

# United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

January 20, 2022

Dr. Karen Donfried  
Assistant Secretary for European and Eurasian Affairs  
The United States Department of State  
2201 C Street NW  
Washington, D.C. 20520

Dear Assistant Secretary Donfried:

We are writing to express our concern regarding recent developments in Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), which threaten the long-held peace established through the Dayton Accords in 1995. We must uphold the spirit of these agreements to preserve the gains made in delivering peace and unity in the country. The United States has a long history of deep engagement in the region; we cannot let our attention waver, as what happens in the Balkans is critical for the rest of Europe and the trans-Atlantic relationship.

Milorad Dodik, the Bosnian Serb member of Bosnia and Herzegovina's tripartite presidency, has threatened to withdraw Republika Srpska (RS) from a number of state institutions, including the armed forces, judiciary and tax and customs agencies. Mr. Dodik has also refused to recognize the authority of the Office of the High Representative (OHR), endangering its mission. These moves are a clear threat to the peace, stability and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Biden administration's announcement on 5 January to impose sanctions on Mr. Dodik sends a clear signal that corrupt activities and efforts to undermine the integrity of the Dayton Accords will have consequences. We call on Mr. Dodik to accept the authority of the OHR and urge a redoubled diplomatic effort to support the OHR and its mandate.

We support robust engagement and an increased diplomatic effort to preserve peace and stability in the region. As long-time supporters of the people and prosperity of Southeast Europe, we appreciate the State Department's ongoing reform efforts in BiH. However, we are concerned that our diplomatic efforts to support the required electoral and constitutional reforms in Bosnia are not bearing sufficient fruit. We ask that the State Department review its approach to ensure that our strategy is both inclusive of broader BiH political institutions, including parliament, ministries, and other state institutions, and robust enough to achieve our goals. We believe it is critical to maintain deep engagement in the region and to counter the malign influence of China and Russia.

The United States has long been committed to a Europe whole, free and at peace. This is a pivotal moment, and we urge the Department of State to use all available diplomatic means at its disposal to maintain peace in BiH and in the Balkans as a whole. We welcome a continued dialogue with you to determine how the Europe Subcommittee can be helpful in strengthening our engagement in the region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Jeanne Shaheen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jeanne" and last name "Shaheen" clearly distinguishable.

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Jeanne Shaheen  
United States Senator  
Chair, Subcommittee on Europe and Regional  
Security Cooperation

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ron Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ron" and last name "Johnson" clearly distinguishable.

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Ron Johnson  
United States Senator  
Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Europe  
and Regional Security Cooperation