

Contact Group Statement - London, 10/10/96

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The Contact Group, meeting in London on 10 October, reaffirmed its commitment to a unified democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina and its strong expectation that the parties will fulfil the constitutional obligations under the Peace Agreement. These obligations include, as well as the joint Presidency, the establishment of the Council of Ministers, the two Chambers of the Parliamentary Assembly, the Constitutional Court and the Central Bank. Although work is proceeding on these institutions, further rapid progress in all areas is essential, so that the new institutions can begin to conduct the business of government. The Contact Group strongly supports the efforts of the High Representative and relevant international organisations to establish a framework for the full and early functioning of the institutions: but the primary responsibility for action rests with the parties.

The Contact Group accordingly deplores the failure of the Serbian member of the Presidency and a majority of Republika Srpska members of the House of Representatives to attend the 5 October inauguration ceremony in Sarajevo. It urges Mr Krajisnik now to sign the solemn declaration and to attend the next meeting of the joint Presidency, which should be arranged urgently in Sarajevo. It expects all signatories of the Peace Agreement, including the governments of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Croatia, to use their influence with the parties in Bosnia to this end. Further obstructionism from any party over issues such as the venue for meetings will not be acceptable. The Contact Group recalls the reference in UN Security Council Resolution 1074 to consideration of the imposition of measures if any party fails significantly to meet its obligations under the Peace Agreement.

The Contact Group, which remains in close contact with the international agencies, notes that the reconstruction of Bosnia remains a key priority and that considerable resources are available for all parts of Bosnia. But the international community's willingness and ability to distribute these resources to all communities in Bosnia will depend on the attitude and support of those communities to the new central institutions.

The Contact Group notes that the OSCE is planning municipal elections for late November, based on the agreement of the parties to the extension of the mandate of the Provisional Election Commission until the end of the year. It underlines its commitment to provide the necessary support to permit a successful outcome to these elections and calls on others in the international community to do the same. It expects the same commitment and support from the parties.

The Contact Group also calls on all parties to show greater commitment to timely implementation of the Article IV agreement on sub-regional arms control and emphasises the importance of full and accurate declarations of weapons holdings.

Office of the High Representative