



## Clinton salutes citizens

President Bill Clinton gestures while meeting with Richard English, a 17-year-old bone cancer patient from Toledo, Ohio, at the White House Jan. 28. After saluting English and two others during the ceremony, Clinton said he plans to meet every Thursday with U.S. citizens whose accomplishments impress him.

AP/Wide World Photos

## Officials warn against pulling troops out of Somalia too fast

By Laurie Hansen  
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — Two church officials have warned that if U.S. troops pull out of Somalia too quickly, Somalis again will face starvation.

After a recent visit to Somalia, Jesuit Father Richard Ryscavage, executive director of the U.S. bishops' department of Migration and Refugee Services, said U.N. forces are not ready to step in if troops from the U.S. and other nations pull out.

"The credibility of the United Nations is zero" in Somalia because the world agency is perceived as having been too slow to react to the tragedy.

He added that U.N. forces suffer from "a serious lack of coordination."

If the troops pull out in the near future, the armed hoodlums that operated freely in the country before the troops arrived will return, said Father Ryscavage. When that happens, persons with guns are likely to determine who eats — as was the case prior to the troops' arrival, he said.

Jack Morgan, spokesman for the Baltimore-based Catholic Relief Services, agreed. "If troops are pulled out precipitously, if the American commitment subsides and the international community puts Somalia on the back burner, chaos could return," he said in an interview with *The New World*, newspaper of the Chicago archdiocese.

CRS is the U.S. bishops' overseas relief and development agency.

Morgan, who returned from Somalia in mid-January, said signs suggested that the United States was not there for the long haul.

"My feeling is that (former President) Bush has bequeathed to (President Bill) Clinton a program that is winding down," he said.

Father Ryscavage said that thanks to the help of outside troops "the feeding situation has improved" in the east African nation.

"Young people are coming to life. You see children laughing much more," said the priest, who visited Somalia in January as a guest of CRS.

But he found the condition of the nation's governing structures "exceedingly grim." Somalia, he said, remains a "dangerous, violent, anarchic place."

He said the most striking aspect of Somalia was "seeing people who had been obviously starving and people who had obviously lived well through the whole crisis walking side by side down the street."

The priest said it was never more clear to him that the starvation was due to civil violence. "There was no food shortage at all," he said.

"An abrupt transition would be the worst thing that could happen. The country is so overwhelmed with armaments," he said, adding that an attempt to disarm the nation quickly would be futile.

Father Ryscavage said CRS workers in Somalia were "doing heroic work" while living in difficult circumstances. Lacking, he said, were security, plumbing and water.

He described CRS' Somalia strategy as "sophisticated." CRS involves Somalis in food distribution, planning for the future when they will operate the program on their own, he said.

The relief and development agency uses "indigenous seeds" for planting, he said, cognizant that when seeds "non-native" to the country are used, plants grow tall but then often succumb to disease.

Contributing to this story was Jay Copp in Chicago.

## Prelate blasts change on gays in the military

SILVER SPRING, Md. (CNS) — The head of the Catholic military archdiocese in the United States has warned President Clinton that accepting gays in the military will have "disastrous consequences for all concerned."

Archbishop Joseph T. Dimino, head of the Archdiocese for the Military Services U.S.A., took that stand in a Jan. 27 letter to Clinton. The archdiocese is based in the Washington suburb of Silver Spring.

In a separate letter, also dated Jan. 27, he expressed concern about Clinton's executive order permitting abortions in military hospitals, saying it would pose a "moral and ethical dilemma" for Catholic health care providers in the armed forces.

Two days after Archbishop Dimino's letters, Clinton announced that an executive order to lift the 50-year ban on homosexuals in the military would be drafted by July 15. He also ordered military recruiters to stop questioning applicants about their sexual orientation and said any pending court cases or dismissals would be suspended until the executive order took effect.

The Clinton plan was a compromise worked out with the Joint Chiefs of Staff, who had initially opposed any move to permit homosexuals in the military, and Senate leaders.

"As the archbishop responsible for the religious welfare of all Catholic men, women and children associated with the armed forces, and as a former military chaplain familiar with the realities of military life, I urge you to heed the advice of the Joint Chiefs of Staff to maintain the traditional Defense Department policy concerning

homosexuality," he wrote.

"The acceptance of homosexuality as an appropriate alternate lifestyle for the military will in my judgment have disastrous consequences for all concerned," he added.

In his letter on abortions in military hospitals, Archbishop Dimino said the executive order Clinton signed Jan. 22 that allows women to pay for their own abortions in military hospitals "poses a grave matter of conscience" for Catholic members of the armed forces whose religious beliefs forbid participation in abortions.

"Our Catholic medical personnel who serve at military hospitals are dedicated, loyal Americans who, in accordance with their commitment to our nation, wish to carry out all directives issued by their commander in chief and other military superiors," the archbishop said.

"But, in a situation involving abortion, because of the dictates of conscience, they shall be forced to refuse participation," he said.

Archbishop Dimino said he was already aware of situations in which physicians at military hospitals "have been criticized and punished in their evaluations for refusing to prescribe contraceptives."

He asked Clinton to further clarify his executive order by insisting on "proper respect for the personal consciences of military physicians, nurses and other medical personnel who are opposed to abortion" and by directing "that such personnel not be required or otherwise pressured into participating in abortion procedures in military health facilities."

## Former priest is sentenced to jail

STILLWATER, Minn. (CNS) — A former Catholic priest, accused of abusing dozens of children, has been sentenced to six months in jail for molesting a 15-year-old baby sitter.

Washington County District Judge Kenneth Maas also placed the former priest, James Porter, on 10 years probation and ordered him to undergo treatment for pedophilia. Porter would have to serve another six months in jail if he does not complete his treatment.

Porter has been accused of molesting dozens of children in three states before he left the priesthood in 1974.

He was convicted in Minnesota in December on six counts of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct involving his children's teen-age baby sitter in 1987.

State sentencing guidelines for a first conviction on the charges recommended up to a year in county jail, with no time in state prison. But prosecutors asked that Porter be sentenced to two and a half years in prison, saying psychological exams showed he is not amenable to treatment.

The defense had asked for 21

months of probation.

Judge Maas said he departed from state guidelines that recommend only two and a half years' probation because Porter didn't appear sorry for his actions.

Porter could receive up to 56 months in state prison if his probation is revoked. Conditions of probation include no contact with the victim and no unsupervised private contact with minors other than his family.

She had testified that Porter fondled her through her clothing on three occasions at his home.

In addition to his conviction, Porter has been indicted in Massachusetts on 46 counts of molesting children involving 32 people in the Fall River diocese, where he was a priest in the 1960s.

Late last year 68 people who said they had been abused by Porter 30 years ago reached a financial settlement with the diocese.

Porter also has been named in civil suits in New Mexico and Minnesota.

Evidence of past allegations against Porter was not allowed in his criminal trial in Minnesota.

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**Catholic Courier (USPS 135-580)**  
Vol. 104 No. 18 February 4, 1993  
Published weekly except the last Thursday in December.  
Subscription rates: single copy, 75¢; one-year subscription in U.S., \$19.50; Canada and foreign \$19.50 plus postage.  
Offices: 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624, 716/328-4340.  
Second-class postage paid at Rochester, N.Y.  
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Catholic Courier, 1150 Buffalo Road, Rochester, N.Y. 14624.