

Vietnamese

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"With very few exceptions," Brother Casper reported, "they said, 'When you go back to Washington, please tell President Bush to take your troops home.'"

The director of Maryknoll's Peace and Justice office, Brother Casper was among those invited to take part in the FOR delegation. He had been approved for entry to Iraq by the Iraqi Embassy in Washington, D.C.

But when the delegation's flight landed at Amann's airport Oct. 18, Jordanian officials discovered the Israeli stamps in Brother Casper's passport, confiscated it, and ordered him to leave the country immediately.

One of the other delegates knew the head of the Jordanian Air Force, however, and the Maryknoll brother was issued a series

of temporary visas to permit him to negotiate with the Iraqi government for permission to continue his mission.

That permission was officially denied Oct. 24, and Brother Casper returned to the United States later that day.

During his seven days in Jordan, Brother Casper visited refugee camps on a daily basis. What he discovered, he said, is that "the impression we get from our media and the impression I got from talking with the people who are directly affected is much different."

The refugees currently in the camps include Sri Lankans, Indians, Sudanese, Thais, Bangladeshi and Filipinos, Brother Casper reported. These people, he said, had primarily worked in such menial jobs as gardeners, maids and bus boys, and had fled Iraq and Kuwait because their employers had left, or because of the threat of war.

The refugees, whose numbers the

Maryknoll Brother said varied from more than 800 to between 1,200 and 1,300 while he was there, were concerned about the economic impact the conflict was having on themselves and their families.

Brother Casper, who worked in the Philippines 12 years prior to being assigned to Maryknoll's Justice and Peace office in 1989, said that he particularly empathized with the Filipino refugees and their plight.

"They told me, 'We have lost our jobs. We have lost our security. We've lost our ability to send money home to our families. I'm heading home to an uncertain future,'" Brother Casper said.

The refugees acknowledged that Iraqi troops had engaged in theft and rape, but not to the extent reported in the U.S. media, Brother Casper said.

As for U.S. troops now stationed in Saudi Arabia, Brother Casper said the consensus among the refugees was, "If they were not present, there would be no threat of war and we could keep our jobs."

Brother Casper said those sentiments were echoed by Palestinian refugees he met from Israel. They unfavorably compared the U.S. reaction to the invasion of Kuwait to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, he said.

"They don't see (the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait) as separate from the Israeli/Palestinian conflict," Brother Casper said. "They see it as a double standard, with the U.S. supporting Israel's occupation of the West Bank while opposing the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait."

The Palestinians expressed open anger toward the United States, he said, adding that even after serving in foreign missions for 16 years, it was the first time he'd heard "such strong feelings expressed against our government."

The Palestinians were not only upset over what they saw as inconsistency on the part of the U.S. government, but also from the fact that foreign troops were stationed in Saudi Arabia.

"They feel the presence of foreign troops in Saudi Arabia is a desecration of their holy land because it is the land where Mecca is," Brother Casper said.

The occupation of Kuwait is viewed as something that they do not condone, but as an accomplished fact, Brother Casper said, adding that the people "seemed to be saying, 'Let us deal with it.'"

His own sense, Brother Casper said, is the United States government appears to "see a military solution as the only solution."

"My feeling," he added, "is the only solution is an Arab solution. And an Arab solution may not include Kuwait as an independent state."

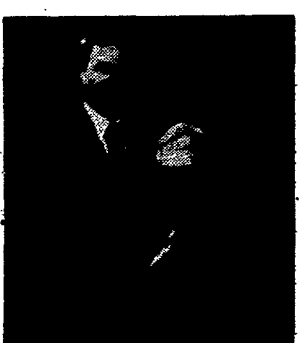
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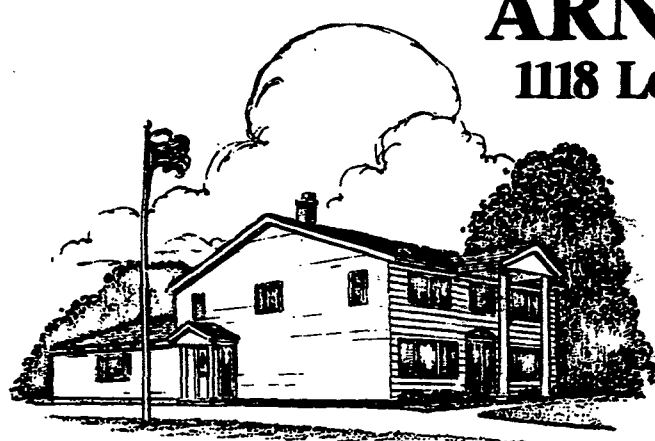
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DeSales

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Vedora have small speaking roles in the film.

"I feel that being in existence for 76 years, they (DeSales) have got to be doing something right," Brian says in the video.

And although Brian enjoyed working on the video, he said he wouldn't want to be a professional film maker. He plans to pursue a career in law enforcement at St. John Fisher College, where he also hopes to play football.

As a tri-captain of the DeSales football team, Brian noted that football practice is similar to writing a script because both require discipline.

"The hardest part was finding time to do both," he said, "and do both well."

EDITORS' NOTE: Copies of the video are available by calling DeSales at 315/789-5111 during school hours, or after school by calling Sister Jacqueline Robinson at 315/789-7841. Copies can also be purchased for \$5.

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