

30th anniversary of Dayton: Unfinished peace project in Bosnia and Herzegovina and a roadmap towards Dayton 2.0

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Abstract

The Dayton Agreement has been hailed as one of the most successful feats of American diplomacy. After all, it has ended the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina that took more than 100,000 lives and lasted from 1992 to 1995. Yet, the agreement has become a central barrier to much-needed Bosnian nation-building in the past decade, fostering a dysfunctional political system that fuels ethnic tensions and allows secessionist movements, particularly in Republika Srpska (RS). The system's centering of ethno-national representation, recognized by the European Court of Human rights as discriminatory, has been used by Russia to continuously impede Bosnia's Euro-Atlantic integration. With the 30th anniversary of the Dayton Agreement, the incoming U.S. administration has an opportunity to complete the Dayton reform and put a stop to the negative trends simmering in past years. This essay offers a Dayton 2.0 roadmap by introducing concrete proposals that stand on security, political and human-rights pillars. If done together, such a feat would protect Bosnia and Herzegovina from a renewed conflict and shield American interests while countering Russia's malign presence in the Western Balkans.

Policy recommendations

- Unless the Bosnian state is made more functional and the current structural issues of Dayton addressed, instability and conflict as last resort remain likely. Carrying the Dayton 2.0 reform along three pillars – security, human-rights, and political – would mitigate malign foreign influence, put a stop to the slow disintegration of the country, and align Bosnia with the United States' broader interests in stabilizing the Balkans and advancing Euro-Atlantic integration.
- Central to the security pillar is the establishment of a New Security Pact – a coalition involving the United States, United Kingdom, Turkey and Norway to provide a transitional security framework for Bosnia until it achieves NATO membership. This includes commitments for defense assistance and security guarantees in order to engage with more complex points of the Dayton reform, the political and human-rights pillars.
- In the human-rights pillar, the United States should center the ECHR's rulings as a basis to reform the political system and eliminate ethnic discrimination. This needs to be complimented by empowering local agency through a citizens' assembly, a targeted usage of some OHR jurisdictions to enhance Bosnian institutional capacity and the introduction of number of new institutions that will streamline government functions and support EU integration processes.
- Through the political pillar, the United States should implement a carrot and stick approach to combine a mix of incentives for reforms with accountability for obstructionism. In aligning with the EU's Growth Plan for the Western Balkans, the United States can supplement the funds with its own strategic investment framework in the defense and energy sectors to foster greater energy independence and enhance defense and security interoperability. Expanded the scope of restrictive measures should include financial networks and secondary sanctions.

Introduction

We have entered the 30th anniversary of the Dayton Agreement. During the 1990s, Richard Holbrooke [mustered](#) all of the American exceptionalism in him – his sheer force of personality, energy and persuasiveness – to get the warring parties across the finish line. And he succeeded. The Dayton Agreement, signed in 1995, put an end to a bloody war, which had been preceded by a genocide and claimed more than 100,000 victims.

It is rightly considered one of the most successful feats of American diplomacy. Yet, on the eve of 30-year anniversary, the Dayton Agreement has become an insurmountable obstacle to building a unified Bosnian nation. Not only has it saddled Bosnia and Herzegovina with a dysfunctional governing system that could precipitate a renewed conflict, but it now directly works against American interests in the Balkans.

The incoming Trump administration has an opportunity to change this course. With a new approach it can rectify decades old-missteps – especially the past four years of misguided Biden policy towards Bosnia and Herzegovina - that has made the country, and ultimately the region, more unstable, more unpredictable, and more prone to conflict. Such a pivotal shift at this moment in European collective security would mark the end of territorial claims in the region, signal a definitive turn towards Euro-Atlantic integration for the Western Balkans, and counter Russian influence, thereby reducing the risk of potential conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the beyond. Most importantly, it would free up U.S. foreign policy capital to focus on greater global priorities. The following roadmaps offer a way to do so.

Dayton dysfunctionality

The Constitution established by the Dayton Agreement, known as the Annex IV, has been aptly described as one of the most [complicated](#) systems of government. Its decentralized democratic governance framework grants vast autonomy and veto power to the two entities – the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina and Republika

Srpska (RS) – effectively paralyzing state decision-making. More so, the power-sharing agreement is guided by three main ethnic groups in the country: Bosniaks, Serbs, and Croats – designated as “Constituent Peoples”. Citizens who do not identify within one of three ethnic groups are systematically marginalized.

As a result, the European Court of Human Rights (ECHR) has issued multiple rulings against Bosnia-Herzegovina, [deeming](#) its political and constitutional structure discriminatory. The European Union (EU) and NATO, to which Bosnia aspires to become full-fledged members, have both [recognized](#) the implementation of these ECHR rulings as mandatory criterion for membership. However, this highly decentralized and dysfunctional constitutional framework has rendered the Bosnian state incapable of functioning, providing effective governance or meaningful Euro-Atlantic integration.

Milorad Dodik, the pro-Russian president of RS entity, has spent the last two decades systematically tearing down state institutions, initiating a [number of processes](#) that constitute de facto [secession](#), and has continuously used RS institutional veto power to block NATO integration. To achieve these objectives, Dodik is [ready](#) to use violence. During last year, Dodik officially proposed an agreement on ‘[peaceful dissolution](#)’ of Bosnia and Herzegovina and has [refused](#) joining sanctions on Russia. Dragan Čović, former Croat member of the country’s tripartite presidency and head of the main Croat ethnonationalist party, the Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ BiH), has employed similar tactics. Encouraged by the international community’s failure to curb Dodik’s decades-long threats to peace and stability, Čović has replicated this approach – entrenching ethno-national exclusivity and [creating constitutional crises](#) by blocking implementation of election results. This has come at the expense of building a more just, democratic, civic oriented society.

The U.S. has [described](#) Čović’s efforts as a blatant attempt to establish a Croat electoral district within the Federation of BiH – de facto creating a third entity in

Bosnia. Furthermore, Čović has [blocked](#) the construction of the Southern Interconnection gas pipeline, a critical project aimed at diversifying Bosnia's energy supply away from Russian sources. This move directly threatens U.S. national interests, as the new pipeline is intended to bring U.S. LNG gas [directly](#) to Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Čović has found an ally within the international community to advance his initiatives. The Office of High Representative – the ultimate authority on interpreting the civilian aspects of the Dayton Constitution – is meant to be an impartial actor, ensuring that the constitution is upheld while prioritizing stability and progress. Instead, in October 2022, the OHR introduced changes to Bosnia and Herzegovina's [election law](#) that subordinated individual citizens' rights to the rights of the country's three major ethnic groups. This change directly caters to Čović, whose long-standing policy has been to assign greater electoral weight to Croat votes from areas dominated by HDZ BiH. It is also a personal victory of Croatia's Prime Minister Andrej Plenković, whose singular foreign policy goal was the imposition of the tailored election law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatian leadership later [boasted](#) of collaborating with the OHR to secure this outcome. High Representative Christian Schmidt's actions have since faced widespread domestic and international [criticism](#). Rather than pushing forward progressive reforms, the OHR has instead chosen to [appease](#) the nationalist leaders of the Serb and Croat parties.

By stepping outside the role of a neutral actor, the OHR has undermined its own reputation and credibility. What may have been a tactical victory for HDZ ultimately represents a strategic defeat for the representative of the international community in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This setback particularly affects the United States, which has long been the most ardent advocate for maintaining an empowered OHR with executive authority ardent – a position often at [odds](#) with the EU's approach in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Such dynamics have created a state of dysfunctionality that has rendered any attempt at meaningful reforms on Bosnia and Herzegovina's path to EU and NATO integration an abject failure. The European Commission's latest enlargement report has ranked the country as the [least prepared candidate](#) for EU membership. At its core, the issue lies in the fact that Euro-Atlantic institutions offer little incentive for local actors to move beyond the Dayton Agreement. The current system continues to [reward](#) ethnic nationalist parties, their leaders, and their efforts to maintain power through destabilization, leaving no space for genuine progress.

Fostering a foreign malign presence

Part of the dysfunctionality of the Dayton Agreement stems from the direct threats posed by foreign malign presence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Russia's war in Ukraine has intensified aggression and subversion across Europe, including in Bosnia, where NATO has recognized a possible [frontier](#) for Russian activities following the invasion. Moscow views Dodik's actions in RS as a way to undermine Western support for Bosnia and Herzegovina's NATO and EU aspirations. This strategy fits into a [larger geopolitical mosaic](#) to challenge the guiding Euro-Atlantic order in the Balkans. Russian influence thrives because the Dayton Agreement's institutional framework provides built-in mechanisms for disruption, allowing Moscow to efficiently [foster ties](#) with the [political elites](#) in [RS](#) and [HDZ BiH](#), further eroding Bosnia's political and territorial integrity.

None of this irredentism would be possible without the direct patronage from hardline regimes in neighboring Serbia and Croatia. Both have found a [common theme](#) with Russia in exploiting the weaknesses of the Dayton Agreement. Serbia's primary [national interest](#) in Bosnia and Herzegovina is secessionism of RS and the destabilization of the country. The recently adopted "All-Serb Assembly" declaration serves this purpose – it is a roadmap for realizing the historical project of "Greater Serbia" – now rebranded as "Serbian

world” (*Srpski svet*) – which seeks [unification](#) of all ethnic Serbs in the Western Balkans under [one state](#). Concurrently, “Greater Serbia” aligns seamlessly with Russia’s concept of “Greater Russia” (*Russkiy Mir*). It is the equivalent of the “denazification” campaign in Ukraine that underscores the need to have the Ukrainian statehood re-structured, re-established and returned to its natural condition as part of the Russian world within historical imperial borders.

Under the pretext of maintaining close parallel relations between Belgrade and Banja Luka, RS gradual secessionism is pursued by invoking the so-called “[original Dayton](#)”, an effort to establish a series of parallel institutions that systematically roll back [authority](#) and jurisdictions from the Bosnian state. Similarly, [Zagreb](#) has supported Čović and acted on his behalf, taking positions that [weaken](#) Bosnia and Herzegovina’s sovereignty.

Exploiting the Dayton Agreement to sustain a [maximum pressure](#), multi-front assault on Bosnia’s sovereignty and territorial integrity is a logical and strategic advantage for Russia. Most recently, the Russian ambassador to Belgrade [stated](#) that Moscow will continue “protecting Dayton, i.e., all the rights of RS acquired through Dayton negotiations” while also making [sure](#) to “use its position as permanent member of the UN Security Council to protect Serbia’s interests”. Under the “Russian World”, a [pale copy](#) of the ideology of “Greater Serbia”, Bosnia serves as an [outpost](#) that allows “the Russians and the Serbs to prevent the West from achieving all its goal”.

To show it is serious, Moscow has signaled readiness to escalate, [openly threatening](#) the Bosnian state with a possible Ukrainian scenario if it chooses to pursue NATO membership. However, this destabilization campaign of inflaming tensions extends beyond the Balkans. Moldova, a country at the forefront of countering Russian malign influence, recently [announced](#) that it had uncovered a Russian-led program in which dozens of Moldovan citizens were trained in disorder and civil unrest tactics by [Russian instructors](#) over the past few months in RS. In essence, the Bosnian

political system is now effectively used to export crises across Europe.

For a minimal investment of resources, Russia has gained direct access in fomenting crises in Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the Dayton Agreement is a direct accomplice in undermining U.S. interests – not just in Bosnia but across European security structures. This diversion of American attention and resources comes at a time when the U.S. is already stretched thin across Ukraine, the Middle East, and efforts to contain China in the Indo-Pacific.

Fixing the Dayton Agreement – a roadmap to Dayton 2.0

The U.S. has to come to terms with the fact that the Dayton Constitution is not a sacred text – it requires modernization, and urgently, as it is clearly incompatible with European values and the integration process. ECHR rulings are [evidence](#) of this position. Furthermore, the constitutional dynamic has fostered perpetual instability that foreshadows conflict. In 2024, the annual threat assessment report by the U.S. Intelligence Community clearly [signaled](#) an increased possibility of violent conflict in Bosnia and the wider Balkans region.

The U.S. approach to Bosnia and Herzegovina must be holistic in nature, actively working with European partners to ensure that the EU carries its share of the burden. Whenever there has been a synchronized effort between the U.S. and Europe, positive results have been achieved on Bosnia’s Euro-Atlantic path. It is a symbiotic relationship in which both sides can complement each other’s strengths. The EU would benefit from the deterrence capacity the U.S. possesses, along with accountability tools it often deploys in Bosnia. In turn, the U.S. initiative can leverage all the positive instruments of EU legislation, the political weight it carries in the region, and the allure of enlargement process to credibly engage in serious reform of Dayton through a comprehensive yet realistic roadmap. A proposed roadmap towards Dayton 2.0 rests on three major pillars that must be targeted

simultaneously: security, human rights and political reform.

Security pillar

To address the deteriorating security situation, the development of tailored deterrence measures should be at the center of U.S. policymaking in Bosnia. As [repeatedly](#) noted, the current peacekeeping structure under EUFOR [lacks](#) both sufficient size and capability. While [previous initiatives](#) calling for strengthening the mission as a standalone measure are welcome, they are ultimately insufficient. The plan to reinforce the presence in Brčko District, the [connective tissue](#) between two halves of RS, should instead be part of a broader, more comprehensive strategy. As suggested earlier this year, in the absence of NATO membership, a [New Security Pact](#) for Bosnia would constitute a serious, transformative strategy to strengthening the country's defense and security. The New Security Pact, which has been positively received by a number of policymakers I have spoken to over the past year, is a coalition spearheaded by the United States in alliance with the United Kingdom, Turkey and Norway. As a quadrilateral strategic partnership framework, these countries share [joint interests](#) and are best positioned to act in Bosnia, either due to their historical connections to post-Dayton nation-building, or their [active contribution](#) to [current](#) security dynamics in the region. Conceived as a transitional mechanism, in which these countries would pledge security assistance and commit to defending Bosnia and Herzegovina in the event of an attack, the pact would offer two major benefits.

First, it would stabilize the security situation, creating the necessary conditions to engage with the more complex aspects of the Dayton reform – namely, the political and human-rights issues. Furthermore, it would provide Bosnia with the space to continue focusing on the defense and security priorities outlined in the recently adopted [NATO Defence Capacity Building](#) package. This would include supporting [further development](#) of a well-trained, well-equipped, modern and professional security and defense

establishment in the country, enabling Bosnia to [significantly contribute](#) to NATO's deterrence and defense posture in Europe.

Second, it sends a strong political message. Strengthening the security framework would leave no space for RS, Belgrade or their supporters in Moscow to threaten Bosnia – whether in the present or during the active reform process. In effect, the New Security Pact defangs any destabilizations efforts, either peacefully or by force, until Bosnia becomes a NATO member. This provision must be clear – the New Security Pact is not a substitute for NATO membership, nor is it intended to entangle the U.S. and its allies in another peacekeeping mission in Europe. The U.S. national interest in preventing a new front of conflict with Russia in Europe is only insured through Bosnia and Herzegovina's full-fledged NATO integration. The ability of Russian proxies to block Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitutional modernization – including NATO integration – has become the most efficient platform for the permanent embedding of Russian geostrategic interests in the Balkans. Therefore, the New Security Pact serves as a temporary safeguard – an ironclad commitment to the Bosnian state that it will support its defense and security until it becomes a NATO member.

Human rights pillar

While the security dimension provides necessary maneuvering space, the central focus of U.S. efforts in Dayton reform should be the human rights pillar. Instead of supporting OHR in its acts [against](#) democratic reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina, the U.S. should advance Dayton reform through two key paths: human rights promotion centered on ECHR rulings and limited OHR interventions that, in effect, transfer part of OHR jurisdictions back to the Bosnian state to enhance functionality.

The value of the Dayton agreement lies in its incorporation of international legal standards and the European Convention on Human Rights and Freedoms into Bosnia and Herzegovina's Constitution. The Constitution explicitly recognizes these

principles as superior to any other national law or legal provisions. Holbrooke envisioned this structure as a natural mechanism for the gradual modernization and upgrade of the Dayton Agreement. It is therefore only logical to use ECHR rulings, all seven of them, as the [main platform](#) for democratizing Bosnia's election process and system of governance. To foster accountability among Bosnian citizens, the U.S., in coordination with the OHR, can draw upon [previous successful EU initiatives](#), or establish a new citizens' assembly – a democratic body composed of selected citizens from the country's major ethnic, demographic and civic groups. This assembly would be tasked with organizing and formulating recommendations to eliminate [discriminatory treatment](#) within Bosnia's political system. The presence of local agency is crucial, as it creates an organic foundation upon which the U.S. and the broader international community can build momentum, ensuring that local political actors are held accountable to their own citizens. In this process, the implementation of ECHR rulings must focus on ending territorial and ethnic discrimination while establishing robust protection mechanisms for both individual and group rights. Enforcing these rulings would set in motion the internal dynamics necessary for Bosnia's peaceful and prosperous development, shielding the country from the onslaught of ethno-national extremists and their external supporters. By removing the ethno-national levers of institutional division embedded in Dayton, foreign malign actors would lose their ability to [exploit](#) the system for destabilization. This fact alone should serve as a compelling reason for renewed U.S. engagement in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

At the same time, if Dodik and RS refuse to [recognize](#) the legitimacy of the High Representative and continue to reject any cooperation with the OHR while demanding its departure from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the OHR has the opportunity to counter Dodik on his own terms by initiating a de

facto reform that returns certain OHR jurisdictions to Bosnian institutions. Targeting specific aspects of governance would enhance functionality and allow the Bosnian state to assume greater local ownership over strategic processes in the country. To that extent, OHR could strengthen the executive branch of Bosnian parliamentary democracy by complementing the current framework of the Council of Ministers with a Prime Minister's office vested with stronger executive powers.

This also necessitates a changed decision-making process within the Council of Ministers, eliminating the ethnic veto mechanisms that have long served as a tool for obstructionist and secessionist actors. Removing this blockade would reduce bureaucratic bottlenecks and streamline government decision-making, facilitating Bosnia's progress on its Euro-Atlantic integration path. Additionally, the OHR could establish five new ministries – Agriculture and Forestry, Energy and Mining, Industry, Health, and Youth, Sport and Culture – to increase the efficiency of the central government. These ministries would provide Bosnia's state institutions with greater authority to negotiate and implement the EU acquis necessary for European integration. All of these portfolios fall within the broader framework of Dayton reform and are essential for strengthening the Bosnian state.

Republika Srpska has been vocal in [rejecting](#) the authority of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the only remaining institution not infused with ethno-national decision-making. The U.S., in coordination with the OHR, can strengthen the Bosnian legal structure by establishing the Supreme Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This court would issue legal decisions based on a simple majority vote, without entity or ethnic-based voting, ensuring a more impartial and effective judiciary. The creation of a Supreme Court would fulfill one of the [key 14 priorities](#) required for Bosnia's EU membership while also strengthening legal security with a body that ensures consistent legal interpretation and judicial practices across the country.

On the security side, the OHR has already [signaled](#) the need for progress on state property legislation and should push [forward](#) with bringing the law to resolve this issue. The only viable solution would be for the state property – including defense property – to be placed under the ownership of Bosnia and Herzegovina, while the law itself should foresee modalities for property use by lower levels of government. Creating a clear legal framework for state property offers dual benefits. Economically, it would create new opportunities for foreign direct investments by utilizing state-owned public assets and would fulfill one of the [5+2 conditions](#) required for the eventual close of the OHR. Militarily, it would meet a key [obligation](#) within Bosnia's NATO Membership Action Plan (MAP) by ensuring the proper registration of immovable defense properties.

Finally, the U.S. can work with the OHR to establish a new institution – an independent Defence Intelligence Agency – with appropriate powers and a chain of command reporting directly to the Ministry of Defense and the Bosnian Presidency. This agency would play a critical role in addressing [military intelligence](#) needs within the evolving security landscape of the Balkans, an arena that has seen increased geopolitical [activity](#) in recent years. Strengthening Bosnia's intelligence capabilities would not only enhance its ability to formulate and execute security policy but would also deepen cooperation between Bosnia and Herzegovina and NATO, reinforcing its long-term defense and strategic positioning.

Political pillar

The political pillar completes the Dayton reform roadmap. It ensures the implementation of human rights reforms by combination of a system of carrots and sticks, while the security pillar provides the necessary physical backing. The EU recently announced the [Growth Plan for Western Balkans](#) – a €6 billion initiative aimed at supporting enlargement members on their path to EU membership. With €1 billion designated for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Growth Plan has already proven to be an [attractive tool](#), securing

the participation of all local political. The U.S. should build on this initiative through an additional carrot in the case of Bosnia and Herzegovina by adding its own framework of targeted strategic investments through the [Western Balkans Investment Framework](#). Given that the WBIF already includes non-EU member states such as Norway, alongside major international financial organizations, U.S. participation would be a natural extension rather than an anomaly.

While the Growth Plan focuses on single market integration, advancing regional economic cooperation, digitalization, and road and railroad infrastructure, the U.S. could focus its efforts on two key areas: the defense industry and energy security. This division of labor serves multiple purposes. First, it avoids duplicating financial commitments made by the EU. Second, it eliminates the argument that U.S. involvement is a unilateral initiative. Third, it brings together both the U.S. and EU in a coordinated approach in incentivizing reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina. In the defense industry, strategic U.S. investments would facilitate the local development of deterrence capabilities, gradually reducing the need for a direct U.S. presence over time. Additionally, by supporting the transfer of military technologies and production processes, these investments would enhance Bosnia's [interoperability](#) with NATO, ultimately [benefiting](#) the alliance itself. In energy security, U.S. engagement aligns with its direct national economic interests. American liquefied natural gas (LNG) could replace Russian gas, diversifying Bosnia's energy sources through the construction of Southern Interconnection Pipeline. Furthermore, the U.S. could support the development of energy storage infrastructure and expand Bosnia's clean energy capacity, opening opportunities for U.S. companies to invest in the country's energy sector. A similar [agreement](#) has already been implemented in Kosovo. After all, supporting such initiatives not only strengthens Bosnia's energy independence but also disrupts the [weaponization of dependence](#) on Russian gas used as a coercive political tool in the region.

To ensure that the carrot is respected, the U.S. stick should strengthen its enforcement mechanisms by expanding its portfolio of sanctions. Previous [sanctions](#), such as travel bans and asset freezes in the United States, are of limited impact, as sanctioned individuals – including Dodik and other RS leaders – do not travel or hold assets in the U.S. However, expanding the scope of sanctions to target financial streams, restricting exports services of companies and enterprises that finance Dodik and Čović, their political parties and their secessionist activities, would constitute a more effective approach. Additionally, those who [facilitate](#) sanctions [evasion](#) should be targeted with secondary sanctions. Recent actions by the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) to [ensure compliance](#) among financial institutions in Bosnia and Herzegovina represents a step in the right direction.

By carefully balancing the usage of the carrot and stick, the U.S. can offer incentives and real support to actors who engage in good faith in reforms of the human rights dimension of the Dayton constitution while holding accountable those who persist in politics of secessionism, obstructionism and political blockade that perpetuate Bosnia's dysfunction. The U.S. should not hesitate to exercise this power when necessary.

Securing Bosnian sovereignty

American policymakers never intended for the Dayton Agreement to be a permanent solution. Within the first 15 years, it was supposed to be replaced or at least modernized with a more forward-looking constitutional framework. This never happened, despite serious [U.S. initiatives](#). However, in the years following Dayton, Holbrooke came to regret two key decisions about Bosnia. First, his insistence on keeping the name Republika Srpska for one of Bosnia's entities. It was "[a curse that the negotiators hung around Bosnia's neck](#)". Today, that entity and its leadership promote RS as a "greater-state" project that negates Bosnian statehood, [denies](#) genocide and

international court [rulings](#), and [glorifies](#) war criminals. Second, Holbrooke regretted forcing a ceasefire in early October 1995, just as the Bosnian and Croatian armies were on the outskirts of Banja Luka. Had those forces continued their campaign, Bosnia would be a different country today. As George Packer put it, it would have been the end of the Republika Srpska. Bosnia today would be a multiethnic state, messy but whole. The war would have had a winner. And there would have been no Dayton".

Both of these factors have proven to be significant obstacles to Bosnia and Herzegovina's security and viability. Unless the Bosnian state is made more functional and current Dayton's structural flaws are addressed, instability – and ultimately conflict – remain real possibilities. Reclaiming Bosnian sovereignty is therefore paramount. By bringing the EU in the Dayton 2.0 roadmap, the U.S. does not have to act alone. Instead, it can maximize the chances of building enough momentum to bring a broad coalition of actors on board in support of comprehensive reforms. Therefore, Trump's administration has an opportunity to achieve a transformative breakthrough that no previous U.S. administration has accomplished in the past 30 years: building a more functional Bosnian state. For a president who has branded himself as the "greatest dealmaker in American history," such an achievement would be too big to overlook – even among his fiercest critics.

Not everything about Dayton has been negative. It ended the war, provided a fragile peace, offered contours of the Bosnian nation, and cemented the U.S. as one of the few global actors capable of resolving one of the world's most complex crises of our time. Most importantly, it unequivocally established the [continuation](#) of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign country within the international community. As the U.S. [recalibrates](#) its global leadership strategy, the 30th anniversary of the Dayton Agreement may provide the right moment to inject one final push into the unfinished peace project in the Balkans.

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