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Statement by Mr. Carl Bildt, High Representative

I warmly welcome President Clinton's announcement of US participation in the Follow-On force and his commitment of US troops to Bosnia for the next eighteen months. We agree with his approach that foreign troops should be withdrawn only gradually and as circumstances permit. I hope that the final NATO decision will have sufficient flexibility built in to handle the security situation for the entire two-year consolidation period.

Taken together with the conclusions on the consolidation period adopted in Paris yesterday by the Steering Board of the Peace Implementation Council, this is good news for Bosnia. It means that all efforts to realise the promise of the Peace Agreement and achieve political progress in setting up the joint institutions can take place in an atmosphere of security and confidence. I call on the Joint Presidency to redouble its efforts to set up the Council of Ministers as soon as possible.

Office of the High Representative