

A high-contrast, black and white portrait of Bill Clinton, looking slightly to the right with a subtle smile. The image is grainy and serves as the background for the book cover.

WITH A NEW
PREFACE AND
AFTERWORD

My Life
Bill Clinton

#1 NATIONAL BESTSELLER

FIRST VINTAGE BOOKS EDITION, MAY 2005

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LC: 2004107564

Vintage ISBN: 1-4000-3003-X

www.vintagebooks.com

Printed in the United States of America

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To my mother, who gave m

To Hillary, who gave me

To Chelsea, who gave joy and

And to the memory of my
who taught me to look up to people
because we're not so diffe

controls that would prohibit Russian sales of military technology to America's adversaries like Iran and Iraq. With the help of our hard-nosed expert, Lynn Davis, I hung tough on export controls and rebuffed the arms control demands by referring them to our staffs for further study.

The atmosphere brightened when we moved on to economics. I described the economics package as "cooperation," not "assistance," then asked Lloyd Bentsen to outline the proposals we would make to the G-7 in Tokyo. Yeltsin became alarmed when he realized that we couldn't give him any money before the April 25 referendum. Though I couldn't give Boris the \$500 million check he wanted, at the press conference following our final session I made it plain that a lot of money was coming because the United States supported Russia's democracy, its reforms, and its leader.

I left Vancouver with more confidence in Yeltsin and a better understanding of the magnitude of his challenges and his visceral determination to overcome them. And I liked him. He was a big bear of a man, full of apparent contradictions. He had grown up in primitive conditions that made my childhood look like a Rockefeller's, and he could be crude, but he had a fine mind capable of grasping the subtleties of a situation. He would attack one minute and embrace the next. He seemed by turns coldly calculating and genuinely emotional, petty and generous, mad at the world and full of fun. Once when we were walking through my hotel together, a Russian journalist asked him if he was happy with our meeting. He responded quickly, "Happy? One cannot be happy outside the presence of a beautiful woman. But I am satisfied." As everyone knows, Yeltsin had a fondness for vodka, but, by and large, in all our dealings he was alert, well prepared, and effective in representing his country. Compared with the realistic alternatives, Russia was lucky to have him at the helm. He loved his country, loathed communism, and wanted Russia to be both great and good. Whenever anyone made a snide remark about Yeltsin's drinking, I was reminded of what Lincoln allegedly said when Washington snobs made the same criticism of General Grant, by far the most aggressive and successful commander in the Civil War: "Find out what he drinks, and give it to the other generals."

When I got back to Washington, I increased the aid package again, proposing \$2.5 billion for all the former Soviet states, with two-thirds going to Russia. On April 25, a large majority of Russian voters supported Yeltsin, his policies, and his desire for a new Duma. After a little more than one hundred days in office, we had made great strides in bolstering Yeltsin and Russian democracy. Unfortunately, the same could not be said about our efforts to end the slaughter and ethnic cleansing in Bosnia.

In 1989, as the Soviet Union crumbled and communism's demise in Europe accelerated, the question of what political philosophy would replace it was being answered in different ways in different countries. The westernmost part of the former Soviet empire plainly preferred democracy; a cause championed for decades by immigrants to the United States from Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and the Baltic states. In Russia, Yeltsin and other democrats were fighting a rear-guard action against Communists and ultra-nationalists. In Yugoslavia, as the nation struggled to reconcile the competing claims of its ethnic and religious enclaves, Serbian nationalism prevailed over democracy under the leadership of the country's dominant political figure, Slobodan Milosevic.

By 1991, Yugoslavia's westernmost provinces, Slovenia and Croatia, both predominantly Catholic, had declared independence from Yugoslavia. Fighting then broke out between Serbia and Croatia, and spilled over into Bosnia, the most ethnically diverse province of Yugoslavia, where Muslims constituted about 45 percent of the population, Serbs were just over 30 percent, and Croats about 17 percent. The so-called ethnic differences in Bosnia were really political and religious. Bosnia had been the meeting place of three imperial expansions: the Catholic Holy Roman Empire from the west, the Orthodox Christian movement from the east, and the Muslim Ottoman Empire from the south. In 1991, the Bosnians were governed by a coalition of national unity headed by the leading Muslim politician, Alija Izetbegovic, and including the militant Serbian nationalist leader Radovan Karadzic, a Sarajevo psychiatrist.

At first Izetbegovic wanted Bosnia to be an autonomous multi-ethnic, multi-religious province of Yugoslavia. When Slovenia and Croatia were recognized by the international community as independent nations, Izetbegovic decided that the only way Bosnia could escape Serbian dominance was to seek independence, too. Karadzic and his allies, who were allied closely to Milosevic, had a very different agenda. They were supportive of Milosevic's desire to turn as much of Yugoslavia as he could hold on to, including Bosnia, into a Greater Serbia. On March 1, 1992, a referendum was held on whether Bosnia should become an independent nation in which all citizens and groups would be treated equally. The result was an almost unanimous approval of independence, but only two-thirds of the electorate voted. Karadzic had ordered the Serbs to stay away from the polls and most of them did. By then, Serb paramilitary forces had begun killing unarmed Muslims, driving them from their homes in Serb-dominated areas in the hope of carving up Bosnia into ethnic enclaves, or "cantons," by force. This cruel policy came to be known by a curiously antiseptic name: ethnic cleansing.

The European Community envoy, Lord Carrington, tried to get the parties to agree to peacefully divide the country into ethnic regions but

failed, because there was no way to do it without leaving large numbers of one group on land controlled by another, and because many Bosnians wanted to keep their country together, with the different groups living together in peace, as they had done successfully for most of the previous five hundred years.

In April 1992, the European Community recognized Bosnia as an independent state for the first time since the fifteenth century. Meanwhile, Serbian paramilitary forces continued to terrorize Muslim communities and kill civilians, all the while using the media to convince local Serbs that it was they who were under attack from the Muslims and who had to defend themselves. On April 27, Milosevic announced a new state of Yugoslavia comprising Serbia and Montenegro. He then made a show of withdrawing his army from Bosnia, while leaving armaments, supplies, and Bosnian Serb soldiers under the leadership of his handpicked commander, Ratko Mladic. The fighting and killing raged throughout 1992, with European Community leaders struggling to contain it and the Bush administration, uncertain of what to do and unwilling to take on another problem in an election year, content to leave the matter in Europe's hands.

To its credit, the Bush administration did urge the United Nations to impose economic sanctions on Serbia, a measure initially opposed by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the French, and the British, who said they wanted to give Milosevic a chance to stop the very violence he had incited. Finally, sanctions were imposed in late May, but with little effect, as supplies continued to reach the Serbs from friendly neighbors. The United Nations also continued to maintain the arms embargo against the Bosnian government that originally had been imposed against all Yugoslavia in late 1991. The problem with the embargo was that the Serbs had enough weapons and ammunition on hand to fight for years; therefore, the only consequence of maintaining the embargo was to make it virtually impossible for the Bosnians to defend themselves. Somehow they managed to hold out throughout 1992, acquiring some arms by capturing them from Serb forces, or in small shipments from Croatia that managed to evade the NATO blockade of the Croatian coast.

In the summer of 1992, as television and print media finally brought the horror of a Serb-run detention camp in northern Bosnia home to Europeans and Americans, I spoke out in favor of NATO air strikes with U.S. involvement. Later, when it became clear that the Serbs were engaging in the systematic slaughter of Bosnian Muslims, especially targeting local leaders for extermination, I suggested lifting the arms embargo. Instead, the Europeans focused on ending the violence. British prime minister John Major attempted to get the Serbs to lift the siege of Bosnian towns and put their heavy weapons under UN supervision. At the

same time, many private and government humanitarian missions were launched to provide food and medicine, and the United Nations sent in eight thousand troops to protect the aid convoys.

In late October, just before our election, Lord David Owen, the new European negotiator, and the UN negotiator, former U.S. secretary of state Cyrus Vance, put forward a proposal to turn Bosnia into a number of autonomous provinces that would be responsible for all government functions except defense and foreign affairs, which would be handled by a weak central government. The cantons were sufficiently numerous, with the dominant ethnic groups geographically divided in a way that Vance and Owen thought would make it impossible for the Serb-controlled areas to merge with Milosevic's Yugoslavia to form a Greater Serbia. There were several problems with their plan, the two largest of which were that the sweeping powers of the canton governments made it clear that Muslims couldn't safely return to their homes in Serb-controlled areas, and that the vagueness of the canton boundaries invited continued Serb aggression intended to expand their areas, as well as the ongoing, though less severe, conflict between Croats and Muslims.

By the time I became President, the arms embargo and European support for the Vance-Owen plan had weakened Muslim resistance to the Serbs, even as evidence of their slaughter of Muslim civilians and violations of human rights in detention camps continued to surface. In early February, I decided not to endorse the Vance-Owen plan. On the fifth, I met with Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada and was pleased to hear him say he didn't like it either. A few days later, we completed a Bosnian policy review, with Warren Christopher announcing that the United States would like to negotiate a new agreement and would be willing to help enforce it.

On February 23, UN Secretary-General Boutros-Ghali agreed with me on an emergency plan to airdrop humanitarian supplies to the Bosnians. The next day, in my first meeting with John Major, he too supported the airdrops. The airdrops would help a lot of people stay alive, but would do nothing to address the causes of the crisis.

By March, we seemed to be making some progress. Economic sanctions had been strengthened and seemed to be hurting the Serbs, who were also concerned about the possibility of military action by NATO. But we were a long way from a unified policy. On the ninth, in my first meeting with French president François Mitterrand, he made clear to me that, although he had sent five thousand French troops to Bosnia as part of a UN humanitarian force to deliver aid and contain the violence, he was more sympathetic to the Serbs than I was, and less willing to see a Muslim-led unified Bosnia.

On the twenty-sixth, I met with Helmut Kohl, who deplored what

was happening and who, like me, had favored lifting the arms embargo. But we couldn't budge the British and French, who felt lifting the embargo would only prolong the war and endanger the UN forces on the ground that included their troops but not ours. Izebegovic was also in the White House on the twenty-sixth to meet with Al Gore, whose national security aide, Leon Fuerth, was responsible for our success in making the embargo more effective. Both Kohl and I told Izebegovic we were doing our best to get the Europeans to take a stronger stand to support him. Five days later, we succeeded in getting the United Nations to extend a "no fly" zone over all of Bosnia, to at least deprive the Serbs of the benefit of their monopoly on airpower. It was a good thing to do, but it didn't slow the killing much.

In April, a team of U.S. military, diplomatic, and humanitarian aid personnel returned from Bosnia urging that we intervene militarily to stop the suffering. On the sixteenth, the United Nations accepted our recommendation for declaring a "safe area" around Srebrenica, a town in eastern Bosnia where Serb killing and ethnic cleansing had been especially outrageous. On the twenty-second, at the dedication of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel publicly pleaded with me to do more to stop the violence. By the end of the month, my foreign policy team recommended that if we could not secure a Serbian cease-fire, we should lift the arms embargo against the Muslims and launch air strikes against Serb military targets. As Warren Christopher left for Europe to seek support for this policy, the Bosnian Serb leader, Radovan Karadzic, hoping to avoid the air strikes, finally signed the UN peace plan, even though his assembly had rejected it just six days earlier. I didn't believe for a minute that his signature signaled a change in his long-term objectives.

At the end of our first one hundred days, we were nowhere near a satisfactory solution to the Bosnian crisis. The British and French rebuffed Warren Christopher's overtures and reaffirmed their right to take the lead in dealing with the situation. The problem with their position, of course, was that if the Serbs could take the economic hit of the tough sanctions, they could continue their aggressive ethnic cleansing without fear of further punishment. The Bosnian tragedy would drag on for more than two years, leaving more than 250,000 dead and 2.5 million driven from their homes, until NATO air attacks, aided by Serb military losses on the ground, led to an American diplomatic initiative that would bring the war to an end.

I had stepped into what Dick Holbrooke called "the greatest collective security failure of the West since the 1930s." In his book *To End a War*, Holbrooke ascribes the failure to five factors: (1) a misreading of Balkan history, holding that the ethnic strife was too ancient and ingrained to

be prevented by outsiders; (2) the apparent loss of Yugoslavia's strategic importance after the end of the Cold War; (3) the triumph of nationalism over democracy as the dominant ideology of post-Communist Yugoslavia; (4) the reluctance of the Bush administration to undertake another military commitment so soon after the 1991 Iraq war; and (5) the decision of the United States to turn the issue over to Europe instead of NATO, and the confused and passive European response. To Holbrooke's list I would add a sixth factor: some European leaders were not eager to have a Muslim state in the heart of the Balkans, fearing it might become a base for exporting extremism, a result that their neglect made more, not less, likely.

My own options were constrained by the dug-in positions I found when I took office. For example, I was reluctant to go along with Senator Dole in unilaterally lifting the arms embargo, for fear of weakening the United Nations (though we later did so in effect, by declining to enforce it). I also didn't want to divide the NATO alliance by unilaterally bombing Serb military positions, especially since there were European, but no American, soldiers on the ground with the UN mission. And I didn't want to send American troops there, putting them in harm's way under a UN mandate I thought was bound to fail. In May 1993, we were still a long way from a solution.

At the end of the first one hundred days of a new presidency, the press always does an assessment of how well the new administration is doing in keeping its campaign promises and dealing with the other challenges that have arisen. The consensus of the reviews was that my initial performance was mixed. On the positive side of the ledger, I had created a National Economic Council in the White House and put together an ambitious economic program to reverse twelve years of trickle-down economics, and it was making progress in the Congress. I had signed the family leave law, and the "motor voter" law to make voter registration easier, and had reversed the Reagan-Bush abortion policies, including the ban on fetal-tissue research and the gag rule. I had reduced the size of the White House staff, despite its increasing workload; for example, we received more mail in the first three and a half months than had come to the White House in all of 1992. I had also ordered a reduction of 100,000 in total federal employment, and put Vice President Gore in charge of finding new savings and better ways to serve the public with a "reinventing government" initiative whose considerable results would eventually prove the skeptics wrong. I had sent legislation to Congress to create my national service program, to double the Earned Income Tax Credit and create empowerment zones in poor communities, and to dramatically cut the cost of college loans, saving billions of dollars for both students and

charges, saying that the whole problem arose because his wealthy but irresponsible father-in-law, Seth Ward, had refused to pay the Rose firm for the costs of a patent infringement case they had lost. It seemed plausible, but it wasn't true.

It turned out that Webb had overcharged his clients, and in so doing, had injured the Rose firm and reduced the income of all his partners, including Hillary. If his case had played out normally, he probably would have reached an agreement with the law firm to repay it for the cost of reimbursing its clients and would have lost his license for a year or two. The bar association might or might not have referred him to the state prosecuting attorney; if it had, Hubbell probably would have been able to avoid going to prison by reimbursing the firm. Instead, Webb was caught up in the independent counsels' net.

When the facts first came out, I was stunned. Webb and I had been friends and golfing partners for years, and I thought I knew him well. I still think he's a good man who made a bad mistake, one he had to pay too high a price for, because he refused to become a pawn in Starr's game.

While all this was going on, I stayed on the other track of my parallel lives, the one I came to Washington to pursue. In March, I devoted considerable time to pushing two bills that I thought would help workers without college degrees. Most people could no longer keep one job or even stay with one employer for their entire working lives, and the churning job market treated them in markedly different ways. Our 6.5 percent unemployment rate was misleading; it was 3.5 percent for college graduates, more than 5 percent for those with two years of college, over 7 percent for high school graduates, and more than 11 percent for high school dropouts. At events in Nashua and Keene, New Hampshire, I said I wanted to convert the program of unemployment benefits into a reemployment system with a broader range of better-designed training programs. And I wanted Congress to approve a school-to-work program, to provide one or two years of high-quality training for young people who didn't want to get a four-year college degree. By the end of the month, I was able to sign the Goals 2000 bill. Finally, we had a congressional commitment to meet the national education goals I had worked on back in 1989, to measure students' progress toward them, and to encourage local school districts to adopt the most promising reforms. It was a good day for Secretary Dick Riley.

On March 18, Presidents Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Franjo Tudjman of Croatia were at the White House to sign an agreement negotiated with the help of my special envoy, Charles Redman, that established a federation in the areas of Bosnia in which their populations

were in a majority, and set up a process to move toward a confederation with Croatia. The fighting between Muslims and Croats had not been as severe as that in which both sides had engaged with the Bosnian Serbs, but the agreement was still an important step toward peace.

The last days of March marked the beginning of a serious crisis with North Korea. After agreeing in February to let inspectors from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) check their declared nuclear sites on March 15, North Korea blocked them from completing their work. The reactor they were studying operated on fuel rods. Once the rods had been exhausted for their original purpose, the spent fuel could be reprocessed into plutonium in sufficient quantities to make nuclear weapons. North Korea also was planning to build two larger reactors, which would have produced many more spent fuel rods. The rods were a dangerous asset in the hands of the most isolated country in the world, a poor one that could not even feed its own people and might feel the temptation to sell the plutonium to the wrong buyer. Within a week I had decided to send Patriot missiles to South Korea and to ask the UN to impose economic sanctions against North Korea. As Bill Perry told a group of editors and reporters on March 30, I was determined to stop North Korea from developing a nuclear arsenal, even at the risk of war. In order to make absolutely certain that the North Koreans knew we were serious, Perry continued the tough talk over the next three days, even saying that we would not rule out a preemptive military strike.

Meanwhile, Warren Christopher made sure our message had the right balance. The State Department said we preferred a peaceful solution, and our ambassador to South Korea, Jim Laney, described our position as one of "watchfulness, firmness, and patience." I believed that if North Korea really understood our position, as well as the economic and political benefits it could realize by abandoning its nuclear program in favor of cooperation with its neighbors and the United States, we could work it out. If we didn't, Whitewater would soon look like the sideshow it was.

On March 26, I was in Dallas for a happy weekend off, to serve as best man in my brother's wedding to Molly Martin, a beautiful woman he'd met when, after spending a few years in Nashville, he'd moved to Los Angeles in the hope of reviving his singing career. I was really happy for Roger.

On the day after the wedding, we all went to see the Arkansas Razorbacks defeat the University of Michigan in the NCAA Basketball Tournament quarterfinals. That week *Sports Illustrated* had me on the cover in a Razorback jogging suit; the article inside included a picture of me palm-ting a basketball. After the kind of coverage I'd been getting, the piece was

Agency cuts were so severe that they would effectively end enforcement of the Clean Air and Clean Water acts. They voted to abolish AmeriCorps and cut assistance for the nation's homeless population in half. They effectively ended the family planning program that previously had been supported by Democrats and Republicans alike as a way to help prevent unwanted pregnancies and abortions. They wanted to slash the foreign aid budget, already only 1.3 percent of total federal spending, weakening our ability to fight terrorism and the spread of nuclear weapons, open new markets for American exports, and support the forces of peace, democracy, and human rights around the world.

Unbelievably, just five years after President Bush had signed the Americans with Disabilities Act, which had passed with large bipartisan majorities, the Republicans even proposed to cut the services and supports necessary for disabled people to exercise their rights under the law. After the disability cuts were made public, I got a call one night from Tom Campbell, my roommate for four years at Georgetown. Tom was an airline pilot who made a comfortable living but was by no means wealthy. In an agitated voice, he said he was concerned about the proposed budget cuts for the disabled. His daughter, Chiara had cerebral palsy. So did her best friend, who was being raised by a single mother working at a minimum-wage job to which she traveled one hour each way every day by bus. Tom asked some questions about the budget cuts and I answered them. Then he said, "So let me get this straight. They're going to give me a tax cut and cut the aid Chiara's friend and her mother get to cover the costs of the child's wheelchair and the four or five pairs of expensive special shoes she has to have every year and the transportation assistance the mother gets to travel to and from her minimum-wage job?" "That's right," I said. He replied, "Bill, that's immoral. You've got to stop it."

Tom Campbell was a devout Catholic and an ex-marine who had been raised in a conservative Republican home. If the New Right Republicans had gone too far for Americans like him, I knew I could beat them back. On the last day of the month, Alice Rivlin announced that the improving economy had led to a lower deficit than we had expected, and that we could now balance the budget in nine years without the harsh GOP cuts. I was closing in on them.

FORTY-FOUR

There were three positive developments in foreign affairs in July: I normalized relations with Vietnam, with the strong support of most Vietnam veterans in Congress, including John McCain, Bob Kerry, John Kerry, Chuck Robb, and Pete Peterson; Saddam Hussein released two Americans who had been held prisoner since March, after a strong plea from Congressman Bill Richardson; and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam, in Washington for the dedication of the Korean War Memorial, strongly endorsed the agreement we had made with North Korea to end its nuclear program. Because Jesse Helms and others had criticized the deal, Kim's support was helpful, especially since he had been a political prisoner and advocate for democracy when South Korea was still an authoritarian state.

Unfortunately, the good news was dwarfed by what was happening in Bosnia. After being reasonably quiet for most of 1994, things had begun to go wrong at the end of November, when Serb warplanes attacked Croatian Muslims in western Bosnia. The attack was a violation of the no-fly zone, and in retaliation NATO bombed the Serb airfield, but didn't destroy it or all the planes that had flown.

In March, when the cease-fire President Carter had announced began to unravel, Dick Holbrook, who had left his post as ambassador to Germany to become assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, sent our special envoy to the former Yugoslavia, Bob Frasure, to see Milosevic in the futile hope of ending the Bosnian Serb aggression and securing at least limited recognition for Bosnia in return for lifting the UN sanctions on Serbia.

By July, the fighting was in full swing again, with the Bosnian government forces making some gains in the middle of the country. Instead of trying to regain the lost territory, General Mladic decided to attack three isolated Muslim towns in eastern Bosnia, Srebrenica, Zepa, and Gorazde. The towns were filled with Muslim refugees from nearby areas, and though they had been declared UN safe areas, they were protected by only a small number of UN troops. Mladic wanted to take the three towns so that all of eastern Bosnia would be controlled by the Serbs, and he was convinced that, as long as he held UN peacekeepers hostage, the UN would not allow NATO to bomb in retaliation. He was right, and the consequences were devastating.

On July 10, the Serbs took Srebrenica. By the end of the month they had also taken Zepa, and refugees who escaped from Srebrenica had begun to tell the world of the horrifying slaughter of Muslims there by Mladic's troops. Thousands of men and boys were gathered in a soccer field and murdered en masse. Thousands more were trying to escape through the heavily wooded hills.

After Srebrenica was overrun, I pressured the UN to authorize the rapid reaction force we had discussed at the G-7 meeting in Canada a few weeks earlier. Meanwhile, Bob Dole was pushing to lift the arms embargo. I asked him to postpone the vote and he agreed. I was still trying to find a way to save Bosnia that restored the effectiveness of the UN and NATO, but by the third week of July, Bosnian Serbs had made a mockery of the UN and, by extension, of the commitments of NATO and the United States. The safe areas were far from safe, and NATO action was severely limited because of the vulnerability of European troops who couldn't defend themselves, much less the Muslims. The Bosnian Serb practice of UN hostage-taking had exposed the fundamental flaw of the UN's strategy. Its arms embargo had kept the Bosnian government from achieving military parity with the Serbs. The peacekeepers could protect the Bosnian Muslims and Croats only as long as the Serbs believed NATO would punish their aggression. Now the hostage-taking had erased that fear and given the Serbs a free hand in eastern Bosnia. The situation was slightly better in central and western Bosnia, because the Croats and Muslims had been able to obtain some arms despite the UN embargo.

In an almost desperate attempt to regain the initiative, the foreign and defense ministers of NATO met in London. Warren Christopher, Bill Perry, and General Shalikashvili went to the conference determined to reverse the building momentum for a withdrawal of UN forces from Bosnia and, instead, to increase NATO's commitment and authority to act against the Serbs. Both the loss of Srebrenica and Zepa and the move in Congress to lift the arms embargo had strengthened our ability to push for more aggressive action. At the meeting, the ministers eventually accepted a proposal developed by Warren Christopher and his team to "draw a line in the sand" around Gorazde and to remove the "dual key" decision making that had given the UN veto authority over NATO action. The London conference was a turning point; from then on, NATO would be much more assertive. Not long afterward, the NATO commander, General George Joulwan, and our NATO ambassador, Robert Hunter, succeeded in extending the Gorazde rules to the Sarajevo safe area.

In August, the situation took a dramatic turn. The Croats launched an offensive to retake the Krajina, a part of Croatia that the local Serbs

had proclaimed their territory. European and some American military and intelligence officials had recommended against the action in the belief that Milosevic would intervene to save the Krajina Serbs, but I was rooting for the Croats. So was Helmut Kohl, who knew, as I did, that diplomacy could not succeed until the Serbs had sustained some serious losses on the ground.

Because we knew Bosnia's survival was at stake, we had not tightly enforced the arms embargo. As a result, both the Croats and the Bosnians were able to get some arms, which helped them survive. We had also authorized a private company to use retired U.S. military personnel to improve and train the Croatian army.

As it turned out, Milosevic didn't come to the aid of the Krajina Serbs and Croatian forces took Krajina with little resistance. It was the first defeat for the Serbs in four years, and it changed both the balance of power on the ground and the psychology of all the parties. One Western diplomat in Croatia was quoted as saying, "There was almost a signal of support from Washington. The Americans have been spoiling for a chance to hit the Serbs, and they are using Croatia as their proxy to do the deed for them." On August 4, in a visit with veteran ABC News correspondent Sam Donaldson at the National Institutes of Health, where he was recovering from cancer surgery, I acknowledged that the Croatian offensive could prove helpful in resolving the conflict. Ever the good journalist, Donaldson filed a report on my comments from his hospital bed.

In an effort to capitalize on the shift in momentum, I sent Tony Lake and Undersecretary of State Peter Tarnoff to Europe (including Russia) to present a framework for peace that Lake had developed and to have Dick Holbrooke lead a team to begin a last-ditch effort to negotiate an end to the conflict with the Bosnians and Milosevic, who claimed not to control the Bosnian Serbs, though everyone knew they could not prevail without his support. Just before we launched the diplomatic mission, the Senate followed the House in voting to lift the arms embargo and I vetoed the bill to give our effort a chance. Lake and Tarnoff immediately took off to make the case for our plan, then met with Holbrooke on August 14 to report that the allies and Russians were supportive, and that Holbrooke could begin his mission at once.

On August 15, after a briefing from Tony Lake on Bosnia, Hillary, Chelsea, and I left for a vacation in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, where we had been invited to spend a few days at the home of Senator Jay and Sharon Rockefeller. We all needed the time off, and I was really looking forward to the prospect of hiking and horseback riding in the Grand Tetons; rafting the Snake River; visiting Yellowstone National Park to see Old Faithful, the buffalo and moose, and the wolves we had brought

back to the wild; and playing golf at the high altitude, where the ball goes a lot farther. Hillary was working on a book about families and children, and she was looking forward to making headway on it at the Rockefeller's spacious, light-filled ranch house. We did all those things and more, but the enduring memory of our vacation was about Bosnia, and heartbreak.

On the day my family went to Wyoming, Dick Holbrooke left for Bosnia with an impressive team, including Bob Frasure, Joe Krugel, Air Force Colonel Nelson Drew, and Lieutenant General Wesley Clark, director of strategic policy for the Joint Chiefs and a fellow Arkansan I had first met at Georgetown in 1965.

Holbrooke and his team landed in the Croatian coastal city of Split, where they briefed the Bosnian foreign minister, Muhamed Sacirbey, on our plans. Sacirbey was the eloquent public face of Bosnia on American television, a handsome, fit man who, as a student in the United States, had been a starting football player at Tulane University. He had long sought greater American involvement in his beleaguered nation and was glad the hour had finally come.

After Split, the U.S. team went to Zagreb, Croatia's capital, to see President Tudman, then flew to Belgrade to meet with Slobodan Milosevic. This inconclusive meeting was remarkable only for the fact that Milosevic refused to guarantee the safety of our team's plane from Bosnian Serb artillery if they flew from Belgrade into the airport at Sarajevo, their next stop. That meant they had to fly back to Split, from which they would helicopter to a landing spot, then take off for a two-hour drive to Sarajevo over the Mount Igman road, a narrow, unpaved route with no guardrails at the edges of its steep slopes and great vulnerability to nearby Serb machine gunners who regularly shot at UN vehicles. The EU negotiator, Carl Bildt, had been shot at when he traveled the road a few weeks earlier, and there were many wrecked vehicles in the ravines between Split and Sarajevo, some of which had simply slid off the road.

On August 19, my forty-ninth birthday, I started the day by playing golf with Vernon Jordan, Erskine Bowles, and Jim Wolfensohn, the president of the World Bank. It was a perfect morning until I heard about what had happened on the Mount Igman road. First from a news report, and later in an emotional phone call with Dick Holbrooke and Wesley Clark. I learned that our team had set out for Sarajevo with Holbrooke and Clark riding in a U.S. Army Humvee, and Frasure, Krugel, and Drew following behind in a French armored personnel carrier (APC) painted UN white. About an hour into the trip, at the top of a steep incline, the road gave way on the APC, and it somersaulted down the mountain and exploded into flames. Besides the three members of our team, there were two other Americans and four French soldiers in the vehicle. The APC had caught fire when the live ammunition it was carry-

ing exploded. In a brave attempt to help, Wesley Clark rappelled down the mountain with a rope tied to a tree trunk and tried to get into the burning vehicle to rescue the men still trapped inside, but it was too damaged and scalding hot.

It was also too late. Bob Frasure and Nelson Drew had been killed in the tumbling fall down the mountain. The others all got out, but Joe Krugel soon died of his injuries, and one French soldier also perished. Frasure was fifty-three, Krugel fifty, Drew forty-seven, all were patriotic public servants and good family men who died too young trying to save the lives of innocent people a long way from home.

The next week, after the Bosnian Serbs lobbed a mortar shell into the heart of Sarajevo, killing thirty-eight people, NATO began three days of air strikes on Serb positions. On September 1, Holbrooke announced that all the parties would meet in Geneva for talks. When the Bosnian Serbs did not comply with all of NATO's conditions, the air strikes resumed and continued until the fourteenth, when Holbrooke succeeded in getting an agreement signed by Karadzic and Mladic to end the siege of Sarajevo. Soon the final peace talks would begin in Dayton, Ohio. Ultimately they would bring an end to the bloody Bosnian war. When they did, their success would be in no small measure a tribute to three quiet American heroes who did not live to see the fruits of their labors.

While the August news was dominated by Bosnia, I continued to argue with the Republicans on the budget; noted that a million Americans had lost their health insurance in the year since the failure of health-care reform; and took executive action to limit the advertising, promotion, distribution, and marketing of cigarettes to teenagers. The Food and Drug Administration had just completed a fourteen-month study confirming that cigarettes were addictive, harmful, and aggressively marketed to teenagers, whose smoking rates were on the rise.

The teen smoking problem was a tough nut to crack. Tobacco is America's legal addictive drug; it kills people and adds untold billions to the cost of health care. But the tobacco companies are politically influential, and the farmers who raise the tobacco crop are an important part of the economic, political, and cultural life of Kentucky and North Carolina. The farmers were the sympathetic face of the tobacco companies' effort to increase their profits by hooking younger and younger people on cigarettes. I thought we had to do something to push them back. So did Al Gore, who had lost his beloved sister, Nancy, to lung cancer.

On August 8, we got a break in our efforts to eliminate the vestiges of Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program when two of Saddam Hussein's daughters and their husbands defected to Jordan and were given asylum by King Hussein. One of the men, Hussein Kamel Hassan al-

a young man named Hacin Thaci. The KLA wanted independence and believed it could actually go toe-to-toe with the Serbian army.

The parties met at Rambouillet, France, on February 6, to work out the details of an agreement that would restore autonomy, protect the Kosovars from oppression with a NATO-led operation, disarm the KLA, and allow the Serb army to continue to patrol the border. Madeleine Albright and her British counterpart, Robin Cook, pursued this policy aggressively. After a week of negotiations coordinated by U.S. Ambassador Chris Hill and his counterparts from the European Union and Russia, Madeleine found that our position was opposed by both sides: the Serbs didn't want to agree to a NATO peacekeeping force, and the Kosovars didn't want to agree to accept autonomy unless they were also guaranteed a referendum on independence. And the KLA weren't happy about having to disarm, partly because they weren't sure they could rely on the NATO forces to protect them. Our team decided to write the agreement in a way that would delay the referendum but not deny it forever.

On February 23, the Kosovar Albanians, including Thaci, accepted the agreement in principle, returned home to sell it to their people, and in mid-March traveled to Paris to sign the finished document. The Serbs boycotted the ceremony, as forty thousand Serbian troops massed in and around Kosovo and Milosevic said again that he would never agree to foreign troops on Yugoslavian soil. I sent Dick Holbrooke back to see him one last time, but even Dick couldn't budge him.

On March 23, after Holbrooke left Belgrade, NATO Secretary-General Javier Solana, with my full support, directed General Wesley Clark to begin air strikes. On the same day, by a bipartisan majority of 58-41, the Senate voted to support the action. Earlier in the month, the House had voted 219-191 to support sending U.S. troops to Kosovo if there was a peace agreement. Among the prominent Republicans voting for the proposal were the new Speaker, Dennis Hastert, and Henry Hyde. When Congressman Hyde said America should stand up against Milosevic and ethnic cleansing, I smiled and thought to myself that maybe Dr. Jeckyll was in there somewhere after all.

While a majority of Congress and all our NATO allies favored the air strikes, Russia did not. Prime Minister Yevgeny Primakov was on his way to the United States to meet with Al Gore. When Al notified him that a NATO attack on Yugoslavia was imminent, Primakov ordered his plane to turn around and take him back to Moscow.

On the twenty-fourth, I spoke to the American people about what I was doing and why. I explained that Milosevic had stripped the Kosovars of their autonomy, denying them their constitutionally guaranteed rights to speak their own language, run their own schools, and govern themselves. I described the Serb atrocities: killing civilians, burning villages,

and driving people from their homes; sixty thousand in the last five weeks, a quarter million in all. Finally, I put the current events in the context of the wars Milosevic had already waged against Bosnia and Croatia, and the destructive impact of his killing on the future of Europe.

The bombing campaign had three objectives: to show Milosevic we were serious about stopping another round of ethnic cleansing, to deter an even bloodier offensive against innocent civilians in Kosovo, and, if Milosevic didn't throw in the towel soon, to seriously damage the Serbs' military capacity.

That night the NATO air strikes began. They would last for eleven weeks, as Milosevic continued to kill Kosovar Albanians and drive almost one million people from their homes. The bombs would inflict great damage on the military and economic infrastructure of Serbia. Alas, on a few occasions they would miss their intended targets and take the lives of people we were trying to protect.

Some people argued that our position would have been more defensible if we had sent in ground troops. There were two problems with that argument. First, by the time the soldiers were in position, in adequate numbers and with proper support, the Serbs would have done an enormous amount of damage. Second, the civilian casualties of a ground campaign would probably have been greater than the toll from errant bombs. I didn't find the argument that I should pursue a course that would cost more American lives without enhancing the prospects of victory very persuasive. Our strategy would often be second-guessed, but never abandoned.

At the end of the month, as the stock market closed above 10,000 for the first time ever, up from 3,200 when I took office, I sat down for an interview with CBS-TV's Dan Rather. After an extended discussion of Kosovo, Dan asked me whether I expected to be the husband of a United States senator. By then, many New York officials had joined Charlie Rangel in asking Hillary to consider the race. I told Rather that I had no idea what she would do, but that if she ran and won, "she would be magnificent."

In April, the Kosovo conflict intensified as we extended the bombing to downtown Belgrade, hitting the Interior Ministry, Serbia's state television headquarters, and Milosevic's party headquarters and his home. We also dramatically increased our financial support and troop presence in neighboring Albania and Macedonia to help them deal with the large number of refugees flooding in. By the end of the month, when Milosevic still hadn't folded, opposition to our policy was coming from both directions. Tony Blair and some members of Congress thought it was time to send in ground troops, while the House of Representatives voted to deny the use of troops without prior approval of Congress.