

Statement by Ambassador Hardeep Singh Puri, Permanent Representative
during UN Security Council Debate on situation in Bosnia-Herzegovina on
November 13, 2012

I will now make a statement in my national capacity.

At the outset, I would like to welcome High Representative Valentin Inzko to the Council and thank him for his comprehensive briefing and the report on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

2. It is a matter of satisfaction that during the period of the report, there has been peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Political developments are, however, of serious concern. There has been little progress in the country's Euro-Atlantic integration. Negative rhetoric has adversely affected economic prospects. These issues need to be addressed by political entities within the framework established by the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

3. We commend the conduct of local elections on 7 October, and hope grass root democratic institutions will promote nation-building, inter-community harmony, and the rule of law. The joint declaration of the Foreign Ministers of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Montenegro and Serbia on cooperation to protect and promote the rights of refugees, returnees and internally displaced persons, signed earlier this year, should serve as an important confidence-building measure. Such cooperation will not only promote regional cooperation but also facilitate their common aspirations for Euro-Atlantic integration.

4. We have noted that the progress on outstanding issues for closure of the Office of the High Representative has been somewhat slow. We are, however, glad that a recent state property ruling by the BiH Constitutional Court has laid out guiding principles for the resolution of the state property issue. We also welcome the closure of the Brcko Final Award Office on 31 August.

5. Through their continued presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the EU and NATO military missions have carried out an important role in reassuring its citizens of safety and security, even when the political situation is tense. We commend the efforts of EUFOR and support the extension of its mandate.

6. As I have said in our previous meetings, Bosnia-Herzegovina is a novel experiment in building a new nation from the rubbles of civil war that the peoples of former Yugoslavia had to endure in the 1990s. It is never easy to build a multi-ethnic, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-religious country. The problems that have been mentioned in the report and briefing of the High Representative are bound to be encountered on the path of building a nation

inhabited by people of different faiths, ethnicities and languages. Our own experience over the last six decades has convinced us that though the path of building such a nation is long and arduous, the fruits are well worth the efforts.

7. Resolution of the problems facing the Bosnian peoples, therefore, calls for patience, determination and mutual accommodation. Unilateral actions, mutual suspicion, rhetorical statements and violation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace will only vitiate the political and social atmosphere and delay the achievement of their goals.

8. The General Framework Agreement for Peace and its implementation have ensured peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina over the last 17 years. Nothing should be done to undermine the Peace Agreement's foundations or roll back reforms undertaken to implement it. We would, therefore, urge the leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as the international community to persevere in spite of the problems that are encountered. We hope that the Bosnian parties will engage in the spirit of compromise and maturity to address political problems so that the Peace Agreement and its implementation are strengthened. They should also take concerted steps so that currently deteriorating economic prospects are reversed and the country returns to the path of high growth of pre-recession years.

9. In conclusion, I would like to highly commend the work being done by High Representative Inzko in assisting the people and leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina in their nation-building endeavours. We fully support his efforts.

I thank you.

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