

# IMPLEMENTATION OF THE HELSINKI ACCORDS

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## HEARING BEFORE THE COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE ONE HUNDRED THIRD CONGRESS SECOND SESSION

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A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAVEJO

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MARCH 10, 1994

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Printed for the use of the  
Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe  
[CSCE 103-2-13]



U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE

77-754 CC

WASHINGTON : 1994

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For sale by the U.S. Government Printing Office  
Superintendent of Documents, Congressional Sales Office, Washington, DC 20402

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## A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAJEVO

THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 1994

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
*Washington, DC.*

The Commission met in room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC, at 10 a.m., Hon. Dennis DeConcini, Chairman, presiding.

Present: Hon. Dennis DeConcini, Chairman; Hon. Steny H. Hoyer, Co-Chairman; Commissioners Hon. Barbara Mikulski, Hon. Edward Markey, Hon. Frank McCloskey, and Hon. Christopher H. Smith.

Also present: Hon. Rosa L. DeLauro, a Representative in Congress from the State of Connecticut, and Hon. Dennis Eckart, former Representative in Congress from the State of Ohio.

Chairman DECONCINI. The Helsinki Commission will come to order.

I'd like to welcome everyone here to the most recent and unique hearing of the Helsinki Commission on the conflict in Bosnia Hercegovina. Our witness today is Zlata Filipovic, a 13-year-old girl from Sarajevo, whose diary of the war period has just been published here in the United States.

All too frequently, policymakers and even the public look at warfare, aggression and genocide in terms of great power politics and strategic interests.

Through the innocent, unbiased eyes of this young lady who is before us today, we come to realize the horrible impact of the perpetual and senseless shelling of a peaceful and beautiful city on its multi-ethnic population. People whose daily lives are subject to the constant threat of the sniper bullets and the need to find food, water and safe warm shelter; children whose childhood is brutally taken from them and replaced with horrors most of us never experience in a lifetime; children who, instead of being taught the values of love towards one's neighbor, are shown by hideous examples how to hate and even kill a fellow human being because he or she is of different background or religion.

And as we listen to Zlata today and her story, we can only wonder why this had to happen to the people of Sarajevo and Bosnia-Hercegovina, and why it wasn't stopped as soon as it became evident what was going on.

We want to thank you, Zlata, for taking the time and for being available for people to listen to you and to be here today at the hearings.

I'll now yield to the Ranking Member, the Co-Chairman, Mr. Hoyer, and other members as they come in.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Zlata, I too am very pleased to welcome you here to our hearing. I have three daughters. They're much older than you. But then again I'm older than your folks, so that is understandable. But we want to welcome as well your parents here. How incredibly proud they must be and how incredibly proud the young people that we have in the audience, some of whom have gotten your autograph on your book. I know that that makes you proud, hopefully, as it ought to, because you have shown courage and insight in your book that I've had the opportunity to read.

I never met Anne Frank and many have compared you to Anne Frank, both young persons of insight, young persons who express the feelings that they have as they see their lives disrupted by adults who all too often do things that are not civilized, do things that are against all of our religious principles, do things against families, and most tragically do things against children. You've spoken up and spoken out and you've captured the imagination and the attention of the world and that is very, very important.

I'd like to introduce some young people who are not quite as young as you. They're seniors in high school. Zlata, what would you be, a 7th grader, 8th grader?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Seventh or 8th.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Seventh or 8th. Your schooling has been some disrupted. So, they've been luckier than you in many ways.

But I'd like the 12th graders and Mr. Larry Roberson, who I've had the opportunity to meet, from the Colonial Beach High School to stand up and be welcomed. We appreciate your being here. Thank you very much. You can be seated now.

Zlata, we appreciate your agreeing to appear here and we thank your parents for allowing you to do that and accompanying you.

As a parent myself who has investments in his children as well, you must be incredibly proud of Zlata, appropriately so. She obviously reflects the love and the deep sense of justice and caring that you have taught her. So, we congratulate you for being here with her and for being a part of her.

I want to welcome you to Washington, DC, the capital of the United States, where we discuss a lot of big issues. But sometimes we forget the people that are affected by the issues we discuss. You so well embody the people that are the real players, if you will, in all of the policies that are discussed, good and bad, in governments all over the world. Everyone is very impressed with your observations, your maturity and your ability to express your views in English. For many of us who are much older than you and have been to school a lot longer, our facility with language is so much more limited than yours. We admire you for that.

In her diary, as so many of you probably know, Zlata's surprise and inability to explain why such a horrible conflict came to her home two years ago reflects not her youthful naiveté, but intelligence and understanding. Her story reveals that this did not have to happen. It certainly was not inevitable. Her story reveals that the constant bombardment of Sarajevo cannot be explained to the point that it becomes acceptable, reasonable or justified. As Chairman DeConcini points out, "it only makes us ask why."

I'd also like to point out something which Zlata already knows. Not only is she smart and mature, she is in some respects lucky. While she had to live through much of the siege of Sarajevo, she survived it to the point where she was able to leave. Other children did not survive, such as the six, as young as five and as old as 12, killed by a shell on January 22nd, when they wrongfully felt that the shelling had slowed enough for them to do some sledding without much danger. Young people, how many of us over this past winter here in the Washington Metropolitan area, have gone out on a hill, gotten on a sled and had a great time and not worried about what really evil people would do, unconcerned about the consequences of their acts, trying to further political ends when the payment for those political ends was the lives of young children.

Fifteen hundred children, some younger, some older than Zlata, are known to have been killed by shells and sniper fire alone just in Sarajevo. Fifteen thousand children—from the besieged region still under Bosnian control. Many of the children that did survive are still there. I mentioned in our last hearing that the United Nations has found that many of the children of Sarajevo, as you know, Zlata, reveal passive suicidal tendencies, unlike Zlata, not caring to protect themselves because they feel a sense of imminent doom anyway, a sense of no future. Too many of our children even in this country reflect that.

While the threat to Sarajevo has recently been eased, hopefully for good, these children will bear the emotional scars of the death and destruction which has surrounded them for the rest of their lives, not to mention the physical effects of malnutrition and a lack of medical care.

Mr. Chairman, I ask the balance of my statement be included in the record.

Zlata, we want to hear from you. Not just for your own insights, but the fact that you reflect the hopes and aspirations, the love, the joy, the fears of so many of your generation, and how important it is that those in policy levels remember that ultimately the policies that we adopt impact on the children of the world.

We're pleased to have you here. Thank you very much, Zlata.

Congressman McCloskey?

Mr. MCCLOSKEY. Thank you very much, Senator, Mr. Chairman. It's an honor to be here with Zlata.

I have two copies of the book. Quite frankly, with my schedule lately, I've just been able to read brief sections. But it's an eloquent and moving statement that probably is significant to us in governmental or political leadership. The book is going to have a positive impact on the resolution of the war. I guess from one of the passages I read, it was movingly stated something to the effect, Mr. Chairman, that the grownups are at it again. In essence, the grownups of all ethnic backgrounds, particularly the Serbian elements that have been at fault in this horrible carnage.

I would also like to commend the administration. In recent weeks we have had a more assertive and realistic policy, but even as we talk, war and death not only go on in Sarajevo, but also in Maglaj, Srebrenica—indeed throughout the region. So, I hope Zlata's visit today will be an inspiration for us to continue to press the administration for an even better focus to improving recent efforts.

Mr. Chairman, thank you very much.

Chairman DECONCINI. Senator Mikulski?

Senator MIKULSKI. Hello, Zlata. I'm Senator Barbara Mikulski, one of seven women in the United States Senate. In all of American history, there have only been 17 of us. So, we want to welcome you because we know you're a pioneer too. I guess you must wonder how strange the American parliament is that we invite you to testify and then we give all the speeches. To say we want to listen to you and then we take a half an hour talking.

So, we want you to feel so at ease here among the friends that you have here who are supportive of lifting the siege at Sarajevo and I believe looking so forward to hearing you tell the story from the eyes of a young woman because so often when we think of war we think of men, we think of guns, we think of no-fly zones. We think of that but we don't think about the lives of people and how hard it must have been to worry about food or freedom, school or play.

So, I'm not going to give a speech. I do want to listen to you and we hope that your life and the life of all the children of Sarajevo and around the world is better. Thank you for writing your diary so we could learn more about it.

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Thank you for listening.

Chairman DECONCINI. Congresswoman DeLauro.

Ms. DELAURO. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Zlata, welcome as well. I'm Rosa DeLauro and I am from the State of Connecticut, and I'm a member of the House of Representatives. As Senator Mikulski pointed out, there are seven women in the Senate, there are 48 women in the House of Representatives, and we need every day to have more there. There's only 48 out of 435. Indeed and in fact, you are a pioneer.

I have two daughters, two step-daughters, who are now in their 20's. So, it's with great pleasure that I welcome you here this morning. As I think back a very long time ago, given my age today, to when I was 13 years old, I did not have to think about war, nor did my girls; or where a hot meal was coming from; or the tragedy of a friend dying. I didn't have to think about what that was about. You have had that experience and you've been very brave in the way that you have dealt with these experiences. You have had experiences that no child should have and that's to have your childhood taken away from you.

Unfortunately, we can't give that back here. That's not in our power. No one can give that back. But by talking to you today, by listening to you today, maybe we can begin to understand a little bit of what you have gone through and how we can help children when the war is over and how we can help children now who are experiencing what you have.

I have a great deal of admiration for you and what you have done. Though we were not there with you, you have helped us through your words and through your emotions to begin a little bit to understand what it's about. We also understand what a tremendous waste of life there has been. Your sparkling eyes have helped us to see these kinds of things. For that we will be grateful to you. We hope that, in fact, we can take a lesson from what you tell us here today and do something positive with it.

Thank you very much.

Chairman DECONCINI. Congressman Markey?

Mr. MARKEY. Thank you, Senator, and I want to thank you, Representative Hoyer, for conducting this hearing today.

I just want to thank you because I think you are going to make it easier for the United States to help you to begin a new diary which is more optimistic and more hopeful for the future of your country. I look forward to your testimony because I think that it's going to help our country to understand the moral responsibility we have to make sure that those trolleys that we saw running on the front page of the New York Times yesterday in Sarajevo for the first time in two years continue to run and that you can return to a peaceful country.

Thank you.

Chairman DECONCINI. We're very pleased to have former Congressman Dennis Eckart here today.

Congressman, we welcome you. You've been an outspoken voice in this area for many, many years. Do you have any comments or opening statement?

Mr. ECKART. I've given that up.

Chairman DECONCINI. Yes, we should too, I suspect.

Zlata, thank you very much. Do you have any statement you'd like to make? We have a number of questions we would like to ask you to respond to, but perhaps you'd like to open with some remarks.

**TESTIMONY OF ZLATA FILIPOVIC, AUTHOR, "ZLATA'S DIARY: A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAJEVO"**

Ms. FILIPOVIC. I would like to tell you that this is what happened to me and what I will tell you. It's not only my story, it's a story of all the children there. I am lucky to survive and lucky to be here, to get out of that hell. But a lot of them stayed. So, I will be the one who will talk in their name, because it's not only my story, because any child from Sarajevo in Bosnia could sit here and tell you the same story.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you. Let me just ask you if you can give us a little background before the war and the involvement in the community of Sarajevo. What was it like living there with the different ethnic groups? Was it a good life? Was it a happy life and was there violence? Can you tell us a little bit about what it was before the war?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. It was a great life. For me it wasn't important that any of my friends were of different religion or which nationality he was. It was just important that he is a good friend, or she, and that we just played together. We went to music school today, to school, to tennis, to skiing. Everywhere we went together and all of us were together and no one ever knew which religion. It wasn't important.

Chairman DECONCINI. Before the war, did you travel, you and your family, through Bosnia-Herzegovina and was there any danger of traveling in certain areas that had one large ethnic group or another one?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. No, never. I traveled all around Bosnia. I don't know. It's difficult for me to explain everything because for me it

was just normal life and everything was great. I didn't need anything, but it was enough for me. Like every child deserved to live and to travel everywhere and everywhere was safe.

Chairman DECONCINI. I'm going to ask someone to keep time here for us for ten minutes, please.

Let me ask you about, Zlata, your diary. You make some reference there about you didn't feel Sarajevo would be shelled and become part of the war, particularly when Dubrovnik was under attack by the Croats and the Serbs. Why was that or is that correct, and why was it that you had some feeling that Sarajevo might be spared, or did you?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, I didn't because I believed that because all of us lived together and all of us love each other that with that love we will get that war, love will kill that war, that love will win. That all love, because all our friends, all of us live together and love each other and we believe that that love will win and that love—

Chairman DECONCINI. So you thought the war would not come to Sarajevo?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. No. Well, a lot of people talked about it, but we were naive. We thought with that love we can win everything.

Chairman DECONCINI. Can you tell us—so much of it is in your book, but can you give us what an average day is like or was like, still is if you were there, since the war began in Sarajevo? What was your day like when you woke up in the morning and what did you proceed to do and what were the dangers?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, the dangers, I could have two kind of days. I could have a day when I have shooting or a day when it's more shooting or a day when there is no shooting. When it's shooting, I sometimes must get up at 3, 4 in the morning from a warm bed, from a dreamland. Usually I dream about peace, about my friends, about beach. I have to wake up and go to reality, go to the cellar, the cold cellar, wet cellar, and stay there until it's finished. You never know. Everything depends. Sometimes I can stay all day, sometimes just a few hours. Everything depends.

But it's very bad when you just—I feel best when I was in bed because I could dream about everything and it was a safe place for me. I could escape from reality. And then I just hear sounds, noise, the shooting, shelling, bombing, bullets, and then I have to wake up and go to the cellar. Then, I have to dress very quickly and then go to the cellar.

If there is no big shooting, usually I get up at about 7 and then I have to go to the bathroom to wash. But I see there is no running water, there is no—cold running water especially, not hot running water. Then I have only one glass of water and I can wash my face a little bit and wash my hands, but do everything with one glass, with one jug. And go again from the warm bed to cold bathroom and then to cold kitchen where my mother and father are trying to heat a little bit, trying to burn the wood in a wood stove to prepare some tea or something to drink warm. Then I eat something if we have something, what I can eat because everything has the same taste. Sometimes I can't eat because I couldn't eat those kind of tastes.

Then I go to my room or stay in the room where there is heat and maybe read or sometimes, when it's not too dangerous, go to one dangerous room and just play piano a little bit. But most of the time, I read. But sometimes I couldn't concentrate on reading because I was nervous, very nervous because everywhere I want to go there, I want to go there, I'm nervous, I'm cold. Then I can't concentrate on reading also.

Then maybe we have some lunch, some rice or some beans or something, and then we go to collect water in one place where we can stay there for about an hour, sometimes hour and a half, sometimes 2 hours. It depends. Then I go home and then it's getting dark and it's the worst part of day because we don't have any candles, we don't have any light. Then we're just sitting in the dark and we spent 2 years thinking and talking. So, sometimes we feel so useless because you're just sitting and waiting until it's about 8 and then go to bed. It's the worst period of the day, those minutes getting dark and when it's dark you feel so useless. You don't feel like a human being.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you. You had some of your friends who are no longer alive and you saw them get injured and die or what happened? Can you give us one or two examples?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Yes. I had one friend. Well, she wasn't my best friend, but I went with her to kindergarten and very often we played in the park. Then one day, it was May 7, 1992, it was beginning of the war and all the children went out. Again I believed that with love, with play, with singing, that they can win that war, that love is stronger than a war, that love is stronger than a death. And they went out, all the children, and they called me also to play that morning. But I don't know, my mother say it's too quiet. Who knows? Maybe something could happen. So, I wait at the house. I was a little bit angry because I see all the children outside. I wanted also to go outside, go in the sun, to go and study nature in the park. Then, in just moments, one detonation and then a lot of screams, a lot of crying. Then we went to the cellar to wait, maybe because sometimes when you hear one bomb, it's very often that there comes another and a third one on the same place. After I find out that all the children who were in the park, all my friends, all of them were wounded. Some of them stayed in hospitals. Some of them came back home and one friend, she was—her name is Nina—very badly wounded and doctors tried to help her, but they couldn't because she had the shrapnel in her brain. I don't know. She died.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

Congressman Hoyer?

Co-Chairman HOYER. Zlata, why did your friends think this was going on?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Excuse me?

Co-Chairman HOYER. Why did your friends think this was happening? Why did they think there was war in Sarajevo?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, we don't know. The children really don't know. I don't know, because it's just one day I was at school and tomorrow was Saturday, just a normal day, and then Sunday one girl was dead and then there was a lot of bombing. They just know that the war came, that every moment they can be killed, that they

don't have food, they don't have electricity, that sometime their parents go out on a job and they don't know if they are seeing them for the last time. So, it's just one big mess and nobody knows why it happened. Well, the children don't.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Did you hear your parents talking about it? Did other young people that were in your class hear their parents talking about it and did they say anything about why their parents thought the war was occurring?

Chairman DECONCINI. Push it a little closer, Jane, please, if you can. Thank you.

Ms. FILIPOVIC. My parents tried. My parents sometimes talked about it, but they didn't want to talk with me. They said, "You are too young. You are a child. It's too hard for you." And they also talked about leaving. Do we have to leave or not. They talk and they were interested and all of us are full of questions why it happened and why it still lasts.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Among your classmates, was there any choosing of sides or did everybody feel that they were together? Do you know what I mean? Were they saying that this group is right or the other group is right or were all of you feeling that you were together in this?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, we were together in this because every time when you hear shooting, all the children, all the people have to go to the cellar. Nobody asked are you a Serb or Croat or Muslim or Jew. You are just, all of you, in danger and all of them are going together in the cellar and wait together. It's just that there are people in Sarajevo and people around Sarajevo who are killing them, just good and bad people.

Co-Chairman HOYER. When you went out, did you have an opportunity of seeing the United Nations soldiers?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, I see them in the cars and also they were good because one group of children went to one building where they are. And we also go because a dentist was there, so every time when we go there they give us some chocolates, small chocolates, and it was so big for us to see a chocolate or chewing gum or something. That means a lot to us.

Co-Chairman HOYER. What was the feeling of the people you talked to, both your classmates and others, adults that you may have talked with, about the U.N. soldiers?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, people didn't know that they are there to bring the food. They believe also that they come there like soldiers to bring the peace. Well, it's great what they are doing, their job to bring food. But people believe that they are there for peace, they have a mission to bring the peace. But they have another mission, to bring the food. I think what they've done is a great job because probably all of us will be dead because I know—before they brought the first packages in Sarajevo, first food, first medicines, they—we all of us were in—and we didn't have any food, anything. So, probably all of us will die of hunger if they didn't come.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Did you feel safer when they were around?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, when they arrived, just a few days before the war, I was sure that they arrived in Sarajevo and then I was sure that they want the war because United Nation troops are

there. So, it's impossible. I don't know. Also, when they shoot sometime in their buildings where they were. So, it wasn't so safe.

Co-Chairman HOYER. So you didn't really—after the war began, after they came, and you were shelled, you didn't feel that they were making it safer, although they were bringing food and medicine?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, yes. Well, they were safer, I believe, because when they—I believe that when they're still in Sarajevo, Sarajevo can still be a little bit alive.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Zlata, have you had any chance to talk to your friends since the shelling stopped recently?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, my friends, almost all of them, went out in the beginning and only one friend was still in Sarajevo, but she was so far away because she was across the river. It was one bridge, where there always were snipers. So, we couldn't go there. Sometimes before the war I could go for 2 minutes to her house. But then it was so far, it was like in another town, another country, another world. That small river, that small bridge, it was sea, like an ocean for us.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Zlata, this is the last question I'll ask. What did your classmates think of themselves as? Let me tell you what I mean by that. If I asked all the young people who are in the 12th grade behind you, "What are you in terms of country?" they would say they were Americans. What would your classmates say?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, they would say Bosnians or children from Sarajevo. I don't know. Children, for them it's not important, for children which I know. Of course there are some children who think of that, that somebody is Croat, somebody is Serb. But those are children who lost maybe their parents, their brothers. They must feel that difference. I don't know. It's understandable that they feel a little bit of those differences. But the children who I know that didn't lose a close family member, they are still like we are from Bosnia. We are from Sarajevo.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Thank you.

Chairman DECONCINI. Senator Mikulski?

Senator MIKULSKI. Zlata, my friend, Congressman Hoyer, asked many of my questions. But you talked about how many of your friends left, I guess were evacuated. When we think about how to help the children of Sarajevo and some of the other cities that are being hit by shell fire, do you think the children should be evacuated to a safer place? Do you think their families should be evacuated? Do you think we should take everybody out of the town until the peace can come, or do you think all these—or we should just try to keep the cease-fire going?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. That's difficult. Of course, it's better that all of them stay in their houses, in their homes, with their parents, with their families. It's much better if it's peace there and if it's food there, it's electricity, water there, so they can live normal life in their homes. It's difficult also to be a refugee. It's not so easy because especially I see through myself because I have so much family there and all of them. I have my parents here, but we feel lonely because we don't have anybody who is ours.

Senator MIKULSKI. I think you've told a story of what it means to be a refugee. I know you're a good student and I don't know if you know that 85 percent of all the refugees in the world are either women or children. Did you know that? Because the men are often at the wars and so on.

What do you—let's say—I want to look ahead. I want to be optimistic. Let's say that the cease-fire holds and maybe even a peace agreement. What do you think will be important to do with the families and the children after the war is over?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. The families and women and children who are out, for them the best thing to do is to bring those families together again. But I don't know how it will look after two years of this.

Senator MIKULSKI. Well, you know, I'm going to ask you something else. Many years ago, I was a social worker and helped children who had been abused by their own families. We find that often for children who have gone through terrible situations where they've seen great horrors, they have to tell their story in some way or the other. They have to heal. They have to get well. It's being with their family, it's food, it's school, but there will be other things that are necessary. You wrote your diary. Did your diary help you survive?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Yes. Well, it helped me because I wanted to talk with somebody. I wanted to tell some things to somebody and I didn't have any of my friends. As I said, my friends are across the ocean, that river. All my friends went out. My parents were too occupied about everything that happened. They were worried about the political situation and water, electricity, for me, what will they have to cook tomorrow for lunch. So, I didn't have anybody, but I remember that I have that diary. Before the war it was just on paper where I could tell my memories, just tell things from my childhood and afterwards to have memories. Then I remember in the war that I have a friend there and that I can speak with that friend, I can tell things to that friend.

Senator MIKULSKI. Do you think it will be important after the war is over to help the children with these feelings that they have and have them a way to tell those feelings to other people? Do you think that will be part of getting well and getting better and moving on?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. I don't know. It's too many tragedies have happened.

Senator MIKULSKI. Too much to ask. What do you dream about now? You talked about how you would lie in bed and that was the best part of the day and where you felt better and you would dream. What do you dream about now?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, now I'm usually not sleeping. I am almost all the time thinking in the night. But when I sleep, I don't dream anything, which is strange, because all the time before I dream—well, every night I dream something. But now, since we arrived here, I'm not sleeping or when I sleep I don't dream anything. I just feel like flying somewhere. It's not a dream. I don't know. I'm not sleeping.

Senator MIKULSKI. I know, and I won't hold on, but what's your dream of the heart? You know, you can dream when you sleep, but I had a dream to be a lady senator. I didn't dream it in my sleep,

I dreamt it in my heart and thought about what I wanted to be. I had a dream of the heart to be a social worker and went to school to become one. What are your dreams of the heart?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, my dream is peace, peace everywhere. Not only in Sarajevo, in whole world, and that all people, all children, love each other and live together and that all of them put their arms together and just play together and I sometimes imagine like big sign of peace and all the people which I love around that sign and they are happy, they're smiling. That's my dream here. But in reality—

Senator MIKULSKI. You know what? That's my dream too. I think we all need to start dreaming together.

Thank you very much.

Chairman DECONCINI. Congresswoman DeLauro.

Ms. DELAURO. Zlata, you talked about your schoolmates and your classmates. Were you able to go to school and what happened with your schooling and the schooling of your classmates?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, in the last day in the school, in the normal school was April 3, 1992.

Ms. DELAURO. April 3, 1992, was the last day of school?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Yes. And then I didn't have school one year. In that one year, my school is destroyed. Almost all the children from my class went out or a lot of them were wounded. Some of them hardly, some of them easy. I don't know. My school is destroyed. I also have some things in school. I don't know what's happened with those things in my desk. Then one year after, in April 1993, they started to organize some school. But it wasn't—usually before the war we have 45 minutes of school, but this was half an hour. In winter it was 15 minutes. I don't know. It's just to call it school, but you can't learn anything. And then for four months, you must finish all year. You finished all school year. But it's like you go one day and then you don't go three days because it's dangerous, and one day and then weekend. It wasn't school, it was just imitation of school. Like everything what happened there, it's just imitation.

Ms. DELAURO. What was your feeling about that, of not being able to go to school, the feelings of your classmates about that? Were you angry? Did people say they didn't want it, it was just as well not to be in school? What were your own feelings about not being able to be in school and learning?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, for me, the school is symbol of a normal life, symbol of a childhood to go to school, to get good or bad marks, to have a friend at school, some kind of competition in school. That's, for me, typical normal life of one child. When they take away my school, I said this really means something. This means that somebody really change. They took my childhood, they took my school.

Ms. DELAURO. Let me just ask you, and it may be a little bit like Senator Mikulski's question. What would you like to do? What would you like to accomplish in your life? Have you thought about that? You know, you dream about being things. What is it that you want to do? Do you want to go back to Sarajevo?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, I would like to go back, but not now. Now it's still bad situation. But when it will be like it was, and I hope it will be soon, I will for sure like to go back. I would just like to have a normal life. That's my dream, just to go to school and then

maybe university and then maybe married and have children. Just normal life.

Ms. DELAURO. Do you think that for your classmates that some of the hatred that exists amongst adults and between the different ethnic groups, do you think that that has been passed down to yourself or to your friends? The kind of hatred that have been displayed, is that being passed down to young people today?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, for me, no. But probably. As I said, there are a lot of children who lost their parents, they lost their brothers, sisters. They've seen terrible pictures of war. They have been very severely wounded. They lost their arms or legs. I think those children must hate. It's understandable. Too much evil is done and they must hate. But I myself, I don't hate anybody, some special ethnic group. I just hate those bad people who did all this.

Ms. DELAURO. Zlata, I thank you very, very much for talking with us today. I wish for you and for your family and for the children of Sarajevo a bright future. Thank you.

Chairman DECONCINI. Congressman Markey?

Mr. MARKEY. Thank you.

Have you been able to telephone any of your friends in Sarajevo since you've come to the United States?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, no, because phone doesn't work.

Mr. MARKEY. The phones don't work?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Phone connections from outside in Sarajevo, it doesn't work. Only sometimes through satellite phone. But sometimes you can get it through Switzerland. Sometimes you can get Sarajevo. So, we talked with them maybe one or two times. Also, sometimes we have received just one letter from them through journalists who are going to Sarajevo. But it's not enough. We would like to have a letter every day and to talk every day.

Mr. MARKEY. So the telecommunications equipment in Sarajevo was largely destroyed?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Oh, yes, because 2nd of May, 1992, the main post office is burned. Until then, my flat didn't have a phone. My grandparents and almost all the people don't have phone there.

Mr. MARKEY. So many members of the U.S. Congress want to send equipment to Sarajevo so that there can be a telephone system and that you and all of those who are refugees would be able to call back in and to talk to their friends and their relatives. But the United Nations says that that's not humanitarian. So, we can't send in that telecommunications equipment. What would you say to the United Nations about the rights of people to be able to talk in the middle of a war?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. It's big thing for the people. For myself, I would like to talk every day with my best friend, with my grandparents, with my uncle. I could speak with them two hours on the phone because I miss them. So, I want to talk with them, to be on the phone with them.

Mr. MARKEY. So the United Nations is wrong, don't you think, when they say that that's not humanitarian?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Oh, yes. Yes. I think—well, no, we should have that connections.

Mr. MARKEY. You should have that. I agree with you. We're going to try to work to make that possible. I think that all of the

people who have been forced outside of their own country should be able to talk to the people who are still there.

What about heating? What about electricity in Sarajevo? What's the conditions that exist right now with regard to natural gas, electricity?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. There is no gas, there is no electricity now. They can only, again, use like we did, some old furniture from the attic, some old furniture which can still be used. Some it's good furniture but we have to burn it because we didn't have anything else. We didn't have money, enough money to buy the wood because some people sell the wood.

So, still there are—I don't know. They are trying to use just a little bit of wood to heat and to try to make from nothing something, from just a little bit of wood to heat all the room and to cook lunch and to make bread and to do everything what they have to do.

Mr. MARKEY. So, the Serbians have cut off the energy going into Sarajevo?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Yes, still.

Mr. MARKEY. Yes. Well, there's a lot of people here who think that the United Nations should cut off the energy going into Belgrade, which we could do through Hungary, so that they understood exactly what was going on in Sarajevo, the civilians in Belgrade. If they did, maybe they would understand the suffering the people in Sarajevo have to endure because of the lack of heat and electricity.

What do you think about that? Do you think that might be a good lesson for them to understand and maybe they would turn the heat back on inside of Sarajevo for those children and those old people?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, civilians in Belgrade, civilians in Serbia, they didn't cut off, only soldiers cut off, those bad people. But civilians, they again suffered everywhere. Civilians always suffer and normal people always suffer. Children always suffered. Where are those bad people? They never suffer. They only make people to suffer.

Mr. MARKEY. So, in your opinion, you don't think the ordinary Serbian wants to have this war with Bosnia?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. I don't think so. There are just some bad people and some evil people and some evil soldiers.

Mr. MARKEY. OK. Well, my opinion is that the United States and the United Nations have to do a lot more and I think we have to confront the Serbians more to make sure you have heat, that you have telecommunications, that the civilians inside of your country are not made to suffer. I don't think we've done enough and I think that your testimony here today helps to make that point all too clear to us.

I just want to congratulate you because I don't think we're going to have a more eloquent person who testifies before this Committee all year long. You did a wonderful job. Thank you.

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Thank you.

I would like to say thank you for listening because you spend now, I don't know, an hour with Sarajevo and every moment spent with Sarajevo means something to people there. It means that peo-

ple here which can help them and you probably can help them. The people think of them and it's great what you have done because all of you there also listened and thank you.

Chairman DECONCINI: Zlata, can we ask Mr. Smith to ask you some questions? He's the Ranking member on the House for the Commission.

Mr. Smith?

Mr. SMITH. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Zlata, I have read the Newsweek excerpts of your diary, and watched some of the media coverage and now have heard your presentation. I can only say that you truly are a remarkably brave and articulate young lady. You have an insight and a maturity, and I would also add a poise, that is far beyond your years. There are many who would aspire, even in adulthood, to behave in such a dignified manner as you have today and throughout this entire cruel war that you have experienced.

You blame politics for the problems in Sarajevo and Bosnia, and I think you are right in doing so. Perhaps you yourself, when it is time to rebuild Bosnia, might contemplate a career in politics so that individuals of your caliber can help in the rebuilding of that war-savaged country.

Zlata, I do have one basic question. In your search for answers in coping with the evil that has been thrust upon you, your family, and your friends, have you and the others sought any solace, or comfort, or perhaps answers in prayer?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Can you repeat? Excuse me.

Mr. SMITH. In coping with the daily agony of seeing friends die, seeing people die, seeing bombs fall on your neighborhood and your city, have you and have others sought solace in prayer to God?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, it was reality to die. It was there, every moment everyone could die. So, you must think of it because it was everywhere. Everyone could be dead and so you also. I wasn't afraid to die. I was more afraid for my parents to die because when I'm dead it's finished, but when somebody close, it's terrible pain, of course. I can't describe it by the words what pain it is. I was afraid for them. But for myself, I was just afraid to stay armless or legless because it's terrible because when you see or look yourself for your life like that.

I don't know. We all think about it, about staying armless, legless, dying, because it was everywhere. It was reality. Every day some people died. Just every time when you go out and where somebody go out, you think it's the last time when we see each other because you never know.

Mr. SMITH. From where do you derive that inner strength? Is it from a sense of prayer? Are you able to overcome because of perspective one hears when you see things from the spiritual realm? Or, do you cope day to day, feeling that whatever happens happens?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, I think I had one strength, which my parents put in me before and it's probably some kind of love. So, I use that love because everywhere was hateness and everywhere was evil and bad things. So, I used that love a little bit.

Mr. SMITH. Very nice.

Thank you very much and God bless you.

Chairman DECONCINI. Zlata, let me just ask one last question. Do you plan to go back to Sarajevo?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Well, I would like to go back, but when it's possible to go back and when it's possible to live there normal life because now they're still bringing humanitarian aid. They still don't have water, electricity. So, it's still bad situation. But I would like because it's my hometown. My bed is there, my desk is there.

Chairman DECONCINI. Mr. Eckart. Do you have any questions? No, we have time, Mr. Eckart.

Co-Chairman HOYER. Zlata, Mr. Eckart was our ambassador to a conference on the human dimension, which dealt with how nations deal with one another and politicians deal with people, very human questions that you raise so well. So, he was our country's representative, in this case in Warsaw, to a conference that talked about some of the problems that you were experiencing firsthand.

Mr. ECKART. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, for extending me this courtesy.

Zlata, why do you think the war happened? What caused it?

Ms. FILIPOVIC. I think because some people wanted it to happen. That's how I can explain for me because just one day a few decide to meet differences because people—because they're some different religion or nationalities and they just wanted to make the war and they made it. Some people, crazy people, but people which has army which can do something bad if they wanted to.

Mr. ECKART. Thank you very much.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman DECONCINI. Thank you.

Zlata, thank you very much. We've had a lot of witnesses and many of them have been outstanding people, some from Sarajevo, as a matter of fact, and other parts of Bosnia-Herzegovina. I just want to tell you that you've been this most impressive one this Senator has heard because you speak truly from the heart and the experience of someone young. Often those of us of older years miss some of those things that you have talked about in the real sense.

We thank you for your testimony this morning. We thank you for your willingness to be part of this process. We go through this process so we can help other people to listen and to understand the problems and maybe find some solutions.

Congressman Hoyer and I do have a flag we want to give to you and we'll bring it down to you as our gratitude for your being here today.

Ms. FILIPOVIC. Thank you.

Chairman DECONCINI. The Commission will stand in recess.

[Whereupon, at 11:07 a.m., the Commission was adjourned.]

**Helsinki Commission Hearing on:**

**A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAJEVO**

**Thursday, March 10, 1994**

**10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

**562 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

**Statement of Senator Dennis DeConcini, Chairman**

I would like to welcome everyone here to this, the most recent and unique hearing of the Helsinki Commission on the conflict in Bosnia-Herzegovina. Our witness today is Zlata Filipovic, a thirteen-year old girl from Sarajevo, whose diary of the war period has just been published here in the United States.

All too frequently, policy-makers and even the public look at warfare, aggression and genocide in terms of great power politics and strategic interests.

Through the innocent, unbiased eyes of this young lady, however, we come to realize the horrible impact of the perpetual and senseless shelling of a peaceful and beautiful city on its multi-ethnic population. People whose daily lives are subjected to the constant threat of the sniper's bullet and the need to find food, water, and safe, warm shelter; children whose childhood is brutally taken from them and replaced with horrors most of us never experience in a lifetime; children, who, instead of being taught the values of love toward one's neighbor, are shown, by hideous example, how to hate and even kill a fellow human being because he or she is of different background or religion.

And, as we listen to Zlata's story, we can only wonder why this had to happen to the people of Sarajevo and Bosnia-Herzegovina as a whole, and why it wasn't stopped as soon as it became evident what was going to happen.

Thank you, Zlata, for agreeing to be with us this morning, and I look forward to hearing what you have to say.

**Helsinki Commission Hearing on:**

**A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAJEVO**

**Thursday, March 10, 1994**

**10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.**

**562 Dirksen Senate Office Building**

**Statement of Representative Steny H. Hoyer, Co-Chairman**

I would also like to thank you, Zlata Filipovic, for agreeing to appear at this hearing and to welcome you to Washington, DC. From the press coverage you have received, everyone is very impressed with your observations, your maturity and your ability to express your views in English, which is not your native language.

In her diary, Zlata's surprise and inability to explain why such a horrible conflict came to her home two years ago reflects, not her youthful naivete, but intelligence and understanding. Her story reveals that this did not have to happen; it certainly was not inevitable. Her story reveals that the constant bombardment of Sarajevo cannot be explained to the point that it becomes acceptable, reasonable or justified. As Chairman DeConcini points out, it only makes us ask "Why?"

I would also like to point out something which Zlata already knows. Not only is she smart and mature; she is, in some respects, lucky. While she had to live through much of the siege of Sarajevo, she survived it to the point where she was able to leave. Other children did not survive the siege, such as the six -- as young as 5 and old as 12 -- killed by a shell on January 22, when they wrongfully felt the shelling had slowed enough for them to do some sledding without much danger. 1,500 children are known to have been killed by shells and sniper fire alone in Sarajevo; 15,000 for the besieged regions still under Bosnian control. Many of the children that did survive are still there. I mentioned at our last hearing that the United Nations has found that many of the children of Sarajevo reveal passive suicidal tendencies, not caring to protect themselves because they feel a sense of imminent doom anyway. While the threat to Sarajevo has recently been eased, hopefully for good, these children will bear the emotional scars of the death and destruction which has surrounded them for the rest of their lives, not to mention the physical effects of malnutrition and a lack of medical care.

And these, my friends and colleagues, are those Bosnian children fortunate enough to have been in Sarajevo. What about the children today in Maglaj, in Tuzla, in Gorazde? Some of these places have refugee populations well in excess of their original populations. In all of them, a significant portion of the homes and buildings needed for shelter have been destroyed. Most of these places are not getting any food or medical supplies because aid convoys continue to be blocked.

We may be hopeful today that, with recent diplomatic efforts and increased NATO resolve, this war might soon end. We cannot forget, however, that it has yet to end for these children. Zlata's appearance here today, more than anything, reminds us that children are not Muslims, Serbs or Croats; children are children. And I only hope and pray that those of Sarajevo and the rest of Bosnia-Herzegovina will learn from their ordeal not to hate as well, but to develop instead the tolerance and understanding needed to prevent this from happening ever again.

**STATEMENT OF CONGRESSMAN EDWARD J. MARKEY (D-MA)  
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
HEARING ON A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAJEVO  
MARCH 10, 1994**

I first would like to thank Chairman DeConcini and Chairman Hoyer for holding this very important and unique hearing. I would also like to welcome Zlata. I bet when you wrote in your diary almost three years ago, Zlata, that you were enjoying such a "public life," you never imagined just how "public" your life and your words would actually become! You are really a brave young woman, and I want you to know that your courage and determination are truly inspiring.

Zlata, you also recorded in your diary the shock you felt when you learned that such a beautiful town like Dubrovnik was being completely destroyed by artillery shells. When you wrote that you thought it was impossible that the fighting would spread to Sarajevo, I think you expressed the disbelief many of us in the international community felt when we saw such a cosmopolitan, multi-ethnic city torn apart by war. After 23 months of bitter fighting, the Serb guns ringing the hillsides surrounding the city are now silent. Still, although the United Nations and NATO are engaged in trying to bring all the parties to the negotiating table, the siege of Sarajevo persists.

Now that shells no longer rain down on the city, it is time to begin restoring to normal, as best as we possibly can, the lives of the residents of the Bosnian capital. I was happy to see a picture in the *New York Times* yesterday of a trolley making its way down the tracks in Sarajevo for the first time in two years. It is time to repair the city's gas lines and rebuild water pipes so that the residents can begin the difficult process of putting their lives back together. It's time for boys and girls like you, Zlata, to start studying up on biology and math again, practicing for piano recitals, and eating pizza - although I must admit that the ham, ketchup, and mushroom pizza you describe in your diary is a bit exotic for my taste.

I am pleased that the U.N. Security Council voted this past Friday to appoint a task force to work on the daunting job of restoring basic services in Sarajevo. I have also called on our government and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to support the shipment of telecommunications equipment into Sarajevo. Since the war started, the residents of Sarajevo have been unable to call their loved ones abroad. This morning, I will be sending letters to Secretary of State Warren Christopher and U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees Sadako Ogata urging that they recognize telecommunications equipment as humanitarian aid and ship it into the city. I want to thank Chairman DeConcini and Chairman Hoyer, as well as my colleagues on the Commission for joining me in this effort. It is our hope that Sarajevans will soon be able to call their relatives outside the city so that bonds severed 23 months ago can begin to be restored.

I look forward to your testimony, Zlata. I hope that if you haven't done so already, you will start work on a new diary, and the next chapter will be bright, optimistic, and hopeful.

OPENING STATEMENT  
COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE  
A CHILD'S LIFE IN SARAJEVO  
WELCOMING ZLATA FILIPOVIC  
MARCH 10, 1994

CHRISTOPHER H. SMITH (4-NJ)

Mr. Chairman, we are indeed privileged to have Zlata Filipovic with us today. I think that her presence here today is nothing short of a miracle.

The devastation and death which has been inflicted on the people of Sarajevo--indeed all of Bosnia--has ended the lives of thousands of people, young and old, whose contributions to the world will never be known. But perhaps in death, they call us to a task which might seem beyond our abilities--to seek a lasting peace where people of all ethnic backgrounds, cultures and religions will live side by side, building a better world.

Zlata and her parents are no longer threatened personally by the destruction in Bosnia--but it has forever changed their lives. I am sure it has also changed how they will forever view the world. *Zlata's Diary*--her record of the war and her thoughts and perceptions--should certainly challenge us.

From the first time portions of the diary became known, the world sat up and took notice of this young girl whose insights and passion belie her age. Quickly, she received world attention. She was being acclaimed as the "Anne Frank of Sarajevo." *Newsweek* magazine said "she compared herself to Anne Frank." But as I read her diary it was not

Zlata, but others who gave her that name. Her response was simply, "That frightens me. I don't want to suffer her fate."

Mr. Chairman, Anne Frank's diary became known to the world only after her death, only after the whole world knew of the atrocities of the Nazi extermination programs. It serves as a reminder of one of the darkest moments in human history. Yet at the same time it serves as message of hope--hope that it seems only a child can offer at times such as that.

*Zlata's Diary* speaks to us now while the atrocities of the war in Bosnia continue. It is not a reminder of things past, but a call to respond now to the crisis. Her voice speaks for the thousands who are still besieged, who live with the fear that at any moment their world will be torn apart. She is the living spirit of the children who have died and of those who continue to suffer. She is a light of hope for those in Bosnia who each day lose hope.

Now that Zlata is safe, she hopefully no longer has to worry about suffering the fate of Anne Frank. But how many more will if something is not done? How tragic it would be if we only praise her for her literary achievement and fail to respond to the crisis which gave birth to it.

Zlata, welcome. Thank you for speaking out so forcefully and bravely for your fellow Bosnians and for all children. Thank you for reminding me of the obligations which I have to seek peace, security and justice. And thank you for honoring us with your presence here today.



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Commission on  
Security and Cooperation in Europe  
Testimony

by  
Charles F. MacCormack  
President  
Save the Children  
March 10, 1994

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I speak today on behalf of the children of Bosnia Hercegovina, and the many American humanitarian organizations who serve them. My message is an urgent plea for help.

I am Charles F. MacCormack, President of Save the Children. Save the Children is an international relief and community development organization which has been in the forefront of humanitarian efforts in some of the world's most turbulent conflicts, from Bosnia to Somalia.

It is not insignificant that 75 years ago, the international Save the Children movement was launched in response to the suffering then of children in the Balkans, who were the innocent victims of a different war in another time.

Out of that beginning came the original Declaration of the Rights of the Child, a simple charter drafted by Save the Children's founder and adopted first by the league of Nations in 1923. The Children's Charter became the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child in 1959 and in 1990 was the cornerstone of the World Summit for Children and the International Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The situation that Zlata Filipovic has faced will remind all of us that the United States should sustain its traditional role of moral leader for the world through such acts as ratification of the Rights of the Child. Zlata Filipovic reminds us that violence, wherever it occurs, denies children basic human rights, takes from them their precious and irreplaceable childhoods and prevents them from learning to love and to live with one another.

I am particularly pleased to join Zlata today in giving voice to the voiceless thousands of Croatian, Serb and Muslim children caught in the crossfire of the conflict that has engulfed Bosnia-Herzegovina and captured the horrified attention of the entire world. I am deeply committed to leading Save the Children in doing everything possible to help these beleaguered people put an end to the insanity and begin rebuilding their lives and their children's future.

I am also grateful for the opportunity to make a plea for more direct U.S. humanitarian assistance for all nongovernmental organizations to operate programs to promote the rehabilitation of society in Bosnia Hercegovina and in Croatia.

Recent events suggest that some sort of durable truce may be possible in the near future. Making that truce hold and creating conditions within which a peaceful settlement may be possible is an extraordinary challenge. It is also a remarkable opportunity to which the international community should fully commit.

At the same time however, we must beware lest the moment pass. We believe that the United States, through the Agency for International Development can make a recognizable difference over the next few weeks in the evolution of events in the former Yugoslavia, if it acts decisively and expeditiously to support programs that promote a return to normalcy and that initiate the processes of healing and rehabilitation

There is a critical need to hasten the process of reestablishing a civil society. This can be done first by giving attention and support to recreating a basic infrastructure: public works and power grids, social services, educational systems, commercial enterprise and market centers, and demilitarized zones where agriculture can flourish once again.

Let me share with you some of the specific keys to saving this region from complete self-destruction.

Save the Children and many other organizations are already at work on the ground in Bosnia and Croatia. The process of resuscitating the society could take off, now, if more resources are provided to experienced, committed, proven humanitarian organizations, who in turn, can strengthen local institutions and organizations.

I recently visited Croatia, where Save the Children is working with Bosnian refugee children. My own observances and experiences underscore the message in Zlata Filipovic's experience. Children should not be pawns in or victims of war.

What I saw there reminded me of other wars, other children. Mozambique's long and vicious civil war in particular. In an attempt to heal the terrible psychological and social wounds inflicted on children, especially child soldiers, Save the Children began a very successful Children and War initiative.

Through that initiative we were able to help children cope with the traumas they had experienced and move beyond them. The Mozambican program has been adopted by the national government, and Save the Children has replicated it in other areas of need. It was clear to me that there was a need for such a program for Bosnia's children.

In early September of 1993, Save the Children began providing psycho-social assistance to refugees and displaced children and families living in collective centers and communities along the northern Dalmatian coast of Croatia in the region of Sibenik.

A small project team, backed by a consultant trainer, initiated a dialogue with resident mothers in the facility to identify ways in which Save the Children might be able to assist the community in reducing existing tensions and help them better cope with their situation. The outcome of this dialogue was the identification of the needs for structured educational activities for the younger children that might isolate them from the stresses within the community.

Additionally, it was felt that such an intervention would help in easing some of the stress on their mothers by reducing some of the supervisory burden from their shoulders, address their concerns for their children's future educational needs, and provide them with some measure of peace in which they might be better able to begin healing their own serious emotional wounds.

Pre-school teacher trainees were recruited from within the community. Using curriculum developed initially from material procured from other organizations, basic training was given in classroom set-up, management, record keeping and lesson planning.

The teachers and the community were asked to identify a space that would meet established criteria for the children's safety. Save the Children provided start-up supplies and play materials after the classroom was set up. Children were registered to attend supervised classes five days a week for an average of four hour per day.

When the first preschool center was organized in a small town whose hotel held 1,000 refugees -- about one-third Bosnian Muslim, one-third Bosnian Croat and one-third Croatians, forced to flee parts of their own country -- initial efforts to talk with one groups would be met with screams from others. Women working with Save the Children finally were able to get Croatian and Muslim mothers to talk about the common needs of their children, many of whom had been deprived of school for two years.

One nine-year-old girl who brought home both the tragedy of the war and the significance of programs like this one when she said, in tears, that she thought she had forgotten how to read and write.

The program is now expanding rapidly. As it has moved up the coast and encountered more communities which are subject to daily shelling from the nearby Kyreenan Serb forces, the demand for programming has increased.

In these areas, the program has become increasingly involved in supporting existing community efforts to run educational programs on their own.

This has included providing material and technical support to existing schools, adding pre-school components, or simply linking interested communities with existing efforts to facilitate greater information exchanges. As the program moves into high risk areas, greater attention is also being given to ways of improving security for school children.

Besides establishing pre-school programs, the project has spun off other education-related activities, including a first-day orientation for first graders (as much to address the parents' fears as the children's) and has provided organizational and material support for parental supervised after-school homework and study session for school-attending children.

Project team members regularly collaborate with other voluntary agencies operating in the area, and this has helped to link mothers with available psychological counseling programs; having counselling staff from other voluntary agencies provide training to teachers in war stress awareness; and incorporating other voluntary agency personnel into programs to provide recreational activities to children.

Save the Children believes that it has developed a sound and

proven intervention in the long process of attempting to sooth and heal emotional problems that scar the thousands who have fled the horror that Zlata and too many others have known so well for so long.

The benefits of Save the Children's assistance program in Croatia are not simply that children from refugee and displaced families are given access to education. Just as importantly, children and parents alike have been able to derive psychological relief.

Collaborating with voluntary organizations in the area has made it possible to link mothers to counseling programs. The inability to escape from the threat of war and the loss of hope have created extraordinary anxiety. I am pleased to report that our program has helped to create a small island of calm for children in which they can relive their memories of what childhood should be.

While there have been many successful relief efforts certainly Zlata Filipovic's survival bears witness to that the sad reality is that the world community has pursued a course of action in Bosnia that has been less than effective in rescuing many other children from the crossfire of this cruel war. Recent tallies put the total number of people killed -- many of them civilians -- at 150,000.

Press reports put the figure at 200,000 dead or missing. It is especially sad that so many children who have survived will never see their fathers again.

To quote from a recent study by Brown University and the Refugee Policy Group, "Any report on humanitarian action by the United Nations in response to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia is an analysis of a house divided against itself."

There can be no question that the issues surrounding the conflict in the former Yugoslavia -- and the world's response -- are complex and demand to be addressed fully. Yet there can be no alternative to redoubling efforts to protect innocent civilians, especially children, from the carnage of war, nor to committing resources over the long-term to ensuring a return to peace.

Over the next few months, we expect that thousands of refugees and displaced will be coming from Bosnia-Herzegovina. And despite the positive signs of a truce, the sources of tensions will remain and many thousands of children will still be in great need of educational support. Once again, I would emphasize that the United States has a unique opportunity to act quickly and effectively. I would urge you not to let it pass.

Thank you.

