

First, because they are left starving, and, second, because their idleness represents a terrible waste of resources. With an economy that does not yet exist, and an unemployment rate estimated at 75-85%, it is clear the Bosnia government cannot do much for its military, unless a rational program of reconstruction, with adequate investment, is started immediately.

Instead, the financial side of the "reconstruction" is left to the IMF and the World Bank, which are imposing literally human sacrifice. Something is beginning to break though, as shown by the July 17 attack against the World Bank made in Washington by Bosnian Prime Minister Hasan Muratovic. He revealed that the World Bank credits to Bosnia are nothing but the debts of former Yugoslavia, i.e., the entity responsible for the genocide, that Bosnia has been forced to recognize. But, thanks to World Bank blackmail, Bosnia was forced to surrender on March 1, in order to escape a credit strangulation from virtually every source.

It was following the successful blackmail, that the IMF-World Bank apparatus ensured the collaboration of agencies such as AID. "Why should the U.S. function as a puppet of these financial institutions?" asked a Bosnian source. "It is clear to a child that talking about reconstruction, while accepting this system of usury, cannot lead to any reconstruction, let alone peace."

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## A visit with Msgr. Franjo Komarica

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# 'Who will stand up for principles in Bosnia?'

On July 25, Msgr. Franjo Komarica, the bishop of the Bosnian city of Banja Luka, spoke in the library of the Woodstock Theological Center at Georgetown University in Washington, D.C., and answered questions from a select group of religious personalities, diplomats, think-tank leaders, Bosnia experts, and journalists, including *EIR*'s Umberto Pascali. The mostly Catholic audience was deeply moved, not only when the bishop described the condition he, his priests and nuns, and their faithful had endured during the worst period of the Greater Serbian aggression, when he resisted all threats and blackmail to abandon his diocese. (In the diocese of Banja Luka, Catholics and Muslims were almost 100% "cleansed," at least 412 parishioners and 7 religious people were tortured and killed, and almost all the churches and mosques were destroyed or damaged.) But especially, when he looked the attendees in the eye and appealed to their individual, personal

sense of responsibility as Americans to realize the Christian principle of justice in Bosnia: "Do I, in your opinion, expect too much?"

Another moment of visible emotion came when the bishop, who stressed that the problems for Bosnia and former Yugoslavia come *from outside powers*, recalled his answer to a British diplomat who had accused him of having "thwarted many plans" by remaining in Banja Luka. And when he said: "The United States of America expressed its view in Dayton: a multi-ethnic, multicultural entity, territorial integrity, living together. However, representatives of other powers said to me, 'We shall do everything to ensure that the Dayton Agreement fails.'"

During his visit to Washington, as he did last June, Monsignor Komarica had meetings, including with many members of Congress, and visited the White House. The following are excerpts of the dialogue at the Woodstock Theological Center. We especially thank Smiljan Corkovic for his help in preparing this for publication. The exchanges have been edited by *EIR*.

**Komarica:** . . . There are many documents issued by single Catholic representatives, or joint documents, that clearly expose actions of Croatian politicians, and clearly distance themselves from these actions, when they did not conform to civilized, to the values of human dignity or democracy. I'd like to repeat: Where and when people paid attention to the voice of religious leaders who were placing emphasis on universal human values and on protection for every single person and his or her possessions, we succeeded in saving human beings, in reducing the evil. It is my deep conviction, that religious leaders must be *ex posto* [visible and available], both in convenient times and in inconvenient times, to attest to the truth, the bitter truth about human beings, human values, and human rights. In all our frequent joint declarations, we tried hard to uphold universal human values, that is, all those values that adorn European as well as American culture.

We tried to uphold a clear and consistent position on the principles expressed by the [Catholic] Church teachings. . . . That is, protection of every human being, every ethnic or religious group. As far as Bosnia and Hercegovina is concerned, we were steadfast in our stand for her territorial integrity within her internationally recognized borders, recognized by the U.S.A. and others, her multi-ethnic and religious, her multicultural character. Out of our many statements, I would like to single out for you our joint statement from January of this year, after Dayton; I would recommend it to you. In it, there is a summary of the past, the presence of the Catholic Church and other religious and ethnic communities, of the suffering during the war, and our views regarding the future of this country. Resolutely, I invite my faithful, but also all other people of good will, to the process of forgiveness and reconciliation. Resolutely, I invite all the people whose rights were taken away, who suffered injustice, to forgive, but we

also ask for forgiveness. As believers, we are certainly convinced that there will be no real future, neither for individuals, nor for peoples, nor for that whole country, without a certain openness to one's faith, to acts of God, i.e., to a renewal of one's inner person.

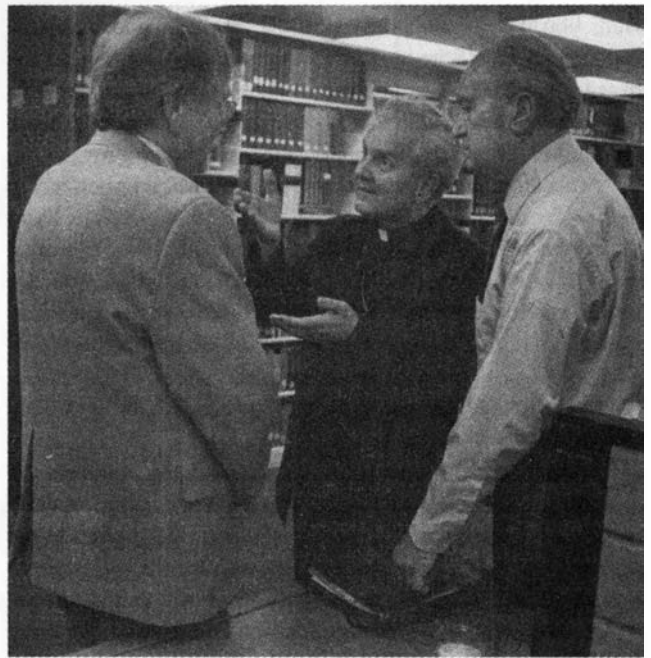
As far as the specific case of Banja Luka, I personally, together with my associates, tried hard to help not only Catholics, but equally, all my other fellow citizens from Banja Luka, as well as all people of that region. My fellow citizens from Banja Luka know that very well, as do the people from that whole area. And I do not regret I acted this way, despite multiple victims, even deaths. For they also, my murdered priests, my nuns, and my faithful, were not murdered because they harmed others, but because they were peace-loving, because they were helping others. I am convinced there are many magnanimous, good people, people who care about humanity, who will give us help to persevere in this region, and help us in our firm stand, in our love for peace and brotherly reconciliation. Even this gathering today, to me so precious, presents more encouragement for me to persist on my present course. I'd be grateful if you would ask questions, which I will try to answer. . . .

**Q:** Your words and your actions have certainly reflected the teaching of the Gospel, and one can imagine the difficulties. . . . And yet, there is a widespread idea that within the Federation, others in the Catholic leadership have not been always so consistent . . . some of them being more supportive of nationalism.

**Komarica:** I have mentioned, and I would like to underline, that whenever politicians respected the appeals and the demands of religious leaders, they have behaved better, acted more humanely, more democratically. I'd like to say, that atheism spread among all the peoples, more or less, even to the members, nominal members, of religious communities, to a greater or lesser extent, and that applies also to the Croatian people. A certain manifestation of it is not foreign to the United States either, although it is not as common as in Europe and its many countries, and that is nationalism. It always rises and gains strength in places where the Catholic universal values do not have strong roots, or where the universal Catholic message is not given its due consideration. A part of the Croatian population has not been spared this, either. According to the logic of things, a nationalism of one side gives birth to nationalism on the other side.

**Q:** . . . Some wonder whether we can realize [a united Bosnia], given the history of the region. . . . I spent some time in Burundi and neighboring Rwanda. . . . Both groups are heavily Catholic, but pluralism did not work. . . . In Cyprus, because of the Greek and Turk animosity, the solution was separation. . . . Can we have any hope? . . .

**Komarica:** In my opinion, this is one of the central questions of American and European politics, concerning not only Bos-



*Monsignor Franjo Komarica at the Woodstock Theological Library: "I appeal for the extension of the stay of the American troops. . . . This fragile peace—or a better term would be this stoppage of war—cannot continue without the American presence; it will not survive."*

nia, but many other similar situations in the future, and not just in Europe. It depends on whether the politicians will find the right answers. I cannot speak about a situation in Africa . . . but I can say that one must expect that in [Bosnia], a Serbian, a Croatian, and a Muslim would think the same way. The acceptable differences regarding the nationality, religion, and to a certain extent culture, are not as large as what they have in common, their need for each other. . . . Unfortunately, this region is a witness of really bloody conflicts, especially when the states and the countries were in the process of change, when one state disappeared from the Earth and another appeared. In 1878, when the Ottoman Empire was retreating, the coming of Austria witnessed great conflicts. When the Austrian Empire was perishing, there were conflicts again. When World War II came, and German Nazism and Italian Fascism started to make inroads here, new conflicts came about. Now, when Europe is in a stage of new democratic changes, while eastern communism tries, through [Serbian strongman Slobodan] Milosevic, desperately using force, to survive at all costs, again conflicts have erupted. Not only communism, but Milosevic's centralism.

As far as the common people are concerned, I am still convinced that the people in Bosnia are willing, a great percentage of them, to live together. However, the main nationalistic political leaders have sown a lot of mistrust among their people toward the peoples or groups of other nationalities or faiths. And not only mistrust, but a lot of blood was shed.

Here you have these deep wounds, that we have to assess properly, that will be very hard to heal. I say again, that the people, the faithful, are more willing to show forgiveness and reconciliation and to live together than those that are unbelievers. We will do our best, from our side.

Let us understand each other: All the politicians belonging to the Croatian people are not believers and they do not share our views, but we have the impression that all Croatian politicians, all Serbian politicians, and all Muslim politicians are just pawns in the hands of others, who use them to make their moves. And that is the reason that the situation there will go according to those that are making hats for us, without bothering to take measurements of our heads.

**Q:** Much of the discussion here in Washington concerns the role of the U.S. forces in Bosnia and the administration position that the troops will be out by the end of the year. What do you think will be the outcome if this happens?

**Komarica:** There is a certain opinion among us that the arrival of the American soldiers represented for us a temporary salvation, and that with their arrival they prevented many, many victims. It is certain, that the peoples of Bosnia and Hercegovina will forever remain in debt to the American people and the Americans who came at this tragic moment to help us. For that very reason, since without the American troops there would have been no realization of at least some sort of peace, it is crucial, in my opinion, that American politicians do not spoil, with a rash and reckless decision, everything that has been achieved so far. Certain of these achievements were invaluable. In other words, I absolutely appeal for the extension of the stay of the American troops. I am of the opinion that as time goes on, there is less danger for the American people there from any extremist groups, because their very arrival, that first phase, was the most critical and risky. But this fragile peace—or a better term would be this stoppage of war—cannot continue without the American presence; it will not survive.

And for that I plead to you, and I have seen that there is willingness among many leading politicians, in Congress, to suggest to President Clinton to extend the mandate of the U.S. troops, which makes me very happy. Both parties support this, the Republicans and the Democrats. I plead for the understanding of the American people for the peoples of Bosnia and Hercegovina, who have suffered greatly. That can only be a benefit to the prestige of the American nation in the whole world. Forgive me, if I meddle into politics, since politics is not my area of competence.

**Q:** What actions can the Catholic Church take in Banja Luka to build peace? . . .

**Komarica:** This whole region of my diocese is geopolitically and economically tied to its surrounding area, and especially to bordering Croatia. This region before the war had 80% of its commerce and financial transactions with Croatia

and Slovenia, not with Sarajevo. And, now, there is a kind of contradiction here, we [Croats of Banja Luka] have been expelled from there—as I said there are 8,000 of us left out of 80,000 before the war—and now my co-citizens, the Serbs from Banja Luka, are asking me that I help re-open those bridges across the Sava River [connecting Banja Luka with Croatia] and the roads to Croatia and through Croatia to Slovenia, so that the people of Banja Luka can survive economically. In other words, we can be very useful there and serve as a very valuable bridge connecting one nation with others. As well, through our persistent, peace-loving stand, if that is made possible for us, we shall strive to exemplify Christian values, which exist for all men, as they possess a universal character. I admit that this is going to be very difficult, hopeless for many. For, if only the elderly are left, those over 60 years, very few children, very few youths, then there is a good possibility, if human rights are not protected there for these people, that even this tiny remainder will try to leave.

That is why I ask our neighbors, and also ask you Americans, ask the whole world, “If we are guilty, prove it to us that we are guilty; but if we are not guilty, why are you punishing us so cruelly?” If you are punishing us knowing that we are innocent, then you are criminals. You have no right, then, to call yourselves humane and compassionate people, no right to call yourselves democrats, no right to say that you are protecting human rights. Thus, I expect of true democrats, of politicians that take human rights to heart, to intercede more resolutely on behalf of principles rather than pursue their “interests.”

I have asked Chancellor [Helmut] Kohl, Van der Brook in Brussels, and President [Jacques] Chirac in Paris, “Do we have a right to expect that you behave as model politicians, politicians representing ideals of democracy?” They told me, “You have that right.” I said, “If you say that, then say it [to the whole world], and put [the words] into practice.” Some other politicians, also well known, told me, “Stop walking down a blind alley,” that is, it does not make sense any longer to devote your energy to fighting for principles, today only interests count. I would be very interested to see which of the politicians are going to win, either those fighting for the principles of civilization, human rights, etc., or those pursuing the pragmatic interests of realpolitik. Permit me to express my deep conviction that American politicians will persevere in their defense of principles. Do I, in your opinion, expect too much? What do you say? Do I expect too much, or are my expectations realistic?

**Q:** In November, my government invited the architect of genocide in Bosnia and Croatia, Slobodan Milosevic, to come to Dayton—along with [Croatia’s President] Franjo Tudjman, who has a lesser responsibility—to determine the future of Bosnia. I just wonder if the Dayton Accord will do more than divide Bosnia? . . .

**Komarica:** I do not know if there is any agreement to divide

Bosnia between Belgrade and Zagreb, but I am fully aware of the internationally recognized Bosnia and Hercegovina, recognized by the Americans, by President Clinton, by leading European states, and Bosnia's fate will be decided by these powers, especially the Contact Group [the main Western countries involved in the Bosnia negotiations]. If, for example, a representative of one of the states of the Contact Group tells me, "We'll do everything to ensure that Dayton does not succeed"—this is neither Milosevic, nor [Bosnia's President Alija] Izetbegovic nor Tudjman. Hence, I ask these politicians of the world, "All right, agree first among yourselves on the fate of Bosnia, reach a conclusion, whatever that is, but it must be as close to normal living as possible for people, for the common man, especially for those common people that have been downtrodden."

**Q:** A Few days ago, Cardinal Kuharic of Zagreb was in Banja Luka. Was the visit connected to the coming elections? Banja Luka is within the Republika Srpska, while Croats are mostly in the Federation part of Bosnia. Are you planning to work more with the Republika Srpska or the Federation authorities?

**Komarica:** Last Monday, July 15, there was a church Holy Day, a feast of the patron saint of the whole diocese and the cathedral, St. Bonaventure, and for that occasion I invited Cardinal Kuharic, or rather a delegation from the Croatian Bishops Conference, to come and visit Banja Luka, because during the whole period of the war nobody ever came—a delegation of the American Catholic Church came from the U.S.A., a delegation from Slovenia, someone came from Austria, from Germany, but none from Croatia. Fifteen days ago we had a delegation of French bishops, Cardinal Simonis of Utrecht from the Netherlands also came, because they consider it absolutely necessary to come and see what is happening there, on the ground. Obviously, we felt, for too long, completely isolated, and that nobody cares about us. We did send out SOS's, "Help us, not only us Catholics, but everyone," but even today politicians here told me, "It was impossible to reach you."

[The fact that I could not be reached] must have been for you politicians a clear sign of horrible things going on there, when borders were cemented so hard that no one could come and see what is going on. Hence, every visit was a huge joy for us, whoever came. Whenever any of the church leaders came visiting me here in Banja Luka, I would invariably take them to the Orthodox *vladika* and Muslim *mufti* to talk to them. And so it was this time with Cardinal Kuharic, for I was trying to have really good relations with the other religious leaders in this town, this region. I firmly believe that this has prevented an even worse fate for the people there.

As far as your second question [regarding the difficulties of maintaining connections with Croatia within Republika Srpska], you all surely know by now that in Banja Luka, which is the city of my birth, this is a home of my parents and

grandparents; we are now living incognito, we don't belong to anybody, and that is sheer nonsense. We do not belong to Pale or Republika Srpska, since they are trying their best to expel us. We do not belong to Sarajevo, because Sarajevo cannot today do anything for us, as Izetbegovic tells me. We belong neither to Zagreb (which is another story), nor to Belgrade, as they are chasing us away, nor to Brussels and the European Union, nor to New York and the UN. It is too early for Heaven, God does not call yet; we do not want to go to Hell, so where? Whom would you give your trust to? Whom would you ask for help? I ask help from every person, as I wish to see that there is Good within each person, I do not want to write off anyone, not even the one who does evil, as I would like to help him do good. I strive to save as many as possible . . . not only people, but also to save the principles, as this is a question of principles at the foundations of our civilization.

**Q:** On July 12, you organized a meeting in Banja Luka with several European parliamentarians of the second biggest political formation in Europe, the Popular Party. For the first time, the Serb mayor of the city participated, stressing the priority of facilitating the return of the victims of ethnic cleansing. The imam, Halilovic, participated. It was said that many Serb citizens want peace, but they are scared, scared of [Radovan] Karadzic and his group. Considering also the deep respect the leadership in Sarajevo has toward you, what do you think you can do for reconciliation and also to make possible the emergence of a new Serbian leadership in Bosnia? . . .

**Komarica:** I am very happy that this meeting took place in Banja Luka, that a team of European parliamentarians answered my request and came, as I had insisted and pleaded in Brussels for that to take place. They saw for themselves that they could do more than what they have done so far. They decided to persist in this direction, as that part of Bosnia must not remain closed, isolated from all the currents that must flow through the whole of Europe and especially through the areas that were under communism. I said to a Serbian reporter who asked my views after that meeting: "I thank God this meeting took place, but I am sorry that my fellow citizens, Serbs, did not adequately benefit from this opportunity, from the Europeans' visit to our city." I have somewhere a copy of a certain opposition newspaper, a Serbian liberal newspaper from Banja Luka, that described this meeting: "We Serbs did not want to make it to Europe, although it is Europe we need"; "now Europe came to us, to Banja Luka, but we fled from Banja Luka." Obviously, this must be seen as a move organized by progressive, democratic forces in Europe, which must infiltrate not only Republika Srpska, but the whole Bosnia and Hercegovina. . . .

Chancellor Kohl told me, after his talks with President Clinton, that Europeans must take a more active role in Bosnia and Hercegovina, in a positive sense, of course. This gives

me additional hope, that I must not get weary on that “shooting range” in Bosnia and Hercegovina. An English diplomat told me: “How did you manage to stay there [Banja Luka]? It was not meant for you to remain there; by remaining there, you have thwarted many plans” [laughter]. I hope I did not thwart them in the negative sense, but you are here to assess the value of this; I stand before you in judgment.

**Q:** What has been the personal toll on you, how did you maintain your equilibrium, between your faith and your daily life?

**Komarica:** I am sure I look very strange to you, one could say as one who has lost his marbles. This is a consequence of a horrible terror, psychological terror, and I can truly only thank my spiritual life, my faith, the power of faith, that I did not lose my mind. And I have a personal experience: From the time that I consciously crossed out the importance of my life, that the importance of my life is greater than any other person’s life around me, I felt miraculously free. I was no longer aware of the dangers I was exposed to every day. I simply did not register them, I did not want to pay attention to them, literally I took every day as the day I was going to be killed. I wanted obstinately to confront the evil that was spreading like magma to crush us all, for I considered that to be my duty. I wanted to go and see my priests, my nuns, members of my congregation, and whenever the churches were being destroyed, whenever they were terribly maltreated, I went right into the hands of criminals. I was kidnapped many times, and from a human standpoint I had no chance to save myself. I tried talking to the people that were hitting me, abusing me, beating me, in front of whom I was forced to lie down, I tried talking to them like human beings, “Don’t do this, folks, this is a crime, it is no good.”

It is not proper to talk about oneself, but I remember a scene when they ordered me to stand as they were about to shoot me. There were 10 of them, ready to shoot. I told them: “Aren’t you men sinning against your soul? One day you will reach this moment of death, and you will have to go before God.” “Why would you care about us? Your time is over.” “Good,” I told them, “I will pray now for you, so that God can forgive you, to bring a change to your hearts, but you must tell me how I should behave, should I stand facing you or turn my back to you.” I saw that the situation was hopeless, they were going to kill me. They said: “You are just joking with us.” “Good and well,” I said. “I ask you to take good care of yourselves, if you are going to kill me, let God forgive you, but I ask you again, don’t do it, for your sake, not mine. You will bring trouble on yourselves, for one cannot play with God, a man ought not play with God.”

But I have also seen magnificent examples from simple believers, the way they behaved in these terrible moments, when they were horribly maltreated physically, when they were being murdered, or about to be murdered, but survived. . . .

## Jacques Chirac and the Menchurian Candidate

by Katharine Kanter

In mid-June, several hundred Indians from virtually every nation in the Americas descended for a week upon the National Assembly in Paris. They had been called together by the French government for a meeting on “indigenism,” ostensibly under the aegis of Philippe Séguin, president of the Parliament; however, according to what one might describe as well-founded rumor, M. Séguin was quite literally coerced by President Chirac into sponsoring the gathering, to the extent that he did not turn up at the plenary session where he was to be keynote speaker. Among the scenes of absolute madness over which Séguin was expected to preside, was an *animist ceremony* in the state apartments of the Assembly, and a *raising of totems* in the gardens. A note in the gossip column of the weekly *L’Événement du jeudi* recalled that in 1992, the 500th anniversary of Columbus’ arrival on American shores, M. Chirac refused to allow the City of Paris, of which he was then mayor, to take part in any celebration because he believes that Columbus et al. were a “misfortune.”

Double-take. Chirac? Friend of the Indians? The man who told a gathering of top French military brass but two months before, that his experience as a colonel in one of the most savage colonial wars ever fought, the Algerian War (1.5 million dead), was “by far my greatest experience as a human being,” the man who said 18 months ago, that he quite understood that French people worry about African immigrants because of the “smells and cooking odors” in tenement housing? The man who has just abolished conscription in favor of an all-volunteer army for out-of-area deployments?

### Friend of the Indians?

Be that as it may, here we have Chirac, in his new incarnation as Friend of the Indians, sending messages to the French embassies all over South, Central, and North America, that they search out and rope in Indians suitable for a conference in the City of Light.

Sources at the conference told this news service that although UNESCO and other communitarian-indigenist