



United States Mission to the OSCE

Response to High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Miroslav Lajcak

As delivered by Ambassador Julie Finley
to the Permanent Council, Vienna
June 5, 2008

Mr. Chairman,

The United States welcomes High Representative Miroslav Lajcak to the Permanent Council. Thank you for your comprehensive report. We appreciate the constructive cooperation between your office and the OSCE Mission, and look forward to a continuing good relationship.

The United States fully supports the work of the Office of the High Representative and applauds the progress made thus far on the objectives the Peace Implementation Council has mandated be fulfilled before the Office of the High Representative can be closed. In particular, we congratulate the High Representative and the government of Bosnia and Herzegovina on the passage of legislation on police reform and on the upcoming June 16th signing of a Stabilization and Association agreement with the European Union. We also commend your May 30th actions against individuals suspected of supporting war crimes fugitive Stojan Zupljanin. Apprehension of the remaining fugitives from The Hague Tribunal is critical for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the entire region.

We also welcome NATO's decision at the Bucharest Summit to begin an Intensified Dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina on membership questions as another step on its path to Euro-Atlantic integration. However, we note with concern that nationalist rhetoric could increase in the lead up to the October 5th municipal elections. Republika Srpska Prime Minister Dodik's recent anti-state rhetoric in Croatia is unacceptable and inconsistent with his constituents' aspirations for a European future. Bosnia and Herzegovina now has the opportunity to move steadily towards EU and NATO membership. This opportunity should not be squandered.

Mr. Chairman, now is the time for Bosnia and Herzegovina to focus on completing the objectives identified by the Peace Implementation Council as essential for ensuring future peace and stability. It is essential to complete these objectives prior to OHR transition. The United States looks forward to working with the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities and the High Representative and the OSCE to ensure that all objectives are meaningfully implemented. We are confident in the High Representative's abilities to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders toward achieving this goal.

We again thank High Representative Lajcak, for his helpful report and the support he has given to the OSCE. We wish him all the best in his work.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.