

Ethicist: 'Just cause' not only issue

Fr. Hehir speaks on war in Bosnia

By Mark Zimmermann
Catholic News Service

WASHINGTON — There is just cause for international military intervention to halt the ethnic cleansing and human rights violations in Bosnia, but that is not the only issue that needs to be resolved, Catholic ethicist Father J. Bryan Hehir said May 12.

"There are reasons for the international community to say what is happening there is intolerable," he said. "My problem is not with the cause. It's whether you could carry out and execute the strategy."

Father Hehir, a professor of religion and society at Harvard Divinity School and former director of the U.S. bishops' Department of Social Development and World Peace, was lead speaker on moral issues for a forum at the Washington National Cathedral titled, "Human Rights and Military Intervention: Bosnia as a Test Case."

Also on the forum panel, addressing political and strategic dimensions, were former Central Intelligence Agency director William E. Colby and a Russian political scholar, Dimitri K. Simes, chair of the Center for Russian and Eurasian Programs at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

In a step-by-step analysis of the Bosnian crisis in terms of traditional Catholic moral teaching on warfare, Father Hehir found four just-war criteria causing special concern about any attempt to intervene militarily: probability of success, proportionality of goals, proportionality of means and the principle of noncombatant immunity.

On the questions of just cause and right intention, he said the protection of human lives and human rights from aggression are sufficient reason to intervene.

The changing world situation has altered concepts of national sovereignty and when intervention should occur, he said.

He said it was still correct to start with an assumption against intervention. But in the past only outside aggression or cases of genocide would bring other nations to intervene. Today, the international community has cause to take action when serious human rights abuses occur within a state, he said.

As to competent authority, he said



AP/Wide World Photos
A refugee girl from the area of Banja Luka hugs her teddy bear outside a camp in the Muslim-controlled town of Travnik May 8. More than a thousand Muslim refugees are waiting in this Bosnia town — located 13 miles northwest of Vitez — to return home. Bosnia's president has refused to agree to a U.N.-brokered plan for a truce in the embattled Muslim enclave of Zepa.

he would "argue against unilateral intervention in almost all cases." He noted the difficulty the U.S. government had recently in trying to get European nations to agree on a joint military action in Bosnia. Without such multinational support, military intervention would probably not be wise, he said.

Father Hehir said it could be argued

that the international community has passed the test of last resort, in view of the numerous failed efforts to bring an end to the war by diplomatic, political and economic pressures.

In the end, the priest said, his questions about the morality of military intervention in Bosnia stemmed from concerns about whether any such ac

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Cardinal calls for strife to end

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Croatian Cardinal Franjo Kuharic appealed to ethnic Croats and Muslims in Bosnia-Herzegovina to stop fighting among themselves and end their "crimes against humanity."

The cardinal's plea came as Croatian and Muslim militias, formerly allies in the war against Serbian forces, pounded each other's positions near Mostar in Herzegovina. The text of his message was released by the Vatican.

Cardinal Kuharic, archbishop of Zagreb, said Croat-Muslim fighting has been marked by "crimes, killings, burnings and the expulsion of people from their homes." Addressing both sides, he urged them to do all in their power to immediately end the hostilities.

"May you fear God who will judge every thought, every word, every deed. May you be moved by the tears of the children, the women and the aged," he said.

U.N. officials described the fighting as an effort to gain territorial control before a peace plan can be implemented. They said Croatian soldiers were expelling Muslim families from Mostar neighborhoods and housing them in camps outside the city; Croats said the Muslims were being moved for their own good.

Cardinal Kuharic said he had no objective information on who was to blame for individual episodes in the Herzegovina fighting, but said the role of ethnic Croatian forces has damaged the standing of Croatia in the eyes of the world.

"To the extent that Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina are guilty in this conflict, they are also responsible for all the damage done to Croatia and its people in the area of international relations and the mass media," he said.

He said that because Croatia is now being accused of involvement

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