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Statement on Bosnia and Herzegovina

Press Statement

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Deputy Secretary

Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina

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I am delighted to be in Sarajevo, and especially pleased to be here so soon after the formation of the new Council of Ministers. Yesterday, I had a very productive round of meetings with the Presidency, Chairman Bevanda, Foreign Minister Lagumdzija, High Representative Inzko and EU Special Representative Sorensen. I reiterated our concern about the consequences of the recent winter storm for the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and our readiness to continue to do all we can to help.

My main message to all political leaders was exactly the same – President Obama and Secretary Clinton are deeply committed to a peaceful, democratic and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina. I made clear in all my meetings that we remain steadfast in our support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Dayton Accords. The U.S. vision remains that of a multi-ethnic, democratic Bosnia and Herzegovina that is a member of NATO and the EU, and we will continue to support efforts to that end.

Bosnia and Herzegovina faces urgent political, economic and social challenges. Progress in forming the Council of Ministers and completing some EU-required reforms shows that leaders can put aside personal differences and narrow political interests, and work on practical solutions that can deliver positive results for this country and its citizens. I urged political leaders to work in the same spirit to resolve a number of outstanding issues, including the Sejdic-Finci case and defense property. I strongly encouraged them to take action soon, so that Bosnia and Herzegovina can activate its participation in NATO's Membership Action Plan ahead of the May Chicago Summit and to bring the Stabilization and Association Agreement with the EU into force. Ambassador Moon and our Embassy here in Sarajevo stand ready to assist in these efforts.

I also conveyed to High Representative Inzko that the United States will continue its strong support of the Office of the High Representative. I thanked EU Special Representative Sorensen and High Representative Inzko for their close cooperation, and expressed our full support for Ambassador Sorensen and the reinforced EU presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

While success depends upon the willingness and the commitment of the leaders and citizens of this country, the U.S. remains a steadfast friend and supporter of a modern, stable, prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina fully integrated into Europe.

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