

Pope John Paul: 'War Is Not Inevitable'

by Claudio Celani

True world leaders today state that war is not inevitable, as do Lyndon LaRouche and his collaborator Amelia Boynton Robinson. Such a true world leader is, of course, Pope John Paul II, who is seen worldwide as the highest moral authority opposing not only the war against Iraq, but also the very idea of a "preventive war." Instead, the Pope has repeated in public statements for many months, that the world community should engage in removing the causes of conflicts, which are primarily to be found in the lack of justice, especially social and economic justice, among and within nations.

Recently, John Paul II intensified his opposition by naming for the first time, the nation of Iraq and its population; high Vatican spokesmen have put public pressure on the United States as the nation that bears the highest responsibility, as a Christian nation, for maintaining peace in the world.

The Pope chose the traditional New Year's diplomatic reception, on Jan. 13, to address the issue of the Iraq war in explicit terms as never before. "No to war!" the Pope said. "War is not always inevitable. It is always a defeat for humanity. International law, honest dialogue, solidarity between states, the noble exercise of diplomacy: These are methods worthy of individuals and nations in resolving their differences. I say this as I think of those who still place their trust in nuclear weapons and of the all-too-numerous conflicts which continue to hold hostage our brothers and sisters in humanity."

Pointing to the "ongoing degeneration of the crisis in the Middle East," the Pope stressed that "the solution will never be imposed by recourse to terrorism or armed conflict."

"And what are we to say of the threat of a war which could strike the people of Iraq, the land of the Prophets, a people already sorely tried by more than 12 years of embargo? War is never just another means that one can choose to employ, for settling differences between nations. As the Charter of the United Nations Organization and international law itself remind us, war cannot be decided upon, even when it is a matter of ensuring the consequences for the civilian population both during and after the military operations."

The sharp and precise words of the Pontiff, pronounced before the assembled diplomatic corps, challenged the United States and Great Britain which are threatening imminent attack against Iraq, with the public opposition of the highest moral authority in the world. He left no room for error that he held their policy unworthy of a Christian nation. "It is therefore possible," the Pope continued, "to change the course of

events, once good will, trust in others, fidelity to commitments and cooperation between responsible partners are allowed to prevail.”

The Pope set “two conditions” if “we are to avoid descending into chaos”: “First, we must rediscover within states and between states the paramount value of the natural law, which is the source of inspiration for the rights of nations and for the first formulations of international law. Even if today some people question its validity, I am convinced that its general and universal principles can still help us to understand more clearly the unity of the human race, and to foster the development of the consciences both of those who govern and of those who are governed. Second, we need the persevering work of statesmen who are honest and selfless. In effect, the indispensable professional competence of political leaders can find no legitimation unless it is connected to strong moral convictions.”

‘The War Will Not Break Out’

At the beginning of his speech, the Pope thanked the dean of the international diplomatic corps, Ambassador Giovanni Galossi from the Republic of San Marino who, in his introductory speech, had “pointed to the legitimate aspirations of modern men and women.” Ambassador Galossi had stated that all efforts must be made to prevent war, and had called for “an effective vigilance on the so-called free market, which often humiliates weaker countries, with serious social repercussions.” Galossi also called for a “careful reconsidering of globalization . . . aiming at increasing—which is possible through new technologies—the living standard of many peoples who still lack essential goods.”

Following the Pope’s Jan. 13 address, one of the most experienced Vatican diplomats, Archbishop Renato Martino, took the gloves off, so to speak, on the question of why the Pope is so severe with the United States. In an interview with the Italian daily *Corriere della Sera*, Martino explained that the Holy See “rejects an anti-American view!” The Pope demands a lot from America, Martino said, because “he is confident that America can give a lot. It is a Christian people and the Catholic confession is the most numerous one. Therefore, the Pope is confident to be listened to.”

Martino has served for many years as Vatican representative at the United Nations and now is chairman of the *Justitia et Pax* Committee of the Vatican. He told *Corriere*, “Preventive war is not included in the definition of just war, which is only defensive war,” and warned a war against Iraq “would risk blowing up the Mideast powderkeg; will launch new terrorism against the U.S.A.; will strengthen anti-American sentiment in the Muslim world”; and will make it “easier to recruit suicide terrorists.”

But Cardinal Martino indicated that the Holy See is aware of the political faction fight around the U.S. government, when he pronounced himself “confident that [the war] will not break out,” because he “trusts that rulers are reasonable” and “there are other elements which, day by day, bolster me in this confidence, but not all of them can be reported.” He called Bush’s and Blair’s persistent threats “a form of deterrence, accompanied by troop movements to give strength to the words.” But the decision must be in the hands of the UN: “If weapons are found,” then “Saddam must comply. But if they are not found, we must lift the embargo which has been starving that population for 12 years.”

Pope, LaRouche Greeted

In their New Year’s address, the Captains Regent of the Republic of San Marino greeted Pope John Paul II’s message for World Peace Day, Jan. 1, and pointed to the November 2002 visit of Lyndon LaRouche to San Marino as an opportunity to deepen the economic and social aspects of the Pope’s teachings.

In the spirit of the *Pacem in Terris* encyclical, today John Paul II insists that it will not be weapons, nor globalizing economic policies, that solve those conflicts that breed terrorism, but justice, in the form of a new world economic order. We Capitani Reggenti, in the name of the whole people of San Marino, offer our full and total support to His Holiness, for the peace efforts he is leading. . . . We are with the forces of peace, and we repeat with the same forcefulness and determination, that peace is built through the establishment of justice. For justice, we understand,

above all, the ability to create a balance in development and in using resources. . . .

Exactly on this issue, on injustices created by the current economic organization and on distortions produced by financial flows managed in a speculative way, the Regency had the occasion of reflecting in meeting with American economist Lyndon LaRouche, during his recent visit to San Marino. Our request was that he first meet representatives of the San Marino economy, so that a germ of a new organization of the economy could grow in our country.

But the commitment to create conditions of justice among men and states must be strengthened; and in the international organizations, San Marino’s voice must be raised in order to avoid the not infrequent “hesitation” in the international community over the obligation to respect and implement human rights. This commitment concerns not only respecting international conventions aimed at improving living conditions in the developing countries, but also regulating conflicts, so that the rights and duties of peoples are upheld.