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**BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA AFTER DAYTON: COHESION VERSUS DIVISION**

1. In the process of peace consolidation following the Dayton Agreement and Peace Accords signed in Paris it is important to identify, from the perspective of citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, factors influencing cohesion and division in the country. The factors consequently listed in the Annex reflect daily realities in their lives. The imbalance of their number and content speaks for itself, both as a comment on the war and a tribute to hope. Four factors are listed as both cohesive and divisive: return of refugees and displaced persons (places of return); language (common versus distinctions); education (curriculum content); and culture (e.g. music). This singles out these areas for particular attention inasmuch as the manner in which they are approached in the new context of peace may swing them decisively toward cohesive or divisive tendencies. Clearly, concerted action is required to ensure that they move in the former, not the latter direction, but this is in the first instance a matter of collective will.

2. The sheer number and kinds of other factors listed indicate the complexity of the task. They include some (e.g. families of mixed origin/religion and the children thereof; personal suffering and grief) which will play their role over time and do not call for specific national or international initiatives. Others, on the contrary, require and can be significantly influenced by sustained and concerted action. Against the backdrop of vast needs across the board, elements of action may each appear obvious in isolation. Linked together on the basis of the factors in the Annex, however, they strongly suggest a holistic approach in which any project or activity, beyond its intrinsic value, can be tested against the extent to which it contributes to cohesion versus division.

**A. Peace. Engendering a Well-founded Feeling of Immediate Safety and Longer-term Security**

3. The Dayton Agreement, IFOR and other elements of international presence have clearly put in place cornerstones on which a lasting national purpose and identity must be built if peace within a single sovereign state is to be preserved. It is equally clear that this can only be done by the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves, with external assistance as

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required. This process will take considerable time; the most immediate benefits can be derived from all measures which restore aspects of normal peacetime life characterized by people of different origins and religions living together again as they did only a few years ago.

Priorities:

- prompt and just action against those violating the peace (e.g. snipers)
- removal of land mines
- tracing of missing persons and reunification of families
- assurance of freedom and safety of movement
- encouragement of freedom of trade
- assurance of all fundamental human rights
- promoting a climate of confidence for all segments of the national population, inter alia through international presence, including IFOR and the UN.

4. The physical security of the civilian population was disastrously shattered during the war. Beyond the most basic and immediate priorities mentioned, therefore, confidence in politically stable and fully functioning government institutions committed to the peace must be rebuilt. The prosecution of war criminals must proceed impartially and with deliberate speed in order to contain the heated and divisive feelings this subject continues to generate. Surrounded by the ravages of four years of war and the once familiar, now strange sounds of daily life in peace, people frequently ask the question: Why and how did this happen to us? They deserve honest answers.

B. Economic Revival and Reconstruction

5. A good deal has been written by the World Bank, the EBRD and others on the wide-ranging devastation caused by the war and consequent needs for economic revival and reconstruction. The two main categories of required action in this area are:

(i) the rebuilding of economic and financial institutions and systems (including a strong central bank, a single currency, customs, and a system of taxation and interest rates to raise public revenues while regenerating income and stimulating savings and investment); and

(ii) the reconstruction and rehabilitation of physical infrastructure such as water, heating and energy systems, roads, bridges and transport, housing, communications, hospitals and schools.

At the technical level there is little point in adding to existing sectoral needs assessments made by various national and international bodies. It is, however, important to highlight four strategic considerations:

5. • First, a total asset and liability approach encompassing all the country's human, financial, physical and cultural resources is necessary. Social policy should be developed to go hand in hand with economic and reconstruction policy. Provisions must urgently be made for vulnerable groups such as orphans, invalids and families who have lost able-bodied adults. The return from other countries of Bosnians and their resources must be encouraged, though care should be taken to ensure that such returns do not dangerously overburden the already stretched fabric of security, facilities and resources in place. Intangibles such as

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the will and feelings of people can be decisive influences on cohesive and divisive factors. Non-military uses of the military in peacetime must be promoted to the maximum as a national resource in reconstruction. The immediate availability of external assistance funds is critical. This asset can, however, become a liability if the experience of persons in the service of humanitarian agencies in Bosnia and Herzegovina before and during the war is now lost in the implementation of the peace. Even though immediate needs are vast, peace and reconstruction in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be seen in the far broader context of the former Yugoslavia and Europe as a whole; in economic terms this is especially relevant to transport and trade.

6. • **Second**, non-military job creation is absolutely critical to the resumption of normal life and the viability of the peace over time. In this connection demobilized military personnel and returnees are categories of people claiming priority attention. With regard to the latter, every effort must be made to facilitate return to places of origin and to avoid exacerbating urban influxes from rural areas. While certain types of economic activity (such as small-scale animal husbandry) were essential to sustain life during the war, the priority for investment must now go to labor-intensive activities including rehabilitation of agriculture to ensure food self-sufficiency, physical (re)construction, small-scale manufacturing and service industries.

7. • **Third**, the stakes in the peace after an atrocious war on civilian populations can and should be raised by every possible means, i.e. any thought of resumption of hostilities must be made more and more inconceivable. Powerful symbols of the peace must be erected and rebuilt. One practical possibility which should be quickly explored and developed is the strengthening of links between local towns and villages with towns and villages across Europe ("twins") through existing multi-national mechanisms. The channels thus established should be used for coordination of returns, international assistance, advice (where needed), and fund-raising on a locality-to-locality basis. Another possibility is the highly visible construction of clinics and modern hospitals with staff of diverse origins and religions and fields of specialization dictated by the casualties of war. Other possibilities include student exchanges and high-visibility use of Sarajevo, the capital city, and other locations in Bosnia and Herzegovina as venues for international events.

8. • **Fourth**, peace consolidation and reconstruction efforts should consist of projects and activities linked in a holistic approach, each component reflecting the aim of strengthening cohesive versus divisive forces. The peaceful and productive interaction of people of diverse origins and religions in economic, social and cultural activities is thus an explicit goal in itself. The focus of such interaction may be geographic (or modular), i.e. lie in communities where links among projects and activities can be readily identified and built upon. Successful examples can then be replicated elsewhere. The diverse character of towns presents an obvious challenge and opportunity in this regard. At the same time, certain sectors of economic activity lend themselves particularly well to the strengthening of cohesive forces, such as the rapid rehabilitation of road, rail and air transport with associated job creation. What must be avoided is an approach based on theoretical sectoral distinctions (e.g. agriculture, education, health, housing, industry) which spread across the board and do not take into account complex human and geographic realities on the ground. The depth of divisions created by the war and the urgency of needs in peace consolidation and reconstruction would dictate rapid, high-impact efforts within a holistic framework taking advantage of immediately available funds.

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### C. Cultural Reconstruction

9. The totality of the country's culture-artistic, architectural, religious, civil, political, culinary, historic and humoristic- was brutally affected by the war through destruction, transformation and division. Its elements survived, but its restoration as a living whole is crucially dependent on peace consolidation activities in the post-Dayton period. Peace can bring restoration of culture, and culture in all its forms can help (or hinder) a cementing of the peace almost every step along the way. Continuity of culture must be given tangible expression, first and foremost in activities of the groups, associations and organizations which make up civil society, and in daily life where the pre-war culture of friendly neighbours must be resuscitated. While cultural reconstruction cannot easily be assigned a particular priority, cultural activity involving all communities is a potent force of cohesion.

### D. A Comment on General Approach

10. Great care must be taken by international humanitarian agencies working in Bosnia and Herzegovina not to waste time and resources trying to promote pre-conceived foreign ideas on what is to be done. Nationals know very well what their most urgent needs are. What they want to know in concrete terms is how to obtain the resources to meet their needs, what and how much will be made available by whom and when. Local people, already coping with enormous problems in the immediate aftermath of war, should not be further burdened by the armchair philosophies and agendas of some unfortunately ever-present "tourists of tragedy". The role of existing and new expressions of the country's civil society is of great importance. The reinforcement of local capacities often comes down to very mundane and practical matters of resources, management language and practices which enable effective interaction between local, national and international bodies. While the shift in emphasis from emergency response to reconstruction is appropriate in the present context, the inherent value of capacities in the former area should not be underestimated.

## Annex

The following factors were identified, almost exclusively by citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina themselves, as influencing cohesion and division in the wake of the Dayton Agreement. "Cohesion" in this context is taken to mean favouring a continuation of the peace, encouraging tolerance and helping to regenerate national peacetime culture. "Division" is the opposite of these. The factors are listed in no particular order.

### COHESION

1. Respect for fundamental rights and freedoms;
2. Removal of land mines;
3. Return of refugees and displaced persons to their places of origin;
4. Truly free trade (Serb-produced cream alongside Muslim-produced cheese in the same markets)- it is noted that a remarkable amount of barter and direct trade (including smuggling and black marketeering) directly involving the military took place across front lines throughout the armed conflict;
5. Music and popular performances of arts;
6. Families of different origins and religions and their children;
7. Indictment, apprehension and prosecution of war criminals;
8. The common experience (including different cuisines and cafe life);
9. Re-opening of Sarajevo International Airport and use of other existing airfields;
10. The influence of the international presence embodied in IFOR, NATO, the UN, OSCE and EU;
11. Democratic elections without fear of voting;
12. Jobs, economic revival and various reconstruction activities;

### DIVISION

1. All things which highlight distinct religions, origins and traditions in ways not common before the war;
2. The media, including the use and abuse of television backdrops and content;
3. Nationalistic politics and rhetoric along lines demarcating Croats, Muslims and Serbs;
4. The particular music associated with the three main groups during the war;
5. Return of refugees and displaced persons, if they cannot or do not wish to return to their places of origin but instead converge on towns;
6. Personal suffering and grief- it was felt that these could not be seen as a cohesive force at present. Perhaps this could occur in due course;
7. Losses of loved ones, loved places and things, hatreds, feelings of vendetta, mistrust - for example expressed in exodus with the exhumed remains of loved ones;
8. Dangers posed by different international relations and links of Croats, Muslims and Serbs in Bosnia and Herzegovina;
9. Power of political and military leaders during the war and what they might stand to lose in the peace;
10. Education if content is not objective and comprehensive;
11. Language, if differences are emphasized;
12. Rural areas characterized by poverty and predominantly populated by persons of the same origin and religion.

13. Demobilization, civilian employment for ex-soldiers, and non-military uses of the military in reconstruction;
14. Objective and comprehensive educational curricula;
15. Language, if what was and remains common is emphasized;
16. Freedom of movement and means of transportation;
17. Sports events involving all communities;
18. Geographic proximity and the pre-war culture of friendly neighbours;
19. Raising the stakes of peace through powerful symbols including, for example, reconstruction of cultural monuments, clinics and hospitals with diverse staff and specializing in war casualties, and through "twin" town and village links across Europe;
20. Towns as examples of "melting pots" for people of different origins and religions;
21. Peace consolidation and reconstruction activities with the explicit goal of interaction among people of different origins and religions.