

**NATO Headquarters Sarajevo**
NHQSA TALKING POINTS

Bosnia and Herzegovina



BG Valas (ICOM) remarks
Change of Command Ceremony. 10 May 2024

Rev 3

Good morning your Excellencies, ministers, fellow general officers and distinguished guests. thank you for joining us today.

First and foremost, I would like to thank my wife Abby, and my children Reese, Gray, and Elin, for your unwavering love and support as we begin this next journey. You have served with me every step of the way, through multiple assignments and deployments, and I would not be the officer, husband, and father I am today without you.

Admiral Munsch, thank you, for affording me the opportunity to lead this team of experienced, multinational experts.

Throughout my career, I have seen for myself the deep connections, strong friendships and improved capabilities that military partnerships can bring. And I look forward to using that experience to help the armed forces of Bosnia and Herzegovina maintain the high standards of training they have repeatedly demonstrated... and to increase the exchange of expertise between NATO allies and BiH, in order to build the institutional capacity of all BiH security institutions.

I would also like to thank the leadership teams who have supported me and my career, and who have shown their faith and trust in me by encouraging me to accept this prestigious assignment. They are too many to mention, but in particular, I would like to recognize GEN Hokanson, MG Ferguson, LTG Braga, LTG Sasseville, LTG Jensen, and BG David Pritchett.

BG McGaha, thank you for welcoming me to the command, extending all available resources to ensure a seamless transition. It is clear you have made an outsized impact on the mission during your tenure. I appreciate your efforts to ensure I am ready to carry on your success. I wish you only the best in your future endeavors.

Finally, thanks to the people of BiH for your continued efforts, to support peace and stability both at home and in the region. I look forward to partnering with you to increase defense institutional capacity and armed forces capability to improve the livelihood of every citizen. I am grateful to return to BiH and engage once again with the people that welcomed me so warmly over 23 years ago.

Thank you.



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Media Statement / Press release:

I am thankful for the opportunity to return to BiH after departing over 23 years ago at the conclusion of Stabilisation Force 6. I am ready to serve with this team of dedicated, experienced, multinational experts, working tirelessly to increase the defense institutional capacity and armed forces capability of our BiH partners to ultimately improve the livelihood of every citizen. We remain committed, as renewed regional security challenges remind us of our need to continuously strengthen our partnerships, capacity, and capabilities.