

Cardinal raises moral concerns about U.S. attacks

By Tracy Early
Catholic News Service

NEW YORK (CNS) — The question of whether the U.S. missile attacks on Sudan and Afghanistan were morally justified should be addressed, according to Cardinal John J. O'Connor of New York.

Writing in *Catholic New York*, the New York archdiocesan weekly, the cardinal said he could not give an adequate answer because he did not have all the facts.

"But the question must be asked, not only about the attacks that have taken place, but about plans for the future," he said in his column, "From My Viewpoint."

The column appeared Aug. 27, one week after the missile attacks that U.S. officials said were launched in retaliation for the bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania Aug. 7, and in an effort to deter further acts of terrorism.

Cardinal O'Connor said preventing terrorism was "surely a desirable goal," but he asked whether the United States had "a moral policy in place for achieving it."

"A moralist must still ask respectfully if we have the moral right to launch deadly weapons of any sort against unseen targets without warning and without knowing for certain whether or not the lives of innocent civilians will be lost, or their property severely damaged," he wrote.

Another issue is putting "innocent American civilians at risk of reprisal without their knowledge or consent," he said.

Recalling his service as a U.S. Navy chaplain during the Vietnam War, Cardinal O'Connor said he was "personally aware, as one who was consulted" that "the president of the United States and his strategic advisers tortured themselves over whether or not to bomb the harbor of Haiphong in



Sudanese women view the damage at the bombed El Shifa pharmaceuticals factory near Khartoum, Sudan, Aug. 25. The U.S. attack on the plant Aug. 20 was carried out after intelligence indicated it produced an ingredient for chemical weapons.

North Vietnam, because of the dangers of escalating the war, killing civilians, etc."

Although some people disagree, just war principles remain applicable today, and applicable to unconventional forms of warfare such as "terrorism/anti-terrorism," Cardinal O'Connor said.

From the just war perspective, even re-

sponses to unjust attacks must be governed by "the principle of proportionality," he said.

"Do we have the moral right to launch even the most technically accurate deadly weapons over civilian-occupied areas if there is a reasonable possibility that any of those weapons might go awry and fall into

a civilian population?" he asked.

Cardinal O'Connor concluded by calling for moral planning as well as policy and military planning. "I would hope that if our government has not yet done so, it would appeal to scholars of the moral dimensions of warfare to offer their analyses of what we seem to be about as a nation," he said.



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CC-TH 98

Jesuits defend writer's works

NEW DELHI, India (CNS) — While acknowledging that some writings attributed to Jesuit Father Anthony de Mello may be objectionable, leading Indian Jesuits said the Vatican's condemnation of their late confrere's works seems to reflect misunderstanding.

South Asia Jesuit provincial Father Lisbert d'Souza told UCA News, an Asian church news agency, that the Vatican has "the right to ban those writings of Father de Mello which it finds to be deviating from the basic tenets of Christian faith."

"But," he added, "I feel the relevance and spiritual insights in some of his works are grossly misunderstood because they have been published differently (by some of his followers) without his knowledge and permission," he said.

An Aug. 22 notification from the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith said that some of Father de Mello's views on religions and God "are incompatible with the Catholic faith and can cause harm."

The Vatican notification criticizes the Jesuit's works for presenting God as an impersonal cosmic reality and Jesus as one master among many.

A July 23 letter from Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the congregation's prefect, instructed Catholic bishops to withdraw the production and sale of the priest's books.

Father d'Souza said the Society of Jesus in India accepts only nine books as authored by Father de Mello and that most of the controversial writings attributed to him appear in fake and unauthorized books.

Father d'Souza explained that Father de Mello's works are not to be taken as theological interpretations of Christian faith and the Catholic Church.

"His preachings were in the form of stories and a mix of Christian, Hindu and Buddhist anecdotes and Islamic sayings. They were not doctrinal treatises on the Catholic faith," Father d'Souza said.