Remarks by the High Represenatative, Carl Bildt at the Peace Implementation Council

A year ago, in this very room, we discussed and decided upon the lines of action for the first year of implementation of the peace agreement which had just been initialled in Dayton and signed in Paris.

At that time, military issues were at the centre of everyone's attention, particularly of the media. But we made clear then that although these military issues were fundamental, success in the fairly straightforward business of military implementation coupled with failure in the vastly more complex and controversial issues of civilian implementation would leave us with a country deeply partitioned.

And we did recognise that partition would never bring peace – just a pause before the conflict would risk restarting.

The Peace Agreement for Bosnia is without doubt the most ambitious of its kind in modern history. It includes far-reaching provisions of a nature never implemented before as part of a peace agreement. It sets out an agenda which would take years to carry through even under the very best of circumstances.

The Peace Agreement aims to achieve reconciliation based on justice, after the most brutal and bitter war that Europe has seen since 1945. It provides for the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes, should they so wish – in a country where almost half of the population has been displaced by war, by civil conflict, or indeed by fear.

The Agreement also seeks the reconstruction of a devastated economy, and maybe even more difficult, the gradual re-creation of a society in which all people can live peacefully together with each other again.

As to what has been achieved, the territorial provisions of the agreement have been fully implemented. So have the other strictly military provisions of the Peace Agreement. In this connection I pay tribute to the efforts of the NATO-led Implementation Force, General Joulwain, Admiral Leighton Smith and his successors as COMIFOR, the force's leaders and its men.

But I am concerned that there are serious problems when it comes to realising the arms control provisions that are so central to the long-term prospects for peace.

The armies have been separated and their weaponry is being monitored – now the task is to make certain that there is a build-down rather than a build-up. We must be firm in our demand that these central disarmament provisions of the Peace Agreement are respected and implemented in full.

The political provisions of the Agreement – especially the implementation of the Constitution – are of cardinal importance for the future. It is only through the setting up of the common institutions that the partition of the country can be overcome and a start made in solving the economic and social issues which are looming larger and larger for ordinary people in all parts of Bosnia.

The elections held on 14 September were in the first instance a success because they were held, and I pay tribute to the OSCE Mission led by Ambassador Frowick. We all know that there were serious deficiencies in the political environment in which they took place. But even taking this into account, no one disputes that their results gave a more or less accurate reflection of the will of the peoples of Bosnia one year after the end of the war.

Nevertheless, based on these election results, the process of setting up the common institutions of the country has begun. It has been difficult and it has been slow – but it has been moving forward week by week during the two months that have passed since the results of the elections were certified.

The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina has met twice a week in different locations in Sarajevo to discuss both the institutional issues and the foreign affairs issues for which it has a special responsibility.

The Governing Board of the Central Bank has been nominated and started to work. The final nominations from the entities for the Constitutional Court are now awaited.

And after prolonged discussions an agreement has been reached on the structure and composition of the Council of Ministers, with persons now to be nominated, and with the House of Representatives of the Parliamentary Assembly expected to approve the proposals shortly.

There are very substantial challenges ahead in the process of constitutional implementation when it comes to the common institutions. It is in my view of particular importance to move rapidly towards a state budget for 1997. It is also vital to take the critical decisions on the staffing and the structure of the administrations which will be needed to support the common institutions and the tasks they will undertake.

The process of constitutional implementation is also moving forward within the entities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Federation and in the Republika Srpska. This is of great importance in view of the very extensive powers given to the two entities in the Constitution. Under its provisions Bosnia will be a united – but by no means a unitary – state with a greater devolution of powers that perhaps anywhere else in the modern world.

But for this to work, all the provisions of the Constitution have to be respected and implemented.

It is by no means acceptable that structures which are shadows of the past, and have no place in the new constitutional order of the country, continue to exist and exercise power, whether in the form of the institutions of the so-called Republic of Herzog Bosna, or of the old Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

And it is utterly unacceptable when elected members of parliamentary assemblies are prevented from voting and exercising their duties, as we have seen in the case of the non-Serb members of the Republika Srpska Assembly and in some other cases. Any parliament or parliamentary body acting like this will soon cease to be a legal body under the provisions of the Constitution.

When the common institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina – as well as the institutions of the Federation and the Republika Srpska – have all been set up the challenge will be to create the conditions for them to work with all the issues which must be solved during the years ahead.

It is only by making these institutions work amd making them respected by all of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina that we can create the conditions for Bosnia to survive and prosper and for peace to be there.

The past year has seen vast progress on a larger number of issues. But the more that has been done, the more we have become aware of everything which remains to be done. It is a sad truth that it is far easier to start a war than to create a durable peace. The former can be done in an hour, the latter requires years and sometimes generations.

Human rights are central to our efforts and human rights are still being abused throughout the territory of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In Florence in June, the Human Rights Co-ordination Centre of my office presented a comprehensive report on the state of human rights. It described in detail a pattern of ethnic harassment, observed and documented more-or-less all over the country, which pointed to the future ethnic partition of the country if it were not reversed.

Although there has been progress in some areas, it is my sad duty to report today that in spite the clear message from Florence as well as from the United Nations Security Council, the human rights situation remains essentially the same.

This must not be tolerated. Small-scale harassment of individuals and families can be as effective in dividing a country as large-scale shelling of cities. The double tragedy of Sarajevo – one tragedy in the shelling in wartime, another tragedy in the exodus in peacetime – bears ample testimony to this.

To improve respect for human rights is central to all other provisions of the Peace Agreement.

It is only when human rights are guaranteed that we will see politics emerging from the bonds of fear and war. It is only when human rights are fully respected that we will see the true freedom of movement so central to the peace implementation. It is only when human rights are more secure that we will see the refugees who are still hesitating starting to come back, to help in the rebuilding of the country that was and forever will be their true home.

We have to make clear that a deal is a deal, and the signatories to the Peace Agreement must live up to their

obligations in every respect.

Although there have been improvements, cooperation with the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia is still severly lacking throughout the region.

When there are still persons indicted for war crimes walking around on the territory of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, of Croatia and of certain parts of Bosnia and Herzegovina, we can in no way be satisfied with the state of affairs.

To cooperate fully with the International Tribunal is in the genuine interest of every entity and every nation. No people should want to see its name tainted for a long time to come by association with persons who evidently do not dare to stand up and defend their record and their actions before the Tribunal.

Time is beginning to run out, and so is the patience of the international community. The message from London on this must be clear. If the will of the parties to comply is not there, our will to ensure that the provisions are applied with must be there. The Steering Board agreed yesterday that it will consider measures in this respect if we do not see a change in the situation in the near future.

Increasingly, the security which has been provided by external forces must come from the Bosnians themselves, working together. That is why one of the main messages to go out from this Conference must be that the key to the future can only be turned by the Bosnians. We will support their efforts, but they carry the prime responsibility for their future.

What we can and must do is provide the framework for their success. I very warmly welcome the decision last month in Paris that the international community will stay on course , helping and assisting through the consolidation period.

The task of economic reconstruction is one where the international community can and must make a substantial contribution. The speed and scope of assistance flows to Bosnia, the way they have built up over this year, have been without parallel if we look around the world. I pay tribute to the role played by the World Bank, the European Commission, the EBRD and key bilateral donors.

These efforts will need to be continued over the consolidation period. But it must be recognized that the efforts of the international community will come to nothing at the end of the day if there is not the corresponding will and ability of the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to undertake serious and radical economic reform.

I am seriously concerned about the mounting economic and social problems throughout Bosnia. And people are – rightly so – demanding action from their authorities. We will help. But we will simply not accept that authorities which have failed in their duties to their own people should seek to put the blame for their own shortcomings on the international community.

We have learnt the lessons of what has been done in 1996 in terms of aid to reconstruction. We must co-ordinate better, prioritise better, and focus more strongly

Within the Economic Task Force, we are now taking steps in order to improve the co-ordination of our efforts and focus more on the necessary structural reforms. We must also in the year ahead look at new ways of making certain that our efforts in the economic field support our efforts to make it possible for displaced persons and refugees to come back.

Secondly I would mention the media and freedom of expression as an area that we shall be looking at very carefully, with all that media freedoms will mean for the municipal elections due next summer and the new national and entity elections barely a year thereafter.

Freedom of media represent a hallmark of democratic values in Europe. We shall watch critically to see who is sincere in this aspiration. And among ourselves, we must ensure that our contribution to the legal framework for the media and to individual projects for independent media is both properly co-ordinated and effective.

One other area in which I hope that we can take tough decisions here in London is that of the police, who represent the local, natural enforcement agencies. As military implementation gives way to civil implementation, I expect the village policeman to become a more important figure than the foreign soldier. The gloomy background to policing

in this part of Europe includes wartime paramilitaries and Communist policemen. But there has also been a tradition of professionalism, often against the odds.

We must put more effort into building up this crucial part of civil society, because the police role in providing a framework of order and responsibility is second to none. We must urgently consider how to reinforce the International Police Task Force – who are doing an excellent job – in their important work of monitoring, supervision and training local police forces.

The year which has passed has laid the foundations for peace implementation on the economic, social and political issues. But the process is very far from self-sustaining so far.

The aim of the consolidation period is to create a peace process which is self-sustaining in all the key areas. I firmly believe it can be done – but that it will require the double commitment of all the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to fully implement the Peace Agreement and of the international community to stay actively involved.

The 1998 elections will then be Bosnia's first truly post-war elections, dominated not by the fears from the past, but by the hopes and visions for the future. That must be our common goal.

My final words are about the wider perspective.

War has emanated from this part of Europe many times, in this century but also in earlier times. Bosnia lies at the fault lines of so many of Europe's divisions – in terms cultural, linguistic, religious, and strategic. The wider region has been the crucible of declining empires and rising nationalisms for generations.

We shall only be able to ride out all of the contradictions and the conflicts there if we make a commitment which is both broader in scope than Bosnia, and longer in its time-scale than the year envisaged at Dayton.

If we look at the events which are being played out on the streets of Belgrade, or if we consider the different futures which are being pondered in Croatia, we must see that there is an urgent need for an approach by the international community which takes all of these factors into account.

Today, the forces of repression and retrogression seem to be gaining the upper hand in the regime in Belgrade. This is a tragedy for a nation as great as the Serb nation, as well as tragedy for the region.

But stability can never be achieved through repression. The massive and peaceful demonstrations in Belgrade and throughout Serbia show that there is the will to reform and there is hope for the future.

Our voice must be loud and clear. Our commitment to human rights and democracy is a commitment throughout the region. To Bosnia in all its parts. To Serbia and Yugoslavia. To Croatia.

In military terms there must be an "exit strategy" from Bosnia. But in political terms we must aim at an "entry strategy" for Bosnia as well as for Croatia and Serbia into the structures and possibilities of European and international integration and co-operation. Every step towards human rights, democracy and economic reform is a step in this direction.

The lesson of my generation in Europe – wrongly called the post-war generation – is that integration is the key to peace and stability, but that integration must be based on a free society and a free economy. This has brought peace and stability to wide areas of that were previously plagued by war after war – and this is the way in which peace and stability must ultimately be secured for this part of Europe as well.