

## WORLD &amp; NATION

## Sarajevo cardinal criticizes peace accord as 'unjust'

By Agostino Bono  
Catholic News Service

ROME — The cardinal of Sarajevo said the U.S.-brokered peace accord for Bosnia-Herzegovina is unjust because it divides the country and legalizes ethnic cleansing.

"This peace might be the prolongation of the war" and it jeopardizes the idea of a multiethnic, united country, remarked Cardinal Vinko Puljic of Sarajevo.

Although the peace agreement denies that Bosnia will be divided, "there are fears" that this will happen, he said.

"Dividing Bosnia means putting into question the very principles of living together of the entire international community," he added.

"A just peace foresees equality among ethnic groups and security for all," he said.

Cardinal Puljic was interviewed by Italian and Japanese journalists while in Rome for meetings with Vatican officials. A transcript of the interview was

made available in Rome Nov. 28 by the Tokyo newspapers *Asahi Shimbun* and *Kosei Shimbun*.

The interview was released after President Bill Clinton addressed the nation Nov. 27 to explain that as part of the peace accord, the United States would commit 20,000 troops to serve in a NATO peacekeeping force in Bosnia. U.S. soldiers were expected to begin entering Bosnia in early December.



At Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton Ohio, Nov. 21, Serbian president Slobodan Milosevic, left, Bosnian president Alija Izetbegovic and Croatian president Franjo Tudjman sign the peace accord to settle the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Reuters/CNS

Cardinal Puljic criticized the peace accord for giving the Serbs 49 percent of the territory when the Serbs constitute only 31 percent of the pre-war population.

"Ethnic cleansing is legalized, and the law of the strongest is justified," he said.

The accord gives the remainder of Bosnian territory to a Muslim-Croat federation.

The cardinal said leaders of Bosnia's three ethnic groups opposed a unified, pluralistic country.

"The Serbs dreamed of a greater Serbia, the Croat politicians — not the people — of a greater Croatia, and the Muslims of an Islamic state," he said.

"Each of these three dreams is mistaken," he added.

## Irish voters legalize divorce

By Patrick Nolan  
Catholic News Service

DUBLIN, Ireland — The narrow vote for legalizing divorce in Ireland will spur the Catholic Church to improve its marriage and family life programs, said a spokesman for Ireland's bishops.

The closeness of the vote "indicates that for a great number of people, the choice was a very difficult one," said Bishop Thomas Flynn of Achonry, conference spokesman.

Meanwhile, one anti-divorce group said it planned to challenge the legality of the referendum based on the closeness of the vote and a Supreme Court decision that the government was not authorized to spend public funds to support a "yes" vote in the referendum.

By only a 9,124-vote majority Nov. 24, voters said they wanted an end to the 58-year-old constitutional ban on divorce. More than 1.6 million Irish citizens voted in the referendum.

The government already has drafted divorce legislation and hopes to get parliamentary approval for it early next year. Ireland is the only European country that bars divorce.

The Irish bishops — supported by statements from Pope John Paul II and Mother Teresa of Calcutta — opposed legalizing divorce, stressing its harmful effect on children and divorced couples.

Now that people have voted "it is imperative that we, as a society, continue to explore effective ways of supporting marriage and especially couples who find themselves experiencing marital difficulty," said Bishop Flynn.

The bishops pledge to help those involved in marriage breakdowns to ensure that they do not consider themselves as separated from the church, he said.

Prime Minister John Bruton said that everyone would have to reflect on the anxieties that led to the vote against divorce and work to strengthen the family.

Richard Greene, leader of the People of Ireland anti-divorce group, said Nov. 27 that his group would ask the courts to set aside the referendum results and that he may be joined by other anti-divorce groups. Leaders of those groups said the loss was caused in large part by \$800,000 in government-funded, pro-divorce ad-

vertisements that the Supreme Court ruled illegal Nov. 17, a week before the vote.

Divorce opponents also attributed their defeat to the support for divorce by all the major political parties and by most of the influential newspapers.

The vote showed a marked change in the public attitude since a 1986 referendum in which legalizing divorce was voted down by 63.5 percent of the voters.

However, the 50.3 percent who favored divorce in 1995 was a sharp drop from polls earlier in the year showing 66 percent support for legalized divorce.

In the Nov. 24 vote, support for divorce came mainly from the heavily populated areas of Dublin and the eastern province of Leinster.

Two days before the vote, the pope threw his weight behind the bid to defeat the referendum.

"I urge everyone to reflect on the importance for society of the indissoluble character of the marriage bond," he told Irish pilgrims Nov. 22 at the Vatican.

"Our savior has shown how the nature of the love that unites a man and woman in marriage, and the good of the children, call for total fidelity on the part of the spouses and an unbreakable unity between them," the pope said.

The once-overwhelming support for divorce began evaporating quickly as voting day approached. A Nov. 21 poll showed that 45 percent favored legalized divorce; 42 percent opposed it and 13 percent were undecided.

This marked a 7 percent drop in support in a little over two weeks and encouraged anti-divorce campaigners.

Social Welfare Minister Proinsias de Rossa accused the bishops of lying about the consequences of divorce.

The bishops are spreading "mythology, lies and deceit," he said at a Nov. 20 government news conference in Dublin.

He said that if the Catholic Church exercised excessive influence in Ireland, it would be more difficult to secure permanent peace in Northern Ireland, where the majority is Protestant.

About 95 percent of Ireland's 3.5 million population professes Catholicism. Many supporters of legalized divorce have said that the bishops want to impose Catholic teaching on the predominantly Protestant minority in Ireland.

# Billy Graham



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