

WORLD & NATION

Vatican hopes for peace in Iraq crisis

By John Thavis
Catholic News Service

VATICAN CITY — Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials were following the unfolding developments in Iraq with apprehension in early February, hopeful that dialogue would prevent a new U.S. military strike against Iraqi targets.

The pope discussed the Iraqi situation with Iranian Foreign Minister Kamal Kharrazi, who was working to help ward off a military confrontation in the wake of Iraq's refusal to allow unconditional U.N. inspection of suspected weapons sites.

Following his private talks with the pope Feb. 2, Kharrazi told Vatican Radio that he thought the international community had a responsibility to help prevent further military action.

"I believe both sides have to show restraint and prudence. A military operation is not going to help. I believe we need concerted efforts to encourage Iraqis to abide by the resolutions of the (U.N.) Security Council," he said.

He said he thought a military strike would only add to regional tensions and widen the gap between the United States and Iraq.

Vatican sources, meanwhile, said the Holy See was working quietly through diplomatic channels to forestall another round of military action against Iraq. They said the Vatican's position on Iraq was expressed by the pope last November, when he urged both sides to insist on dialogue and diplomacy as the way to "preserve and strengthen respect for justice and international law." The pontiff was an adamant critic of the 1991 Gulf war against Iraq, saying the possibilities of dialogue had not been exhausted.

The sources also pointed to the pope's January address to the diplomatic corps, in which he called the ongoing embargo against Iraq "pitiless," as his clearest recent statement on the Iraqi situation. In his talk to the diplomats, the pope appealed to Iraqis and the West to show flexibility and end the country's isolation.

"I must call upon the consciences of those who, in Iraq and elsewhere, put political, economic or strategic considerations before the fundamental good of the people, and I ask them to show compassion," the pope said.

"The weak and the innocent cannot pay for mistakes for which they are not responsible," he said. He added his hope that

Iraq could regain a normal position in the international community.

Cardinal Achille Silvestrini, a veteran Vatican diplomat and prefect of the Congregation for Eastern-rite Churches, told Catholic News Service Feb. 3 that the Vatican was still hoping for a peaceful resolution of the current crisis.

"Obviously, an agreement must be the fruit of good will on both sides, and, naturally, in observance of the international norms given by the United Nations," he said.

He acknowledged that many in the West believe that Iraqi President Saddam Hussein is inflexible and should suffer the consequences.

"But the consequences are also suffered by the (Iraqi) population, and we give a priority to this humanitarian aspect — all the more when it's a matter of new attacks or acts of war," he said.

Cardinal Silvestrini said his congregation hears continually from representatives of the several million Eastern-rite Catholics in Iraq about the harm caused by the embargo, particularly to children and the elderly.

"We are worried about this," he said. He said the embargo, imposed in 1990, was



CNS/Reuters

Iraqi women hold up an automatic rifle in front of a poster of Saddam Hussein in Baghdad Feb. 1.

hurting Iraq's weakest.

"We hope and ask that an international solution may be found that, at the very least, lessens the suffering of this country," he said.

Cardinal Silvestrini said that in managing the current crisis, international leaders should remember that "there exists a responsibility for the good of the human person which must take precedence."

WE BELIEVE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS!

ALL SAINTS CATHOLIC JR. HIGH,
ROCHESTER (7-8)
Ms. Debra Eveland, Principal
170 Spencerport Road • (716) 429-6010

BISHOP KEARNEY HIGH SCHOOL
Br. Raymond J. Vercautse, C.F.C., President
Louis D'Angelo, Principal
125 Kings Highway South, Rochester
(716) 342-4000
"A Heritage of Vision and Values"

CHRIST THE KING (PreK-6)
Mrs. Collen D'Hondt, Principal
445 Kings Hwy. South, Rochester
(716) 467-8730
"Educating the Whole Child"

HOLY CROSS SCHOOL (PreK-8)
Marilyn Reeves SFCC, Principal
4488 Lake Ave., Rochester • (716) 663-6533
"Beacon of Hope"

HOLY TRINITY SCHOOL
Mrs. Mary Louise Kime, Principal
1456 Ridge Rd., Webster • (716) 265-2002
"Faith - Academics - Tradition - Self Discipline"
"A Value Choice"

NATIVITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY SCHOOL (PreK-5)
Mrs. Frances Barr, Principal
Holley & Utica St., Brockport • (716) 637-2109
Open House Feb. 9 & 10
9:30 am-2:00 pm • All Welcome

NAZARETH SCHOOLS THE HALL, THE ACADEMY
Sr. Ann Collins, SSJ, Executive Director
1001 Lake Ave., Rochester • (716) 458-8583
"Challenging the Scholar and Nurturing the Spirit"
"Spirit and Scholarship since 1871"

OUR LADY OF MERCY HIGH SCHOOL FOR YOUNG WOMEN (GRADES 7-12)
Mrs. Evelyn J. Kirst, Principal
1437 Blossom Rd. • (716) 288-7120
"Mercy - for women who make a difference"

ST. AMBROSE SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Mrs. Rebecca Maloney, Principal
31 Empire Blvd., Rochester • (716) 288-0580
"A School That Believes in Each Student"

ST. ANDREW SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Mr. Norman Fagnan, Principal
901 Portland Avenue • (716) 467-9201
"Teaching Respect for Ourselves and Others"

ST. CHARLES BORROMEO (PreK-8)
Mary Barrese-Frame, Principal
64 Maiden Lane, Rochester • (716) 663-1220
"Restoring Faith in Education"

ST. HELEN SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Mary Beth Napier, Principal
150 Lettington Drive • Gates
(716) 235-2391

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST SCHOOL (PreK-8)
Mr. Robert Edelman, Jr., Principal
2376 Ridge Rd. West, Greece • (716) 225-3450
FAX (716) 225-6301
"A Century of Excellence... Come Take a Closer Look"

ST. JOHN THE EVANGELIST SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Miss Angela Fortunato, Principal
545 Humboldt St. • (716) 654-9437
"We Love to Learn & Learn to Love"

ST. JOSEPH'S ELEMENTARY (1-8)
Sr. Walter O'Malley, SSJ Principal
101 E. Genesee St., Auburn • (315) 253-8327
"Providing tools to build the future"

ST. JOSEPH'S PRIMARY SCHOOL PRE-K - KINDERGARTEN
Sr. Waller Anne O'Malley SSJ
17 Clymer St., Auburn • (315) 252-8353
"The possibilities are endless"

ST. JOSEPH'S SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Mrs. JoAnn Struck, Principal
209 Freemont Street, Wayland, NY
(716) 728-5700
"Great beginnings last a lifetime"

ST. LOUIS SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Mrs. Kathleen Carroll, Principal
11 Rand Place, Pittsford • (716) 586-5200
Open House Feb. 11, 9:30-11:30 am
"Celebrate Faith in Education"

ST. MARGARET MARY SCHOOL
Sr. Mary Alice O'Brien, RSM, Principal
400 Rogers Parkway, Rochester
(716) 266-0413
Open House Feb. 12
9-11 am or 7-8 pm • All Welcome

ST. MICHAEL SCHOOL (PreK-8)
Mrs. Kathleen Peters, Principal
320 South Main Street, Newark, NY
(315) 321-2297
"A school you can believe in"

ST. MONICA SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Sr. Mary Marvin, RSM, Principal
841 Genesee St. • (716) 235-4140
"Home, Church & School - Working Together for the Future of our Children"

ST. PIUS TENTH SCHOOL (PreK-6)
Mr. Stephen Oberst, Principal
3000 Chili Ave., Chili • (716) 247-5650
"Aim for Excellence"
Open House Feb. 11, 7-8:30 pm • All Welcome

WESLEY CONSTRUCTION TRICO OVERHEAD DOOR
7340 Victor Mendon Road, Victor, NY
(716) 924-8200
"Always willing to help our community and those in need."

