



**Board of
Directors**

December 14, 2009

Haris Alibašić
President

The Honorable Hillary R. Clinton
Secretary of State

Meliha Pihura
Vice President

U.S. Department of State
2201 C Street NW
Washington, DC 20520

Ferid Sefer
Secretary

Dear Madam Secretary Clinton,

Uzeir Ramić
Treasurer

Semir Đulić
Spokesperson

On behalf of the Congress of North American Bosniaks, I am writing to express our gravest concern regarding the political situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the resurgence of the ultra-nationalist rhetoric that led to the violent breakup of Yugoslavia in the early 1990s. The appeasement of Slobodan Milosevic and other Serbian nationalists during that time period created an environment that was based on ethnic and religious hatred and led to the worst civilian atrocities Europe has seen since World War II. Bosnia and Herzegovina declared independence within its historical borders and was recognized by the United States, the United Nations, and the larger international community as a multi-ethnic, democratic state that could have served as a model for peaceful coexistence and tolerance as they have done for many years in its history. But evil forces of Slobodan Milosevic, Radovan Karadzic, and other Serb leaders at the time used nationalist rhetoric that was rooted in deep hatred towards non-Serbs, especially the Bosniaks in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We all know how the story unfolded, and that it was thanks in large part to the Clinton administration, the United States government, and NATO that the war ended with the Dayton agreement.

Amir
Makarević

Burhan Bey
Husika

Daniel
Toljaga

Dževad
Burić

Hamdija
Čustović

Haris
Šuko

Kemal
Hamulić

Unfortunately, a sequel seems to be in the making, as the same ultra-nationalist rhetoric is once again being propagated by a new generation of Milosevic's followers, including Milorad Dodik, the current premier of Republika Srpska, Nikola Spiric, the prime minister of BiH, and Nebojsa Radmanovic, the current member of the presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Over the last few years, they have been testing the will of the United States and the European Union and purposely crippling any hopes for reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, by trying to create an environment where they can illegally proclaim a referendum for independence of Republika Srpska, thereby attaining Karadzic's wartime goals.

Mirsad
Smajić

Rusmin
Topalović

Sanel
Babić

Looking back on the Dayton agreement, the wartime representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina only agreed to the Dayton agreement after a full guarantee by the United States that its sovereignty will be preserved. It was clear that the intentions were to end the war, guarantee Bosnian sovereignty, and hope for a better future for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Instead, the Serbian nationalists choose to misinterpret the agreement and use it as a tool for their agenda to accomplish "in peace" what Milosevic and Karadzic could not in war, a greater Serbia. This is, sadly, being almost completely ignored by the United States and the EU, who have sent a message that the people of Bosnia must resolve their own differences and come to an agreement on how to structure the country. While this sounds like an ideal solution, it is clear that the Bosnian Serb representatives do not want to accept

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any solution, except that which preserves a homogeneous Republika Srpska. This is now also fueling fires with some Bosnian Croat representatives who think they should have the same. On the other hand, there is clear lack of leadership by the Bosniak representatives in dealing with these issues. Thus, the ascertainment that the destiny of Bosnian framework is up to the local politicians is only partially acceptable because the international community, with the Dayton agreement, provided them with tools which they now misappropriate for nationalist gain, by spreading propaganda of fear and hatred in order to promote a secessionist agenda.

Therefore, we ask, again, for the help of the United States of America in this dire time of need. Although, thankfully, there is no armed conflict at this time, it is imperative to implement sound foreign policy to prevent the injustice that Bosnia has suffered and the tragedy that has happened to its centuries' old tradition of tolerance, diversity, and coexistence. This time, we ask not only as the former refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also as American citizens to save Bosnia and Herzegovina from the dark clouds that have once again begun to gather on the horizon. There is absolutely no rhyme or reason why Bosnia and Herzegovina cannot exist as a multi-ethnic, democratic, and prosperous nation that is fully integrated in Europe and a future member of NATO. One of the main obstacles to Bosnian democracy is the so called ethnic voting, which severely undermines the ability of Bosnia and Herzegovina to function as a state.

The only question that remains is the following: is the United States still committed to fulfilling its obligation as the broker of the Dayton agreement to preserve peace, democracy, and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina, or will it stand by and allow these ultra-nationalist elements to disintegrate any resemblance of a functioning state and be rewarded for committing genocide? As it currently stands, Russia now has a far more involved role in Bosnia and Herzegovina than before and threatens to undermine the United States' efforts by promoting Serbian nationalism. We urge you to consider the gravity of the situation and realize that it is not only the moral duty of the United States to stop such activity, but that it is of vital national interest to the United States to prevent further instability in the region.

We believe that an urgent entry of Bosnia and Herzegovina into NATO would quell the manipulation of some of its citizens and provide a strong message to all in the region that Bosnian sovereignty will never come into question. We also recommend urgent constitutional reforms that guarantee equal rights for all of its citizens, but also eliminate the undemocratic process of ethnic voting that holds the central government hostage from implementing any reforms that would lead towards euro-Atlantic integration. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Mr. Haris Alibašić, MPA
President of the CNAB Board of Directors