Federation Meeting on the Central Bosnia Canton, 05 August 1997

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On 5 August, Federation President Soljic, Vice-President Ganic, Prime Minister Bicakcic, Deputy Prime Minister Bilandzija, Minister for Refugees Kadic and his Deputy Ljubic met with the Governor of the Central Bosnia Canton Saric, his Deputy Terzic and other Canton officials to discuss the situation in the Canton. The meeting was chaired by the Senior Deputy High Representative Ambassador Wagner. COSSFOR Widder, UN SRSG Eide, UNHCR Special Envoy Faubert, OSCE Deputy Head of Mission Jenness and Deputy Police Commissioner Schumm were also present.
The participants deplored the events which took place in the municipality of Jajce between 1 and 3 August. The incidents are being investigated. The participants expressed their resolve to use all their authority to prevent similar incidents in the Canton in the future. They also expressed their determination to continue to support return to and within the Central Bosnia Canton as well as in the whole Federation, in full respect of the provisions of Annex 7 of the General Framework Agreement for Peace. They welcomed the agreement on the formation of the Canton Police as a major contribution to security and safety in the area.

The Federation officials took note of the letter of the Principals of the Major Implementation Agencies of 3 August to President Soljic and Vice-President Ganic in which they strongly condemned actions which were directed against returnees and which may have resulted in the death of one

citizen. They accepted that they are fully responsible to re-establish law and order, to immediately establish conditions which enable families to return to their homes and to fully investigate the events to identify those responsible. Federation officials also took note of the pending report of the UN IPTF and the Principals' announcement that they will press for the removal from office of any official found directly or politically responsible. Federation officials regretted the lack of action of the cantonal and local authorities which forced SFOR establish area security to protect returnees from violence and to prevent an escalation of the situation.

To facilitate the return of refugees and displaced persons to their homes in a safe manner and to improve the security situation in the Central Bosnia Canton, the participants decided the following:

1. The Central Bosnia Canton will declare its firm intention to welcome back all former inhabitants, regardless of their national belonging. The authorities will give priority to return issues and to open up municipalities and villages to returnees. For this purpose, UNHCR, the Federation Minister for Refugees and his Deputy as well as Canton officials will straight away form a working group under the JCC Sub-Commission for Refugees, in which also OHR, SFOR, OSCE and UN IPTF will participate. The working group will discuss the approach to returns, a program for return to the Canton provided by the Ministry for refugees, in strict accordance with Annex 7 of the GFAP, and devote particular attention to the security of returnees. It will also take action upon complaints about the denial of returns to specific municipalities in the Central Bosnia Canton, brought to its attention by the Federation Ombudsmen and from other sources.
2. As an immediate step, those displaced persons who left

Jajce in fear will be enabled to return to their villages by the end of next week. Cantonal and municipal authorities and political leaders will in this time make public statements inviting all former inhabitants of the Central Bosnian Canton to return to their homes of origin.

3. Canton officials signed the attached Agreement on the Canton Police and decided to accelerate its implementation.
4. The Canton authorities will immediately provide premises for the Federation Ombudsmen to open a regional office in Travnik.

The participants decided to meet again in 10 days to discuss the report of the UN IPTF and to review first results of this meeting.

Sarajevo, 5 August 1997

Office of the High Representative