

Joint Statement, 14 May 1996

Federation Forum Meeting In Washington

Joint Statement

The Federation Forum, first convened by the U.S Government on April 3, today held its second plenary session at Blair House, upon the invitation of Secretary Christopher. President Clinton and Vice President Gore met with participants in the Forum at the White House.

The following measures were agreed after meetings among the President and Vice President of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Foreign Minister of Croatia, and other senior officials.

The Forum conducted a thorough review of Federation implementation, including the Geneva, Sarajevo and Petersberg commitments, which were reaffirmed. Important areas of progress were noted and areas of concentration for further work were identified.

The Forum reviewed results of the May 11 meeting of the Cooperation Council in Zagreb, welcoming the agreements reached by the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Croatia there on the use of the port of Ploce, free passage through Neum, and on visas and property protection.

1. Defense The Federation President and Vice President agreed today on a Federation defense law, which establishes a single Ministry of Defense and a joint command structure. Integration of all Federation military forces as stipulated by this law is a goal of the Federation. Integration will be performed within a three year time limit, immediately after this law enters into force. The law will be submitted to the Federation

Assembly by May 29.

They further agreed to move all necessary Ministry personnel to Sarajevo by May 31 and to expedite the implementation of the law.

2. Economic Recovery and integration The Federation officials reiterated their commitment to promoting economic recovery as essential to the integration of Bosnia and Herzegovina and to improvements in the well-being of all Bosnian citizens.

In a meeting with Deputy Under Secretary of Commerce Timothy Hauser, the officials at the Forum welcome the visit of Secretary Kantor in furtherance of Secretary Brown's mission. Federation officials will promote private business activity in the Federation, including by:

- ensuring the unrestricted flow of goods, throughout the Federation and, without checkpoints, across the Inter-Entity Boundary Line;
- proposing discussions, under the auspices of the High Representative with the Republika Srpska on arrangements for the movement of goods throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina; and,
- starting, with officials of Bosnia and Herzegovina, negotiations with the FRY to promote the free flow of goods.

In a meeting with Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Lawrence Summers, the officials at the Forum recognized that rapid delivery of outside assistance is dependent upon existence of suitable Federation institutions and agreed on the need to establish by May 31 the economic and financial structures integral to economic recovery, including:

- a Federation Banking Agency, which will ensure the continued, economically-sound operation of

commercial banks in the territory of the Federation;

- a Federation budget and procedures for its implementation;
- a Federation Privatization Agency, which will promote a market economy, as called for in the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, by devolving state assets to private ownership;
- a unified Federation payments system, which will permit financial transactions throughout the Federation consistent with the March 30 Sarajevo Agreement on the Federation;
- A Federation Tax Administration and to channel tax and customs revenues to Federation accounts; and
- improvements in the joint Federation customs system, including integration of Bosniac and Croat personnel in the entire customs system and technical assistance and monitors from the United States, in coordination with EU monitors.

3. Elections The Federation officials recognized the central role elections play in the Dayton peace process and recommitted themselves to ensuring that elections proceed in line with the timetable agreed upon in Dayton. They reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that conditions exist for the organization of free and fair elections, to cooperate fully with OSCE Head of Mission Ambassador Frowick, and to set up administrative structures necessary for the orderly and efficient conduction of the elections. Consequently, Federation officials will:

- by May 18, appoint all members of local election commissions. They invite the OSCE to fill any vacancies after that date;
- adapt municipal boundaries to the inter-entity boundary line and submit any remaining disputes to the Federation Arbitrator.

4. Media The participants acknowledge that democratic,

free, and fair elections require the unrestricted flow of information to the people throughout Bosnia and Herzegovina. Reiterating their commitment to guarantee a politically neutral environment and to ensure freedom of speech, the Bosnian officials at the Forum agreed to:

- provide one hour of prime time radio and television programming daily from May 21 until election day on all stations now in operation in the Federation for information relevant to elections. This time shall be used in accordance with instructions, if any, from the OSCE;
- ensure that fair access to equitable and significant amounts of prime time TV and radio are made available to opposition political parties and candidates, starting June 1 and lasting until election day and that political parties and candidates are offered access to the services of producers and directors in order to package and present this programming in an attractive and informative manner;
- review applications for radio and television frequencies and repair-and-improvement requests for communications infrastructure within seven days of receipt, in order to increase the number and capacity of independent media outlets, and ensure that no obstacles are placed in the way of requests by new independent networks to begin early operations; and
- ensure freedom of movement for journalists from both Entities to cover election campaigns, for political party workers and candidates to campaign, and for displaced persons and refugees to vote.

5. Freedom of Movement The officials at the Forum reaffirmed their commitment to providing full freedom of movement in Federation territory. Emphasizing that freedom of movement is a universally recognized

fundamental right that is specifically guaranteed by the Dayton accord, they agreed to redouble their efforts to:

- continue implementation of the UNHCR guidelines for freedom of movement, working with the High Representative, IFOR, UNHCR, IPTF, and the OSCE;
- accelerate the restoration of regular bus service, especially between the Federation and the Republika Srpska.

6. Federation institutions Recognizing the substantial progress represented by establishment of a Federation government, constitutional court and the near completion of the cantonal and municipal structures, but considering continued progress on Federation institutions central to the success of the peace process, Federation officials will by the next session of the Federation Assembly:

- prepare and disseminate materials to help inform members of the Federation Assembly, starting with the proposals discussed in this Statement;
- urge the Federation Assembly to work continuously from May 29, when it is scheduled to meet next, until it has voted on the measures to be proposed pursuant to this Statement and to develop a regular meeting schedule, bearing in mind the importance of allowing members of the Assembly time to arrange to attend sessions;
- seek an immediate decision by the Federation Assembly on a Federation flag and coat of arms, which will be the symbols designating Federation institutions, especially the police and military forces;
- present to the Federation Assembly an agreed package of amendments to bring the Federation Constitution into conformity with the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina;
- agree on a final solution for the organization and structure, including the distribution of

responsibilities among the Canton, City, and district of Sarajevo;

- establish Federation municipal governments in the central Bosnian towns of Bugojno and Vares in accordance with the Arbitrator's decisions;
- redouble their efforts to improve training and resources for the united Federation police, to ensure that the force follows international standards and complies with orders of international bodies, including the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia; and
- appoint expeditiously Human Rights Officers in each canton, pursuant to the Petersberg agreement, with a mandate to collect data on human rights violations and to submit this data to officials of the Federation and appropriate international institutions.

7. Consequences of Non-Implementation Federation officials acknowledge that the willingness of the international community to provide financial and diplomatic support for the Federation will depend upon the implementation of those commitments. Working with the High Representative and in the Federation Forum, Federation officials will focus attention on officials alleged to be blocking the implementation of Federation agreements. Pursuant to the commitment they made at Geneva, Federation officials will seek to have only persons committed to the success of the Federation serving in its institutions, and to effect the removal of those officials whose actions are inconsistent with that commitment. To that end, they will submit the attached draft agreement on the establishment of the Federation Implementation Council to the next session of the Federation Assembly for its approval

Office of the High Representative