

**THE AMERICAN ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY**

**PITTSBURGH GLOBAL  
PRESS CONFERENCE**

**“THE BALKANS”**

HOST: SKY FORRESTER

GUESTS:

ROBERT HUNTER, US AMBASSADOR TO NATO  
RICHARD KAUZLARICH, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO  
BOSNIA-HERZEGOVINA  
AVIS BOHLEN, AMBASSADOR

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 24<sup>TH</sup>, 2005

*Transcript by:  
Federal News Service  
Washington, D.C*

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SKY FORRESTER: Thank you for joining us on this week's Pittsburgh Global Press Conference, brought to you by KQV, all-news, 1410, and the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, a non-profit, non-partisan organization bringing educational programs and world affairs to Pittsburgh for almost 75 years.

I'm Sky Forrester and your host for this week's program. Our focus today is the Balkans, something different. We usually talk about the Middle East, but there is another part of the world in which we in fact have been engaged in conflict within the last 10 years or so, and we often forget about it today and that's the Balkans. This is in fact 2005, 10 years after the Dayton Accords, in which we got involved and settled – and I'm using quotation marks here – the war in Bosnia. We've since been in war in Kosovo, and we're going to talk about what those last 10 years have brought.

We're joined in the studio by actually three guests and we'll do them two at a time. We've never done this before. Ambassador Bob Hunter, who was US Ambassador to NATO from 1993 to 1998, now a senior advisor at the RAND Corporation. Ambassador Rich Kauzlarich, who was the ambassador – US Ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1997 to 1999, since retired from the Foreign Service and is now at the National Intelligence Council in Washington. And then we'll be joined later in the conversation by Ambassador Avis Bohlen, who was US Ambassador to Bulgaria 1996 to 1999, and now a member of the International Commission on the Balkans.

Ambassador Hunter and Ambassador Kauzlarich, thanks for joining us in this part of the program. It's great to have you here in Pittsburgh.

AMB. ROBERT HUNTER: Glad to be here.

AMB. RICHARD KAUZLARICH: Glad to be with you.

MR. FORRESTER: And I should say as well that all three of these individuals are here really sponsored by the American Academy of Diplomacy in Washington, and

we give thanks to Ambassador Dan Simpson in Pittsburgh, who is on the board of that august organization.

All right, 10 years after Dayton. It really took the United States really kicking and screaming to get involved in Bosnia, it seemed to a number of us anyway. Ambassador Hunter, you were there in NATO at the time. Was it kicking and screaming? Why did we get involved and why didn't we get involved earlier?

AMB. HUNTER: Well, I think the real matter was that nobody, outside of the Bosnians themselves, the Yugoslavs themselves, were prepared to expend any blood and treasure to stop the horrendous killing that was going on there. It was in Europe, yes, but it was not a part of Europe that was going to trigger a war. As we said in black humor in those days, "You can kill as many Austrian archdukes as you want in Sarajevo, but there's not going to be another World War I."

Actually the United States did try to get NATO involved from about 1993, to use air power in order to stop what the Bosnian Serbs and to an extent the Bosnian Croats were doing against the Muslims. But we didn't want to do it on our own. We didn't want to do it in a way that was going to lead to significant casualties –

MR. FORRESTER: And our own meaning our US own, or our NATO own?

AMB. HUNTER: Our US own. And the United States – and I had the opportunity to negotiate this – tried to get all 16 allies to agree, and we usually got 13 or 14, or almost 15, but generally the British were the hold-outs, sometimes the Canadians. The French would come around, but the point was we couldn't get the other allies as a whole to recognize just how serious this was in human terms, as well as in terms of the future of NATO. It took two years to get people around to the point where they understood this had to stop.

MR. FORRESTER: I mean, I wasn't in the US at the time, I was in Vienna, in fact, until 1994, and even all the reports of the atrocities and the camps, but even on CNN International anyway, and presumably CNN back in the US was still carrying these pictures of people in concentration camps and scrawny, you know, scrawny looking figures, kind of, you know, Auschwitz revisited and so on. And then all the bombing in Sarajevo and all those kinds of things.

Ambassador Kauzlarich, you were not involved in this period. You were involved in another issue called the Caucasus, but kind of as an outside observer but in the profession. What was your sense of this at that time?

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Well, I think there was a cumulative CNN effect that now multiple years of coverage of the tragedy that was going on in the Balkans, and three very major sub-elements in that tragedy were two mortar attacks on markets in Sarajevo, which created hundreds of casualties that were brought in everybody's living room. And the Srebrenica massacre, where over 4,000 young boys and men were killed. And I think

that had the cumulative effect that finally Europe, the United States, the international community could no longer simply stand by while this was – while this was going on.

Yet we were quite capable of standing by while Rwanda went up –

MR. FORRESTER: Yes, this was going on at the same time and hardly anyone paid any attention.

AMB. KAUZLARICH: I'm not in a position to judge why one triggered the response that another didn't, but I think there was a cumulative effect of the visibility of the fighting on everyone's television screen.

MR. FORRESTER: A key question, which actually has some relevance for today. I mean, it's kind of like the timing and the nature of intervention in a crisis, whether it's in the Balkans or the Middle East or south Asia, or whatever it is. What was the key to the intervention you – principally US – what physically did we do that caused essentially this conflict to come to an end, and for people to come to a hanger and date?

AMB. HUNTER: I think Richard is right about a CNN effect, because there's also what was called in those days the reverse CNN effect, that people become inured to seeing certain kinds of things. They say, this is taking place in the Balkans. They've been doing it for 600 years. Who can help?

I think in addition to the horrors of Srebrenica that he's correctly pointed to, there was something else that was going on. NATO was re-constructing itself to deal with what George H.W. Bush said, to create a Europe whole and free, to finally try to bury the second World War, the tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, by reaching out to more countries that would join NATO, lots of countries working together, re-forming the alliances, reaching out to Russia, reaching out to Ukraine, a whole series of things.

When those all got done and people were fat, dumb and happy at NATO – “Look, we're all ready for the future” --- someone came along and said, “WWait a second. There's a war going on not too far from home. You haven't stopped it. You've failed.” And that was kind of the thing that led countries eventually to say, okay, we can be really rather callous about people dying, up to a point, but we can't be callous about the problems of providing for the future. The two things came together – Srebrenica and NATO reform, and finally we were able to drag the last remaining allies, including the British, kicking and screaming over the line to where they would say, “YYes, okay, now we will use air power.” And surprise, surprise. In 20 days, Mr. Milosevic up in Belgrade cried uncle and the war came to an end.

MR. FORRESTER: And he was also being offered an opportunity to be the hero at Dayton as well, right?

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Well, and also he was getting, because of the Croat offensive operations storm at that time, militarily things were not going well for the – for

the Bosnian Serbs, or the Serbs generally, so there was a combination of all of these things.

MR. FORRESTER: And conventional wisdom says that we helped orchestrate that, through the passing of intelligence –

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Like I say, I was –

MR. FORRESTER: I'm looking at Ambassador Hunter.

AMB. HUNTER: Well, let's say that we weren't entirely sitting on the sidelines.

MR. FORRESTER: That's fair enough. That's fair enough.

The one thing not – we haven't talked about this at all in that, in the luncheon that we just had at the World Affairs Council. I mean, there really wasn't part of this conversation, but there was also a sense in the early 1990s that the United Nations was going to kind of play a much bigger role in these kinds of conflicts, and in fact had not succeeded at all in this.

To what extent was this – I mean, did the UN play a role in this? Was there kind of a passing off, or was there a conclusion that, no, the UN can't do this? Or was that just a tiding things over because you didn't have anything else to do in the first place?

AMB. HUNTER: Well, I think we have to remember, and this is apposite to what's been going on in this decade, let's say, in Iraq, is that the United Nations is not an independent group out there that comes in from Mars and intervenes, or Mt. Olympus. It's made up of nations. And if a country like the United States isn't prepared to do something, or Britain and France and Germany, then the UN doesn't do anything. But it did in this case, after unfortunately too many people in Europe acquiesced in the break-up of Yugoslavia, the UN did come in. They had two negotiators, Britain's David Owen, a former foreign secretary, and America's Cyrus Vance, who used to be Secretary of State. And they had put together a plan which looked like a jigsaw puzzle, but it had a chance.

Unfortunately, administrations changed, the new American administration under Bill Clinton decided they wanted to try something else, and the Europeans weren't prepared to try anything, and so we were right back in the soup for another two years.

AMB. KAUZLARICH: And also the UN military presence, rightly or wrongly, was seen as part of the problem. UNPROFOR did not protect the people in Srebrenica. UNPROFOR did not end the siege at Sarajevo. It was seen certainly on the part of Bosnian Muslims as not – as not being the protection force that it claimed to be, and so there was a certain amount of ill will that was generated and the UN carried that burden with it throughout this period.

AMB. HUNTER: That's exactly right. The great powers decided that the UN Protection Force, or UNPROFOR, would in effect be just a bunch of glorified policemen. I don't mean that against policemen, but they did not even have a policeman's authority here in Pittsburgh. They couldn't draw a weapon and use it against somebody who was killing somebody else. They were just like traffic cops.

MR. FORRESTER: And the tradition of most Cold War peacekeeping missions was some lightly armed, blue-helmeted folks, who for the most part were there at the consent of everybody on the playing field, and in this case – I mean, particularly the Dutch peacekeepers becoming, you know, taking a lot of casualties and that. So obviously one of the players didn't view them as a benign presence in the process.

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Well, and also there was a lot of lessons learned from the UNPROFOR experience that got applied in the Dayton military aspects of this. So the NATO force went in in overwhelming – with an overwhelming presence and was simply not going to be pushed around. And was not pushed around. The real success story of Dayton, I have to say, is on the military side and the role that I-4, S-4 under NATO leadership played in making sure that the worst did not happen. There was no fighting once that air episode ended.

MR. FORRESTER: And it served a whole lot of other interests because it wasn't just NATO forces. It was also Russian forces and Ukrainian forces –

AMB. KAUZLARICH: And North Africans and Egyptians – it was a very, very impressive operation.

AMB. HUNTER: Including the fact that the Russians sent 1,500 peacekeepers, their very best people, to serve under American command, which was an extraordinary thing. And the United States brought the 1<sup>st</sup> US Armored Division down through a place called Brcko, the worst possible place. And if you've ever seen a US armored division on the move, it's like Hannibal and the elephants clumping along. People take it very seriously. They never had to fire a shot, never a casualty, nobody has died from force of arms in Bosnia in almost 10 years.

MR. FORRESTER: I want to turn the subject now post Dayton. The Dayton Accord was a constitution, it was a political arrangement that has pretty much been frozen in concrete for the last 10 years. As we now know and recite to ourselves over and over again and probably never enough, and that is the military victory is only to enable the beginning of a political solution.

Was there the beginning of a political solution, and how did that get started? Ambassador Kauzlarich, you were there from '97.

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Right. Well, I think for the first two years after Dayton was signed there was a real settling in of both the parties on the ground, as well as the international presence. Our main concern from the beginning was to make sure that the

NATO commanders had the authority to move as they saw fit to deal with potential challenges from armed forces. The political side of the equation was left in the hands of Carl Bildt, who under Dayton was really never really given the kind of authority that he needed to implement the civilian aspects of Dayton, and the expectation was that somehow, you know, people of goodwill who signed Dayton would work together and cooperate to implement it. That did not happen.

So it really was only two years later when the peace implementation council, which governed the implementation of Dayton, gave the office of the high representative the kind of power and authority that he needed to really take these – these key political steps.

MR. FORRESTER: And just review, you know, for listeners kind of what the arrangement was. I mean, you basically had three pieces in Bosnia that were kind of jammed together. No, you can't be your own separate part but to some extent we're going to let you be your own separate part and a three-headed –

AMB. KAUZLARICH: It was actually two-headed. I mean, there was the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which was the Croat Bosnian Muslim essentially majority area. The other was the Republic of Srpska, which was essentially the Serb area. It was never the intention of Dayton that you would have Serbs on one side of the line and Bosnia – actually Croats on the other because you could never – I mean, the problem with Vance-Owen was they could never draw a map that sort of made any sense and you ended up with these ideas that really would have never worked.

So the push from the beginning was we were going to have a multi-ethnic Bosnia and Herzegovina made up of two entities. And the problem was the people on the ground, particularly the nationalist parties, had a different view of what those entities would look like than the international community did.

AMB. HUNTER: There was a little bit of sleight of hand there. I think a lot of people didn't think it was going to work but had an overriding objective which was to keep people from killing one another.

MR. FORRESTER: And that succeeded over the last 10 years.

AMB. HUNTER: It succeeded. And then to try to get them, as happened in Western Europe after World War II, as is happening in Central Europe now, for people to have a chance to run their lives and get a little prosperity and then maybe, just maybe in the future they will start thinking about today and tomorrow, rather than who did what to me X hundred years ago.

MR. FORRESTER: Before we fast-forward to the future, Ambassador Hunter, I wanted to shift the subject just a little bit to Kosovo, which of course the military operations in Kosovo were 1999. It was the year after you left Brussels, but certainly a lot of the run-up to that. This was an entirely different situation. Say a little bit about the

mindset as we approach dealing with the Kosovo crisis and dealing with Milosevic there. Because certainly there were a lot of people after – after Dayton who thought, ah okay, we solved that one for a while. We kicked that can down the road. We stuffed it back into the cupboard, or whatever phrase you want to use.

AMB. HUNTER: Well, I'll tell you something which may sound remarkable, given what we've just been through in Bosnia. Nobody at NATO even thought about Kosovo, even though President Bush the elder on Christmas day in 1992, one of his last acts, had given an absolute guarantee to prevent fighting in Kosovo. It really kind of crept up very slowly, and just like Bosnia, people tried to push it away. My personal view is that the lessons of dealing with Milosevic hadn't been learned effectively, and in effect he out-bluffed people in this country and a lot of Europeans, until he really crossed a line that he didn't realize he'd crossed. Then there was another air campaign.

I don't think the Kosovo war had to take place if we'd adequately learned what we'd already done before.

AMB. KAUZLARICH: It did have an impact in Bosnia Herzegovina. For one thing, it kept me awake at night as NATO aircraft zoomed overhead on their way to their bombing missions in Serbia and Kosovo. But it also was a measure for both Serbs and non-Serbs in Bosnia that the United States had not sort of ended the story with Dayton, that when the need arose that we were prepared to lead an intervention, to stop ethnic cleansing, and to deal with problems in the Balkans. And so there was, you know, a recognition that after having started out at the beginning of the Dayton process saying we were only going to be there for one year, that there was a US commitment that really extended beyond that. And that was extremely helpful because people will cooperate with you if you think – if they think you're going to be involved for the long run.

AMB. HUNTER: I remember the day that President Clinton, in the presence of a small group of us, took the decision to stay past a year. He said, "I just know three things. First, it's the right thing to do. Secondly, we're going to do it. And third, I'm in a lot of domestic political trouble."

The difference between Bosnia and Kosovo is maybe by the accident of timing. Bosnia was an independent state, suffering from aggression from abroad. It might have been a little bit of a fiction but that's what we could hide behind. Kosovo was and is an integral part of another country, which meant that if you were going to intervene, you were saying that the leaders of this sovereign country can't treat their people like this. It is in a way the precursor of what we then did with regard to Iraq, to say Saddam can't treat his people that way. So that was a big moment in Kosovo, crossing the barrier to say that Milosevic can't treat some of his people this way.

AMB. KAUZLARICH: And bringing the Europeans on with that was very, very difficult, as you well know, because they were uneasy.

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(Break)

(Pre-taping discussion)

MR. FORRESTER: What we've been doing is doing a lot of retrospective and we, you know, why did we go to Dayton, the beginning of the high commissioner in '97, we just were talking about Kosovo and so on. So where I'm going to start this is, following Kosovo, 2000, our attention gets diverted, you know. We have – we need time to leave the Balkans and we have two situations that are essentially frozen and almost off our radar screen. So I want to in this last six minutes or so kind of bring this forward to, you know, what have we learned, what has been accomplished, what still needs to be done, and that leads right into the commission as well. All right?

AMB. AVIS BOHLEN: Yes.

MR. FORRESTER: And that's kind of where we're going to go, and next thing you know we're going to be done and I'll just have to say, that's all we've got time for.

(Technical discussion)

MR. FORRESTER: Our guests this week are Ambassador Bob Hunter, Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich, and Ambassador Avis Bohlen, all experts on the Balkans. We've now been joined by Ambassador Bohlen, who was ambassador to Bulgaria when a lot of these issues were going on from '96 to '99, and now part of the International Commission on the Balkans. And we'll hear a little bit more about all of that.

But we've just been talking about not only the Dayton Accords of '95, but the war in Kosovo in 1999. And it seems to me that after 1999, with the millennium, and 9/11 and all of our attention is turned elsewhere, the good news – I guess – is that there really hasn't been anybody getting killed in combat in the Balkans over the last – at least since Kosovo. But it's frozen. Is that a fair – Ambassador Kauzlarich, is that a fair characteristic? What's happened since then to move this towards political solution, reconciliation, whatever you want to call it?

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Yes, it's real easy to point out the problems. The politics really haven't changed demonstrably. The nationalist parties still dominate. Economic reform and therefore economic growth lag in this part of the world, and absolutely critical. But a million refugees and displaced people have come back to their homes. Extraordinary. I would have never thought that would have happened during my time there. And this includes 400,000-plus minority returns in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

And the Dayton process has in a sense bought the international community and people of the region time, in a way to start bridge-building to the future, a future that has to involve closer association with Europe.

MR. FORRESTER: And to some extent peace-keeping operations are, if nothing else, about buying time, right?

AMB. KAUZLARICH: Right.

MR. FORRESTER: It just may be two or three generations worth of time.

Now Ambassador Bohlen, you've been there, what, three times over the last few years as part of the commission?

AMB. BOHLEN: I've been there three times in the past year as part of this international commission, which has mostly European members on it, and which is looking to the – looking at the state of the region with an eye to their future relationship with the EU. And I agree with Rich. I think the important thing is that there has been no fighting for the last – the last few years, as it's given people time to catch their breath and to move on with the – and to focus on what are going to be the problems of the future. And they are – they are numerous.

I think there is still one urgent situation, one potentially – one potential flashpoint, and that is Kosovo, and there was – there was fighting there. There was violence there rather last – a year ago when an incident got out of control and the Kosovar Albanians started destroying a lot of Serb property, Serb churches and monasteries and so on, and it was a very, very ugly scene. And I think what it did, what it was was a wake-up call to the international community, which had put this region out of its mind, to remind them that there are still some unsettled status issues.

And also in that context, and this is what the commission is really – will focus on in its report, which will be out in about a month, is the future problems. I mean, now the violence is over, people have had time to look at the problems of the future, and they are – they are still very numerous. The economies, the stagnant economies, the unreformed economies, the corruption, the organized crime, the continued ethnic tensions, the – the really – the pessimism of the region, which is very – very marked, I think.

And I think that – that really the future of this region lies in – within the European Union, and I think it is probably up to the European Union to take a comprehensive approach to this – to this whole problem. So that's the kind of – the larger timeframe. And then you have the shorter time – the immediate issue of Kosovo, which the international community I think has recognized that it has to deal with in the next – over the next year. There's a mid-term review coming up.

MR. FORRESTER: There have been two principal political changes in – in former Yugoslavia over the last five years, and that's elections in both Serbia and in

Croatia, that essentially replaced Milosevic, replaced Tudjman, replaced people who were some of the bad guys in this. There was a lot of optimism at the time. Was that optimism exaggerated? Because you're still talking as if there's kind of unreformed political governments and so on.

AMB. BOHLEN: I think Croatia has been doing better and is now really on track to begin accession negotiations with the – with the EU within a couple of years. I think Serbia has not really been able to deal with its problems very effectively. The – the death of Djindjic was just a tragic event. He was a moderate reformer. The nationalist parties are still very strong and even, I mean, Mr. Kostunica was not a violent nationalist but I think the sort of – the nationalist themes still resonate –

MR. FORRESTER: He was still a nationalist and he had to be to become the president.

AMB. BOHLEN: That's right. And the prime minister Tadic, president, is – sorry, President Tadic is – is a reform-minded, but it's – it's a very difficult political climate, and I think one of the issues is Kosovo. It's really – I think there are many Serbs who would say Kosovo is the past, we are a small and diminishing minority, our future is in Europe, we should rid ourselves of this burden. But of course the nationalist theme is still – is still very, very strong.

MR. FORRESTER: Well, we only have about a minute left in this conversation but I want to turn it to the role of the US. I mean, we've kind of forgotten about it, and the EU has taken over from NATO in the military dimension of this. You're describing this as essentially a problem to be dealt with principally in the EU context, except for Kosovo. And so very briefly, Ambassador Kauzlarich, what do you see as the US role ought to be here, and we'll come back to –

AMB. KAUZLARICH: In a way we've come full circle from where we were at the very beginning of the 90's, where we in Europe agreed this was going to be a European problem that had a European solution, and for all the reasons we've seen, that did not work. But it's a different time now and it probably is time for the United States, at least in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to begin to make this kind of transition so that this international presence can be seen more and more within the framework of a Europe, of an expanding Europe, of a Europe that has a future to offer to the – particularly to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

So I think, you know, we're on – we're on the edge of something that could – has the potential if you've got people of good will on the ground working together to really open up a new future.

MR. FORRESTER: Ambassador Bohlen, what's the US role here, in your view?

AMB. BOHLEN: Well, I agree very much with what Rich said. I think – I think it is time to let the main burden of responsibility pass to the – to the European Union, but

I think Kosovo is where we have to be involved. And I think we will always be welcome in the area. I mean, we certainly will not – we will be – we will be a presence. But it is really Europe's problem.

MR. FORRESTER: So this is really one of those conversations, although it hasn't been in the headlines over the past week, as the president and Secretary of State have been in Europe over the past month, that this is one of those things in fact in which we can say to our European allies, we're there, we'll be part of the help, but you all have the lead on this one. Probably with – said with great relief in Washington, I suspect, as well.

AMB. BOHLEN: I think so. And I think – I think the Bush administration hoped that this would have happened at the beginning of their first term instead of at the beginning of the second.

MR. FORRESTER: Well, you don't always get your way in this business.

AMB. BOHLEN: That's right.

MR. FORRESTER: Thanks very much to all of you for being on the program. Unfortunately we – and with this subject, you always run out of time before you run out of things to talk about. But thanks very much for being with us.

AMB. BOHLEN: A pleasure. Thank you.

MR. FORRESTER: You've been listening to 1410 KQV and the Pittsburgh Global Press Conference, brought to you in cooperation with the World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh, a non-profit, non-partisan organization bringing educational programs in world affairs to Pittsburgh for almost 75 years. We've been having a conversation about the Balkans, 10 years after the Dayton Accords, and we've been joined by Ambassador Bob Hunter, who was ambassador to NATO from 1993 to 1998, now at the RAND Corporation. Ambassador Richard Kauzlarich, who was ambassador to Bosnia-Herzegovina from 1997 to 1999, now at the National Intelligence Council. And Ambassador Avis Bohlen, former assistant secretary of state and then ambassador to Bulgaria, 1996 to 1999, now on the International Commission on the Balkans.

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