

---

## Interview: Patriarch Raphael Bidawid of Iraq

---

# The U.S. must come to its senses and withdraw from the Persian Gulf

*The Patriarch of Babylonia of the Chaldeans, Blessed Right Reverend Raphael Bidawid of Iraq, arrived in Rome for the Synod of the Roman Catholic Church, after a sojourn in Bari, where he took part in the ecumenical meeting. Our correspondent Fiorella Operio met with him on Oct. 6. The interview has been translated from the Italian original.*

**Bidawid:** In the course of a recent encounter with a delegation of members of Congress opposed to the U.S. operation in the Gulf, I gave them an open letter to Bush, which they delivered. In this letter I request the withdrawal of the U.S. troops from Saudi Arabia, because, first of all, this constitutes a desecration of the Islamic territory which we Christians respect, because we have lived for years in good relations with the Muslims, and we do not want to re-create a split in this coexistence.

Many people in the Islamic world consider the U.S. soldiers as new Crusaders; people there do not distinguish between a Christian and an American.

The defense of Kuwait by the United States seems to us to be a pretext. If the United States were so zealous to defend peace and the rights of nations, they should free Palestine and Lebanon, problems which have been pending for years and which no one has wanted to resolve despite all the U.N. resolutions, which neither Israel nor Syria has ever respected. So why do we have this world crisis today? Because so many soldiers and so many weapons are on our territory. Clearly the U.S. is not in the least interested in Kuwait's independence, but in oil, that's what they care about! Otherwise, if there is a desire to deal with the Kuwait problem, one must at the same time, for reasons of justice, deal with all the region's other problems.

You have to be crazy to decide to fire the first shot in the Gulf. Everybody knows that it will not be an easy war, but difficult for everyone, and I cannot believe that the Americans are ready to sacrifice their sons for an uncertain cause. And besides, the blockade of food and medicine is inhuman.

The situation is dangerous. Saddam has declared "holy war," and throughout the Islamic world, support for this cause is growing. Iran supports Iraq, and has stated it will not permit Iraq to be attacked.

America ought to think it over a thousand times before shooting: Has Mr. Bush lost his senses? No, I don't think he will do it. Does he just want a show of force? It is too risky.

**Q:** What is your view of the Soviet position?

**Bidawid:** The Soviets today need the United States, for grain, credits, and so forth. They toe the U.S. line, but I don't think the Russians will make war on Iraq. Look, so far they have not sent their troops. I think that Russia won't do anything. Anyway, the last one to be able to talk of human rights is Russia. What has Gorbachov done against the Baltic countries, Lithuania? Threats and embargo. Who has said anything for Lithuania? Where was Mr. Bush? Who protested the embargo against Vilnius?

**Q:** In fact, only LaRouche and the Schiller Institute!

**Bidawid:** Justice is indivisible. Either there is justice for all or it does not exist. All peoples have equal rights. I do not justify the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, but this is a question which must be settled peaceably. Saddam Hussein was almost teased, instigated into that step. I suspect that the Americans planned this crisis with the aim of entering the Gulf. It was a trap.

For months documents were circulating on the preparation of a coup against Saddam Hussein, while some Arab countries teased him by dangling an easy victory in Kuwait: There is, in fact, a dispute between Kuwait and Iraq, and Saddam was aware that they were plotting against him. When the Iraqi troops went into Kuwait, they found billions in Iraqi currency, which had been gathered in Kuwait for an operation of devaluating the currency.

This was a well-planned trap, well studied, which pushed Saddam into a preventive strike. The United States was worried about unified Europe. And today, with the oil in their hands, they can choke European economic development.

I don't believe Iraq will actually start the "holy war," that's a political instrument. The Iraqis don't want war; no matter how much you love your own country, you can't accept such a war, because it would be cruel for everybody. The Americans should recover their senses, and consider that their sons were not born to be killed by artillery, but want

to live in peace and quiet. No people wants war, which is destructive for everybody. I appeal to the people of the United States, that they should make their voice heard, we don't want a war! Everbody go home! There is no threat to Europe, if there were a threat we would have been the first to denounce it.

**Q:** Do you think there can be tolerance between Christianity and Islam?

**Bidawid:** Sure, we have lived for so many centuries in mutual tolerance. Today there exists in Islam this intolerant and fanatic tendency. But Lebanon, for example, is the model country of religious coexistence. Today Lebanon is being destroyed by a foreigners' war, it's not a civil war. They want to "Islamize" Lebanon.

It is said that a Muslim cannot be ruled by an Infidel, i.e. a Christian President. But this peaceful coexistence, even at the executive level, has gone on for centuries and centuries in Lebanon. That's the motive. Not that in Iraq we have not had problems: nations evolve, people travel more and they get to know other countries, and they realize the world has changed. Above all, this world needs peace and development!

## Argentina's Menem scored as 'traitor'

by Cynthia R. Rush

During a Washington press conference on Oct. 1, Argentine President Carlos Menem was visibly annoyed when *EIR* correspondent Carlos Wesley asked him whether Argentine military officers weren't angry at having to be deployed to the Persian Gulf as allies of the same Anglo-American forces responsible for the 1982 Malvinas War against Argentina. Menem has deployed two Navy ships to the Gulf to join the international blockade against Iraq, explaining that Argentina has now joined George Bush's "new world order."

Accusing Wesley, a Panamanian, of asking an "ill-intentioned question," Menem defensively responded, "I want to tell you that right now, officers in the Republic of Argentina are lining up, begging to be sent to the Persian Gulf." In response to another question by Wesley about whether Argentina was receiving financial assistance from the Kuwaiti government in exchange for participating in the U.N. blockade of Iraq, President Menem indignantly replied, "Argentina is not a mercenary nation." In early September, Kuwait's energy minister toured Ibero-America, offering investments to any government that would join the blockade against Iraq.

However, upon arriving in Buenos Aires from a trip to New York and Washington on Oct. 3, President Menem had a different tale to tell. In an interview with a Buenos Aires radio station, he bragged that "it is very possible that Kuwaiti investments will shortly be arriving in our country, because that nation is very interested in our agricultural sector, and their armed forces may be re-equipping themselves and will buy some of our weapons."

And what of the military officers standing in line begging to be sent to the Gulf? The Oct. 5 issue of the weekly *El Informador Público* reports on a study prepared by the private Foundation for the Study of a Growing Argentina (FEPAC), indicating that 80% of the Army and Air Force's non-commissioned officers are opposed to any Argentine intervention in the Persian Gulf. In the Navy, 60% are opposed. In the officer corps, the percentages are 60% for the Army, 70% for the Air Force, and 50% for the Navy.

### Object of ridicule

Menem has tailored his domestic economic policy and foreign policy entirely to the strategic interests of the Bush

## CONSULTING ARBORIST

Available to Assist in

The planning and development of wooded sites throughout the continental United States as well as

The development of urban and suburban planting areas and

The planning of individual homes subdivisions or industrial parks

For further information and availability please contact Perry Crawford III

**Crawford Tree and Landscape Services**

8530 West Calumet Road  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53224