Speech Given by His Excellency Carlos Westendorp High Representative to Bosnia and Hercegovina, to the North Atlantic Council

Secretary General, Members of the Council, Ladies and Gentlemen.

Let me say that I am delighted to be here and I thank you for your invitation to brief you on the progress we are making, the problems we are facing and my perception of our future needs for long term stability. My presence here is a further sign of the warm co-operation which exists between my office and NATO. It also demonstrates the continuing, and vital, engagement of the North Atlantic Council in the peace process of Bosnia Hercegovina. I would like to add that this introduction is not just a courtesy -without your support and that of all the governments providing forces in Bosnia, I and the International Community, can do nothing.

If I were a doctor, I would be telling you that the Bosnian patient is alive / that he needs the life support machine less and less / but that he is still in intensive care / and that further intensive care is necessary. What I also know is that the patient wants this treatment and, providing that the medication is non-addictive, he will survive; the treatment is prescribed in the Dayton Peace Accords although what I cannot tell you is the duration of that treatment. I am not a doctor of course but I am the High Representative, and, therefore, as the individual charged with implementing those accords, I will give you my prognosis.

Before I do, let me map out for you my key strategic objectives, my 3 key pillars, which underpin my work as the High Representative:

SECURITY AND ST ABILITY

DEMOCRATISATION

ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION

Let me review each in turn.

Firstly, SECURITY AND STABILITY. ” I want to pay tribute to the success and importance of SFOR (and its’ predecessor. IFOR) in maintaining the peace in Bosnia since the signing of the Dayton accords; there could be no civil implementation without their presence. In a land where consensus is hard to achieve, it is striking that the call for a continued military presence gains unanimous support; whether from national politicians or, most importantly, from ordinary Bosnians, getting on with their lives after the ravages and heartache of war. There are, of course, more dynamic aspects to SFOR’s role than just one of presence. The recent and robust action against the Republika Srpska media by SFOR troops provides a clear example of their operational importance in civil implementation – and in this particular instance, our absolute determination to bring about a fair and responsible media in the region. Also, SFOR’s importance was dramatically demonstrated in early July at Prijedor with the operation to arrest war criminal indictees. I must stress the International community’ s requirement for the remaining indictees to appear in The Hague and I welcome recent moves in this field and I call for all countries to support this policy. There can be no normal life in Bosnia if they remain at large.

Secondly, on DEMOCRATISATION, we have had some recent successes. In particular, the municipal elections will enhance local democracy and I extend my congratulations to Ambassador Bob Frowick and his team for their skilful and professional

handling of this complex, significant and crucial step in the democratisation of the region. I should add that without SFOR providing the stable and peaceful environment in which the elections took place there might have been a very different outcome. However, the elections are only a first step – result implementation will be our real test and, looking into next year, to future elections, we will continue to search for greater pluralism in the governments and not a continuation of war by other means. As well as the elections, progress can be demonstrated with the recent agreement on the naming of Ambassadors to serve in the newly constituted Embassies of Bosnia Hercegovina, and the establishment of the Standing Committee for Military Matters after months of negotiation.

Despite all this, there is a long way to go. There is the question mark over the working of the Joint Institutions, still painfully cumbersome and ineffective. The democratisation of the armed forces shows little sign of progress. The presence of old political leaderships, the stigma of corruption and the continued influence of certain war criminals still lend an unpleasant flavour to Bosnian politics, as well as placing significant obstacles in the way of lasting peace. The prospect of renewed violence is never far from the surface. Stability is far from assured. Democratisation has a long way to go before one can safely say it has truly taken root in a country with no historical experience of its benefits. Until hat day, our ultimate guarantee still remains that of an international umbrella of security and stability.

Finally let me turn to the key pillar, that of ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL RECONSTRUCTION. Again I am delighted to report some progress. We have recently seen the opening of the bridges in northern Republika Srpska. We have also established a Department of Civil Aviation for Bosnia and we should soon see the civil airports at Mostar, Tuzla and Banja Luka open to civil traffic. I don’t need to say how much economic potential

exists for the local economies of those towns and for the country as a whole. However, serious inward investment requires long term stability on the ground. Who will invest serious money in a country where the stench of war can be smelt just around the corner? To attract investment, we must also tackle the endemic corruption which permeates all levels of economic and political life in the region.

On the social reconstruction side, the recent tackling and reforming of the RS special police has had, and will have, important – social benefits for Bosnian Serb society with the development of a legitimate local police force. I congratulate Ambassador Kai Eide for his leadership here and, once again, SFOR troops deserve recognition for their crucial role. But while we support measures to promote freedom of movement and the removal of unlawful checkpoints there is still much to be done and we continually return to the divisive problem of the Mostar police force. Let me also remind you of the issue of the return of Displaced Persons to their former homes, one of the fundamental principles behind Dayton. This, might l add, is one of the most emotionally charged aspects to contemporary Bosnian life and again there is much to be done but, as ever, the security provided by SFOR has been crucial to the policy's implementation. The serious violence which occurred in the town of Jajce in August 1997 during such returns was professionally tackled by the soldiers of SFOR who were ready for action / on the spot / familiar with the territory / and who knew the people.

NOW LET ME FOCUS ON MY VIEWS ON THE LONGER TERM SECURITY AND STABILITY QUESTION. The debate is, of course, only just beginning with the recent statements of the defence ministers at Maastricht but we must begin to take stock and to start to look ahead to beyond June next year. However, in discussing security arrangements for the future, we need to develop a longer term strategy.

What is very clear to me is that if we want to keep the peace

process going, we must preserve a robust and reliable security environment. For how long? I don't know, but in taking stock I feel sure that we will need forces available after June 1998 to keep former warring factions in check and to give people the clear message that there will be no new war.

In my opinion, it is axiomatic that any force in, Bosnia must be both readily available and effective. Can you imagine us dealing with the recent events in Brcko, Mostar or Banja Luka with a security guarantee that is not immediately to hand? Imagine 20 buses, carrying demonstrators, en route to a potential trouble spot; this is never a hypothetical situation in Bosnia, and some of the passengers may be armed. Are we to await for the deployment of an over the horizon ground force, are we to engage them with air assets or in some other way? Over the horizon is not a good solution for Bosnia's security and I question whether it should even be an option. An over the horizon security framework would lead to an over the horizon International Community and Dayton cannot be implemented from such a position. The International Community needs to be on the spot / in a secure environment / giving immediate treatment to Bosnia's pains.

As to leadership, I cannot imagine any organisation other than NA TO providing the required level of command and control of a peace keeping force within Bosnia Hercegovina. Of course, I commend and pay tribute to the professionalism of the non – NATO contingents to the current SFOR force and the commitment of their governments to the peace process. But, my central point is that only NA TO has the depth of experience and the ability to deliver the peace which Bosnia needs. The way the N A TO Alliance protected Western Europe from aggression for 40 years coupled with the responsible and effective manner in which it has embraced the former Eastern Block countries signposts its legitimacy and suitability for the task.

Still talking of security, I mentioned earlier that it is important to move beyond the debate focused on June 1998, and

to consider arrangements into the next Millennium. For this, we must encourage the Bosnian military and political establishment themselves to take on a greater responsibility for their security; albeit with our help and assistance of course. Central to this must be the newly established Standing Committee for Military Matters or SCMM, and I wish to publicly thank the Secretary General for his timely help in establishing this Committee.

The SCMM is a body that brings together the Presidency and Defence Ministers and Chiefs of Staff from all three peoples and the local armies. OHR, SFOR and OSCE are all observers. MY vision for this institution is for it to develop from a simple discussion body through to a co-ordinating, even controlling, mechanism for the Bosnian armed forces. I envisage, in due course, joint planning and joint exercises. Most importantly, I want to see tensions discussed within SCMM's monthly confines and resolved around its table. We must all play our part in its development.

In the longer term, therefore, I believe that the SCMM has the potential to develop into an effective and central instrument of security. It is this development which will ensure that any international force commitment will nQ1 be open-ended and can continue to be scaled down. Moreover, SCMM will, in due course, provide the main contact point between the International Community and the Bosnian military authorities and the main forum for inter-entity transparency and, ultimately perhaps, inter-regional security. This is my vision for this newly established, and vital, Dayton institution. But, and I must stress this, the whole maturing process for SCMM will take our time and our patience; it must be driven / guided/ encouraged.

We are obliged to make this investment. With Dayton, the International Community gave its commitment to alleviate the suffering of Bosnia Herzegovina. Similarly, in 1945 our whole Continent was facing the near hopeless prospect of recovery

after the destruction of the Second World War. Today, we have the prosperity, confidence and ideals of the European dream supported by our vital transatlantic alliance. Quite a transformation from 50 years ago. We must instil that same confidence in Bosnia, with the message that it can succeed and rebuild its position. / That it has a future f a safe tuture in a prosperous Europe.

IN SUMMARISING AND IN CONCLUSION I will re-affirm the strategic objectives outlined at the beginning: Securityand Stability, Democratisation, Social and Economic Reform.

Based on this year's experience, we have a long path before us and, I suspect, it will be a tortuous one; but it is not a path to nowhere. We are agreed that Dayton is the only direction to take and we are all committed to making it work; soldiers and civilians alike from the International Community have given their lives to it.

So, a long path in front of us and much to do. When I took this job a great deal had already been done but progress was always, as you all know, painfully slow. This remains the case and, although we do not have unlimited time, we d~ now have the greater resolve and commitment of the international community sign posting the path ahead for us. We are now tackling reform of the police and the media. We have an increasingly established electoral process which needs nurturing and reinforcing. Ahead of us lie the problems of refugee return, the running of the Common Institutions and the general self sufficiency of Bosnian government.

This is the agenda. That is the path.

Therefore, my message to you today is that Dayton remains our focus, that the International Community needs to be confident in holding a steady course but that, above all, we must have a secure environment in continuing to take its implementation forward.

You will ask me if I need a stronger mandate. I am reflecting on this. But, what I do need is TIME.

It has been said that you can get more with a kind word and a gun than you can get with a kind word alone. The size of the gun is for nations to decide but, 1 must tell you, the kind word alone will not be enough in Bosnia / NOT YET .