

Speech by the High Representative to the Peace Implementation Conference

Implementation will be the key to a peace in Bosnia and in the region that lasts and that merits the name.

To get agreement was difficult enough. To get these agreements fully implemented will be no less difficult.

Implementation is the key to whether we will have real peace, just a pause in the conflict or worse, a partition of the country.

Much attention has been and still is centered on military implementation. And indeed this is absolutely essential, and dependent upon the active participation not only of all the countries of NATO but also of Russia and other important troop contributor countries, notably those that have already served with such distinction in Bosnia.

While military implementation is the key to stopping the war, it is civilian and political implementation that is the key to building a genuine peace. If the first were to succeed and the latter to fail, we would have achieved little more than the division of Bosnia, and we could be certain that the war was to restart sooner or later.

This must not be allowed to happen. It is thus imperative that we set up the structures and make the commitments that can make civilian and political implementation work.

We can and must build on what has already been achieved. In this context, I must pay tribute to the efforts of all the arms and agencies of the United Nations in Bosnia during these years of war and suffering.

The men and women working day and night in the bitter realities of Bosnia during the past few years have not always been able to achieve everything that the diplomats in the Security Council in New York have asked them to. But I believe they deserve far more credit for what they did achieve than criticism for the tasks that others gave them. Without them there yesterday, Bosnia would not be here today.

If there is one lesson that we must learn from the past few years in Bosnia it is that we must be realistic in our objectives and robust in our means.

The Dayton agreement is as complex as it is comprehensive. It covers a vast spectrum of issues, sets up a large number of institutions and commits us to a broad range of policies.

Refugees and displaced persons must be given the possibility to return. Ethnic cleansing must never be accepted.

There must be created the conditions – political as well as social – for the holding of free and fair elections during the next six to nine months.

There must be set up the new joint institutions that will start gradually to bring back together what has so brutally come apart during these years of war.

Given the right economic policy framework, efforts to rebuild the country must start in earnest.

None of this is going to be easy. And all of these tasks are interrelated.

We would be wise to build on what has been achieved and the experience gained during these years. On the competence and expertise of those that have learned the realities of Bosnia. On the UNHCR and the ICRC and many others on the humanitarian side. On the World Bank, the IMF and the European Commission on the economic side.

But we must also be ready to build new structures. The OSCE will have a major responsibility when it comes to the elections that will be held.

The function of High Representative will be important not only in monitoring the implementation of the peace agreement, but more particularly in coordinating the different civilian and political implementation efforts and

making certain that there is a smooth cooperation between them and the military implementation.

Few things will be as difficult and as decisive as reconciliation. But if reconciliation does not take place, peace will not last. Peace is not the continuation of war by other means. Peace can only be built on reconciliation. Never to forget – but sometimes to forgive. Remember the horrible past – but concentrate on building a better future.

In few places will this be as important as in Sarajevo. We want a united Sarajevo and a Sarajevo where everyone – Muslim, Croat, Serb – feels secure and feels free.

This will take time to establish. In few places was the war as terrible as in Sarajevo. There is fear, mistrust and even hatred that time will heal but which statesmanship must be prepared to help to heal.

A special responsibility lies with the Bosnian Government. It must gain the confidence of the tens of thousands of Serbs in the city. If Serbs flee from Sarajevo it will be a failure for that vision of a united, multi-ethnic Sarajevo, and of a united, multi-ethnic Bosnia.

This will be one of the most difficult and immediate implementation tasks. The international community must be prepared to help. IFOR's deployment will be important. Police deployment will be crucial. Special reconstruction efforts such as those discussed by the EU will also have a vital role.

A major task will be the supervision of elections. I trust the OSCE will proceed with the important responsibility of supervising and coordinating elections to the Presidency and both houses of the Parliament of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to the Assemblies of the Federation and the Republika Srpska within six to nine months. This is a tight schedule, but it must be kept.

After the elections the new constitutional structures of Bosnia and Herzegovina enter fully into effect. These are not simple structures and it is going to require both political will and skill to make these structures work. We can help create a new political climate through encouraging freedom of expression, freedom of association and freedom for political parties to act.

Human rights are especially important. It will be crucial to coordinate closely the various human rights mechanisms and missions established by the Dayton agreement.

Of importance is full respect for all the orders and decisions of the International War Crimes Tribunal.

We need to mobilize the resources of the international community to assist the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This assistance should also be seen in its regional context. The European Union will have an important role on this.

It should not be the task of the High Representative to do what others can do better. Duplication of efforts is something that we have seen enough of. But there will be a need for overall political guidance and monitoring in order to ensure that all of the pieces fit together, that action is taken when they do not, and that resources and political will are mobilized to make implementation work.

So far the High Representative has no resources. We are starting from scratch. The High Representative will depend on your political and financial support. Political support will be of particular importance to face the challenges that lie ahead.