

# Vatican urges dialogue between U.S. and Iraq

## Deplores civilian deaths in attack

By John Thavis  
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican deplored the deaths of civilians in a U.S. missile attack on an Iraqi target and urged both countries to settle their differences through dialogue.

The statement was issued June 28, two days after U.S. forces fired 23 cruise missiles against a Baghdad government intelligence center. Iraq reported that eight civilians were killed and 12 wounded when some of the missiles landed in residential areas.

Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls said the Vatican Secretariat of State had not issued a statement about the attack because it "does not know the causes that may have determined it." The United States said the operation was in reprisal for an alleged Iraqi plot to kill former President George Bush.

Navarro-Valls said the Vatican "obviously deplores the loss of innocent human lives and hopes that an honest dialogue can be established between the United States and Iraq, as the only way to peace."

President Bill Clinton expressed regret at the civilian casualties. But the president said the strike had dealt a blow to Iraq's ability to direct terrorist acts and that the United States had "sent the message we needed to send"

to Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

Clinton said he "ordered the attack after receiving 'compelling evidence' of Iraqi responsibility in an alleged car-bomb plot against Bush while the former president visited Kuwait earlier this year. Kuwaiti police arrested 16 suspects, including two Iraqi nationals, who reportedly confessed to a role in the plot.

Pope John Paul II, who visited an American church in Rome June 27, made no reference to the missile strike. He ended a sermon by saying: "May almighty God bless your nation with harmony and peace."

More than two years after the end of the Persian Gulf War, Iraqi civilians — especially the young and the elderly — are threatened by worsening shortages of food and medicine, said a U.S. priest who recently visited the country.

Chronically malnourished children fill Iraqi hospitals and "if you're ill you're likely to die," said Father William Corcoran, director of the Pontifical Mission for Palestine's office in Amman, Jordan.

To help alleviate the suffering, the Vatican is studying ways to arrange increased humanitarian aid to Iraq while a U.N.-backed economic embargo continues against the country. Father Corcoran presented a report to church funding agencies at the Vatican June 23 and will return to Iraq soon to draw up more specific proposals.

"There is no question about the suffering in Iraq. Food is scarce and medical supplies are practically non-

# Suffering in Somalia



AP/Wide World Photos

Ten-year-old Hassan Riyolo, shown here in May at home in Dheeray, Somalia, was rescued from near death during his country's famine last December. Although health officials said he has shown marked progress, the boy's experience still haunts him. In recent events in Somalia, American helicopter gunships opened fire on a Somali crowd June 28, killing at least two Somalis, after a Pakistani soldier died in a sniper attack. It was the latest in a string of clashes between U.N. troops and Somalis since the United Nations attacked power bases of warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid in June. Tensions between foreign soldiers and Somalis have built since 24 Pakistanis were killed June 5 in two ambushes that the United Nations blames on Aidid.

existent," Father Corcoran said in an interview June 24, two days before the U.S. attack on Iraq.

This spring the Pontifical Mission sent \$250,000 worth of drugs to Iraqi hospitals. On a recent follow-up visit, Father Corcoran said he toured a 100-bed children's hospital in Baghdad that often holds 300 young patients, along with their mothers.

Most of the patients suffer from forms of malnutrition, dysentery and juvenile diabetes, he said. He pulled out snapshots of skeletal babies and children lying in cramped quarters.

"The doctors are frustrated because the children who are helped go back to the same living conditions. They pretty much guaranteed that most of these children would be back in the hospital or would die," he said. Meanwhile, he said, hospitals are running out of the intravenous solution needed to help the malnourished.

Father Corcoran said the food shortage extends across Iraqi society, but that "the fringes — the young and the old — are dying off in large numbers." There is no medication even for easily treated diseases such as high blood pressure, heart problems and diabetes, he said. All surgery has been deferred because of a lack of equipment and

supplies.

The situation reflects a slow but steady economic deterioration in Iraq because of the embargo, he said. The lack of spare parts and fertilizer is now seriously affecting agriculture, he said.

"Up to this point, people have been able to live off savings and get by, but now the economy seems to be coming to a real halt. Even the middle class has sold off what it has in order to eat," he said.

Most Iraqis' diet comprises starchy foods with little or no protein, he said. A chicken costs half a week's salary, and a can of milk powder half a month's, he said.

Water is unsafe, but many people can't afford bottled water, so they boil water from rivers. But waste treatment centers were bombed during the war, and some are still pumping raw sewage into these rivers, he said.

Father Corcoran's efforts follow a fact-finding tour this spring by Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, a top Vatican official. The cardinal was moved by the suffering he saw and asked the Pontifical Mission to propose aid projects.

In addition to increased food and medical aid sent overland from Jordan, Father Corcoran said he is now trying to interest donor agencies in longer-range projects. But there are problems, he said.

For one thing, much of the medical supplies have to be shipped to state-run hospitals, and many donors are uncomfortable with government involvement, he said.

## Dignity ... Sympathy ... Human Understanding

Alan E. Giltner Edward H. Dreier  
Evelyn Dreier Taillie

Recently remodeled facilities to better meet your needs.

**DREIER-GILTNER FUNERAL HOME, INC.**

1717 Portland Ave. 342-8500



Douglas C. Meeson

"Our Family Serving Your Family For Over 65 Years"

Robert E. Vay

**Vay-Schleich & Meeson Funeral Home, Inc.**

2692 Dewey Avenue

663-2100

1075 Long Pond Road

## FUNERAL DIRECTORS OF THE ROCHESTER DIOCESE

The funeral Directors listed herein offer pre-need and at-need services and counseling in accordance with the Catholic faith.

### IRONDEQUOIT

Schauman-Sulewski Funeral Home Inc.

Edwin Sulewski  
2100 St. Paul Street  
Rochester, N.Y. 14621  
(716) 342-3400

Michael R. Yackiw Funeral Home

1270 Norton Street  
Rochester, N.Y. 14621  
(716) 544-5000

### ELMIRA

HOLLY-KECK & BAKER, INC.

James A. Baker, Sr., V.P.  
640 W. Gray St., Elmira  
(607) 732-5273

### GATES

DiPonzio Funeral Home, Inc.

(Across from St. Theodore's Church)  
219 Spencerport Road  
Rochester, N.Y. 14606  
429-6700

### ROCHESTER

Crawford Funeral Home, Inc.

"Our Family Serving Your Family"  
Located at 495 N. Winton Rd.  
(Between Atlantic & Humboldt)  
(716) 482-0400

Lucey Funeral Home, Inc.

301 W. Main St. Victor, N.Y.  
924-5730  
2309 Culver Rd.  
342-0470  
Michael W. Lucey Lic. Mgr.

### MONUMENTS

**HART MONUMENT CO.**

2301 Dewey Avenue  
Opposite Holy Sepulchre Cemetery

Since 1856

865-6746

## ARNDT FUNERAL HOME

Family Owned & Operated



**RONALD JOHN ARNDT  
ROBERT J. ARNDT**  
Funeral Directors

**225-6350**

1118 Long Pond Road  
(South of Maiden Lane)