves for more territory in central Bosnia might be one of the things that would be wise for the Federation to accept as part of a more um coherent er map. 06 59

But at that stage, a lot of the attention was focused on the er the broader strategy, how to bring more pressure to bear, how to create the leverage that had evaporated over the previous twelve months, as the pin prick air strikes had convinced the Serbs they could continue to act with impunity.

Um, that reached its climax in Bihac, when we were er unable to persuade our allies to do anything to er bring NATO's air power to bear to save that safe area.

And er so I think we started with the larger concept and it was only as the effort began to gain momentum that the details began to get fleshed out.

INTERVIEWER

When Srebrenica did fall, you were telling me before that there was that debate between, pull the UN out or beef up NATO and how that resolved itself in the first few days.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Er, well, the real...

Let me begin again.

Er, when Srebrenica fell, it obviously convinced everyone that more decisive action was needed.

Er, no-one felt that it was realistic to reverse what the Serbs had done in Srebrenica, as outrageous as it was and as much as we wished we could have reversed it.

Er, when President Chirac suggested in his initial exchange with the President that we should go in on the ground with ground forces to retake Srebrenica, the President, commended him for his sentiment, but felt that it was not a realistic option and tried to steer the discussion towards other options.

INTERRUPTION

SANDY VERSHBOW

Everyone felt, when Srebrenica finally fell, that decisive action was needed, but no-one believed that re-taking Srebrenica, that reversing what the Serbs had done was realistic.

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When President Chirac suggested in his initial exchange with President Clinton that we should go back and re-take Srebrenica, 09 04 the President er asked him, and then what would we do next?

Er, he really didn't believe it was realistic and he tried to steer the discussion towards er more practical options. 09 12

.../ And in that conversation and subsequently, always stressed that the only time we had ever succeeded was when the NATO er threat was credible.

We had saved Sarajevo back in February '94 and er felt that that was the way to go again.

So that led to a series of exchanges of letters, additional phone calls, um leading up to our strong recommendation that the way to respond to Srebrenica was to draw a line er at Gorazde and the other safe areas and to say to the Serbs that we will no longer er tolerate these kinds of threats, that if they either attack or even threaten to attack the other safe areas, they will be met with a decisive air campaign.

Er, this found favour with most of our allies.

President Chirac initially felt that the way to go would be to reinforce Gorazde with additional peace-keepers and, and make a last stand on the ground.

But as a consensus developed er among the other allies, 10 11 he told the President on the eve of the London conference that while he still felt that the US proposal was not the best choice, that he would er join a consensus in London, because something had to be done. 10 22

And indeed, Chirac throughout this effort was always er in sync with, with us in feeling that the time had come for very decisive action and that was key to what followed in the subsequent weeks.

INTERVIEWER

When the delegation went off to London, what did you think they were going to come back with?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, in sending our team to London, we had hoped that the threat of a decisive air campaign would be made in connection with attacks on all the safe areas. But that's proved to be too much for the traffic to bear in one go.

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Some of our allies were very nervous about this approach, even though they recognised that there was no real alternative, but they felt that we should test the waters with one safe area and Gorazde was the one under most imminent threat and that we should start there. 11 19

Er, the British government felt that it was the right course to take, but they felt that if we actually had to carry out the threat, it would spell the end of UNPROFOR, that robust air strikes kind of continued UNPROFOR presence on the ground were simply incompatible.

Er, nevertheless, as the situation developed, we were able to persuade allies subsequently in, in August to extend the NATO air ultimatum to all the safe areas and that's what enabled us to respond quickly when the Sarajevo market was attacked at the end of August.

INTERVIEWER

Did Polly Neville-Jones come over with Rifkind when Rifkind was here that week?

SANDY VERSHBOW

I, yeah, I think she was here with Rifkind.

INTERVIEWER

*When it was agreed that you would have bombing to aid to protect Gorazde... beyond a threat to stop further aggression, what was the bombing designed to achieve?
What did you want it to actually do as you're thinking of this strategic end game?*

SANDY VERSHBOW

Mmm.

Well, the, the basis for the air strikes had to be UN resolutions and NATO decisions and so if the Serbs had been wiser and simply heeded the ultimatum and not put NATO to the test, the situation could have evolved very differently.

Er, but their cockiness over the previous year that NATO would not make good in its threats or I think pushed them to make a strategic error at the end of August and then their own stubbornness or actually enabled NATO to maintain a sustained bombing campaign, which or by extension had a very positive influence on the negotiations.

INTERVIEWER

Even before August, when you were pushing in July thinking we have to re-institute the threat of air strikes, what did you want them to achieve?

Had you thought through really what you wanted?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, the aim was by mounting a credible threat of, of the use of force - and of course air strikes were one part of it, I should mention that the additional dimension was to make clear to the Serbs that if the renewed diplomatic efforts came to nought because of their intransigence, that they would face er, following an UNPROFOR withdrawal, a lifting of the arms embargo and efforts by the United States, assisted by other countries, er to arm the Bosnian government, to train them and to conduct further air strikes er under the traditional lift and strike strategy that we had tried to sell two years before. So, both the threat of immediate action and the longer term danger that the military balance would be shifted fundamentally against them were seen as the two ways to bring the Serbs to accept a more reasonable outcome, based on a, on a improved version of the contact group plan, but, but preserving its basic principles.

INTERVIEWER

You were telling me before about when you knew that the Croats were going to go, try to re-take Kineen in the Krajina, that how the military analysts here were worried because of what it might imply for the possibility of a greater Balkan war. Tell me a little bit...

SANDY VERSHBOW

Yeah.

At the end of July, when the Croatians intervened in western Bosnia, er our general feeling was that was not a bad thing because it was relieving pressure on Bihac, which was under severe siege again, and it would thereby prevent the collapse of the Bihac pocket, which could trigger er direct Croatian intervention in Bosnia and untold consequences thereafter. Tudjman threats to launch a direct military campaign to re-take the Krajina er were seen somewhat differently.

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Our analysts felt that Croatia, while it had been re-a... re-arming itself, notwithstanding the arms embargo, still did not have the means to finish the job quickly, 15 27 that they would get bogged down for a week or more and that er the longer the Krajina Serbs put up resistance, the greater the pressure on Milosevic er to intervene to save his, his cousins in Croatia.

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Er, so for that reason, we cautioned er Tudjman not to do it.

We felt that er he would suffer a reverse and that it could destabilise the whole situation in Bosnia. But we also knew that in making that er threat, er we only had limited influence on him.

He seemed quite determined to act at some point in the course of 1995 on the Krajina, he was under domestic political pressure to do so. He er in retrospect had a better understanding of his own capabilities than we did and so the job was carried out amazingly swiftly and Milosevic made clear that he was not going to lift a finger for the Krajina Serbs and the Krajina Serb leadership um made the strategic choice, which er in retrospect was a, a

major blunder, to order the er immediate evacuation of the entire Krajina, er making it much simpler for, for Tudjman to re-establish control over a now ethnically pure er Krajina.

INTERVIEWER

In those few days, from the second of August through the eighth, I suppose two things were happening.

One was the Croats were moving and the other thing was the other army, Congress was moving, then there was a whole series of meetings here.

Karl Bilt was here as well.

Could you just take me through that, culminating in sending Tony Lake off...

SANDY VERSHBOW

Yeah.

Well, I think the, the serious er debate within the administration on launching a new initiative began in earnest in mid-July, er

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we had done our internal work here at the NSC and Tony Lake er convened one of his regular breakfasts with his colleagues, 17 33 Secretary Christopher, Secretary Perry, Madeleine Albright, John Deutsch, General Shalkashvili 17 39 and er put on the table a, a paper that laid out his thinking on how we could launch a new initiative that would combine more credible threats of, of er military pressure with a re-invigorated diplomacy. 17 54 And that stimulated very lively debate and a whole series of meetings and papers were written by others, er and that culminated in a series of meetings with the President at the beginning of August, in which he immediately gave his blessing to a er, a bold approach.

He accepted that there was no alternative for the United States to, to get out in front and take charge of the process and the situation on the ground was changing quickly in support of a new initiative with the Croatian moves, er so it seemed more propitious by the time er the initiative was launched, than it did when it was being conceived.

And so in a series of meetings,

18 38 the President quickly gave his approval to the concept and er worked with his key advisers to refine the details, 18 47 so that when there was a final meeting at breakfast on August the ninth, er with the whole team, 18 54 he said um that it looked good, that it had a chance and that certainly no-one would fault us for the effort even if it failed 19 02 and er sent Tony Lake and his team on their way to, to present it to allies and to the Russians. 19 09

INTERVIEWER

Quickly run me through what the basic elements were, the 'Big Bang' theory of how to do it.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, the, the, the proposal...

Let me begin again. /...

.../ The proposal began as a starting point with the contact group plan, that we did not want to depart from the basic principles, namely that Bosnia should be maintained as a single state, that there should be a, an equitable territorial arrangement based on the 51-49 principle, although we would not block alternative results if the parties agreed to them, but that we should seek a more realistic, realistic version of the map and encourage the parties to be flexible on the constitutional arrangements, taking into account the realities of the, of the war.

Er, also central to the initiative was to make clear that there were real carrots and sticks now being brought to bear and that the parties had better take, take this effort more seriously than they had previous efforts, or indeed the earlier contact group proposal of, of 1994. Specifically, and on the carrot side, we made clear to the Bosnians, number one that we would re-affirm unequivocally our commitment to participate with NATO in implementing a settlement if it were reached.

And secondly, that we would support a large scale economic reconstruction effort to help rebuild Bosnia and that we would use all our political weight to mobilise international resources for that purpose. Also as an incentive for the Bosnians to be flexible, was the promise that if the negotiations got bogged down because of Serb intransigence, but they had been forthcoming, then our post, post-UNPROFOR withdrawal strategy would be to lift the arms embargo, to help them rebuild militarily and to carry out air strikes, you know, the full package of lift and strike.

However, the disincentive was that if they were the party that blocked progress, then while we would lift the arms embargo, they would be on their own, what we call in shorthand lift and leave.

And so they had a choice.

They could seize the opportunity for a realistic settlement and yield the rewards, or they could take a chance of surviving on their own, without American or international support.

And we thought that this combination, together with the re-invigorated NATO threat that had already been decided at the London conference, added up to the, added up to a, an initiative that had a chance of success, where, where others had failed.

INTERVIEWER

As all that was presented to the group and to the President...

SANDY VERSHBOW

I didn't mention the sanctions element...

INTERVIEWER

Yeah.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Yeah, I would, I would say...

The, the other incentive of course for the Serbs, beyond the threat of, of punitive action if they were intransigent, was the promise of substantial sanctions relief.

And in this we consciously changed course from where we had been for the previous six months.

We decided to put er, put aside any further thought of piecemeal lifting of sanctions in response to er half steps by the Serbs, such as political recognition of Bosnia or Croatia and to hold all the sanctions relief back for er, for the actual signature of a settlement.

In other words,

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They would get a 'Big Bang'.

If they actually reached a settlement, all the sanctions would be suspended and as soon as that settlement were implemented, they would be lifted permanently.

But they would get no sanctions relief before that time. 23 23

And we had learned that despite er his bluster, Milosevic was increasingly hurt by the sanctions and the Bosnian Serbs were being hurt by Milosevic's cut off of er supplies to them, so that the sanctions leverage had, was more important than some people credited it.

INTERVIEWER

Can you think back to what point - if there was a point - that here you realised you could make a deal with Milosevic, that there was a certain sort of logic of going to him and using him as someone to talk to?

SANDY VERSHBOW

I don't think we were as confident that Milosevic could deliver until after the Holbrooke shuttle er had begun and some of the first er breakthroughs began to occur.

During the spring, when we had been negotiating on er the idea of limited sanctions relief for, for mutual recognition, it was more based on a hope and a prayer that this would enhance Milosevic's prestige at home enough that he could put more pressure on the Bosnian Serbs and bring about a real peace.

Um, but others believed that he would just pocket the sanctions relief and continue to er profess that he lacked the clout in Pale to bring the Bosnian Serbs along.

So by moving to a more er all or nothing approach on sanctions, we put Milosevic to the test and to our great satisfaction, he er, he came through, first by brokering the deal in which he er took control of a, a combined Serbian-Bosnian Serb delegation, er witnessed by the Patriarch of the Orthodox Church, essentially seized the diplomatic reins from Karadic and that was the key that unlocked er the rest of the er, the process and led to the final agreement, er with the Bosnian Serbs grumbling all the way, but incapable of, of stopping the moving train.

INTERRUPTION

INTERVIEWER

*Was there a particular reason that by putting Holbrooke in, an Assistant Secretary of State, above the ambassadorial level, was this something that the President...
Who decided that that happen, that he was brought in?*

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, the decision, or the recommendation that Dick Holbrooke take charge of the process was a consensus one er by all the senior advisers who were working on this initiative before it went to the President.

There was a feeling that in putting US prestige on the line, we needed to raise the profile of our involvement.

Bob Frasure, who had been our envoy since the beginning of the year, had good credibility with Milosevic and was seen as the er, certainly the er alter ego of Holbrooke, that was certainly a very different personality from Dick, er, but that a dynamic er figure like Holbrooke was needed to make this initiative have at least a fighting chance of success.

So er that was recommended to the President and er there was no, no second choice.

INTERVIEWER

Could you just describe that last meeting when the President sent Tony Lake on his way?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, the day before departing,

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there was a long meeting in which the overall presentation that Tony Lake was going to take on the road was presented to the President and he went through it line by line and asked questions and suggested changes. 27 12

Er there were some debate over exactly how we should present our views on the map and on Gorazde, sensitive points like that, which he made the final call on.

And then Tony was charged with coming up with a final version that would be sent to all the players in Washington for their final approval and it was agreed that they, they would all gather with the President that morning for er one last er reality check. And the President er went, went through the points, suggested a few, both strategic and tactical adjustments and er gave Tony a strong send-off.

INTERVIEWER

Do you remember exactly what he said?

SANDY VERSHBOW

I think I said that earlier.

He said that it looked, looked very good, he thought it had a fighting chance of success and that er we would not er suffer, even if the effort failed.

And so he told Tony, have a good trip, nothing more dramatic than that.

INTERVIEWER

And what did you think, 'cos you were sort of giving your baby away?

SANDY VERSHBOW

I was er very optimistic certainly that the allies would, would welcome this proposal.

I always felt that they were looking for a stronger US role, more US leadership, that they knew that the policy of the previous two years had er basically been a dead end and that they were looking for a new initiative, a new impulse from Washington to er, to move things ahead.

Moreover, I felt that some of the substantive aspects of the proposal, in which we were ready to push the parties to be more flexible on the details of the map, on the details of the constitutional arrangements, and that we were prepared to tell our friends, the Bosnians, that er our support for them was not unconditional, that they had to be flexible or that er support that we gave to them would be called into question.

Er because the, the Europeans had always accused us of being er too biased in favour of the Bosnians, er that I felt would er find er lot of er resonance in the European capitals.

But I think the main thing was the mere fact of an American initiative, an initiative at a time when all looked, looked hopeless was what made them er rally round us very quickly without much controversy at all.

INTERVIEWER

Thank you, that's great.

When the three were killed in the mountains, were you here?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Er, I was actually...

I, I was at home.

I was... /...

.../ After Tony's trip, Nelson Drew took my place on the delegation and went off with Dick Holbrooke and I came back to take a few days of vacation with my wife on the eastern shore of Virginia.

Er, but we'd just come back to Washington on the way to visit our younger son at, at camp up in Pennsylvania, when I woke up to hear the bad news on the radio, that there'd been this accident. So I, I came rushing into the office and er we soon learned that er three people had been lost and it was quite an emotionally devastating experience, because all three of them were very close colleagues of many years.

INTERVIEWER

The shelling in the market place, which triggered the air strikes...

SANDY VERSHBOW

Er, what about it?

INTERVIEWER

How did...

The chain of command and all of that.

SANDY VERSHBOW

I'm trying to remember.

I can't remember exactly where I was at the time.

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INTERVIEWER

*On the Thursday, you heard the news.
How did it work for the next two days before the air strikes
actually began?*

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, we'd been telling the world in the days preceding the attack on the market place that we had a new er more effective decision-making scheme that had been worked out between NATO and the UN, that the dual key of, of, of yore had been replaced by one that would actually work, namely that the UN's key had been delegated to the er level of the commander in the theatre and that therefore this would no longer be a political decision. When the bombing occurred, we all crossed our fingers, held our breaths, waiting to see if this really would prove to be effective in practice, er otherwise we would have lost all credibility with the Congress and we might have rekindled pressures for a unilateral lift.

Thankfully, the er, the system did work and while there were lots of phone calls back and forth to Ambassador in NATO , to the military commanders, we quickly became assured that there was no hesitation on the part of er, of the generals in the field and that if the Serbs did not comply with the er, the final warnings, that the bombing would occur and indeed, two days later it did.

So we were very satisfied.

But then there was a bit of confusion as to what were the proper conditions for termination.

We didn't want to let the Serbs off too easy, particularly when the bombing had a, a positive effect on the negotiating process.

At the same time, we didn't want to set unreasonable conditions that they couldn't meet and find that we had a bombing campaign that had no logical end. and there was a little bit of growing pains in the er UN-NATO relationship er in which there was a bit of confusion as to what were the right conditions.

By Saturday, September the third, there was, we had an all-day meeting of the North Atlantic Council and an all-day meeting of our Deputies Committee, sitting around the White House situat... situation and working the phones across the Atlantic almost non-stop, which finally led, in the wee hours of the night, to a NATO agreement on er what should be the proper terms for er Serb compliance er or else the bombing would resume in seventy two hours.

And to our surprise, er the Bosnian Serbs continued to hold out, although their political leaders were looking for er an escape.

General Malodic was as stubborn as ever and they only did a half-hearted effort to withdraw the heavy weapons from around Sarajevo and the bombing did resume three days later.

INTERVIEWER

Were you worried though sitting on that Saturday?
I think somebody was supposed to go to a wedding, as I remember.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, we were all a little worried that somehow we would er, after having come this far, er lose our way and let the Serbs off easy or lower the bar and let them get by with only half compliance with the conditions. And so er Strobe Talbot, who was the Acting Secretary of State at, on that weekend, and, and Sandy Berger, Tony Lake's deputy, er who were due at five o'clock in the afternoon at the wedding of Madeleine Albright's daughter, er found that they couldn't er, couldn't make it, they were er they had to stay and, and phone the French Foreign Ministry, NATO commanders, our ambassador, Hunter, in Brussels and to bring this thing to a conclusion only at about eight, nine o'clock in Washington.

INTERVIEWER

You got a cease-fire finally.

The decision finally was taken here that the President would go out and announce the cease-fire and the fact that there were going to be talks, was the first time that the President had linked himself with this thing.

What sort of consultation was there about the wisdom...?

SANDY VERSHBOW

The President actually er announced the Geneva on September eighth and I think he made a statement on the twenty sixth...

INTERVIEWER

Twenty sixth of September from New York.

SANDY VERSHBOW

...for the second set of principles.

Er, so that wasn't the first time. /...

.../ But the initiative had its initial impulse from the er determination of the President to get out of the box that we found ourselves trapped in throughout the first half of the year and he really had invested a lot of his own political capital in this effort.

So it was only natural that er when major breakthroughs, such as the cease-fire and the agreement on basic principles occurred, that he would want to announce them to show that his er commitment to this process was unflagging.

INTERVIEWER

Did you go to Dayton or was that just...?

SANDY VERSHBOW

No, I only went to Dayton for the one day that Tony Lake was there.

I was back here, preparing for implementation, er which was what we were spending all of August, September and October er doing in, in Washington, while the team was...

INTERVIEWER

Tell me about the last night then and the phone calls coming through saying you know, we've failed, it's going to end.

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, throughout Dayton we were getting periodic up-dates reflecting the mood swings of our negotiators. /...

.../ Er Don Kerrick who was representing the NSC was, was our, our point man on the delegation and he phoned over, over that last weekend with er generally pessimistic accounts, that while all the other issues were beginning to come into, er come into place, they had made progress on dealing with sanctions relief and the constitutional issues, er things were deadlocked on the map.

And indeed the map er proved to be, as most people predicted, the hardest issue er in the negotiations.

By the twentieth er Milosevic had discovered that in the trading of territory that had been going on, the percentage breakdown had moved to about 54-46 and he had neglected to ask about this until er three or four days after those basic lines had been agreed and he er went into a panic, saying that this was unacceptable, that we had to go back to 51-49 and this led to the, the, the eleventh hour effort to readjust the map sufficiently to come back to 51-49.

And the delegation kept alerting us that the President might need to weigh in personally with Izetbegovic and Tudjman to er push through the final compromises needed.

In the event, it turned out that President Tudjman was called upon to er, to make the final moves that unblocked the negotiation and the President phoned him on the afternoon of the twentieth, making clear that any, any er territorial er concessions, painful and we would understand how difficult this is, but we urged him not to allow the process to fail. /...

.../ And the President er underscored how much we er valued Tudjman's role to date and Tudjman responded very positively, saying that he was about to put a new proposal on the table that would end the impasse.

As it turned out, we didn't know till we woke up the next morning whether it would succeed or not.

Mo Sacirbey had already gone to the press to announce that the talks were finished, they had failed, but little did he know that er at the air base, Milosevic and Tudjman were working a final er horse trade that saved the day and er led to the, the initialing later that day.

INTERVIEWER

OK.

INTERRUPTION

SANDY VERSHBOW

Well, that, that meeting had two dimensions to it. The first was to focus on the short-term operational er requirements of getting the right result from the London conference, which was four days away.

09 09

But Tony was determined to look beyond London and beyond the immediate er crisis management to think about where we're going in the longer term. 09 20

And he had been warning his colleagues that he wanted to have a serious discussion, you know, with people letting their hair down and having a er, a brainstorming kind of session.

Er and somehow it always kept, kept getting put off because of the press of daily er brush fires. /...

.../ But on this occasion, er he laid out his thinking and the other principals gave their views and this started the process er that, that led to, to the initiative.

INTERVIEWER

When you present a proposal like this, sometimes it takes a while for people to get their minds round. Was it instantly accepted?

SANDY VERSHBOW

Yeah, there, there...

Not everyone agreed with the overall thrust of the approach. There were, in some cases, differences of nuance, er some were a bit sceptical at that point that the prospects for an initiative were sufficiently bright, that it was worth taking the political risks of launching it.

Er, some felt that we should continue to kind of contain the conflict and see what happens on the ground for another month or so and perhaps an initiative in the, er in the autumn would be more propitious.

But given the President's strong views that we needed to, to press forward now and I think everyone's recognition that we risked losing control of events, er that even with the best outcome in London, er we had to find some way to, to bring the diplomatic er process back to life, that using force by itself, without a diplomatic goal in mind might be satisfying in the short-term, but wouldn't lead us out of the er, out of the ally that we were in.

INTERVIEWER

OK, that's fine.

Can we just go back one more time on how the maps evolved, your ideas of what the maps should be...

END OF INTERVIEW WITH SANDY VERSHBOW

Brian Lapping Associates

Interview with Tony Lake interview

January 19, 1996

(several uh, um, etc. in speech pattern. not all are represented)

U-bit # 083

q. If you can think back to that weekend in may, end of may beginning of june, what did the president say to you when the un soldiers were taken hostage?

Lake I simply recall that he was angered. He had been very much involved of course in our agreeing to the, and encouraging in fact the bombing response of late may to the closer and tighter strangulation of sarajevo.

01 15 I uh remember at a retirement ceremony at a base across the potomac river for Gordon Sullivan, the army chief of staff, uh telling the president that it looked as though UNPROFOR was in fact going to turn the key and would allow this and his face registered real pleasure. 01 35 Uh and relief that after all those months of our increasing worry that UNPROFOR and NATO were losing their credibility first over the events at --- and last uh in the previous year. Uh and that is that the cease fire gradually eroded during the first half of the year. This was an opportunity to act, and the president wanted us to seize it so he said yes, go.

General shalikashvili was there and he and I talked I recall madeline albright because it required action at the un also. Uh and uh we uh went ahead. Uh so he was very much personally involved in the bombing itself and when they uh took the hostages, uh I remember he was uh angry. And uh all the more determined that we would do something on all this.

Q. Did he call you into his office and do you remember sort of ...

Lake we met every morning uh and there was no kind of eureka moment here that I recall vividly. It was every morning his expressing as he had been for a while his growing concern and determination that we do something about it.

Q. So how did it happen that from that crisis in the beginning of june/ end of may was that translated into the genesis of a new policy. Either his instructions to you then translated into work here at the nsc.

Lake well there really were two levels here. One was the day to day business in which he was very involved through a series of meetings both my morning meetings with

him and also a series of meetings with his uh whole foreign policy team uh at which he would saying that we had to respond. Had to come to terms with this uh and there was a lot of short term work.

How do you strike the --- with the rrf? How do you encourage further nato action? What is the diplomacy of it all which we can come back to. But the other piece of it uh and one that I was particularly concerned about and the president was concerned about, was what was our longer term strategy here. What happens if unprof for collapses either on it's own or because of legislation that was being moved in the congress for unilateral lift uh and it was it took some time to first work through what that longer term strategy ought to be and then to reach agreement on it in the midst of the swirl of the every day efforts to deal with the situation as it unfolded.

Q. There was, I mean I've read about in early june something like the 6th of june there was a a meeting of the principals committee at which it was decided that you would launch into developing a new a new policy.

Lake uh I don't think that's quite right.

Q. It's been in the press you know so

lake then it must be. (Laughs)

as I recall that early june meeting I had more to do with, well with two issues, uh one was with the diplomacy. And uh increasingly it seemed to a number of us that the focus of the contact group effort on what kind of trade off you would have with a partial lift of sanctions and a recognition was not really going to the heart of the matter. It was the other side of the capillaries but not yet at the heart. And we had to figure out beyond what was uh not serious in our view argument about whether the contact proposals were the basis for negotiations or whatever. Uh and get to really looking at how you could promote a settlement. And at that meeting we agreed that the approach that had been taken thus far focussing just on sanctions lift, recognition, uh wasn't enough and we needed to do more there.

Uh and the other issue I recall was what to do about UNPROFOR. And here the argument was uh over a important central point and that was not were we going to ourselves create the collapse of UNPROFOR uh, because

05 41 we all agreed that that collapse would mean that american troops would have to go into bosnia in order to rescue unprof for which meant that we were going in in the context of a defeat. And nobody wanted that. It would have had huge consequences 05 54

, uh and that is one reason why we so vigorously oppose the dole approach. Because it would have in our judgement led to that collapse of unprof which would have not only been in defeat for the international community but probably also set back any chance of a diplomatic settlement.

The issue however was

06 15 if it did collapse, uh then were we what were we prepared to do. And uh a harder question 06 26 if UNPROFOR could not be built up and get stronger on the ground and the winter was upon us would we then contemplate allowing them to collapse at it's own rate if it couldn't be strengthened. Uh I know there had been some disagreements we began to come to terms with that at that meeting but hadn't resolved it. Uh what happened then was that uh the president uh people on my staff, sandy vershbow, nelson drew*, who'd just joined the staff, sandy berger my deputy and others, were increasingly of the view that we needed that long term strategy. Which is to say that we needed to look at what our policy would be if UNPROFOR did collapse. And there were two reasons why I felt very strongly about that. One was that it was simply prudent to do that planning because it could happen. Uh and because you needed to look at what you would do if in fact uh you did agree ok if you're not going to get stronger than get out.

And uh secondly and more importantly, because until you decided what you would do if UNPROFOR left, you didn't really have much leverage in the negotiations. Or to put it differently, if you could go to the bosnian government and the bosnian serbs and the croats and say if you were responsible for the collapse and if you are responsible for a failure to achieve a negotiated settlement then uh this will happen or not happen. And this was the essence of the approach that we were subsequently to follow. Which is to say that we - I'm getting ahead of myself here.

Q. Ok, I was going to say can I just stop you for a second because there is something that --- has told me about but I haven't talked to madam albright which is the intermediate step so I don't know quite how to phrase this question. But would he said was that he and madeline albright had a whole series of meetings in new york at the un in april, may at which they thought what are we going to do. Every time we try to do something, putting it crudely the problem is that the british and the french stop us because the british and the french have the troops on the ground, they're sitting in the enclaves and there is no way to break out of this impasse. And that the idea was that they thought we have to do something and they came up with this idea I think of calling ---, strategy. And what --- led me to believe what he didn't actually know is that madeline albright I think came back and talked to you about doing something in the spring about, were there a series of talks with her?

Lake no, certainly madeline and I have worked very closely on this issue for a number of years. We have in general the same kind of view on it and as we worked on this madeline and I did work closely on it but I don't recall a sort of --- through mmadeline

q. Uh ok I just wanted to know whether--- something in his mind.

Lake no what did happen is because of our concern for developing longer term strategies, so that we could increase our leverage in negotiations and do some prudent planning. As I recal

09 31 1 in late june on a saturday morning, I asked sandy versbow and col. Nelson drew who was later to die, on mount igman*. And sandy burger, nancy sodaber* on my staff, others to join me for a kind of blue skies discussion on what that longer term strategy would be. We talked it through for three or four hours as I recall 09 51 and a out of that then uh sandy versbow and nelson drew drafted a strategy paper looking at what that end game might be and how we could use it then to try to get a settlement. That was done as I recall by the second week in july.

That initial paper. I then uh got a group of people around the government together who were interested in the problem to do further refinements sort of informally, we had a whole series of meetings over the next few weeks and meanwhile there were then a series of formal meetings that the president attended and the other principal members to discuss that paper, to discuss papers that others drafted and that led to the strategy paper that the president approved in early august from which we derived the talking points that I then used earlier.

Q. Yes I was going to say we've jumped ahead of ourselves a little bit. Um do you think you could sort of briefly take me through the ideas you that had I suppose before the fall of srebrenica which is then going to change everything once again. But in the end of june, beginning of july, what in terms of what you wanted to do roughly with the map and roughly in terms of uh uh a tactical approach to getting a solution?

Lake well we had more concluded that what we were doing wasn't working than we had figured out a tactical way to get a solution because again in my view, you, we did not have the leverage to get a diplomatic agreement unless UNPROFOR was strengthened unless the power realities on the ground had changed, and unless we had thought through a longer term strategy we could then use as leverage uh in short term negotiations. Uh and in general our approach at the time was we had to go on you know keep using the contact group map, uh etc. That approach then changed at the end of july and the beginning of august in a number of ways.

Q. Ok let's let's talk a little bit about, um.

Lake where's sandy?

Q. He's right there.

Lake are you going to correct me if I get anything wrong?---
(Laughs) that's an ominous pause. Anything so
far?

Sandy i think it's about right. Even in early july we were
already thinking of more compact territory --- that
we were going to have to go ---

q. But did you have to...

Lake well, as we were thinking about not for an immediate
approach but uh on what a general new approach, that's right we
were beginning to look at uh how you might reconfigure the map.
We had not decided we would then put in a new american map. Uh
again that came uh the idea of not an american map but
alternative maps that we could use, as I recall emerged then from
that towards the end of july and beginning of august.

Q. I wonder if you could just sort of, quite sort of just uh
for the viewer it might make more sense, more
compact, now I'm not sure that that's exactly going to make
sense to anybody who hasn't studied all of these horrible
things.

Lake the basic strategic concern here and

13 14 Our objective really is obviously first a unitary
bosnian state or a unified bosnian state of various
parts in which there is one state within it's current
borders. But within that to have a federation
territory that is defensible and sustainable, and of
which there is a relative balance of power on the
ground between the federation and the bosnian serbs.
In that meant in looking at the map that rather than
draw the lines in a kind of haggled pigglety way uh
that might make sense in terms of a detailed
negotiation and where the current populations are, to
do what we could to have a federation territory that
was as consolidated and simplified as possible 14 05
so that it would be sustainable in the long run.

Q. Do you think that three, three, um. I suppose that
ambassador frasier threw ambassador mensies* did you
let, and I was thinking mostly the bosnian government, know
what you had in mind at this point or was this all kept
secret here in ---.

Lake i'd say in general terms yes we were ---excuse me excuse me.
Yes certainly in general terms uh madeline
albright was meeting with ambassador suchobee* and uh in

new york, uh all of us saw bosnian officials from time to time. And certainly our diplomats in the area were keeping them informed in general terms. But if we were sharing with them the specifics of our thinking then in effect we would have been entering into a negotiation with them before we were prepared because we needed to think it through clearly ourselves first.

Q. Ok. That's great. --- Srebrenica, that crisis right through the london conference and everything changed finally. Um I suppose that, the first thing I was going to ask you is within the administration I suppose, within the first couple of days after srebrenica fell, there was that debate about what do we do. Do we say this is the end of the un, or do we now, and pull them out or do we um do something to toughen them up, increase nato's role. Mind if you tell me a little bit about the meetings in the first the first 48 hours? I suppose 72 hours after the 11th of july.

Lake i don't remember them. There were so many meetings specifically. Uh I do remember again that the debate was does this mean that you collapse unprofor or does it mean that you try to use this opportunity to toughen it? And

15 46 every time we looked at the consequences of an UNPROFOR defeat and withdrawal and an american intervention, under nato, to save them the more it became clear that yes in the end you might have to do that but that the better option was to work with the french and the british to strengthen unprofor. 16 10 Uh and help to support the armor, the rapid reaction force, etc. And that's the course we pursued.

Q. Yesterday...

Lake but, and let me emphasize this, this is a subtlety but it was important 16 20 the important issue was do we say then that if unprofor can not be strengthened, then it will be, should be withdrawn and we will lift the arms embargo 16 32 multilaterally if we can unilaterally if we must. That was the position that we were within the government gradually moving towards is the position that the president then took at the g7 meeting. Uh now nova scotia, 16 46 and it was very important both because I think it was the right policy, and because it allowed us to go to the congress and say look there is a better way. 16 54 Don't simply unilaterally lift the arms embargo now, bear with us, let's make a serious effort to strengthen unperfor to support the british and the french and the others here.

And if it doesn't work then we assure you that come fall we will be moving towards suggesting to our european allies that unprofor withdraw, 17 15 we will help them withdraw

and we'll move to the option that many in the congress were for in any case. I think that argument, I remember for a number of conversations I had with senators after the dole bill was passed and as we working to be able to sustain a veto which I think we would have been able to do had they brought it up again. With that argument was the one that generally convinced a number of the swing hawks on the issue that yes we will give you a chance. We'll delay a vote uh and let's see if you can't strengthen UNPROFOR and get something done.

Q. Secretary perry yesterday when we were doing the interview was telling us that he was arguing very strongly in those day that now was the time you had to through the nac through the allies actually agree a policy that there is going to be serious air strikes, not pinpricks but serious nato involvement. Um how did that argument sort of carry which is really really what happened in london?

Lake uh well there were a number of us who uh were promoting that point of view. Uh

18 16 There was never going to be a settlement of this issue unless there was a restoration of the credibility of NATO 18 22 and the un. Credibility which had been eroded very badly at the time of the be-hatsh* crisis and uh in november 1984.

Q. Sorry, you just said 1984

lake 94!

Q. Ok yes

lake any credibility that had been seriously eroded at the end of 1994. And which had to be restored. And so it was not simply that we needed to carry out serious air strikes in order to uh meet the demands of the situation after the hostage taking. Uh but in order to be able to harness power to diplomacy again the way we had been during 1994 after the sarajevo ultimatum.

Q. Can you

lake the other reason if I may for the air strikes was that after srebrenica if you recall, president sherk* had suggested ground action. At which 19 18 all military experts said simply could not be accomplished. The european and american military experts. But something had to be done and the alternative was uh air strikes. 19 26 The issue then is serious air strikes or pinpricks uh and the hostage taking itself suggested that anything less than very strong air strikes simply asked for the kind of reaction the serbs had taken.

Q. Can you, did the president talk to president sherk on the, I'll tell you what day it was, on the friday which was the 14th. Um and that's when sherk was saying that's when our troops to retake srebrenica. (Voice in bg) was that the 13th? I don't want you to correct me. (Laughs)

lake um ---truth is a ---

q. Ah. So on the thursday can you describe for me a little bit how that conversation went between between the two presidents? So how president clinton channelled president sherk's enthusiasm for military action in a way that ---.

Lake well I think it was really more of an exchange of views as I recall it 20 29 . And they did not achieve a common view at the end of it. The president heard President Chirac out with great interest. Demurred on these as I recall in the military wisdom of it or feasibility of it, 20 42 then suggested the alternative that general shalikashvili promoted on his trip to europe as I recall right about at that time. If I can add a point there about president Chirac, and an unsolicited point at about the bosnian serbs during this period.

Uh I think uh that Chirac while he was suggesting something that was unfeasible over srebrenica played a tremendously positive role in galvanizing public opinion throughout Europe in the way he weighed in on this issue. And that was very important in creating the fertile ground that we could then sow in our initiative in august. Secondly the bosnian serbs in their starting to strangle sarajevo in early may, in there hostage taking in late may or early june and then in the attack on srebrenica in each case had tactical successes but it was for them a strategic disaster because they did strengthen the hands of those within every government within europe and the united states who were pressing for stronger action. And they had a tremendous impact on public opinion in the united states and more importantly I believe in in europe. Which again prepared the ground for a new initiative that ultimately resulted in the agreement.

Q. Were you, ripkin came over at that time in the run up to the london conference and I know he was meeting with um secretary christopher. Presumably you were also in.

Lake no I met with him --- in my office.

Q. Since the beginning I mean the british I suppose have been the among the allies, the european allies, have been the most resistant to the idea of air strikes, it's no secret at that point how was he expressing his

feeling about their willingness to go along with?

Lake I recall that meeting, I recall the meeting with uh uh mr. Rifkind as focussing my meeting as focussing less on the air strikes. Which is meetings with other officials had focussed on but rather on what was my central concern at the time which is we think strategically, that we look down the road and that we devise a longer term strategy that we then use to gain leverage in negotiations. And I remember uh it was a quite informal talk about this and uh he seemed uh very much of the same mind.

Q. Ok

lake is that right sandy I do remember that meeting. (Voice in bg) cause I was making it up.

Q. --- Was it really decided when shalikashvili met --- in london?

Lake essentially yes.

Q. Um. In london it was really gorazde was the focus. Gerajda was the line in the sand that was drawn. As i understand it when the american delegation went over the idea was that it wouldn't just be gerajda it would also be the --- in sarajevo?
(End of audio cassette side 1

Q. How was it that at London, it was only Varusta [?] that was put on the list?

Lake You really should talk to the folks who were there. I mean, I, all of us were making calls to our counterparts, arguing for as broad a definition, both of what a bombing campaign would look like and of what er, how many safe areas would be covered. Um, but the, the actual course of the negotiations that ended up with just Gorazde, which is not our position, I don't recall.

Q. OK.
Shall we go forward to the fall of Krajina and the meetings at the beginning of August.
We know from a number of sources that there was a meeting in Split, in, Tudjman and Izetbegovic and they agreed the military lines and Philip Galbraith was invited and told that the Croats were going to, that they had the military plans, that they intended to retake the Krajina by force, by military means. /...

.../ How, back here, did you analyse first of all their chances of success of doing this and what risks this had for American policy?

Lake I'm going to have to back up just a bit.
As you recall,

25 27 the initial operation er that the Croats conducted was across the border and into Bosnia and then up towards er Bihac.

25 35

And there, if we can use traffic light er images, er we gave them something between a yellow and a green, 25 45 er because it was very important at the time that the pressure on Bihac be relieved or we faced much larger choices er of military intervention of some kind, I don't mean with American ground troops.

So there we did not throw our bodies in front of the, the er Croatian car.

26 01

Er, when it came to the Krajina, we were concerned that if the Croatian forces became bogged down in a lengthy operation, then you, the pressures on President Milosevic to intervene er with Serbian troops would be every day stronger and stronger. 26 20

Er, and of course that would have blown up the er, the whole thing.

26 24

Er, most of our intelligence analysts believed er that in fact it was unlikely that a quick campaign could be conducted. 26 34

So I would say that er we were giving him a fairly strong yellow light er on Krajina, not a red light.

.../ Because the, our main concern at the time was that if he did it - and we knew we probably couldn't stop him, although a number of other European governments were also counselling him to be very careful um on this - the main concerns were, were that er they have a care for human rights er abuses and that they have a care for UNPROFOR troops er who were there and um try to ensure their safety as well.

27 06

So we told him, in effect, please don't do this er and er sort of a strong yellow light as I said.

But, if you do it, then take care of the UNPROFOR troops er and avoid er civilian casualties to the degree you can. 27 21

Er that, that we were giving him those qualifiers implied that we thought there was still a chance that he would do it. 27 28

Later then, when Croatian troops er were approaching Banja Luka, er and an attack on Banja Luka could have killed the er negotiating process er and certainly over eastern Slavonia we gave an absolute red light.

Q. On the second of August, Karl Bilt was here, in the next two days the Croats attacked, there was there great sort of flurry of activity at the beginning of August which really resulted in your trip out there.

I suppose what I'm told is that the President, for the first time went to the Bosnia policy...

No, it's not true?

Lake He'd been going to Bosnia policy meetings for two and a half years.

Q. It's Time Magazine.

Lake Time Magazine, I believe, you shake me.
I've heretofore believed every word in Time Magazine!

Q. Those meetings which culminated in your trip, I mean, can you remember a little a bit of the atmosphere, what it was like as the Croats were sweeping through?

Lake Mmm.

Q. Christopher was in Vietnam as I remember.

Lake Yeah, he was, yeah, yeah he was.

Er, during that...

A... again, we didn't suddenly decide to do something because of the Croatian actions.

Er, in fact the origins of the approach that we took er went back to er meetings that I and my staff had had, conversations with the President er in late June and then we were working all through July then with my colleagues. Er, but clearly this was bringing it to a head. /...

.../ The changed strategic realities on the ground, the consequences of Srebrenica on European public opinion, er the President's increasing concerns about a new approach being necessary,

29 18 all of it suggested that there was a real opportunity here for a new diplomatic initiative that might even, it seemed a stretch at the time, bring about a settlement er with Bosnia. 29 29

Er, during that week there were probably three or four er formal meetings with the President, with all his senior foreign policy advisers er in the Cabinet Room, which the President ran er very crisply as I recall, er because we were very focused on getting er the specifics right of a new approach 29 55 and I'll come back to what that approach was.

Er and then I also held a series of informal meetings with the er group of experts and er people from various agencies that we'd been working with during July and putting this together.

So it was a very full week, yes.

Q. Was there the final meeting, when the President said OK, we'll do this, can you describe what you talked about, what you agreed...

Lake Well we through earlier meetings had been going over a set of memos that we had all er prepared, including the memo that had come, that we had been working over July that laid out what this approach might look like. /...

.../ Er,

30 40 he in the early days of that week er said, yes, this is more or less the approach we should be taking, so 30 47 in the final meeting er Sandy Vershbow and Nelson Drew had prepared er very detailed, eight or nine single spaced pages of talking points er that I could take er with me round Europe that we had er worked over. So that last meeting er focused it, focused on er those er talking points 31 08 and er the specifics of our approach and, as I recall, on alternative maps that down the road a little way we could present to the er, to the er parties.

Q. Did the President say something to you as he went out the door?

Lake Yes, er...
Yes, no, no, not...

Q. What did he say to you?

Lake Well, could we back up...

Q. Just describe...

Lake Can I just describe to you what the elements of this were, because they've never actually been, I think written about in any detail.

Er, the first element was that er, well there were three elements and then a very important overall decision on, on what approach we would take. /...

31 49

.../ Er, the first element was that we would launch a major new diplomatic initiative, er which would be much more than ever in the past an American initiative.

Not quite yet an American plan, but it anticipated our at some point putting down in effect an American plan er a map on the constitutional arrangements, etcetera, which we'd hesitated to do in the past er for tactical reasons. 32 12

Er, secondly, er 32 20 the approach contained a basic trade-off, er which had to do with what we would do after, in a post-UNPROFOR Bosnia.

Er and that trade-off was, it consisted of going to the Bosnian Serbs and saying, if you are responsible for a failure to achieve an agreement, then we are going to er lift the arms embargo multilaterally if we can, unilaterally if we have to, we are going to arm er and equip and train the Bosnian forces, so that they can defend themselves and we will conduct vigorous air strikes er for an interim period.

Er and therefore it is in your interest to settle, because if you do then there will be economic assistance and a lot

of other things. 33 09

And we er had the mirror image for the Bosnian government, saying if you agree to a settlement and here are all the good things that will happen and if you are responsible, then we will not be in a position to proceed er with these efforts to help to defend you in the er future. 33 29

The third element of it was one that er 33 32 I emphasised with the President at the end of this meeting, er and that was that when I took this around to the Europeans, that I make it very clear that this was what the United States was going to do, 33 45 that we could be more effective in doing it, er that if the Europeans joined us, that we hoped very much that they would join us, er that we wanted to work with them very closely, but that if they did not, we were going to proceed on this basis er in any case. 33 58

Er and as I left the room, I remember reminding the President that this is what I was going to say to the Europeans, er and he said er, God speed, exactly right. 34 10

Um, he then called me er just before I left for Europe, he had gone over the talking points er one more time and he had some suggestions on er some ways to, to er frame them, so he was very intimately involved in er every detail and...

CHANGE OF TAPE U- 084

END OF INTERVIEW ON ROLL C5

U-BIT # 084

Q.

When you were in Europe, how did the Allies receive your talking points?

Lake

Er, surprisingly well, I thought.

Er, I think that they were er very happy that we were going to be taking a new initiative, er they were increasingly concerned about what we would happen to UNPROFOR forces during winter, er and for any chance that we could all, by pooling our diplomatic and other resources, um getting an agreement was very welcome news to us.

I mean, to them...

INTERRUPTION

Lake

01 34

The, the reception in Europe was better than I had anticipated, er although Sandy Vershbow had predicted that it would be er very welcoming.

Er, the er reason was, I think, essentially, er the Europeans were increasingly concerned about what would happen to their troops on the ground in Bosnia during the coming winter and the prospect of a serious new diplomatic initiative in which we could all pool our resources to get something done er was very welcome to them. They were less welcoming of the notion that if there was not an agreement and UNPROFOR collapsed, er that we were going to lift the arms embargo and take er strong measures 02 10 , er assuming that the Bosnian government had been constructive in the negotiation effort.

Er, but even that concern helped focus them then on the welcome news of a new diplomatic approach.

Er, what I tried to do was after each er meeting as I went around Europe, was at, at the end of the meeting ask that we review what they would say on background to the press.

Er, I refused to see reporters, avoided photographs if I could er and relied on them to er put out a positive message on background

I then had each embassy forward to me comments of the previous stop on background, so I could use that to say, look, the last government genuinely is on board, look at how they're backgrounding the press and that encouraged them to do the same thing and it built a kind of a momentum er at each stop, without my having to er meet with the reporters er and discuss with them the details of the approach that I was discussing with the governments.

Q.

You met with Holbrooke in London to toss the baton in the American Residency or the American Embassy, I'm not sure which?

Lake

It was at the er Chancery building in Grosvenor Square.

Q.

Can you describe for me a little bit - there's been a lot written about it and Holbrooke's told us a bit about it...

Lake

As always, I agree with Dick!

Yes,

03 39

I wanted to meet with him privately, er both to go over the substance of the approach er so that he had it er firmly in mind 03 44 er and to tell him about the reactions that I had gotten.

Er, but also to er emphasise with him that

03 54 this was our last best shot at resolving the problem in Bosnia, that there should be no hesitation, no holding back, just let it rip, 04 02 as God knows, er Ambassador Holbrooke er let it. 04 06

Er and that win or lose, er that I was going to be with him, back here in Washington, er and do whatever I could to cover flanks, get things done in support of him when I was back here.

And then I took a mo..., sentimental moment to recall er that he and I had joined the Foreign Service together, er we had worked on Vietnam together and that this was an opportunity er towards the end of our careers er to really get something done and wasn't it er nice that we were getting the opportunity to do something that we had er more or less dreamt about many years ago.

Q.

That's great.

A few days later was the tragedy on Mount Igmon. Everybody tells me that it changed something inside the administration, beyond the obvious personal thing, but somehow the attitude changed after that.

Lake

I...

We were already determined, but it put a new steel in that determination er for everybody, least for, for um I'm sure all of us, our friends.

05 24

I recall when I went, er when I got the news, er that I er went out er with um Sandy Vershbow and Sandy Berger to er tell Nelson Drew's er very fine officers, Nelson Drew's wife that he had died er

05 44

and I walked in the door and as soon as I walked in the door - she's a military officer's wife and she knows how these things work.

As soon as she saw me, she was, of course, er stunned, because she had heard that there had been an accident, but if I was there, it was obviously, there was possible news. And I told her that er Nelson had been killed and the first thing she said was, we have to put an end to that war, the first thing she said.

Nothing about herself or anything, but just the war and stopping it. 06 19

And I think we've all had some bitter experiences and if there was ever any moment at which one would say, well, let's take some time off or put it off to next week or whatever, a memory of a moment like that just pushes you on.

Q.
You met with Madeleine Albright and Bill Parry at the
airforce base, I think, on the twenty first.
Was it to reconfigure the team or what do we do now?

Lake
Well, this is when their remains had come home?

Q.
Yeah.

Lake
Um, it was just to, yeah, not, yes just to...
Because we needed to move immediately er to reconfigure the
team, to get new people in place, to keep the momentum
going, er that's exactly what they all would have wanted.
Er, and so we met for an hour or so over lunch and did
that.

Q.
You were on vacation maybe when the shelling happened in
the market place that triggered the first big bombing raids
at the end of August?

Lake
No, I was here...

Q.
You were here, you were here.

Lake
Er the President was out at Jackson Hole in Miami er and,
as I recall, er either the first news of it or a day later,
I, I was calling out to Jackson Hole, er I think it was the
first news. /...

.../ He was out on a hike somewhere, on a trail, er so I
reached the er military assistant who always travels with
him and gave him the news and he passed it on then to the
President.

Q.
Then did you talk to him?

Lake
Oh yes, almost daily, yes.

Q.
Here was the point where now London rules would be engaged,
was there any doubt in your conversations, do you remember
how it went?

Lake
No, absolutely not.
No, they were...

Q.

Is that what the President said to you.

Lake

No, that's not a direct quote, but that was certainly the gist of the message, yeah.

Very clearly.

Q.

Then there was a pause in the bombing, it went on for forty eight hours, then it stopped.

Holbrooke in Belgrade was sort of [unintelligible] Milosevic now that he could control it, he could turn it on, he could turn it off depending on what they were doing. How much at this point the diplomatic effort really running the bombing?

Lake

I think it was very useful that er, that Milosevic understood that Dick had a powerful influence over all of this.

Er, but the fact is that it was both er calibrated to help us achieve what we wanted diplomatically, but also er Janvier had laid down certain conditions, our credibility was on the line and it was er very strongly governed by whether those conditions were being met.

So it was a question of doing both er at the same time and not let do some very careful management back here in Washington, er making do that what Dick was saying was er in accordance with what we were deciding here, er and then a huge number of phone calls to various allies, NATO officials and others to try to co-ordinate it er within.

Q.

You told me a little bit about Banja Luka, so I'll skip that over.

You must have discussed with the President at the point that actually now at the end of October you really now were going say, OK, we are going to contribute troops.

All along since '93, it's been the position, but now you're going to have to sell it to Congress one way or the other. How did you analyse the likelihood of being able to get this through Congress and how were you going to present the sending US ground troops finally?

Lake

It was not a difficult policy decision.

Very little debate went into it, because this had been our policy since er, as I recall, February of 1993.

Er, the President had repeatedly said that if there were a settlement, we would contribute er American troops to a NATO effort, subject to our seeing the plans er and congressional consultation.

Er, and members of Congress were later to say we never told them.

In fact, we repeatedly said this publicly and to members of Congress.

So that wasn't hard.

The focus was much more than on er one, how do you convince the Congress er to er acquiesce er at least, although on constitutional grounds we thought we had the right to do it, much better obviously the more united we were with the Congress on the issue.

And secondly, what were the plans.

So the discussions with the President focused on those two issues, er the hows rather than the whether.

Er we were contrib... we were very committed to that, both to our European allies and to the Bosnian government and it had played a central role in convincing the Bosnian government er in fact to negotiate seriously.

Q.

Were you worried that Congress would somehow stop you?

Lake

Of course.

Er, 11 16 sending American troops on to the ground in Bosnia is, was not going to be a popular er move and the Congress was not going to be instinctively drawn to it. The President knew he was going to have to do a lot of hard work, as he did. 11 29

He made a lot of phone calls, held a number of meetings with congressional leaders, er worked it very hard, appealed to the nation on a number of occasions er 11 40 and every time we had an occasion to er announce a new step forward, er he went out to announce it, both because it was under his orders and he had to take responsibility for it, but also because it was another opportunity to explain to the American people what our interests er were in, at stake and are at stake in Bosnia and how our values are at stake as, as well there. 12 00

So, he worked it very hard with the Congress and um, in the end, the Congress in effect acquiesced.

Um, on the side though, a lot of the focus in our internal meetings was on simply what is the planning and getting briefings from General Charlie [unintelligible] um on the state of NATO planning, how it looked, how many troops, where they would go.

The President is the Commander-in-Chief and he had a responsibility, which he met, to know exactly what those plans were before he sent American troops in.

Q.

At the end, the very last day of Dayton, Christopher and Holbrooke rang up and said that it's off, we've failed, it's not going to work, we must shut it down tomorrow morning.

Were you here that night and do you remember how you took the news?

Lake

Oh yes.

No, we were getting phone calls er all night long for, not just that last night, but er three nights in a row, er because the deadline kept moving a little bit er and finally we did get up against the real, real, real deadline.

The bags were packed, the engines running and, and um our delegation was ready to depart.

And we had gotten word that er it had failed.

I can't remember now which phone call.

I remember

13 11 I went in and told the President it looks as though we've failed. Um, as I recall, his reaction, as mine certainly was, er was that, well, er let's take a couple of weeks, er people can take a deep sigh, step back, consider, look at the alternatives and then let's start again 13 31 and keep trying on it.

Um and then the word came that in fact we had an agreement.

Er, as I recall,

13 37 I was sitting in the President's outer office er when that word came. Er, so I walked into his office, said it looks like we have an agreement after all and put him on the phone 13 46 to Secretary Christopher and er Ambassador Holbrooke and they gave him the details of it and he was elated.

Q.
He called up the three Presidents?

Lake
Yes, he called the three Presidents and then went out and announced it um outside the Oval Office in the Rose Garden.

Q.
I've skipped through most of the details of Dayton, because I'm presuming that's something for Secretary Christopher and Holbrooke, but is there any other place where you personally can remember one moment where you...

Lake
I remember...
I remember going out there er and meeting with each of the er Presidents.
Er, or I guess Tadjman wasn't there when I was there.
I, it was a, a strange, isolated, intense world er as each of them had their rooms along these er corridors and er Holbrooke and the other Americans going from room to room, working the er corridors.
Um...
I don't remember any specifics...

Q.
That's fine.
Do we have time to go back...

INTERRUPTION

Lake

15 38

I got a call on my cellular telephone saying that er the UN had turned the key and that er there was authority now for conducting air strikes. Er, this was at the retirement ceremony of our army Chief of Staff, General [unintelligible] Sullivan.

15 36

Er after the ceremony and the speeches, er I went and found the er President, walked up to him and said the key is turned, it looks as if a go on the bombing. 16 05

Er and his reaction was one of a combination of pleasure that we were acting and relief because he had been immensely frustrated over the months er at the, our, our inability to act 16 18 to get the other, the UN key turned, er and this was a moment now when finally we were going to come, it looked as though come to grips with the issue.

16 29

Er, the President said, yes, go, er this is the right thing. 26 31

Er General [unintelligible] was there, I found him on the edge of the crowd er and er told him the President er approved and that we convey our support for this. Of course, it was not our decision, but a, a UN and a NATO decision.

Er and then er Charlie and I called Madeleine Albright, because we had work to do at the UN and told her that we were er going to move on and that she should begin er her work as well.

Then we got in the motorcade and, and came back.

Q.
During that time was he really angry, can you describe him,
what was he like?
I've never seen him angry, what does he do?

Lake

I don't recall his ever getting angry in that way, but he
can er become very intense and very focused er and again,
there was not one moment at which he said, yes, we must
solve Bosnia.

Er it was more every morning,
at my morning meeting with him his er, almost every
morning, expressing er an increasing concern and increasing
frustration and increasing support for what, er anything
that we could do to come up with plans er for resolving.

Q.
That's terrific, thank you very, very much.

END OF INTERVIEW WITH Lake