

Faris Nanic: Bosnia is fighting for its economic sovereignty

Faris Nanic was the keynote speaker at an FDR-PAC policy forum in Washington, D.C. on Jan. 4. Until October 1996, Nanic was the chief of staff of Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic; he is currently general secretary of the Croatian branch of Bosnia's ruling Party of Democratic Action, and director of TWRA Press Agency in Zagreb.

Thank you very much. Madame LaRouche, Mr. LaRouche, ladies and gentlemen, dear friends. First I would like to apologize. My English is not very good, maybe some of the terms that I will be using will not be adequate, but I think that the ideas that I'm about to present here will be understood.

We had to face a vicious aggression, and genocide, that took place from 1992 until the Dayton agreement, the Dayton Accord was signed. And we managed to defend ourselves. We managed to survive and to defend the core of our nation. However, now that the Dayton peace accord has been signed, we have another battle to fight, a battle which will be much longer, even much harder to conduct: a battle for sovereignty, especially economic sovereignty, of our country, and the battle against new genocide imposed on us by various international or supranational agencies that are trying to deprive us of our right to development.

We think that the Dayton agreement, the Dayton Accord, that we have signed was not a perfect one. You will see from the map of Bosnia [see **Figure 1**] how it has been divided into what the Dayton agreement called two "entities." One of the "entities" is the Federation of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which is a federation of the Bosniac and Croat population, consisting of approximately 51% of the country. The other is the so-called Serb Republic, or Republika Srpska, which is controlled by a fascist regime, which has conducted the genocide against the Muslim Bosniac and Croat population.

This was the so-called "reality," "political reality" that we had to accept, and we have accepted, providing that the Dayton agreement, that all provisions of the Dayton agreement are implemented fully.

The idea is to create, to ensure the freedom of movement all over the country, and the right of each and every refugee to return to his home, which is unfortunately not now the case. If we manage to do this, with the help of the NATO troops, of the international military and political presence in Bosnia, then the Dayton agreement will fulfill its purpose. *If not*, then

FIGURE 1
The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina



another, new war can easily break out, after the withdrawal of the international—now they call it SFOR troops.

Real reconstruction must begin

We have 18 months of the SFOR deployment in Bosnia, that we have to use to stabilize the country inside, from within. Because there are two things that we have to bear in mind. The first I already mentioned: the return of refugees to their homes. This means mainly the Muslim and Croat population back to the Serb Republic, to the cities and towns that they inhabited, predominantly inhabited, before the war, before genocide had occurred. Second, to start *real* reconstruction of the country. Because, we think that development and real reconstruction of the country are the only guarantee for the future, for stable and durable peace. If we cannot provide development and reconstruction of the country, the new war is very, very probable.



Bosnian leader Faris Nanic addresses the FDR-PAC in Washington on Jan. 4. To the left are Helga Zepp LaRouche and Lyndon LaRouche. Without economic reconstruction, Nanic told the audience, there will be no peace or stability in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

By reconstruction, we also mean modernization. Bosnia-Herzegovina is not one of the typical Third World countries that gained independence during the 1960s and 1970s. It is an *industrialized* nation. Of course, not at the level of western Europe, but it *is* an industrialized nation, a nation with a skilled labor force, with engineers, with experts in various fields, with a lot of industrial capacities that are partly damaged or devastated, but can be utilized. And, it's not a great effort to help Bosnia to recover itself from the devastations and the results of the war and aggression.

What does it mean? If Bosnia and the whole region [see **Figure 2**] of the Balkans and Southeastern Europe were to be left out of the modernization process, then there will not be only Bosnia at stake, and the stability in Bosnia, but also the whole region. You have Serbia, which is in a very bad position now. You have the problem of the fascist regime of Mr. [Slobodan] Milosevic, who is one of the co-signatories of the Dayton agreement, who is not prepared, who is not ready to recognize the results of the local elections. You have the problem of the ethnic Albanian majority in the province of Kosova, which can blow up any minute. You have the problem of Macedonia, a country which has a large Albanian minority, the country which was been the subject, the object of the second Balkan War. So, you risk a lot of things if you leave Bosnia and the whole region out of the development and reconstruction program.

The question is: Is the expense of helping the region to

recover, to develop, greater than the expense of infinite military police and political presence of the international community in the region? Because, if you want peace there, if you want stability, without providing the things that I've just men-

FIGURE 2
The Balkans



tioned, then you will have to face the fact that the military presence should continue on indefinitely.

So, what is the greater expense? What is better for us to do? What is better for the world to do?

We have about 800,000 to 1 million refugees outside the country. We want to get those people back to the country. They're all over Europe. They can not find any jobs. They are living on humanitarian aid. But, in order to get those people back, you will have to create the political environment. You have to create security for them, and you have to create jobs for them in the country. And, you will not be able to create jobs, unless you restart the engines of the economy, the industry and the agriculture.

Even the educated people that we have now in the country, the skilled personnel, if there will be no reconstruction, they will slowly leave the country, go all over the world to search for means to live.

Major investment is needed

When I'm talking about the reconstruction process, I'm thinking about major investments into infrastructure, industry, agriculture, which will be able to employ a great number of people, to give them hope and to restart the whole process of the national economy. So, these investments should be productive investments, directed toward carefully selected areas, carefully selected branches, and which will then, with the course of time, initiate development of the whole country. This will also prove to the secessionist Serbs, who were poisoned by the propaganda from Belgrade, that it is much better for them to stay in Bosnia and to search for their happiness in Bosnia, in the country, than to be somehow connected to Serbia, on the basis of humanitarian aid. So it will have a double effect.

Major investments. We have had a couple of international donor conferences which, so far, have collected \$1.8 billion for the reconstruction of the country. The modest estimates of the Bosnian government say that we have about \$50 billion of war damage, direct war damage in the country. The question is: Is it possible, can we, by organizing donor conferences, really help in reconstruction of the country?

Out of this \$1.8 billion, only \$300-500 million has been realized so far, through smaller projects—community projects like repairing of the sewage system, the water system, or electrical supply system. Nothing more; nothing more than that.

We were discussing a lot about the possibility of a new, what we called, of course, conditionally, Marshall Plan for Bosnia, which is a kind of commitment by the United States and by the rest of the Western world, to develop itself through development of others, as they did in 1945, in the postwar, totally devastated Europe. The amount of engagement, the amount of financial means necessary for reconstruction of Bosnia, is far, far beyond what has been invested into western Europe. So, I'm talking about the Western world investing

into Bosnia's economy, investments which will, in a reasonable period of time, bear fruit. We are not talking about humanitarian aid. Bosnia does not need humanitarian aid as its permanent solution. Bosnia needs financial means. It needs money to restart its engines. And then you will see that Bosnia will be a very good partner to all the countries, to companies, to private sectors, to private entrepreneurs, to the state sector, public sector all over the world. That is the first thing.

Bosnia and the Eurasian land-bridge

Second, Bosnia, being a very interesting European country, with a Muslim population majority, with its multi-ethnic, multicultural character for more than 1,000 years, can represent an ideal springboard for the Western countries to be involved, to jump into a big adventure that I think will be one of the subjects of the next century: the Eurasian land-bridge, as they call it [see **Figure 3**].

Bosnia has become—you see where the Eurasian land-bridge should go. Bosnia can be a springboard, Bosnia can connect, and is able to connect, various nations of Islamic countries with western Europe, because we have one advantage: We are a European country with a Muslim majority. We can easily communicate, culturally communicate, with Europeans, but also with the Muslim world. This is a great benefit.

We have a series of countries on the line of this new Silk Road, the land-bridge, with which Bosnia has very good diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations. The key countries, actually, in this region are Turkey and Iran, and these are the major—these are the countries that had politically, financially, and militarily helped Bosnia when it had its worst times, in 1992, 1993, 1994. So, we have the means to help the others, to go into that great adventure of the 21st century.

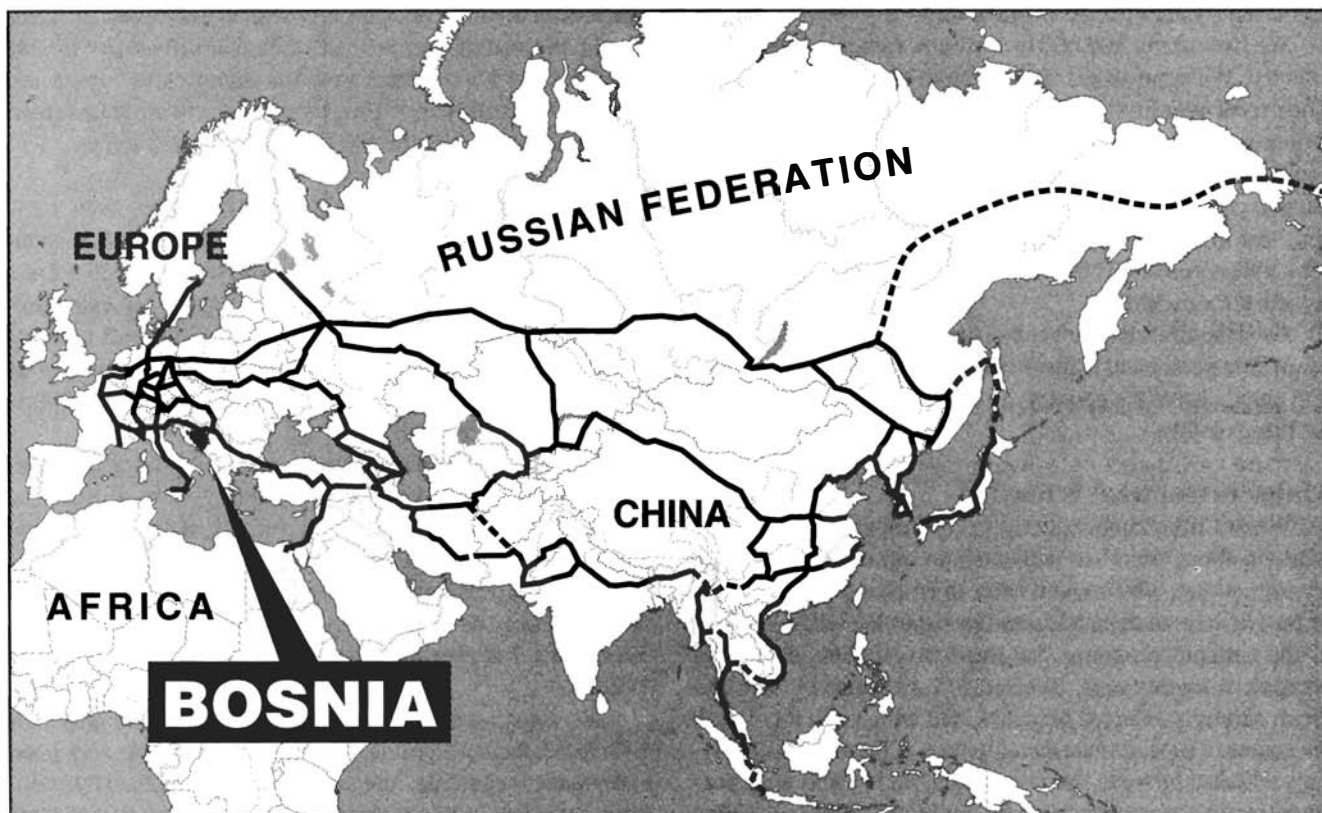
We think, that by developing the Bosnian economy, at least in the region of the Federation of Bosnia, we can create an attractive environment for all those secessionist forces in the country to finally break with what has been going on for the last six years, and join in the great adventure of the reconstruction of the country. We have to mobilize people, and we can mobilize people. We have human resources, we have a skilled labor force, we have industrial capacities (of course, partly damaged and devastated, but productive).

And, what is the most important, we have a motive. We, who have managed to defend the country under unbelievable circumstances of double aggression, of total blockade, we certainly, after this experience, are ready and willing to reconstruct the country that we have defended so eagerly. What we need, is help, real help, from the outside.

One of the things that the post-Dayton process has proven, is that the multilateral approach in reconstruction of the country, is not successful, at least is not sufficient. It's not successful as it was meant to be. What we need, are also to consider possible bilateral arrangements with the United States as being the leading country in the peace process, but also in the

FIGURE 3

Bosnia's location in relation to the Eurasian land-bridge



reconstruction, because we see the United States as a leading country in the reconstruction process of Bosnia.

Having established very good relations with the United States, Bosnia is very much interested in maintaining and continuing these relations, for the benefit of *both*. Therefore, we would like the American policy to consider the possibility of bilateral arrangements with the Bosnian government, thus giving a chance not only to herself, but also to other countries, to do the same. This will be much more efficient than this multilateral approach, where, actually, there are a lot of agencies, a lot of foundations, a lot of NGOs [non-governmental organizations], and there is no effect on the field.

There's a lot of money spent on maintenance of this personnel down there, the cars, the offices, the telephones, and there is no outcome. So, the period of—well, it's almost 14 months—has proven that this approach is not efficient enough. If the United States initiates such a process, I'm sure that the others will join.

There is interest, there are possibilities, there are profitable branches, and there is, of course, the great adventure of helping a nation to recover itself, as the Americans did once, in 1945.

If we manage, finally, to create a durable peace in Bosnia,

that means that we will manage to create a durable peace in the region, and then the region of the Balkans and southeastern Europe, can finally, after a century of constant wars and conflicts, become a bridge from western Europe to the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia, and further east. We have to include the whole region in development, in reconstruction. We have to include the whole region in the life of the modern world. Otherwise, we will remain in the position of geopolitical balances of power, which have caused a lot of bloodshed, a lot of lives lost forever in this country, and in this region, in the last century.

We have to start to think in a totally different way. We have to abandon the geopolitical theories about the "Balkan gendarme," or some sort of balance-of-power or interest zones. We have to think in terms of development, in terms of final stabilization of this region. And this will not go without significant investments into the real economy.

I would like to finish this by thanking you again for giving me the opportunity to address this policy forum, and ask you to think how to change the approach. Changing the approach means a final settlement of the crisis in the Balkans; a final end to the wave and vicious circle of genocide, wars, civil wars, and instability.