

**Remarks As Prepared  
Under Secretary for Political Affairs R. Nicholas Burns  
“Bosnia Ten Years Later: Successes and Challenges”**

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I am delighted to be here with you today at the U.S. Institute of Peace, to commemorate an historic event – the end of the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina and the signing of the Dayton Accords ten years ago this week.

We are also assembled to consider the future of Bosnia, the modernization of the Dayton Accords themselves, and to agree on a new, more unified Bosnia-Herzegovina for the generations ahead. I am grateful to the Institute and its Director, Ambassador Richard Solomon, for all its work in the interest of peace and especially for its willingness to host such an important conference. The Institute’s commitment to a better future for Bosnia, and beyond, is personified by Ambassador Don Hays. I thank Don, his team and the Institute for giving us so much to celebrate and to a more promising future for all the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Over the next two days, the United States Government will offer its own contribution to these celebrations and reiterate our commitment to a democratic peace in the Balkans. I want to welcome Presidents Jovic, Tihic and Paravac to Washington, as well as the representatives of Bosnia’s political parties – Milorad Dodik, Dragan Cavic, Zlatko Lagumzija, Safet Halilovic, and Mate Bandur – as well other Bosnian officials. Welcome to the U.S. Ambassador, Doug McElhaney, and Deputy Assistant Secretary Rosemary DiCarlo. I am hosting a working lunch for the leaders later today at the State Department. Tomorrow, the Tri-Presidency and I will open a meeting of Bosnian and international religious leaders chaired by Rabbi Arthur Schneier, designed to promote tolerance and inter-ethnicity. And later, Secretary of State Rice will meet with the Bosnian leaders, sign two bilateral agreements, and host a lunch in honor of the Dayton Accords and the decade past.

Dayton marked the great turn from war to peace for the people of the Balkans and a seminal moment in American diplomacy. Ten years ago

today, I was with many of you in Dayton as we concluded a three-week negotiating marathon. Dayton stopped a savage war that had left 250,000 dead, including the victims of Srebrenica -- the worst atrocity in Europe since World War Two. It stopped a war that left millions homeless for fear of retribution. Dayton chased from power the despicable war criminals Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic. Dayton succeeded where prior international peacekeeping efforts had failed disastrously. Our efforts at Dayton succeeded because NATO's demonstration of military power in September-October 1995 was combined with resourceful and agile American diplomacy. The Dayton agreement was, simply put, a remarkable diplomatic achievement authored principally by President Clinton, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and its principal architect and negotiator, Ambassador Richard Holbrooke. They deserve great praise for what they achieved.

Dayton led to an end of ethnic fighting, return of some refugees to their homes, and a reassertion of the West's commitment to keep and win the peace. It was followed by a decade of peacekeeping that kept the guns silent and allowed Croats, Serbs and Bosniaks to rebuild their homes and their lives. These successes would not have been possible without the full commitment of the international community. I am so pleased to see High Representative Paddy Ashdown here, as he, in particular, and his predecessors have done so much to move Bosnia forward.

Today, on Dayton's tenth anniversary, the international community gathers together again to celebrate what we have achieved and re-dedicate ourselves to the unfinished task of assuring Bosnia-Herzegovina a democratic, prosperous and secure future for all its citizens.

We have every reason to be more optimistic about Bosnia's future than we did a decade ago. First and foremost, Bosnia and Herzegovina remains a country at peace. We should not take that achievement for granted; it took considerable courage for the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina to overcome the violent legacy of war and move forward together. It is also a testament to NATO's strength and credibility. From the time NATO troops set foot on Bosnian soil in December 1995 to the time the Stabilization Force mission ended in December 2004, not a single shot was fired between the parties and not a single NATO casualty resulted from hostile action. That is an extraordinary achievement that must be acknowledged today. I am pleased to see NATO Deputy Secretary General

Allesandro Minuto Rizzo here, reaffirming the past and future commitment of history's greatest alliance to security and stability in Bosnia and the Balkans.

Most of all, Dayton and its decade of peace are due to the courage of the people of the country and their leaders here today. They sowed the peace that has taken root in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last decade. And now they have begun to give back to the world what they received in 1995. On November 24 – Thanksgiving Day for those of us in America – Bosnia and Herzegovina's Explosive Ordnance Disposal unit serving with multinational forces in Iraq will return home, and another Bosnian unit will go to Iraq to replace it. During every visit I have made to Bosnia and Herzegovina in the last ten years – and I've made two just since June -- Bosnians have gone out of their way to express gratitude to the United States for helping to bring peace and security to their country. Today, I am pleased to return the compliment, and thank the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina for helping to secure the safety and security of the American people and the global community through their efforts in Iraq and elsewhere.

In the last decade, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina – working together with the international community – have reinforced the state constructed at Dayton. Bosnia could have remained static, mired where the war left it. But it did not. Bosnia's people, and its political leaders, have found the courage to move beyond the Dayton framework to make their country -- the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina -- work.

Consider Brcko District. At Dayton, Brcko was a problem so difficult to resolve that it had to be deferred to a process of international arbitration. Most doubted Brcko could return to the multi-ethnic community it was before the war. And yet Brcko has the strongest economy, the highest level of foreign investment, and the most fully functioning multi-ethnic institutions of any municipality in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Clearly, as Brcko proves, multi-ethnicity has a future in the land.

As we look back over the last ten years, there is much to praise in the peace and progress that have taken root in the soil of Bosnia and Herzegovina. But, our task today is also to look forward and to chart an even more ambitious future for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We believe the people of the country are ready to re-make the country once more – into a more unified and more normal state.

Simply put, we need to modernize the Dayton Accords. They served Bosnia well for the last decade. But they were never meant to be immutable or set in stone. Dayton established a state with internal divisions – “Berlin Walls” separating one community from another because that was the only way to stop the war and build a tentative and fragile peace. Ten years later, these internal walls must be torn down. The country’s people – Croats, Serbs and Muslims – must be allowed to mix, to integrate as differing people do in other multi-ethnic states all across the globe – such as India, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

The Dayton Accords need to be modernized. Bosnia needs to create new national institutions that can chart a new future for the country. And that process has already begun. Confronted by a rise in trafficking in persons, drugs, weapons and organized crime, Bosnia and Herzegovina has responded by establishing a State Border Service, a State Investigative and Protection Agency, and a national intelligence service. More recently, it has agreed to a process to reform the country’s police structures – a key step on its road to its future in Europe and in NATO and the EU.

And perhaps most impressively, recognizing the 21<sup>st</sup> century absurdity of maintaining two separate militaries and Defense Ministries—divisive throwbacks to the war - in one state, Bosnia and Herzegovina’s elected representatives recently approved the creation of fully integrated, NATO-compatible armed forces at the national level. All of us familiar with Dayton realize that this single, national army proves that Bosnia and Herzegovina has entered a new phase in its history. It is now a country with one army, one chief of its joint staff, and one -- exceptionally able -- defense minister, Nikola Radovanovic, who I am happy to see is with us today. Through these and other steps, Bosnia and Herzegovina has started to demonstrate its commitment to work towards membership in NATO’s Partnership for Peace and take its proper place in Europe as a net contributor to security.

I hope the leaders with us today understand that future membership in NATO and the EU is essential for its people to prosper and thrive. More than a million people have returned to their pre-war homes in Bosnia and Herzegovina, with, remarkably, nearly half of those returning to areas where they find themselves an ethnic minority. These returns mark courageous acts that merit our appreciation. But for Bosnian families to stay and thrive –

to put down roots again – they need the kind of economic development that creates jobs and small enterprise and the security to maintain a still tenuous peace. Bosnia can only achieve that prosperity and security by joining Europe and NATO in the future.

To secure that future, there are important challenges for Bosnians to overcome. First, Bosnia and Herzegovina needs to rid itself of its most pernicious and debilitating legacy of the past decade: war criminals still at large. This year, a number of criminals indicted for crimes against their neighbors have been persuaded to surrender. That is a major accomplishment. However, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot put the war completely behind them until Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic face justice in The Hague.

To their credit, Bosnia's leaders recognize this. All of Bosnia's political leadership have agreed that Karadzic and Mladic must be sent to The Hague for trial. And all have agreed to state that commitment publicly in Washington this week. If Karadzic and Mladic will not surrender voluntarily, they must be arrested by local authorities. We believe the Bosnian Serb leaders from Banja Luka and the Serb government in Belgrade bear a special responsibility to find these criminals and bring them to justice. These two fugitives are holding back hundreds of thousands of Bosnians from seeing their country assume its rightful place in the world.

The United States' position on war criminals is uncompromising. We will not support Bosnia and Herzegovina or Serbia-Montenegro for membership in NATO's Partnership for Peace until this problem is resolved. It's that simple. War criminals must face justice. The families of their victims must see justice triumph. There can be no middle ground.

Second, and more broadly, the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina need to consider more closely how their country is to be governed in the coming years. The people of Bosnia and Herzegovina have already recognized that change is necessary and inevitable. They have reformed their military, customs and tax administration. They have met the European Commission's 16 conditions for negotiating a Stabilization and Association Agreement. But Bosnia's leaders and citizens need to break down the last political and ethnic divisions that have persisted since the end of the war. We hope they will tell Secretary Rice tomorrow they will agree on an

ambitious and historic set of constitutional reforms that will make Bosnia and Herzegovina one truly unified state in years to come.

I discussed this challenge with the students, government officials, party leaders and journalists with whom I met with last month in Sarajevo. I told them that these are choices that they need to make for themselves. Some were skeptical. But they were also once skeptical that Bosnia could have a common license plate and a common flag, never mind a single army. Secretary Rice will tell the leaders that it is time for constitutional reform -- to create a single presidency from the three men who hold the office now, a strong Prime Minister and a more effective Parliament.

One of the fundamental characteristics of any democracy, and especially constitutional democracies, is the ability and willingness of leaders to consider and implement reforms for the good of the people. Whether in Washington or Sarajevo, or even the city of Dayton, such reforms must rise above the interest of any one leader or party, and address the needs of the people. I have no doubt that the Bosnian people are ready to support such efforts. And so today we call upon Bosnia's leaders to continue building on the success of Dayton to meet those challenges through deeper and more meaningful reforms.

The international community has stood with you in the ten years since Dayton, and we will continue to do so. Bosnians can and should take over increasing responsibility for their own destiny. As we approach the October 2006 general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we would like to see a less intrusive international presence. We hope to see a political climate where citizens are confident that their vote matters. We look forward to campaigns not focused on narrow ethnic interests or complaints about the international community, but on ideas and issues that will move Bosnia forward.

Americans are often portrayed as impatient. I think that is in many ways a positive characteristic. Impatience makes us creative, it makes us strive for goals that are difficult to reach. Creative impatience is a characteristic we share with many, including the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We are impatient to see Bosnia and Herzegovina move ahead quickly. We are impatient to see a Bosnia and Herzegovina where political divisions based on ethnicity have vanished and where its peoples view themselves first and foremost as Bosnians rather than as Muslims, Croats or

Serbs. We are impatient to see a Bosnia and Herzegovina that is a full member NATO and the EU. We are impatient to see Bosnia and Herzegovina create a dynamic economy, taking full advantage of its human and natural resources. And we are impatient to achieve a Bosnia and Herzegovina that is a full contributor to regional and global stability.

We should make the most of our impatience. Ten years from now, we should be able to say we have accomplished all this, and more. Let's make the most of the opportunity Dayton gave us all and help the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina step confidently into a more just democratic and peaceful future.

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