

Sasha Toperich, Senior Fellow

Dr. Sasha Toperich is a Senior Fellow and Director of the [Mediterranean Basin initiative](#) at The Center for Transatlantic Relations, SAIS, at The Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington D.C.

He co-chaired a major international conference [The Western Balkans: “Progress, Stagnation, or Regression”](#) held in Sarajevo in June 2011.

Dr. Toperich also serves as the Chairman of the Organizing Committee for “[Bosnia-Herzegovina: Vision 2020](#)” project and the “[Future of Iraq and Iraqi Kurdistan](#)” project at the CTR SAIS.

He is the Chairman of the Supervisory Board at the [Mediterranean Development Initiative \(MDI\)](#) in Tunis, Tunisia.

Diplomacy

Toperich was appointed the Presidential Envoy of Bosnia to the United States. He was the first high-ranking diplomat from Bosnia and Herzegovina to officially visit Baghdad after fall of Saddam. From 2009 -2010, Toperich served as a Consellor at the Permanent Mission of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the United Nations. From 2011 – 2014, he served as an advisor to the member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bakir Izetbegovic.

Philanthropy

He founded the [America-Bosnia Foundation \(ABF\)](#) established to foster stronger political, cultural, and educational ties between the American and people of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The foundation organizes concerts, exhibitions, lectures, panels, and educational seminars in both Bosnia and Herzegovina and in the United States. ABF’s mission is also to strengthen democratic values in Bosnia-Herzegovina, and preserve its multiethnic and multicultural character.

In 1997, he became President of the Children Foundation of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization)

In 1998, he was awarded the title of UNESCO Artist for Peace.

Together with Shinichiro Okuyama (Japan), he co-founded the [World Youth Leadership Network](#), a not-for-profit organization that aims to unite the international youth community through good

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works and cultural exchange, WYLN was launched at the UN headquarters in New York, in April of 2004. The WYLN has contributed and donated computers to schools and universities in Liberia, organized a fundraising concert in Monrovia for the Louis Arther Grimes School of Law, and set up an IT centre in Benin in collaboration with the Benin Education Fund and the World Bank, to allow students to learn and gain new skills.

In association with Laughing Buddha Music Inc., Toperich launched “*Visas for Life*” project, an educational/historic/diplomatic story of a Japanese diplomat, Chiune Sugihara, who saved over 6000 Jews during World War II, by issuing transit visas through Japan, when serving as a Japanese Consul in Kaunas, Lithuania.

Also in 2004, Toperich served as a project manager for the European Youth Peace Summit held in Sarajevo, bringing together over 500 youth leaders from all over Europe. Budimir Lončar, former Foreign Minister of Yugoslavia under Marshal Tito, and later, top advisor to Stjepan Mesic, President of Croatia, served as the European Youth Peace Summit Senior Advisor.

Concert Pianist

His performances were broadcast on radio and television programs throughout the world. Toperich performed concerts in: Austria, Belgium, Brazil, China, Germany, Egypt, France, Italy, Israel, Japan, South Korea, The Netherlands, the United States, and the countries of former Yugoslavia. He has performed at the Carnegie Hall, Concertgebouw, Kioi Hall, and other famous music halls. Toperich played concerts with conductors such as Zubin Mehta and Kazushi Ono.

Dutch VPRO Television made a documentary film “*Sasha Toperich Plays At Rachmaninov at Cristofori in Amsterdam*”.

His 1997 concert in Washington, D.C. was broadcast nationwide on National Public Radio and earned him a nomination for Best Debut Artist. In 2004, he became the first concert pianist to perform in Monrovia (Liberia), a concert organized by Jacques P. Klein, United Nations Special Representative in Liberia. United Nations broadcast this concert live throughout the African continent.

Publications

He is a co-author of two papers in the book “*Unfinished Business: The Western Balkans and the International Community*” (Brookings Institution/CTR, 2012), titled “*The Regulatory Environment in the Financial System in Bosnia and Herzegovina and How to Improve It*” and “*A New Paradigm for the Mediterranean: EU-U.S.-North Africa-Southeast Europe*”.

Toperich, along with Andy Mullins, edited Brookings Institution/CTR, 2014 publication “*A New Paradigm: Perspectives on the Changing Mediterranean*”, and the Brookings Institution/CTR 2015 publication, “*Bosnia and Herzegovina and Its European Future*”. With Aylin Unver Noi, Toperich edited the Brookings Institution/CTR 2015 publication, “*Challenges of Democracy in the European Union and its Neighbors*”.

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Toperich is also a Featured Columnist at the U.S. Military.com and has a blog at the Huffington Post.

- [Iran: My Journey to Isfahan, The City That Is ‘Half of the World](#)
- [Property Rights Key to Reform, in Algeria and Across the MENA Region](#)
- [Libya: The Muslim Brotherhood’s Last Stand?](#)
- [2014 Doing Business in Algeria Conference Concludes in Washington](#)
- [Tunisia’s Adenauer: The ‘Old Man’ Essebsi](#)
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- [The Peshmerga Did Not Seek Fame](#)
- [Bosnia and Herzegovina’s Defense Industry – America’s Partner in Combating Terrorism](#)
- [Tunisia’s Transition Between Hopes and Challenges](#)
- [A Much Needed New Economic Paradigm For Algeria](#)

Early Life and Education

Toperich, born in Sarajevo, then in Yugoslavia but now in Bosnia and Herzegovina, began playing piano at the age of four. During his years of study, he won first prize at the national piano students competition in Dubrovnik.

He moved to Jerusalem at the age of 21 in the early 1990s, where he did his formal training at the Rubin Academy of Music and Dance in Jerusalem receiving his M.A. in piano, studying under Meira Smailovic, Arbo Valdma, and Irina Berkovich.

He earned his doctoral degree at the Music Academy in Lovran, Croatia, where he studied with Marina Ambokadze.

Toperich is an American citizen and is living in Washington D.C.

He speaks English, French, Portuguese, Serbo-Croatian, Hebrew and Russian.

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