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Request for a Meeting Regarding the Stability and Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Bosnian-Herzegovinian American Academy of Arts and Sciences Board of Directors

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The Honorable Marco Rubio, Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State

The Honorable James E. Risch, Chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, U.S. Senate

The Honorable Brian Mast, Chairman, House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. House of Representatives

Members of the Senate and House Foreign Affairs Committees

Washington, D.C. 20515

Subject: Request for a Meeting Regarding the Stability and Future of Bosnia and Herzegovina

Dear Secretary Rubio, Chairman Risch, Chairman Mast, and Distinguished Members

of the

Committees:

The Bosnian Herzegovinian academic, cultural, and scientific community in the United States is deeply concerned about the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina (B&H). We are alarmed by escalating threats to the Dayton Peace Agreement—the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina (1995)—particularly threats of secession, genocide denial, and the glorification of war criminals. While such destabilizing actions have historically come from the leadership of Republika Srpska and have been supported by political actors in Serbia, we are increasingly witnessing similar actions from certain Croat political figures as well. During the December 2 Western Balkans Hearings, Mr. Max Primorac referred to Bosnia and Herzegovina as “a failed state,” a characterization we strongly reject. Bosnia and Herzegovina is not a failed state. B&H has a long and distinguished history: the medieval Bosnian state was among the first sixteen kingdoms in Europe. Seven centuries later, Europe has forty-nine countries, yet there is no country quite like Bosnia and Herzegovina—one defined not merely by the coexistence of multiple cultures in close proximity, but by a singular and compelling culture and social order that encompasses all ethnicities and renders different faiths—Catholicism, Judaism, Islam, and Orthodoxy—culturally interdependent. This is the true description of our shared homeland, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We, the members of the Bosnian Herzegovinian American Academy of Arts and Sciences (BHAAAS), believe that the United States can and should continue to play a critical role in protecting peace, maintaining the sovereignty and independence of B&H, and supporting its Euro-Atlantic integration. Given the urgency of the democratic crisis in B&H—fueled by the actions of certain political representatives—and the spread of misinformation in Washington, D.C., we respectfully request a meeting with you to present accurate information and to collaborate on steps needed to secure a stable, democratic, and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina.

BHAAAS is a voluntary, nonprofit, nongovernmental, nonpartisan, apolitical, multiethnic, and multicultural organization dedicated to educational, scientific, and charitable purposes. Our approximately 300 members are highly accomplished professionals in medicine, technology, social sciences, engineering, and the art. Over the past eighteen years, we have organized sixteen major scientific congresses in Bosnia and Herzegovina, contributing our expertise to support the country’s development and future generations. Our guiding principle is that knowledge is shareable wealth. U.S. Ambassadors in Sarajevo and other American representatives regularly attend our annual congresses, consistently reaffirming the United States’ strong support for B&H’s progress toward NATO and EU membership.

We deeply appreciate the United States’ leadership in ending the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its recognition of the shared values between American and Bosnian Herzegovinian citizens— democracy, multiethnicity, and human rights. Despite

substantial U.S. support, critical challenges remain, including threats to parliamentary democracy, the weakening of civil society, systemic corruption, ethnic discrimination, and ongoing efforts by extremist and secessionist actors—supported by political forces in the region and beyond—to undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina’s territorial integrity and sovereignty.

As committed partners, we seek to contribute actively to the protection of democratic institutions, the constitutional order of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and its territorial integrity. Strengthening these principles is essential to ensuring long-term peace and stability in the Western Balkans.

For these reasons, we respectfully request a meeting with Secretary of State Rubio, Chairman Risch, Chairman Mast, and members of the Committees to share our vision for a successful, meritocratic Bosnia and Herzegovina that does not cater to special interests. Granting us this meeting would reaffirm and strengthen U.S. support for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Once a meeting date and time are confirmed via the email addresses listed above, we will promptly provide the names and biographies of the BHAAAS representatives who will attend.

Thank you for your leadership and for considering this important request.

Respectfully,

On behalf of the BHAAAS Board of Directors,

Dr. Zlatan Akšamija

President

Bosnian Herzegovinian American Academy of Arts and Sciences

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