



United States Mission to the OSCE

Intervention on Defense and Police Reform in Bosnia and Herzegovina

As delivered by Deputy Political Counselor Diana F. Brown
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
October 13, 2005

Thank you, Madame Chair.

In response to the report by the OSCE Head of Mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Permanent Council of September 15th, the United States hailed the news that an agreement had been reached for the creation of a unified, national army in that country. Just last week, on October 5th, the legislation needed to make this a reality was passed.

The United States welcomes the passage by the state parliament of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Defense Law, and the Law on Service in the Armed Forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is the most significant step towards Euro-Atlantic integration taken by Bosnia and Herzegovina since the signing of the Dayton Peace Accords ten years ago, putting to rest once and for all Bosnia and Herzegovina's wartime legacy of separate military institutions.

The United States looks forward to Bosnia and Herzegovina's admission into the Partnership for Peace, and eventually NATO, once all conditions, including full cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia, are met.

The United States is also very encouraged by the news that the Republika Srpska agreed on October 5th on the need for a united, national police force as well. This is another very positive step, one that will help ensure the security of all the people of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one that will foster a greater sense of nationhood and good will in a diverse and multi-ethnic society.

We urge all parties to work toward the formation of a single, integrated, national police force as soon as possible.

Madame Chair, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has worked closely with the Defense Reform Commission secretariat staff to assist in this crucial step forward. The Mission has also been engaged in persuading the parties of the need for a unified, national police force. We commend Head of Mission Davidson and his staff for their role in helping to bring about these positive changes.

Above all, we commend the people and government of Bosnia and Herzegovina for taking these courageous steps.

Thank you.