

NATO seeks a broader peace

WASHINGTON (CNS) — From Vatican City to Indialantic, Fla., from Lillehammer, Norway, to Sarajevo, Bosnia-Herzegovina, pleas for peace in the former Yugoslavia echoed across the world as a NATO deadline for removing heavy weapons around the Bosnian capital passed Feb. 20.

Religious leaders, politicians, athletes — even a Florida businessman — added their voices and efforts to those urging a steady hand on the process that seemed to be bringing calm to Sarajevo for the first time in months.

"May the winds of destruction finally be calmed!" said Pope John Paul II to a group of Italian peace marchers Feb. 19.

"On our knees and armed only with a plea, we ask those involved, the political and military leaders, to end this monstrous slaughter," he said. "Nothing should remain untried."

He spoke before the NATO deadline came for withdrawal of heavy weapons from around Sarajevo. NATO had threatened air strikes against military positions ringing the city from which Serbian forces had been lobbing shells and gunshots for nearly two years.

The deadline expired with some of the weapons still in place, unable to be moved because of heavy snow. By Feb. 21 U.N. peacekeepers took control of the last Serb guns, and a growing chorus of voices called for NATO's airstrike ultimatum to be used in the rest of Bosnia.

Archbishop Theodore E. McCarrick of Newark, N.J., said after a visit to Bosnia-Herzegovina that the international community needs to be tougher in insisting on an end to fighting in the former Yugoslavia.

"But I would hope that this could be done through diplomacy and the embargo," he said Feb. 15, the day following his return to the United States from a peace conference in Turkey and a side trip to Zagreb, the Croatian capital, and to Banja Luka, in a Serb-occupied region of Bosnia.

"I feel the international community has not followed through on the embargo properly. It allows so many things to come in that can be used in the war effort, it is not effective."

He said he went in response to a suggestion by Bishop Franjo Komarica of Banja Luka that a visit by a U.S. bishop could be helpful. Archbishop McCarrick is chairman of the bishops' committees on Migration and Aid to Central and



File photo President Clinton earlier this week called for a broader use of diplomacy to extend the ceasefire in Sarajevo to other besieged cities.

Eastern Europe, and a member of the International Policy and Administrative committees.

As a result of "ethnic cleansing" carried out by the Serbs, the number of Catholics in the Diocese of Banja Luka, who are mostly Croats, has declined from about 130,000 to about 40,000, Archbishop McCarrick said. Only a small minority of the parishes are still functioning, he said.

"The bishop invited a number of pastors to see me, and they each had stories of people disappearing and of finding bodies," Archbishop McCarrick said. Many Catholics of the diocese now live in Croatia as refugees, he said.

He also reported that all of the 14 mosques formerly located in Banja Luka had been destroyed.

A declaration from the Istanbul conference Archbishop McCarrick attended condemned "any attempt to corrupt the basic tenets of our faith by means of false interpretation and unchecked nationalism." The Christian, Jewish and Muslim leaders attending the Conference on Peace and Tolerance said "we reject the concept that it is possible to justify one's actions in any armed conflict in the name of God." Christianity, Islam and Judaism all proclaim peace as

the supreme good willed by God, they noted.

Meanwhile, the Vatican nuncio in Bosnia, Archbishop Francesco Monterisi, said international intervention should focus on disarming aggressors on all sides.

It should be recognized that attacks are being carried out by Serbian, Muslim and Croatian forces, the archbishop said in an interview published in the Feb. 23 issue of the Italian magazine *L'Europeo*.

The phrase "disarm the aggressor" used by Pope John Paul and other Vatican officials must be understood in the plural, the archbishop said.

"There are the Serbs who attack Sarajevo but also Muslims who attack Croatian villages of central Bosnia, and finally the Croatian artillery that shoots at the Muslim-held eastern zone of Mostar," he said.

"All three 'aggressors' should be taken into consideration," he said.

Joining in trying to bring the world's attention to ending the fighting were Olympic athletes who took time from their competition in Lillehammer to show solidarity with the residents of Sarajevo, site of the 1984 Olympics.

Juan Antonio Samaranch, president of the International Olympic Committee, requested a moment of silence for Bosnia during the Feb. 12 opening ceremonies. A delegation from Lillehammer planned to visit Sarajevo during the 16-day Games.

Among competitors in Norway were nine athletes designated by the Muslim-led government to symbolize the desire for ethnic harmony. The team had Serbs, Croats and Muslims.

Half a world away in Indialantic, Fla., businessman Don Turek was preparing for the latest in a series of trips to Bosnia with medical supplies. Through the Pilgrims for Peace organization, Turek has worked with Catholic Charities of New York to provide ambulances and other equipment to embattled cities such as Ljubiski and Mostar.

"You can't even begin to realize the destruction until you see it with your own eyes," Turek said.

Pope decries resolution on gay families

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II denounced recent efforts to guarantee family rights to homosexual couples, saying a true family is not composed of two men or two women.

The church opposes all discrimination against homosexuals, he said. But giving same-sex couples legal status as a family would "legitimize a moral disorder," he said Feb. 20.

The pope castigated the European Parliament for passing a non-binding resolution that called for granting homosexual couples the same rights as heterosexual couples — specifically in the areas of adoption, housing and pensions.

The resolution gave "an institutional value to behavior that does not conform to God's plan."

"It was an effort to indicate to the inhabitants of our continent moral evil — deviation, a form of slavery — as a way of liberation. A true family is not constituted by a tie between two men or two women, and even less can one give to such a union the right of adoption of children," he said.

"These children would be gravely harmed, because in this 'substitute family' they would not find father and mother, but 'two fathers' or 'two mothers,'" he said.

The pope urged the national parliaments of Europe to avoid implementing the resolution of the European Parliament, which has no legislative authority in individual countries.

He emphasized that the European Parliament's action goes beyond the defense of homosexuals from unjust discrimination, which the church supports.

"On this point the church is in agreement, because every human being is worthy of respect. What is not morally admissible is the legal approval of homosexual practice," he said.

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