

RECORD

Of Franjo Tuđman's conversation with American representatives Holbrooke et al held in Presidential palace on 18-Aug-1995

Start: 14:30 Hs

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

As I understood the agenda, Mr President, we will divide this meeting in two parts approximately. After the introduction, in which we would like to inform you about our talks in Belgrade, the ambassador and I would like to talk with you privately, especially because Dr Kreuzel and General Clark have talks with Minister Šušak and General Chervenko. In addition, at 16:00 Hs we will meet Prime Minister Silajdžić. We did not know that he is here, that is a coincidence, but a very lucky one. We will meet Silajdžić in private, without any publicity, hopefully. Silajdžić will probably generate publicity himself.

PRESIDENT:

Probably.

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RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Do you agree, Mr President? Firstly, thank you for seeing us so often and for giving us so much time. We really appreciate that. The ambassador Frasure and Nelson Drew are at the embassy, they are sending some reports to Washington, so we left them there.

First I would like to inform you about our meetings with president MILOŠEVIĆ. We met him twice, the meeting went on for five hours yesterday, and for three hours this morning.

PRESIDENT:

You could have discussed all five continents!

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

We could have, however, sadly, we discussed a small part of one continent. In addition, General Clark met General PERIŠIĆ this morning, perhaps he could also say something about that conversation. We have not met anyone else in Serbia except for the Foreign Secretary Milutinović, who is new and who was there sitting with them, and that was all. There is only one word that I could use to describe our talks, and that is "unconvincing". I use that word publicly, we requested the White House and the Pentagon to use that word. I read in papers that our peace process is becoming more dynamic, which is not true. We spend a lot of time travelling around and we use a lot of aircraft fuel, but I do not know whether we are making progress or whether we are stuck, I really do not know. Unconvincing. To be specific, we presented our peace plan, all our proposals, exactly the way we presented them to you.

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However, we really emphasised the President's firm position that we have to make progress. MILOŠEVIĆ listened carefully and he did not start, as I thought he would, with the thousand-year-old history of Serbian people. He started talking about various things, and his problem number one was the threefold recognition. Of all the issues we discussed that was the principal problem for him. And, he said, I can quote him exactly... Joe, correct me if I do not repeat his words correctly... "cannot do that after a humanitarian catastrophe of this size" /unclear – possibly they cannot do that or I cannot do that/." Have I quoted him correctly? (Dr. Kruzel confirms by nodding). Humanitarian catastrophe (incomprehensible). It should also be pointed out that, when he speaks of "humanitarian catastrophe" - let us speak frankly within our special private relationship - he also means a political catastrophe. We saw refugees along the roads. Carl Bildt, who arrived immediately after us and met us last night, told us that he stopped and spoke with some refugees and those who spoke with him were not willing to go back to Krajina. On the other hand, other refugees may be willing to return. However, the issue of the return of refugees, or their right to return, or the issue of their property rights, all of that is of absolutely fundamental importance. In that regard, I emphasised to Milošević and I also emphasise that to You, Mr. President, that the USA are strongly convinced that Serbs, who deserted Krajina, regardless of the fact whether they left voluntarily or they were expelled or they escaped because of the clashes, they have to have the right to return, their right as the citizens of Croatia, and, should they decide not to return, the right to compensation for their property.

You told us that you made all of that public. It is very important for that to continue.

PRESIDENT:

But that must be also applicable to Croatian refugees from Serbia, from Bosnia...

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RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Of course. The central...

Dr. MATE GRANIĆ

The same principles.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Of course, Mate. If I had to reduce our goals to two, if you asked me “what the hell are we trying to do here,” I would reduce that to two goals. I would say: these two goals are, regardless of the order they are in, the equal treatment of all three ethnic communities, regardless of the country they live in, and the Bosnian state within its current international borders, a sustainable state that would be recognised by its neighbours. There are also other issues, but these two issues are the *sine qua non*. When I speak of the right of Serbs to return, I mean, of course, the right of all to return, including Croats and Muslims. However, we are talking about my conversation with Milošević and I would like to emphasise what Milošević said. He was absolutely uncompromising regarding the recognition of Croatia. Concerning the recognition of Bosnia, his position was precisely the same as four months earlier. He would recognise Bosnia and Herzegovina within its international borders, but he would not recognise the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina, he would not recognise Izetbegović. I told him “I am not asking you to recognise Izetbegović,” and we struggled around that. That is why I said that the conversation was unconvincing, that it did not result with any conclusion. Regarding Eastern Slavonia, he expressed great concern with regards to the situation over there, and we said that, upon a request by President Clinton, and following his instructions, we are inviting all sides in these area to exercise militarily restraint with regards to new offensive operations and that certainly also includes Eastern

Slavonia, in our estimate. I especially emphasised that, because there are certain confusions, and I understand why, in relation to what we object to, i.e. to what we do not object to, regarding the military operations. Already two-days ago I spoke about that with my friend Defence Minister, and I would like to state clearly, in connection with the famous red, green or yellow signal, in relation to Eastern Slavonia, that the USA absolutely, firmly supports the view that each action in Eastern Slavonia would be really dangerous and that it would drag Milošević into the conflict in a way in which he clearly does not want to be involved.

He does not want to enter this war. He wants to get out of it, but Eastern Slavonia is different. He told us several times that he accepts the principle of Eastern Slavonia being a part of the Republic of Croatia, but he would not state that publicly because of the mass catastrophe he just experienced. We talked about negotiations on solution in the course of three to five years, and about all these gradual processes, but he constantly dodged the issue, and we did not get far. We are constantly putting on the map the importance of the Croatian issue, the peace in Eastern Slavonia and the elements of the plan Z-4, which could still be applied.

Of course, a good deal of the plan Z-4, as the Ambassador Galbright emphasised two days ago, is in the past, but the principle of the right to return, to compensation, to equal rights, etc... Now let us leave the Croatian issue for a moment, Mr. President, I would like to go back to where we are now. This afternoon we will meet Silajdžić. Silajdžić and Izetbegović are in a real political quarrel, same as President Clinton and Senator Dole, which in fact is very similar because Silajdžić is so close to Senator Dole. This is actually the factor that complicates the situation. Firstly, I would like to ask you if you could influence Silajdžić, to tell him that the conflict between him and Izetbegović works only for his enemies and that we have to co-operate. Of course, we will tell him that, but it would be useful if an advice like that would arrive from the people in Zagreb that he listens to. I do not know which one of you is closer to Silajdžić, but that would be really useful.

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PRESIDENT:

Not closer than Izetbegović.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Do you have a good relationship with Silajdžić, personally?

PRESIDENT:

No, only...

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

It is civilised.

PRESIDENT:

Civilised, Yes.

Dr. MATE GRANIĆ:

During the negotiations I...

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

Valentić, President of the Government, he has...

PRESIDENT:

All right, we could try.

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RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I think that this could be the message we would send. The next question, Mr. President, is what to do next? As I mentioned the day before yesterday, in my rather long expose, I would like to emphasise several elements, because I spoke for almost 30 minutes, I would like to emphasise the key elements, which may have not been mentioned. In my introductory expose, I said that we would - in about one month - we would like to hold an international conference. Mate even spoke of the "five + three" formula, regarding the representation /(?) a note by a translator: Halbroke in fact said "regarding the even location"/. We believe that this is the right thing. The Contact Group plus You, Milošević and Izetbegović.

Dr. MATE GRANIĆ:

Presidents of states, those five states. Leadership meeting...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I cannot make a commitment on behalf of President Clinton, but that would be either President Clinton or the State Secretary Christopher... I do not know on which level. Let us ensure firstly that that be a real conference that would give real results. The location and the level of our representatives would depend on the type of the conference, but I know that you want a leadership meeting with the five state leaders, including Yeltsin and Clinton, together with the three of you. We understand that completely. Nevertheless, the prospects for that are connected with the prospects of success. I also know that both Yeltsin and Chirac have proposed direct leadership meetings with you. We think that such meetings should be well prepared, but what is essential is the fact that we have about four weeks. I would like to clarify that... should that never happen, if we do not embark on something, we will head toward withdrawing the UN from Bosnia and to the NATO entering,

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in one form or another, following the UNPROFOR. According to the original plan, that would mean approximately 75,000 to 100,000 NATO soldiers on the battlefield, 25,000 of which would be Americans. That is, as you know, the withdrawal plan, but it will not be that easy. Then there is also the plan for further engagement that I presented to you two days ago, which includes the organisation of forces that would succeed the UN, which would actively support Bosnians, actively support Bosnians. We would be training, arming and equipping them, the arms embargo would be abolished, there would be shelling, either by the NATO or by the USA, that is the wartime plan. However, that is not what we want. Nevertheless, should the UN start pulling out, this is what we will get. And the UN will start pulling out if we do not make progress on a diplomatic level. That is why I am so concerned with Silajdžić, because he is causing so many problems here, because we need Silajdžić's support. I told that to Milošević at great length, not in only 30 seconds, we talked about that for hours. I do not have any idea whether he believed at all in what I told him, but we must not ease the grip. As you well know, he lives in his fantasy world, in Belgrade. However, his English is really good, he lived in New York and we spoke in the urban street-jargon, and I hope that he understood everything, that jargon.

Regarding that conference, it should be prepared by practical progress in the field. We will make the effort to achieve that. I will not know whether we could achieve that until I meet Izetbegović and Silajdžić. At this moment the essential problems are: firstly, Croatia. He is ready for that limited recognition of BiH, however, as I just mentioned, he will not recognise Croatia at the present. Maybe later, perhaps we could make a secret agreement of a sort, I do not know, because I have not given up our position. I wanted to talk to you first; my colleagues and I both want to speak with our colleagues in Washington. However, of all the issues that we discussed with him, he was the least flexible in his position

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that he would not recognise Croatia in any form, at this moment, although he already has the liaison personnel here, and even though he knows that he would have to do that one day, he will not do it now. We all know why. Because you just won your biggest victory and he suffered the biggest defeat since 1389. He is personally (incomprehensible) Serbian people, he really is... that is an overwhelming experience. The second issue that we focussed on with Milošević, besides his problem with recognition, as well as the most difficult issue for us is "who speaks on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs." We talked a lot about Mladić and Karadžić and all those other people, and you know what he said about Karadžić? He said, I quote, "that man is a damn crack-brained maniac." You know, I never met Karadžić and whether he is... However, with regard to Srebrenica and Žepa, he told us, I don't know whether that is true or not, Mr. President, but we are only informing you now, he told us that he attempted to prevent that from happening, he thought it to be a disgrace. When we told him that war crimes were committed in Srebrenica, he actually agreed, he said "I know." It should be pointed out that this is not at all in question, we just spoke with the US Embassy officials who spoke with refugees and ...

PRESIDENT:

And what about Mladić and Karadžić? And the relationship of Mladić and Karadžić with Perišić?

Gen CLARK:

I could say something about that.

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RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

We will discuss Perišić in a minute. He... That is very unclear. I asked him to whom is Mladić subordinated. Who commands him. And he answered, I do not know whether that is true or not, "sometimes I influence him in limited affairs, and sometimes I cannot influence him." In Srebrenica... he claims that he did not have anything to do with that, that he attempted to stop it. However, that has happened and I am not relieving him of responsibility. What I wanted to emphasise in conversation about the Bosnian Serbs was not the history, although the history is extremely important, we will talk about that later, but instead I wanted to emphasise the fact that we cannot find the solution to the problem in this area through negotiations if there is no- one who could speak on behalf of the Bosnian Serbs. And all that game, that... pardon my expression... "shit" because no- one speaks up etc., is still bothering us. This is how it went approximately, Mr. President. We will return to Belgrade on Tuesday... On Sunday, today is Friday. Tomorrow we are leaving for Sarajevo, today we will meet Silajdžić, tomorrow Izetbegović and then again Milošević on Sunday. If we cannot make any progress, if we feel that we are not going any further, by the end of this - to put it that way - second round, in which I met you twice, I will meet him two times and three times the Bosnian Government, but every time separately Silajdžić, Šaćirbej, Izetbegović... then we will return to Washington, and we will tell the President that we did not achieve anything, and the President will have to decide through consultations with Chirac, Major and Kohl, how to proceed. And it is very probable that then we will be on the way of NATO's presence in the field in Bosnia after the UN pulls out. Accordingly, we think that we have three or four weeks... That would in fact be everything I can tell you at this moment. I would like to hear you reaction or remarks and then I would like to ask General Clark to say something about his meeting with General Perišić.

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PRESIDENT:

I would be very interested to hear something about the conversation with...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Would you like the General to speak first? Go ahead, Les.

Gen CLARK:

Mr. President, I believe that in that meeting two issues emerged first. Firstly, the fact that you are facing a very resolute and a very sombre military circles in Yugoslavia. They put up a map on the wall so that I could see it, with display of the Croatian forces' incursion in Bosnia. They displayed the incursions around Dubrovnik, around Glamoč, and the concentration of Croatian forces around Eastern Slavonia. Although they did not threaten at any moment, they made it clear to me... They said "if Croatia invades Eastern Slavonia, the Serbs over there will fight, and there is no prospect of these fights being limited to the area around Danube." They also said "that is why we are accumulating our forces in order to protect our territory." Therefore, I received a very...

PRESIDENT:

Eastern Slavonia is...

Gen CLARK:

So, I received a very clear message, coming from the General who probably does not have an authorisation to say what the possible critical point would be. However, that was a very clear message.

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I have not received that message (incomprehensible).

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Perhaps Kreuzel could add something to our talks with Milošević. Do you have any additional ... Can you think of anything?

GENERAL CLARK:

I would only like to say something about Mladić. You asked me to speak there with Perišić. And I did that.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

That was your idea, we did that because it was a good idea.

GENERAL CLARK:

So, I told him, he stated those military estimations that I just described, I described our plan, what would happen when the NATO comes to the field, NATO air raids... He agreed with me, that the balance of forces changed drastically at the expense of Bosnian Serbs, that was not in question at all, and they see this. That is why I said that we have to have peace, that we have to accomplish peace now, and that we have very little time, and he agreed. I also mentioned what the ambassador Holbrooke requested in his report, I asked who or what controls the Bosnian Serbs and whether he could speak on their behalf. And he said, he did not answer, he said "maybe Karadžić, maybe... who knows." And I said "some say that you control Mladić, is that correct?" He denied that, of course. And I said "but he

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respects you, he is your military colleague *unclear – as printed*,” and he said “no, he is the leader of his own army.” That is where we stopped...

PRESIDENT:

And who provides supplies for Serbs?

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

Mladić controls him, he does not control Mladić.

PRESIDENT:

But Perišić provides supplies...

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

Mister President, Perišić commanded Mostar when we took Mostar, and Mladić was his superior. Then Perišić was promoted after he lost Mostar and Tasovčići and all that, so he was promoted and recalled to Belgrade. This is the complex, Mladić was his superior for 15 years...

GENERAL CLARK:

After that I had a feeling that we could not control Mladić through Perišić. If that is so, Perišić denied it at any rate. *as printed*

PRESIDENT:

All right, I agree, there is that personal motive... However, in relation to supplies etc., that is handled by Serbia, Perišić.

Dr MATE GRANIĆ:

Milošević practically controls...

PRESIDENT:

Not completely... But, without Serbia, without the supplies provided by the Yugoslav Army, Mladić would not be able to conduct this war.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

That is obviously clear.

Dr MATE GRANIĆ:

That is exactly how it is.

Gen CLARK:

The question is whether he is willing to be a channel and to be a certain force... General Perišić.... And he did not show that. He may do that at a future meeting. I told him that I will maybe speak with him again if we come again to Belgrade, on Sunday.

PRESIDENT:

You did not meet Mladić?

Gen CLARK:

No.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Joe, could you maybe reconstruct the discussion to a greater detail than I have, especially yesterday, regarding Eastern Slavonia? For the President. I have the feeling that there were also nuances other than what I presented, and I believe that to have been the most important part of the discussion.

Dr. KRUZEL:

Mr. President, I think that President Milošević acknowledges the issue that is the most important for you, i.e. that Eastern Slavonia is Croatia. He is facing a political problem, and I think that we have to find a way of accepting the things that he agrees with, the fact that that is Croatia, expressing the agreement with the fact that this issue would be dealt with in the future. However, this should be an agreement that would in certain way be politically acceptable to Milošević and that would at the same time enable us to reach a solution for Bosnia. Therefore, we will need your help in finding a way for clarifying how would all that end in two or three years, sometime in the future. But that should not complicate the fundamental task, i.e. finding a solution for Bosnia.

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PRESIDENT:

All right. I already said that the main problem for Milošević is a resolution for Bosnia, and that is connected with... I understand.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

We would be interested... I know that my colleagues must soon go to that other meeting, but before that we would like to hear your reactions to our report about the situation where we are now, especially with regard to what you just mentioned in your answer to Dr. KRUZEL... The issue that Bosnia is the focal point now. Do you think, if we concentrate in Bosnia now and meet Izetbegović and Milošević in turns, that we could achieve something? Or do you think that Milošević would continue spinning in the same circle until we all plunge into an abyss?

PRESIDENT:

I think that Milošević - for political and economic reasons - is interested in reaching solutions, but that the solution must be such that the Serbian part of Bosnia would have the right to rely on that, on that Confederate support from Serbia and that he would accept that.

Dr. MATE GRANIĆ:

And a referendum.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

About which referendum are you talking?

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Dr. MATE GRANIĆ:

The referendum on separation, in few years...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

A ha, on succession after a number of years. I understand.

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

President, the essence of their question is whether we will agree to their talking with Izetbegović and Milošević, to Eastern Slavonia not to remain a topic, to be frozen as topic. That is their question.

PRESIDENT:

No, No.

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

That should be clearly stated to them.

PRESIDENT:

That is what I said. I start from the position that Milošević said that he does not recognise Eastern Slavonia and Baranja...

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

But he will not say that publicly.

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PRESIDENT:

It can not be that long before he says that, that is what I said, that is what I said the last time. That must not be done, because Milošević, regardless of the fact that he can realise that he cannot go further, still this is a Byzantine approach that he would, because he would not admit it, that he could perhaps get that too in the future. */as printed/*

Thus, it should not be agreed to abolish sanctions until he recognises Croatia.

The evidence, two years earlier he told us in Geneva that, when he would get rid of Hadžić, that Martić would be his man and that we have a solution to the Serbian issue within the Croatian borders. */as printed/*

However, Martić did become his man and the things went from bad to worse. From his side, that is. Then, he appointed General MRKŠIĆ, also from the YU Army, in Novaković's position. That General MRKŠIĆ too was even more radical than before. Therefore, he cannot be fully trusted.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Mr. President, this was very useful... Maybe we could split in two groups now, because I know that Minister ŠUŠAK and Joe would like to talk, same as General Clark and your General, and then *we* could talk for few minutes. And then we will have to go and meet Silajdžić. Do you agree?

PRESIDENT:

All right. Is it maybe, but we can leave that for later, is Milošević willing to

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discuss the problems in a broader perspective, besides with you also with some European and even, he relied largely on France and England, and he showed signs that he would also like to talk directly *las printed*.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

What do you think about that, Joe?

Dr. KRUZEL:

To talk directly with you, Mr. President?

PRESIDENT:

That too.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I would... Firstly, when he is with us, he says that he wants the US to be a negotiator, but maybe he says the total opposite to Carl Bildt, I do not know. He tells us that he wants us to be negotiators, because we are the only world super-power. In either case, we are here to do everything we can. Second. Regarding your meeting with Milošević, I could tell you exactly what Milošević's game is. He want a private meeting with you, a private meeting with Izetbegović, and he wants to break-up the Federation. There is no doubt about that, I would do the same in his place and I would like to emphasise as much as possible that - in my opinion - you should not meet him privately, nor should Izetbegović do that. That must be a part of the process that would lead to the three of you meeting together. That is my opinion. Would you like to add something, Joe?

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If he meets you privately, be it secretly or in public, that would become public and the world would have the impression that the two of you are dividing Bosnia. That would lead to a crisis in Sarajevo, it would split the Federation and, as you know, we are constantly repeating that the USA would never agree to an unwilling settlement, with a division. The two of us sat in this room many times and you were assuring us, I know that you were also assuring the Ambassador, that you would never divide Bosnia with Belgrade. We take these assurances very seriously. And should it happen that Belgrade and Zagreb divide Bosnia in between themselves, America would not support Croatia anymore in western institutions. We will not do that. I cannot speak on behalf of the future US Presidents, but Clinton will be the President for another year and a half at least, and I also think for the next five and a half years. He will be re-elected, and this is not acceptable for us. And your secret meeting with Milošević, which he would make public, would be planned for that purpose. Would you like to add something, Joe?

Dr. KRUZEL:

I agree with Ambassador Holbrooke regarding two things: first, that President Clinton would be re-elected and second, not only the US but the entire western community would not forgive you easily.

PRESIDENT:

That is absolutely clear.

Dr. KRUZEL:

However, Mr. President, the meetings with you and your associates have really

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convinced us that the frame of solutions for Bosnia, which we presented to you, would be acceptable to you. Of course, you will consider the details. But the big question is Eastern Slavonia. I know you said that you would rather have a peaceful solution to that problem. Would you pledge yourself to that, for a certain time? To efforts for reaching a peaceful solution?

PRESIDENT:

That was historical, Serbs never had, as I said, borders between Croatia and Serbia but the Danube border, a natural boundary if it exists at all *as printed*, and it exists, even in a military tactical view, such border exists.

According to that, I am in favour, we could see let us say by the end of the UNCRO mandate or I do not know what, for all the attempts for a peaceful solution *as printed*, but if there is no peaceful solution, the mood, then we have still have 100 000 expelled people and the mood in Croatian people is such we cannot allow ourselves speculations...

GOJKO SUŠAK:

Unless there is recognition.

PRESIDENT:

If there is a political solution, yes. I am in favour as I said for the democratically elected Government to return and for the presence of the international community or European observers

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or the United Nations to control the implementation of humanitarian and ethnic rights.

But gentlemen, let us return to one issue that has been raised about an agreement between Milošević and myself, an agreement that was never made and about whether that is acceptable for the United States of America or not. Yugoslavia itself was in a crisis since its very creation in 1918, prior to the WW II when the civic politicians were leaders of Yugoslavia, I had more experience than these today and even more democratic experiences *las printed*/. Then the so-called Croat-Serb agreement took place under the patronage of England and France and with the agreement of America. And then, please - this should be kept in mind, then, in order to save Yugoslavia, the Croatian - Serbian agreement was on the creation of Banovina Croatia, which included the - if you are familiar with that – the parts that were within the boundaries of Herceg-Bosnia and Bosanska Posavina, whereas the remaining part was to be discussed in terms of either autonomy or separation. reminding part either an autonomy or separation should be discussed. That was the situation that the Monarchist Yugoslavia disappeared in, in 1941.

Gentlemen, you are probably also familiar with this map from the NATO and EU circles, the year of ninety and something, 93...

Gen CLARK:

I don't recall that I (incomprehensible) not a one like this of the NATO...

PRESIDENT:

NATO or the EU... That is the division between the eastern, Russian... whatever Russia was like... and the West.

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Gen CLARK:

At any rate, this not an official NATO document...

PRESIDENT:

Not as an official document, but as a strategic analysis, a conception...

Gen CLARK:

Mr. President, I can tell that NATO does not have any strategic conception of this kind. I would like to say, I saw all those documents, but this one is not there.

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

This has been used in order to attribute it to us that we are allegedly making agreements with Milošević. That is not our... (incomprehensible, all speak at once).

PRESIDENT:

This is the Brussels map. And let us be...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Allow me to double-check whether I understand this map. I did not want to speak about it. The issue has be raised. I want to understand this correctly. You say that the map, which was published by London papers, does not fit in your vision of Bosnia, and that you described this map to Paddy Ashdown, but that this is not something that you personally support.

PRESIDENT:

Of course. However, I support Henry Kissinger 's standpoint. He said "if we could not save Yugoslavia, we cannot save Bosnia and Herzegovina."

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Mr. President, since we now clarified the issue of the map, and since we can state that this was not your map, but instead that you drew someone else's map ... The other day you said, during a lunch...

PRESIDENT:

I have not described that map etc. */as printed/*

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

No, obviously not. Since we now understand your explanation, we will say that you told us that the map that appeared in London papers was not your idea but someone else's and that you were explaining it. But you also said, I am not interested in Henry Kissinger in that sense.... You know, Henry Kissinger had many crazy ideas in his time...

PRESIDENT:

But they were quite logical...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

He is not stupid, but here he does not speak on our behalf. I would like to state clearly, in

relation with this, in our conversation today you clearly said that you and Milošević would not divide Bosnia. This is extremely important. However, you just quoted Kissinger saying “they could not preserve Yugoslavia, so they cannot preserve Bosnia either,” and you agreed with that. In my opinion, these two statements are not consistent with each other. We must be able to tell President Clinton, very clearly, that you share the American view that the future of this area includes Bosnia as a separate nation. I would like to be sure that I have not missed something.

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

As a separate state.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

...Union, Federation, we understand. You know what I mean, I mean one individual country within the UN, within its current borders. Let us leave aside the issue we discussed, the Union, Federation, Republic... We do not want a division of Bosnia, or its break-up...

PRESIDENT:

Dear Mr. Halbrooke, it was not a coincidence that I mentioned the agreement of 1939. Communists wanted to resolve that problem, to make it easier by declaring Muslims a separate nation, but they had not made it easier, and instead they made it more serious. Please, you cannot have peace in Bosnia today unless you recognise the right of the Serbs to connect to Serbia as well as the right of Croats to connect to Croatia. There is neither a practical nor theoretical possibility for achieving peace, this has to be clear to us. That is the only possibility for creation

the preconditions for a new stable international order on the territory of the former Yugoslavia.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Mr. President, in my lengthy, too long expose two-days ago I emphasised many important points. Some of them represent changes also in the American policies. One of the issues that I mentioned was that the US accepts the fact that the Bosnian Serbs should have a separate *lunclear – possibly special/* and parallel relationship with Serbia. That is a shift in the American position. Originally, that was also the position of Alan Juppe. We agree for this to be a part of the future. Thus, let us agree that we agree on that.

PRESIDENT:

I agree.

Dr. MATE GRANIĆ:

Plus referendum...

PRESIDENT:

In two, three, five years... A possibility...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Referendum, of course, but the issue of succession and separatism leads to another question, which is how to apply that. When Czechoslovakia voted for separation in two parts, the US and the rest of the world never said a word. Why?

Because that was an honest vote

in peace. Even in Ethiopia after the WW II, the world community led by the US and the UN, agreed with referendum for Eritrea after a number of years, and today Eritrea today is a UN member. That is a separate issue.

PRESIDENT:

Gentlemen, let me add to this, what I said, to this historic strategic observation of that problem. It is absolutely certain that - also from the Churchill - Stalin agreement on a 50/50 division of the interest spheres in the former Yugoslavia - that that was not just a whim of theirs, but that behind it were their Staffs and analyses of the possible solution of the problem.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Mr. President, could Ambassador and I spend few minutes with you? In addition, I would also like Dr. Kruzal to talk to Minister Šušak, because two-days ago I took the time he should have spent with Joe. And they wanted to talk. Your head of Staff is also waiting for us, as well as Silajdžić. We are seeing each other often and we will return. Do you agree?

PRESIDENT:

I agree, just one more sentence. Without understanding the historical depth of this division that practically led to this terrible war, along with the great responsibility of Western Europe... Because, had Western Europe not allowed such aggression of the Yugo-Communist Army and Serbia, we would not have the situation as it is today.

Thus, without understanding of all aspects of the problem, we can not get out of the war and ensure future. Accordingly, through half-solutions we will not satisfy demands of the time.

PETER GALBRIGHT:

Allow me too, Mr. President, to say something. We understand that aspect, and we showed great sympathy in that regard - since President Clinton took office - in regard of the importance of emphasising the territorial integrity and independence of Croatia. You saw this in our policies, and in a way they developed from the Bush Government, which has, frankly speaking, hesitated in recognising Croatia, and did not agree with its current boundaries. Thanks to the US, the UN recognised you in the beginning of 1993, you saw what I did following Clinton's instructions, and I acknowledged that very publicly. The precondition for that was the territorial integrity of Croatia as well as of BiH. You just asked whether the alleged agreement that never existed would be acceptable for the US or not. The answer to that is very clear: it could never be acceptable for the US. We simply would not be able to participate in the division of Bosnia, under no circumstances. The Secretary Holbrooke spoke on behalf of the current Government. I can only speak from my own perspective, after working with the Congress for 14 years, by which I want to say that every such plan would cause a very strong reaction from the Congress and that that would be a catastrophe.

PRESIDENT:

Yesterday I said, so: if you accept what you just said, that the Serbian part has the right to rely on Serbia, then there are no differences in fact, pending there

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is no hidden idea that, through this, Croatia could return to the Yugoslav framework.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Of course not.

Dr. MATE GRANIĆ:

(incomprehensible)... standpoints are no big differences, but we fear... (all speak at once).

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Mate, this Government never had any crazy ideas about a renewal of Yugoslavia. What Ambassador Galbright wanted to say is exactly...

PRESIDENT:

Mr. Eagleburger was not the only one in efforts to...

GOJKO ŠUŠAK:

That was the former Government.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

That is exactly what I wanted to say. I am glad you mentioned Eagleburger. The former Government had that crazy idea... Baker's speech in Belgrade. Eagleburger. Scowcroft... That is in the past.

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PRESIDENT:

And Ambassador Zimmermann.

(A part of representation leaves)

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

We just reviewed some of these issues, but I would rather discuss them in detail. Firstly, Eastern Slavonia and Milošević. Earlier you said that nothing would happen in Eastern Slavonia in the following several months, but that you could undertake certain actions when the UNCRO mandate expires.

PRESIDENT:

Should there be no progress in negotiations.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I understand. I would like to be very frank, because our Government gave certain different signals regarding the military activity in the past several months. In November, we asked you not to attack and you did not attack. In March, I flew over here, we agreed, then you and Al Gore made that public in Copenhagen, and you did not attack. However, then the war started again. And when the war started again, and when you headed towards Western Slavonia, and both Ambassador Galbright and I understood the strategic value of that operation, and the pressure that it imposed on the Serbs, then we stated very energetically in Washington that we should show understanding for military action, although we emphasised the rights of the Croatian people.

PRESIDENT:

And had the Serbs observed the agreement then, I would not have gone. However, they not only humiliated the Croatian Government, but also the Croatian people, and they killed my people down there. Thus, I was not the one who allowed or chose the aggression for no reason. One day they open the oil, and on another day they close the road, etc. */as printed/*

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Mr. President, I would like to be absolutely honest with you, speaking not only as an American official, but also as a person who cares about this issue as an individual, as a man who considers himself a friend of Croatia and I certainly see myself as a friend... (unclear)... and Ambassador. (unclear)... that you did a lot for creation of conditions for peaceful solution and that you had justification for your military action in Eastern Slavonia. I defended it, always, in Washington. You will recall that the two of us met in London immediately after that, we met in private, and then we went to the US Embassy and met Gore. That was a very dramatic exchange. There were some, who wanted Gore to tell you to pull out from Western Slavonia, and we said "absolutely not," you have to stay there, you closed the back door, that's your country. Afterwards, we discussed your activities in Livanjsko Polje. We said again "continue." We said publicly, as you know, that we were concerned, but privately, you knew what we wanted. And again you improved the situation, you strengthened the Federation, etc. Then the issue of Knin and of sectors North and South emerged. At that moment, we were in the middle of a very... Peter was preoccupied with that conversation with Babić about the plan Z-4, there was a lot of confusion... You went ahead. From a political and a military point of view, that was a triumph, and it used the situation again, it assisted again. */as printed/* Refugees are the only problem.

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If you could return those people, if you would give a speech stating that the war has finished and that they should return... The majority would not return... But tell them to return, emphasise that, and convince at least some of them to return.

PRESIDENT:

I would be very pleased if around 10 percent of them would return...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Allright, invite them to return. Give them a compensation, but if we leave the humanitarian issue aside for a moment, I will never forget it, but let's leave it aside for now, you helped the situation again. I would like to be clear, since I told you how I feel secretly, and in my heart, and that is that you did great things to help peace. I do not feel the same in relation to the sector East, Eastern Slavonia. I am very convinced that that would be a different situation because it is situated on the Serbian border and the president authorised me to tell you that we would like to request from you a symbolic withdrawal of your forces from the edge of the area under the UN protection. You are accumulating forces there and the shelling from both sides is constantly taking place, some days that shelling increases, between the Serbs in Eastern Slavonia and you. Milošević too is accumulating forces. Milošević told me to tell you that he too would like to request you to consider the withdrawal of some units, in a visible way. You should only withdraw them for 10 or 15 miles, just something symbolic. Should a crisis occur, you could return them within an hour. However, do something to make people realise that you are prepared to negotiate peacefully about Eastern Slavonia. And, do not forget, Mr. President, we stated publicly... And I also told Milošević, who knows how many times, that Eastern Slavonia is a part of Croatia, we will never alter our

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position. On behalf of President Clinton, I beg you, since I discussed that with Milošević, withdraw part of your units, publicly, within the next few days. Let the world see that you are contributing to the President's peace initiative represented by us. Do that, please.

PRESIDENT:

Alright, I agree. I really am for a peaceful solution.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I know that you are.

PRESIDENT:

You know, 200 of my men were killed, 1,400 wounded, and if I could reach a peaceful solution, alright. Although the entire Croatian public and opinion, they are all prepared to go...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Of course. You know that if you attack in the sector East and if Milošević remains outside of the conflict, you will win. However, we think that he would no be able to stay aside.

PRESIDENT:

I know.

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RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Thank you. Secondly, I think that we do not have to repeat the early conversation. I also wanted to discuss the issue of a secret meeting with Milošević, but we already discussed that. Milošević told me a really interesting thing. Namely, I am new in this area, I arrived only three or four years ago, and you of course lived through the history of your country. And you indeed are the father of modern Croatia. If everything ends in the way I think it will. I observed Milošević, and at one moment, this morning... we discussed Bosnia almost the entire time... he became mad, criticising the events in Krajina, saying how he cannot recognise you under those conditions, maybe later... and then he suddenly said "you know, at the end of it all, in this region it all comes down to Croats and Serbs, we must make a deal one day with the Croats, we must, we must resolve that, because that is the history of this region, and the history of this region is the painful relationship between the Croats and the Serbs."

He said all of this very excitingly.

PRESIDENT:

Do not think that the meeting these days would be...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

That would break up the Federation. Until the Bosnian issue is resolved... What I had heard, as he was speaking... he spent most of his time discussing Karadžić, regarding that "damn crazy maniac," and he really hates him, he is not acting. But you know, this is like a quarrel between communists, between Đilas and Tito, and Stalin and Kaganovich, he said, not once, that Bosnia is the main problem but then at the end he said "that comes down to

Croats and Serbs." I think that we should freeze the situation in Croatia as it is. You regained 90 percent of your lost territory, before, 26 percent of your territory was under the enemy... and now... how much is it now?

PRESIDENT:

4,6 percent of the continental part. And if we count the sea, the percentage is 2,8.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I can openly call you the liberator of your country. The creator in the first place, and then the liberator. You regained 98 percent of your territory, if you count the water, and since you have the most beautiful coast in Europe, let us count that water too. Now you have the opportunity to consolidate, to show how you want to contribute to peace by freezing the situation in Slavonia by the public withdrawal of some units... I asked you for that and you said you would do that... by concentrating on Federation and by helping us to reach the solution in Bosnia, and then we will deal with Slavonia. The US President told us to tell you, Milošević and Izetbegović, that we only have few weeks. We would like to call that big international conference. Of all the leaders in this area, most of our meetings were with you, Clinton, Gore, Christopher and I had most meetings with you. I spent most of the time in these chambers. We are prepared to co-operate with you in order to make Croatia part of the West. If you go on Eastern Slavonia, not right now, all our efforts would be in vain.

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PRESIDENT:

You should not waste time on that. But, that we achieve at this time...

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

However, Mr. President we will not achieve progress within the next few weeks. I would like to concentrate on Bosnia during the next month. I cannot achieve progress in both Eastern Slavonia and Bosnia at the same time. And Milošević may show his willingness for progress in Bosnia, but not in relation to Slavonia. And a secret meeting between the two of you, now, is only an attempt to break-up the Federation. If you help us by supporting us during one month, which is very difficult for you, but you are the victor... In the current triangle between Zagreb, Belgrade and Sarajevo, you are on top of the triangle, not Milošević. He is very annoyed by that. But you are the victor. Do not go too far, freeze the situation, I beg you, consolidate with Ambassador Galbright in relation to all public statements in relation to peace, the restraint and the return or compensation for Krajina refugees. Let us focus on Bosnia, let us focus on Bosnian Serbs again, and let us focus on recognition, so we will see what we will achieve. Give us some space, in term of diplomacy (incomprehensible). Just to mention this, you will notice that I have not mentioned the restraint in Livanjsko Polje, I have not mentioned the restraint in Western Bosnia, where Federation units are active. That is another level of quantity. We want an overall restraint. However, I draw a very strong red line in relation to Eastern Slavonia. Because, what is happening in Bosnia must be connected with negotiations in Bosnia. This is a very sensitive issue. However, here we are, Mr. President, and I am grateful to you for giving me your time. I do not believe that I will manage to convince Milošević to recognise Croatia now. However, on the other hand, speaking in long term, Croatia is the one that he will actually recognise, not Bosnia. However, on a short-term we have to

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focus on Sarajevo. That is why I am begging you for a bit of negotiating flexibility. It is self-understood that, the sooner you give us as much as possible flexibility, restraint and leadership that you will show on the international level, the sooner will Croatia become a part of Western Europe. And that is where you belong.

PRESIDENT:

As you said, with all actions I made an effort to resolve that problem in that manner.

PETER GALBRIGHT:

Mr. President, in that context, perhaps in the next few days, as Secretary Halbrooke proposed, maybe in the next few days the symbolic pullout could take place, and the issuing of a public statement about the wish to...

PRESIDENT:

Today I have a press conference at 18:00 hrs, and I will...

PETER GALBRIGHT:

I think that that would be good.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

That would be excellent. You say that today, do not connect that with my visit, and just make a statement. However, let us send a message to Milošević, let us say in private

that that was a reaction... That would be splendid.

PETER GALBRIGHT:

In relation to Eastern Slavonia, as Holbrooke stated, it will not be possible to achieve anything during the next month, no steps that would solve the problem. I know that, because - as you know - I am obviously in contact with the so-called Krajina Serbs in relation to that. There may be a possibility to make small steps forward that would show some progress. E.g., it would be possible to return some refugees, as well as to undertake some other steps, even in the context of some protected villages or something. In fact I do not know, I am only thinking aloud about some small steps that would show that the wall is breaking over there.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

Precisely.

PETER GALBRIGHT:

In order to help you somehow... that, of course, cannot be a precondition for anything, but I think that we could achieve that within the efforts to bring that wall down.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

I would like to clarify one thing, especially because you mentioned Eagleburger. The US Government will never, never accept any changes of Croatian borders. They are your borders. We will support you. However, at this very moment... Because you won in this war, you won the war in Croatia, except in Eastern Slavonia, and you can do that later, and you are winning

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in Bosnia and I hope that you will continue winning as long as we do not achieve peace... Let us suspend Eastern Slavonia, let us deal with what Peter mentioned, and let us not condition that by any specific later deadlines.

I sincerely thank you for your today's comments, they gave me a great impetus and we will stay in close contact. At what time is your press conference?

PRESIDENT:

At six o'clock.

RICHARD HOLBROOKE:

We will be with Silajdžić. And we will watch Television. Thank you for your time Mr. President.

PRESIDENT:

Thank you for your efforts.

/finished at 16:00 Hrs/