



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to the Report by the High Representative of the UN and the EU for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Ambassador Lajčák

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 25, 2007

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

We welcome High Representative Lajcak to the Permanent Council and thank him for his report.

We appreciate the constructive cooperation between the Office of the High Representative and the OSCE Mission, and look forward to continued good relations.

The United States is deeply concerned about the current situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We were disappointed to see that Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders could not reach consensus on a police reform agreement that would have led to a Stabilization and Association agreement with the European Union. We agree that the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina lies with Europe. The country must return to its European path.

We fully support the Office of the High Representative and Mr. Lajcak's recently announced measures aimed at strengthening the Council of Ministers and the Parliament. These measures were fully within the High Representative's mandate to implement the Dayton Accords.

The measures are not directed at either entity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. They do require members of the executive and legislative branches to show up for work, to participate in debate, and to cast their vote when the Council of Ministers or the Parliament makes a decision. This is what is expected from elected representatives in any democracy.

We are deeply concerned by RS Prime Minister Dodik's challenge to the authorities of the Office of the High Representative and his threat to withdraw his representatives from government and to roll back defense, tax and judicial reforms that are essential for a fully functioning state government in Bosnia and Herzegovina. These measures are inherently antithetical to the Dayton Accords and destabilizing. We hope Prime Minister Dodik will reconsider his confrontational posture. But if he does not, we must be prepared to respond firmly.

The High Representative has the full authority to address the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and has the support of the United States as he does so.

We expect all parties to respect and abide by the High Representative's decisions and carry out their responsibilities under the Dayton Accords.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.