



Clinton: I 'Misspoke' on Bosnia Trip Recollection

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Video footage of Sen. Hillary Clinton's 1996 trip to Bosnia offers a contradictory description to the dramatic account the Democratic presidential candidate delivered in a recent speech.

At an event last week in Washington, Clinton said she and her crew landed in an "evasive maneuver under sniper fire."

She described her trip to Tuzla as if it were a scene from "Saving Private Ryan."

"There was supposed to be some sort of greeting ceremony, but instead we just ran with our heads down to get into the vehicles," she said.

Questions surrounding whether or not Clinton embellished a 1996 trip to Bosnia are particularly embarrassing for her because she has campaigned so hard on her "experience," arguing that she is ready to answer the 3 a.m. crisis call at the White House.

Video footage from the trip reveals no visible threat and a brief greeting ceremony on the tarmac. A little Bosnian schoolgirl read them a poem. The first lady paused for pictures. She and daughter Chelsea even climbed up on a guard tower.

John Pomfret, a Washington Post reporter who was there to capture the moment, said, "The whole Tuzla sector was under the control of the Americans. We were driving around in soft-skin cars. No reporters I know of were wearing flak jackets at the time. So it was pretty much a peaceful area."

Peaceful enough, at least, for a performance by Sheryl Crow and comedian Sinbad who also accompanied the first lady on the trip.

At a time when party rival Illinois Sen. Barack Obama is vacationing with his family in the Virgin Islands, Clinton had hoped the focus would be on what had been billed as a major policy speech on the economy. Instead, her campaign found itself on the defensive.

On Good Morning America Tuesday, Democratic strategist and Clinton supporter James Carville said "it happens" with regards to Clinton's misstatement.

"She's been in public life for a long time. She's been subjected to some rather vicious attacks. Some of them have taken a toll. I think during this gain, she's shown herself to be a woman of remarkable strength and remarkable courage," Carville said.

Continuing he said, "I'm quite proud of her, and I think she'll continue down this road."

Her daughter was asked about Tuzla in Indiana and backed up Clinton's recollection.

"I support what she said," Chelsea Clinton said. "Yes, I was there as well and so honored I was there and had the opportunity to travel with her."

Clinton was asked about it too -- by the editorial boards of the two Philadelphia newspapers Tuesday.

Clinton revised her Bosnia story, admitting there was a "misstatement" in her account describing running with her head down to get into the vehicles. Today, she said that she "had to meet this 8-year-old girl," so, "I took her stuff and left."

When Clinton was challenged by a reporter that this revised account calls into question her foreign policy credentials, Clinton said, "No, I went to 80 countries, you know. I gave contemporaneous accounts, I wrote about a lot of this in my book. You know, I think that, a minor blip, you know, if I said something that, you know, I say a lot of things -- millions of words a day -- so, if I misspoke, that was just a misstatement."

In her autobiography "Living History," Clinton describes a near-perpendicular landing to evade possible ground fire but talks about the greeting ceremony on the tarmac in Tuzla with local schoolchildren though says it was cut short "due to reports of snipers in the hills around the airstrip."

During the event on the tarmac, Clinton writes: "One 8-year-old girl gave me a copy of a poem she had written entitled 'Peace.' Chelsea and I presented the school supplies we had brought. ... We were then hustled off to the fortified American base at Tuzla, where over 2,000 American, Russian, Canadian, British, and Polish soldiers were encamped in a large tent city."

In pictures of the event, Clinton and Chelsea don't seem to be wearing flak jackets or helmets. Clinton points out that she wrote about the Tuzla trip in her book -- without the extra details. It raises the question: Was she embellishing her resume? Or does she just not remember?

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