

Speech by Brcko Supervisor, Susan R. Johnson, to new councillors of Brcko District Assembly

Honorable Councilors of Brcko District, and distinguished guests

Let me say at the outset that as Supervisor, and on behalf of all Supervisors who have served Brcko District, that I do hope to influence you – the elected Councilors of Brcko District – not in favor or against any person or party – but only to urge you to bring constructive attitude to the immediate task of selecting the best possible Government for Brcko District at this stage in its history. That has always been our goal, and I hope it is yours, too.

I am speaking to you today to underscore the historic nature of this inaugural session of the first elected Assembly of Brcko District and the great importance of the decisions and choices that you will be making in selecting the Speaker and the Mayor.

The District is facing a critical juncture in its development. When you vote, you will make choices that will affect whether Brcko District retains its special and unique self-governing status defined by the Arbitral Awards and the Statute, or whether it becomes just another pawn on the political chessboard of BiH.

The Statute and the Election Law of Brcko District provide that twenty-nine Councilors, elected by the citizens, have the responsibility of selecting the best individuals for the highest leadership positions in the District. You, individually and collectively, are those 29. Your choices

will directly influence the District's future – the well-being and prosperity of its residents and the status and position of Brcko District in BiH.

In your endeavors, I urge you to keep foremost in your mind and heart the provision of Article 26 of the Statute of Brcko District –

“Councilors must conduct their public life in an exemplary, appropriate and ethical manner, performing their duties in accordance with their conscience and for the exclusive welfare of the District and BiH.”

Selecting the leadership of the District is indisputably one if not the most important duty that you as Councilors have. The Statute enjoins you to carry out this duty in accordance with your conscience and for the exclusive welfare of the District... – not the welfare of any political party or its leadership.

You are Councilors – advisors – in the direct sense of the word, and your task is to select from among yourselves, the persons you believe best suited to be Speaker and Mayor, who will work with you all to lead the District forward, in accord with the Statute, the Arbitral Awards and the Constitution of BiH.

In making this judgment you must keep in mind many factors besides political party affiliation and nationality – character, experience, demonstrated capacity for fulfilling the responsibilities of the position, ability to inspire confidence of a majority of citizens and to represent all their interests regardless of nationality, religion, gender or age.

Ultimately, it is you who bear the final and direct responsibility for selecting the leadership of the District, whether you endorse what your Party proposes or make your own independent choice. I urge the political parties of Brcko also

to put the interest of Brcko District first and to support policies that will give Brcko the most effective, transparent, accountable and professional government possible.

British Field Marshall Montgomery said, "Leadership is the capacity and will to rally men and women to a common purpose, and the character which inspires confidence." Brcko today needs leaders who have both the capacity and will to rally men and women of all nationalities to a common cause – the good of the District and BiH, and the character to inspire confidence among all segments of our population, including the young and the old.

Brcko District has come a long way since the war in re-establishing itself as a multiethnic community with a growing ethic of tolerance and mutual respect. It must still attain genuinely democratic, multiethnic institutions that function effectively, complete important legal reform, revitalize the economy so that it can retain its economic self-sufficiency, and build constructive and mutually beneficial relationships with the State and the Entities.

If Brcko is to prosper in all senses, it must be united around a common purpose and vision. It is up to you to select that leaders that can, together with all of you, define a common purpose and vision and unite the residents of the District around both.

Let me congratulate each one of you on having been elected. And finally, as is the custom in the United States – let me express the hope that God will guide your choices, and bless the outcome of your efforts.