

Chairman's Conclusions - London, 1 October 1998

Contact Group

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The Contact Group reviewed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina after the elections.

The Contact Group considered that the elections represented modest but useful gains, notably in development of political pluralism. Moderates were strengthened across the board.

As new governments were being formed the Contact Group intended to send clear messages about what was expected of them:

All office holders will be expected to act in accordance with constitutional principles and the peace agreement and to work for a strengthened and united Bosnia. Action that undermined, or threatened to undermine, the considerable progress already made would not be tolerated. The Contact Group looked to the High Representative and to Ambassador Robert Gelbard, who would be returning shortly to Bosnia, to deliver this message directly to the key players in the first instance.

The Contact Group reviewed the principle of conditionality. Those who complied with Dayton would be rewarded. The Contact Group was clear however that we would not hesitate to withdraw support from those who obstructed implementation. The Contact Group considered the merits of working direct with municipalities.

The Contact Group reaffirmed that the High Representative would have the support of the Group in using his powers to take action against those leaders who violated Dayton.

The Contact Group agreed its strategy would be based on the following priorities:

- accelerating and reinforcing the central institutions;
- pressing forward with minority returns and resolving questions of property law;
- tackling the media so that broadcasting networks were rationalised and outside control terminated;

The Contact Group also looked forward to receiving proposals from the High Representative on judicial reform, which included enhanced support for the police, and in November on new electoral arrangements for a simpler and more pluralistic system of government.

Contact Group representatives in Sarajevo will be working with the High Representative to reinforce his efforts in taking forward these common aims.

The Contact Group expected that all signatories to Dayton would play their part in complying with their obligations in supporting the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Office of the High Representative