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## United States Mission to the OSCE

### **Response to Croatian Foreign Minister Grabar-Kitarovic**

As delivered by Political Counselor Bruce Connuck  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
15 November 2005

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

The United States warmly welcomes Minister Grabar-Kitarovic to the Permanent Council and expresses our appreciation for her very detailed discussion of a broad range of issues including Croatia's efforts to enhance regional cooperation and to develop improved relations with its neighbors. Her statement indicated a positive and constructive approach that the United States welcomes.

We share the Minister's positive assessment of the working relationship between the Government of Croatia and the OSCE mission and look forward to its continuation.

We note and welcome the significant progress the Government of Croatia has made in addressing the issues covered by the mandate of the mission, and understand that the mission has been discussing a work plan to effectively address the remaining issues. We appreciate the Minister's detailed discussion today of her government's plans for completing the process of enabling refugee returns and promoting reconciliation, and we look forward to discussing all this issues with Head of Mission Fuentes during his upcoming appearance at the Permanent Council.

We welcome the Government of Croatia's determination to resolve outstanding issues as soon as possible, and have every expectation progress will continue on returns and property restitution as well as on occupancy and tenancy rights, and that work will move forward on other parts of the OSCE mandate such as media and police.

We take note of the fact that the first war crimes indictments have been transferred from the ICTY to Croatian courts - the indictments of General Rahim Ademi and General Mirko Norac, who are both charged with crimes against Serb civilians during military operations in 1993. We support the role the OSCE will take in monitoring these trials, in accordance with the Permanent Council decision on OSCE cooperation with the ICTY.

Croatia has made progress in its cooperating with the ICTY, the best way to judge its efforts will be by seeing results they produce. Success requires that Croatia fulfill its international obligations through the arrest or surrender of Ante Gotovina and his subsequent transfer to the ICTY. We agree with the Government of Croatia's statements that the apprehension of Gotovina is in the best interests of Croatia and welcome the Minister's strong statement today recognizing the importance of this transfer. It is a key step toward reconciliation in the region, and it is essential for Croatia's eventual full integration within Euro-Atlantic institutions.

In conclusion, Mr. Chairman, the United States also welcomes the very serious response of the Government of Croatia to the threat of Avian Influenza, as demonstrated by its implementation of a containment policy and approval of a National Pandemic Influenza Preparation Plan. All of our countries must take this threat extremely seriously.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.