

# A Look Back...

## *Peace at Wright-Patterson: The 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Dayton Peace Accords*



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## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*Above: American delegates and diplomats walking to negotiations on “The Peace Walk” including Ambassador Richard Holbrooke (front left) and Secretary of Defense William Perry (front right).*

On November 21, 1995, the weather was chilly at Wright-Patterson AFB. Many civilians were just coming back to work after the government shut-down a couple days before. Everyone’s focus however, was centered on the base’s off-campus lodging facility, the Hope Hotel. Dozens from the United States and almost thirty other nations piled in the hotel’s conference room in anxious anticipation. After twenty days of non-stop negotiation, an historic agreement was being signed, in that conference room those reporters, dignitaries, facilitators, and journalists witnessed the end of a war.

The Bosnian War was as complicated as it was bloody. After the fall of the USSR and the death of Yugoslavia’s communist leader Marshall Josip Broz Tito internal tensions between the various ethnic and religious groups in the country boiled over into full civil war. Eventually, these various conflicts resulted in Bosnian Serbs partnering with the Serbian-Yugoslavian Army to besiege Sarajevo on April 6, 1992. It was the bloodiest war in Europe since World War II, claiming the lives of 100,000 people. Conflict caused the displacement of over two million refugees and triggered the Srebrenica Massacre. Srebrenica, the largest act of genocide since World War II, ended the lives of over 8,000 Bosnian Muslims in a horrific act of “ethnic cleansing.”

All-out war in Bosnia raged on, despite the best efforts of international actors, for over four years. The United Nations sent its Peacekeepers to create safe havens for civilians in the country and imposed a “no fly zone” in 1992. This zone was also enforced by NATO who ran combat air patrols under Operation Deny Flight in 1993 and eventually took offensive actions, shooting down four Bosnian Serb warplanes February 26, 1994.

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The United States also supported efforts for peace, airdropping supplies into besieged Bosnian towns in February 1993 as part of Operation Provide Promise, and by sending diplomats to initiate peace negotiations. Former President Jimmy Carter negotiated a brief four-month cease-fire that lasted from January 1 to May 1, 1995. Three other U.S. diplomats, Robert C. Frasure, Joseph Kruzal, and Air Force Col. Samuel Nelson Drew were killed while in Bosnia as the result of a car crash on the way to deliver new plans for peace.

NATO's combat actions eventually escalated resulting in its first air campaign, Operation Deliberate Force. Under pressure from NATO airstrikes, Bosnian Serbs withdrew heavy weapons from Sarajevo. The NATO airstrikes ended September 20, 1995 and the United States hosted peace talks in New York beginning September 26.

On October 5, President William Clinton announced a breakthrough in negotiations, and a cease-fire deal was signed October 12. From these negotiations, it was clear all parties wanted to further discuss ending the war, and that the United States would continue to host negotiations. The Secretary of State Warren Christopher surveyed multiple locations to host the talks, including sites in New York and Virginia. His team visited Wright-Patterson on October 14 and announced it as the location for the talks on October 18.

Wright-Patterson had many attractive qualities for the negotiations. The level of security it provided and close availability to a runway ensured that delegates could easily access the installation, and the meeting would be secure. The base's Visitor's Quarters had five identical lodging facilities, which allowed each visiting delegation to be provided the same accommodations. Additionally, the Visitor's Quarters were within walking distance of the site the negotiations, which were set to happen at the Hope Hotel.

All eyes were now on Dayton. Preparing for this high visibility event was a whole force effort, and with a little less than two weeks to prepare, Team Wright-Patt had to move quickly. Officials from Headquarters Air Force Materiel Command, the 88th Air Base Wing, and from across the installation, created a "base within a base" to provide external and internal security and privacy to delegations, serviced 450 on-base lodging facilities, hosted dinners and provided room service, managed and secured the flightline, provided office supplies, installed hundreds of telephone systems, designed graphics and multimedia, provided translation services, and enforced an external media "blackout" period.

Packy's restaurant provided room service and the Officer's Club hosted a full state dinner at the National Museum of the United States Air Force (NMUSAF) with only 6 hours notice. 88th Air Base Wing Security Forces managed multiple protests outside the gates alongside other agencies like Dayton Police, and all protests were mitigated without arrests or incidents. The 88th Operations Squadron maintained multiple aircraft in alert status throughout the negotiations while managing the runway and surrounding airspace. The 88th Civil Engineering even paved a new 1,000 ft sidewalk between the Visitor's Quarters and the Hope Hotel for delegates to use, now known as "The Peace Walk." All the while, Wright-Patterson remained operational for normal day-to-day operations throughout the negotiations and saw no significant hinderance to base functions.

These discussions lasted from November 1 to 21, and involved nine delegations from the United States, the Republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, the Republic of Croatia, the European Union, the Republic of France, the Republic of Germany, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Thanks to the close proximity of the delegates, numerous individual "talks" occurred daily earning the negotiations the title "the Balkan Proximity Peace Talks." Talks took place in various locations like the Visitor's Quarters, the Hope Hotel, over dinner, and notably along the winding Peace Walk, and many believe that peace was reached due to this style of negotiating. However, it was not certain throughout the event. Negotiations initially broke down on November 21, and delegates prepared to leave. Yet, a peace agreement was reached at the last minute on this day, and a treaty was formally signed at Elysse Palace in Paris, France on December 14, 1995.

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*Above: "The Peace Wall" A mural that hung in the Hope Hotel during negotiations decorated with letters to delegates from local Ohio schoolchildren.*

The treaty was named "The Dayton Peace Accords" to honor Dayton's role in the process. In total, the event cost over \$1.76 M to execute (equivalent to over \$3.6 M today) and took thousands of people to make it a success. Over 2,000 individuals from Team Wright-Patt received kudos, medals, and awards for their involvement. November 2025 marks the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of these negotiations and the end of the Bosnian War. In May 2025, NATO's Parliamentary Assembly came to Dayton in honor of Wright-Patterson's instrumental role in the pursuit of peace.

Take a look back at behind the scenes of the Dayton Peace Accords at Wright-Patterson AFB....

### Additional Reading:

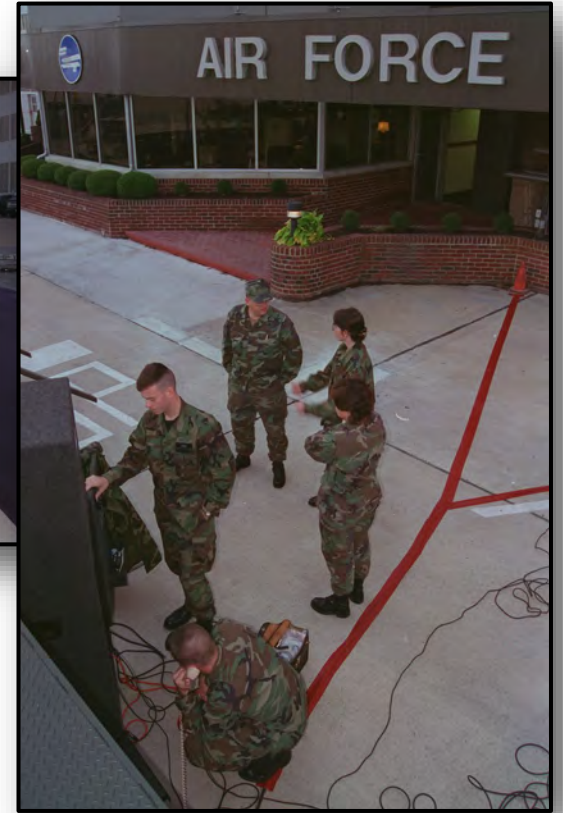
Dr. Henry Narducci, 88ABW/HO, "Balkan Proximity Peace Talks and Wright-Patterson AFB 18 October- 22 November 1995," Vol. 1, November 1997.

AFMC/PA, "Leading Edge: Partners in Peace Air Force sets diplomatic stage for ending Balkan strife," 1996.

Gina Marie Giardina, 88ABW/PA, "Providing the place: WPAFB and the Dayton Peace Accords," November 19, 2015.

Richard Holbrooke, *To End a War*, (Random House, 1998).

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*All: Preparing the flightline for delegate and Distinguished Visitor (DV) arrivals. All delegates and DV's were formally greeted when they arrived and walked into Wright-Patterson on the red carpet.*

## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: Delegates and DVs were greeted by base officials when they arrived, including General Henry "Butch" Viccello, Jr., AFMC Commander (top left) and Colonel Robbie Robinson, 88th ABW Commander (top right). They greeted DVs such as Secretary of State Warren Christopher (Right center).*

## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS

*All: Wright-Patterson welcomes the State Department. Some of the first DVs to arrive at the base were from the United States State Department. Including Secretary of State Warren Christopher (right), Ambassador Richard Holbrooke (center photo, center). Secretary Christopher gave a speech on the flightline to the media opening the talks.*



*Right: The State Department was joined by other DVs in the Balkan Peace Talks effort. One of which was General Wesley Clark (center left), the Director of Strategic Plans and Policy for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. A little over a year after this event, he would get a fourth star and become NATO Supreme Allied Commander.*



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*All: Welcoming the delegations. Wright-Patterson officials welcoming delegations from Serbia (top right), Bosnia and Herzegovina (top left), and Croatia (bottom left).*

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*All: The media was on the flight-line to catch all the action, documenting the arrival of incoming delegates (like Prime Minister Haris Silajdzic of Bosnia and Herzegovina top right),*



## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS

*All: Negotiations begin! Ambassador Richard Holbrooke (left) served as an American diplomat in Bosnia and is seen as the "chief architect" of the Dayton Peace Accords. To honor his work in Dayton, the conference room where peace was negotiated (bottom right) was dedicated as the Richard C. Holbrooke Conference Center.*



# DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: Negotiations happened in more places than just the conference room. Delegates talked all the time throughout the 20 days, whether it was at dinner (top right), or the newly paved "Peace Walk" (center).*



## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: Team Wright-Patt was behind the scenes and in direct support of the negotiations throughout the entire 20 days, on the flightline (top right), in the conference room (bottom right), the video room (top left), or by providing mapping services alongside the Defense Mapping Agency (bottom left).*

## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: Packy's Restaurant Staff and the Wright-Patterson Officer's Club hosted over 40 diplomatic events throughout the talks. One event was a State dinner hosted at the NMUSAF which the Officer's Club had just six hours to prepare. The event provided ample opportunity for discussion and further negotiation. Photos included show the delegates taking a tour of the Museum before dinner.*



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*All: Photos of the State Dinner hosted at the NMUSAF. This dinner gave delegates an opportunity to mingle and negotiate.*

*See the next page for State Dinner negotiation photos.*



DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: November 21, 1995. Team Wright-Patt preparing for the signing of the peace agreement. While the peace talks were set to conclude on the 21st, it initially seemed that peace would not be reached on this day. At the last minute, a compromise was made, and the peace agreement was signed.*



## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: Signing of the Dayton Peace Accords. Negotiations concluded successfully and all interested parties made an agreement for peace. Signatories include, President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia and Herzegovina (bottom left photo, left), President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia (bottom left photo, right), and President Slobodan Milosevic of Serbia (center photo).*



## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



*All: Throughout the negotiations, Wright-Patterson military and civilian personnel worked around the clock to ensure a successful event. The next pages include photos of those men and women in action.*



*Left: Wreath laying ceremony during the NMUSAF state dinner. President Franjo Tudjman of Croatia laid a wreath on the 8th Air Force plaque in honor of their contributions in World War II.*

*Below: The Air Force Band of Flight going to perform at the NMUSAF state dinner*

*Right: Security police scan incoming media crews.*

*Top right: Security Police on the flightline during the arrival of the State Department.*



## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS

*Right: Security Police standing guard outside the Hope Hotel during a snowstorm.*



*Above and right: Wright-Patterson personnel working alongside the Defense Mapping Agency in support of the event.*



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*Right and left: Security Police and support personnel at the signing event.*

*Below: Group photo of the signing event support team.*



*Left: Technicians ready the stage on the flightline for Secretary Christopher's address.*



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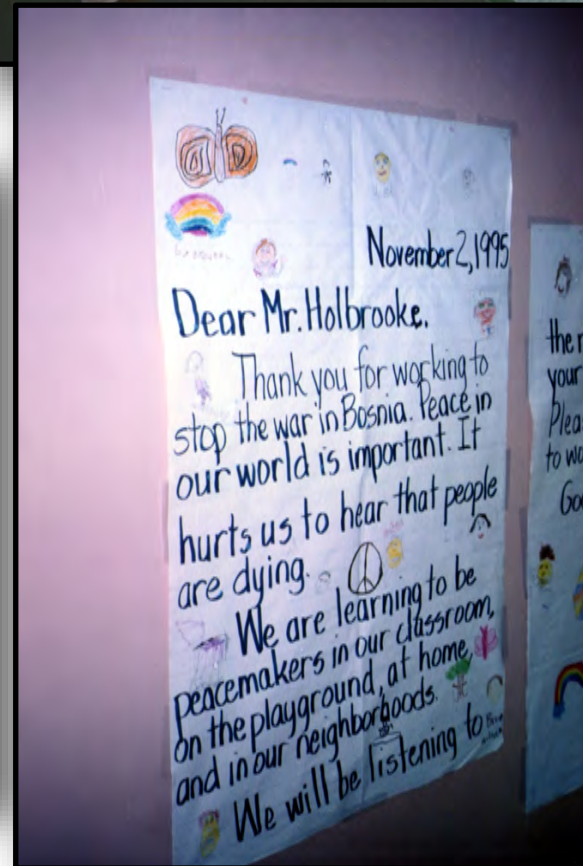
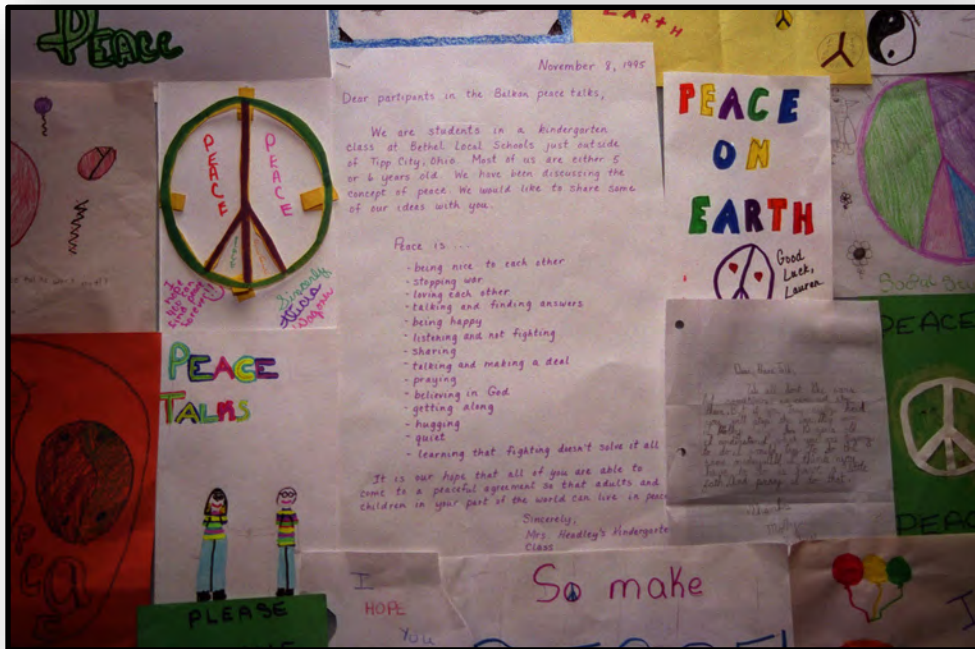
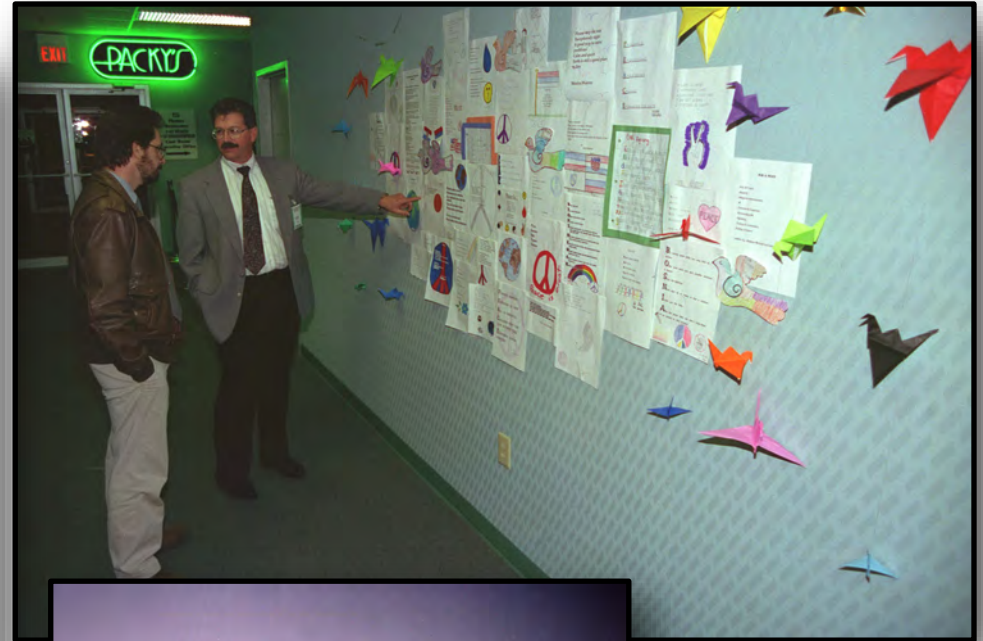


*Top left and right: Transporting DV's, Delegates, and media personnel. Over 40 people volunteered to drive delegates for the event.*

*Center left and right: Defense Mapping Agency photos.*

*Bottom left: Preparing the ramp for DV's to exit incoming aircraft.*

## DAYTON PEACE ACCORDS



All: On the wall in the Hope Hotel and Packy's Restaurant were two "Peace Walls." These walls were adorned with letters, drawings, paper cranes and well-wishes from local Ohio schoolchildren and classrooms to the delegates. These letters filtered in throughout the talks and, given their prominent location, were something the visiting delegations would have seen often.

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Dayton Peace Talks Primary Photographer  
USAF Photographer  
SSGT Brian W. Schlumbohm

*Images from the HQ AFMC/HO Digital Archive*



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