

WORLD & NATION

Bishop: War not expected

WARSAW, Poland (CNS) — The head of the Yugoslav bishops' conference dismissed fears of a new Balkan war, despite attempts by ethnic Albanian guerrillas to seize control of parts of Macedonia.

However, he cautioned a "change of mentalities" was needed for lasting peace and said Catholics would continue to press for reconciliation with other religious communities.

"The latest Macedonian fighting is causing many worries," said Archbishop Franjo Perko of Belgrade, conference president.

"But I don't think the Albanians will achieve anything. Nor do I see any danger that these border conflicts will develop into a wider war," he said.

The church leader spoke as fighting intensified around Tetovo, the main ethnic Albanian city in northwestern Macedonia, which was under attack by Albanian separatists.

In a mid-March Catholic News Service interview, he predicted the latest clashes would be short-lived, adding that securing peace in neighboring Kosovo would remain "the main political challenge."

"Small conflicts are always a possibility here — they've become part of Balkan folklore," Archbishop Perko said.

"But all the main powers — Yugoslavia, Macedonia, Albania and the international community — are against the Albanian extremists. They don't have support to realize their plans," he said.

Around 200 National Liberation Army guerrillas from Kosovo attacked Tetovo March 14, in an attempt to link up with mostly Albanian-inhabited territory in Serbia and Macedonia.

Macedonian President Boris Trajkovski said his government would seek "political and military isolation" of the rebels, whose operations have left up to 50 dead since January.

Consultation ends, work continues

WASHINGTON (CNS) — Recommendations were still coming in to the U.S. bishops' Committee on Women in Society and in the Church nearly a week after its three-day consultation with women in diocesan leadership posts ended in Chicago.

The 150 invited participants in the March 11-13 consultation were encouraged to submit their suggestions in writing after the meeting or to include them in their evaluations of the gathering. The women included Kathleen Cannon, director of Parish Support Ministries for the Diocese of Rochester.

One person in each of the 11 workshop sessions was appointed to record the recommendations of the workshop group and submit a report on them to the committee, said Sheila Garcia, assistant director of the bishops' Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth, who organized the meeting.

The gathering was "a tangible sign of the bishops' commitment to continuing the dialogue," she said.

The recommendations — along with dozens of spoken suggestions during the sessions — will become part of a report from the committee to the rest of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, Garcia said.

Participants praised the openness of the sessions, which were attended by at least six bishops who are present or former members of the committee.

The consultation had as its theme, "Hear, Listen, Affirm: The Voices of Women." It was a continuation of the committee's work on their 1994 document, "Strengthening the Bonds of Peace: A Pastoral Reflection on Women in the Church and in Society" and 1998's "From Words to Deeds: Continuing Reflections on the Role of Women in the Church," Garcia said.

The meeting opened with a review of the history of "high ascents and steep declines" that marked the bishops' efforts to approve a pastoral letter on women.

The March 11 talk by Dolores R. Leckey, former executive director of the bishops' Secretariat for Family, Laity, Women and Youth and now a senior fellow at the Woodstock Theological Center, also addressed other key issues affecting women in the 19th and 20th centuries and the role



Karen Callaway/CNS

Women in church leadership talk with bishops during a national consultation March 11 in Chicago. Clockwise from left are Ann Laszok of the Ukrainian Diocese of St. Josaphat; Eunice Riles, national regent of the Catholic Daughters of the Americas; Auxiliary Bishop John C. Dunne of Rockville Centre.; Catherine Bala, director of family and life ministry in Brooklyn; and Auxiliary Bishop Gilberto Fernandez of Miami.

that the Catholic Church played in them.

During "the first wave of reform" when women sought the vote at the end of the Civil War, "the Catholic story line in this was, shall we say, a bit uneven," Leckey said.

Although some bishops supported giving women the vote, others opposed it, she said. It wasn't until the issue came up again after World War I that the bishops agreed that "women in the voting booth would raise the level of civil discourse" in the United States, she added.

In more recent years, the committee's proposed pastoral letter on women's concerns took nine years and was eventually defeated by the full body of bishops. But the action items that were passed have

borne fruit in meetings held and documents approved since then, Leckey said.

On the consultation's second day, Leodia "Lee" Gooch, program manager for evangelization and parish outreach in the Human Rights Office of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, centered her talk on the recent survey of women diocesan leaders about their positive and negative experiences in church leadership.

Three bishops spoke on the last day: Archbishop John G. Vlazny of Portland, Ore., women's committee's chairman since 1998; Auxiliary Bishop John C. Dunne of Rockville Centre, N.Y., who chaired the women's committee in 1995-98; and Bishop Joseph L. Imesch of Joliet, Ill., chairman in 1982-85.

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