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United States Department of State

The Road to Dayton

U.S. Diplomacy and the Bosnia Peace Process

May-December 1995

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Foreword

In the spring of 1996, Secretary of State Warren Christopher directed the Department to undertake an internal study of America's successful effort to bring peace to Bosnia. The study would be limited to the period from May through early December 1995, from the end of the cease-fire in Bosnia to the signing of the Dayton Agreement in Paris. It would focus on three periods in particular: the formulation of a new U.S. diplomatic initiative between May and early August; the conduct of shuttle diplomacy and agreement on broad principles for a peace settlement between mid-August and October; and the actual proximity talks at Dayton in November.

The goals of what was soon to be known as the Dayton History Project were two-fold: to write a classified history based both on classified documents and numerous interviews with key participants while their recollections remained detailed and fresh; and to create a comprehensive archive of these materials. The Project was sponsored by the Executive Secretary of the Department, William Burns; the Assistant Secretary for Public Affairs, Thomas Donilon; and the Assistant Secretary for European and Canadian Affairs, John Kornblum. I was privileged to be charged with directing it.

Phase One of the effort began in June 1996. Led by Chris Hoh, a Foreign Service Officer who had served as Croatia Desk Officer and later as a key member of the Dayton team, an eight-person staff began to compile the written record from State Department and interagency files, as well as conduct extensive interviews with officials involved in the negotiations. In September 1996, the second phase began. Derek Chollet, a doctoral candidate in international relations at Columbia University and a former research assistant on Secretary of State James Baker's memoirs, began drafting early that month after participating in the interviews and immersing himself in the documents over the summer. Work continued on collecting documents, conducting interviews, and organizing the archive. The draft study was completed in early January 1997 and final editing in April.

This study is based on an extensive documentary record; the author had access to every document the State Department could uncover. Moreover, it draws from nearly sixty hours of formal interviews with over forty U.S. officials involved in this effort and countless hours of informal discussions. Several key officials, including Secretary Christopher, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke, and Ambassador Christopher Hill, reviewed the manuscript for diplomatic and bureaucratic nuance. This study, along with the archive on which it is based, will be housed at the State Department's Office of the Historian, where it will eventually provide rich source material for one or more future volumes in the *Foreign Relations of the United States* series.

The purpose of the study is to do much more than simply piece together the complex events that led to the signing of the Dayton Accords; our aim is to provide a

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narrative analysis that places these events into their broader policy context. At the same time, the study intentionally focuses on bureaucratic and diplomatic process as much as on substantive policy. For example, it attempts to shed light on the interplay between the White House and the State and Defense Departments in launching the initiative; the interrelationship of force and diplomacy; the conduct and execution of shuttle diplomacy; the management of relationships with our European Allies and Russia in both the negotiations and preparations for implementation; and the structure and dynamics of proximity talks. In each of these areas, the insights gleaned from our Balkan diplomacy in 1995 may have implications for analogous situations in the future, whether in this region or elsewhere around the world.

Of course, this study is not designed to be the last word on the subject. But when declassified, our hope is that it will be the first stop for scholars interested in these issues. In the meantime, the study and accompanying archive can serve as a useful resource for present and future policy-makers, who can gain insights and inspiration from the remarkable work described in these pages.

Bennett Freeman
Deputy Assistant Secretary-Public Affairs
Director, Dayton History Project

May 1997

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Derek Chollet
May 1997

Post-Dayton Bosnia and Bordering States

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Serbia and Montenegro have asserted the formation of a joint independent state, but this entity has not been formally recognized as a state by the United States.

Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative.

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The Balkans

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¹ Serbia and Montenegro have asserted the formation of a joint independent state, but this entity has not been recognized as a state by the United States.

² The Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

Names and boundary representation are not necessarily authoritative. J945 3-97 STATE (NR/CG)