

Remarks by Honorable Ambassador Charles L. English

Dear guests, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon and welcome.

Today we mark the breaking of ground for the new Embassy of the United States of America in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is an exciting and important day for our Embassy community. I want to thank each of you here today for joining us on this early spring afternoon.

Today, the new American Embassy in Sarajevo takes a giant step forward in its progression from a vision to a reality. Over the next two years, a modern, well-designed functional, and aesthetically pleasing facility will take shape on this location.

I have been asked many times since my arrival in Bosnia and Herzegovina about the US commitment to this country and about our future here. This site, and the facility that will soon occupy it, says more than any words I can offer.

This new American Embassy will be a strong and visible symbol of the partnership that exists between the United States of America and Bosnia and Herzegovina. It will be a symbol of our friendship, of our deep cooperation and of the democratic values that we share. The new Embassy is a major U.S. investment in this country, and an expression of confidence in the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina as an independent, stable and multi-ethnic state capable of taking its rightful place in European and EuroAtlantic structures.

It is a privilege for me to represent the United States as we break ground and begin construction of the new American Embassy in Bosnia and Herzegovina. I want to recognize several individuals and organizations who have contributed in critical ways to making this day possible.

I would like to thank the men and women of the Department of State's Office of Overseas Building Operations. The members of the OBO team provide strong management and leadership in planning, obtaining resources and bringing the many parts of this complex project together. We are honored that OBO's Project Executive for Europe Emile Corneille is with us today to participate in the ceremonial groundbreaking and to meet our partners in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Next, let me thank all those here in Sarajevo who have contributed so much to this project. There are far too many people who deserve our gratitude for me to name everyone individually, so I will name just a few

organizations that have played especially key roles: the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of BiH, the Ministry of Treasury of BiH, Canton Sarajevo and particularly the Institute of Construction of Canton Sarajevo, and the Municipality of Novo Sarajevo.

I thank you all for your cooperation and joint efforts in making this day possible. Finally I would like to thank the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina for being such warm hosts in your beautiful country. As I have said many times, the United States is the best friend that Bosnia and Herzegovina has in the world. This building of this facility is a symbol of our commitment to you and of our commitment to helping you proceed toward the bright future you so richly deserve. It represents our promise to help you assure that you take your place, in the words of President George W. Bush, in “a Europe that is whole, free, prosperous, and at peace.” Thank you.