

er in Moscow," Lithuania's President Landsbergis declared on Jan. 18. The next day, Lithuanian Foreign Minister Algirdas Saudargas told a rally in Bonn, Germany, "You are not fighting for the freedom of the Baltic states, but for the freedom of your own country. If Lithuania's sovereignty is destroyed, so it will be everywhere."

The Lithuanian told Germans, whose Chancellor Helmut Kohl had patronizingly advised them on a "go slow" strategy for independence:

"Don't think that you have German unity all sewn up; Moscow still has 370,000 troops on German soil, and it can stage the same bloody massacres here as in our country, if the political and military leadership decides to do so."

Later, asked if he was going to form a government in exile in the West, Saudargas said: "It's true that our parliament gave me the mandate to do that if need be, but frankly, I really have other things to do right now, like saving my country. Now, concerning your question about forming an exile government in the West, I can just tell you, that I have my doubts whether this would be the right thing to do. Why not have it in Tiflis? Quite frankly, the Western governments didn't do anything for us."

This bluntness apparently had its impact on German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, who had sent a representative to the rally. After some footdragging ("Minister Genscher is too busy with the Gulf war"), Genscher finally received Saudargas on Jan. 21, after which he was clearly disturbed. "The German government has to rethink its position on the Baltic situation," commented Genscher. Next day, Genscher and his French counterpart Roland Dumas issued a statement, saying that "Bonn and Paris will jointly intervene in Moscow and protest against the military action against the Baltic states."

But clearly the Baltic peoples no longer hope for much from Western governments. Commenting on support for the Baltic republics organized by the Schiller Institute in Western Europe, one Lithuanian parliamentarian said, "That strong language and that kind of support is exactly what we need." In Stockholm, Sweden, the Schiller Institute put out a leaflet blasting the Western governments for their disgusting behavior after Moscow's military occupation of Lithuania, and included a clip which every Swedish citizen was asked to sign and send to Swedish Prime Minister Ingvar Carlsson. It contained only one sentence: "I demand that your government officially recognize the independence of Lithuania." The leaflet excited participants at a mass demonstration on the Baltics.

"Please keep doing these things," the parliamentarian told a representative of the Schiller Institute. "Diplomatic niceties don't get us anywhere. If you could initiate similar actions also in other countries we would be very thankful. We here in Vilnius have anyway the impression, that the international Schiller Institute is doing much more for us than entire governments in the West."

Interview: Rev. Raphael Bidawid

Without equity, no peace can occur

The Reverend Raphael Bidawid, the Chaldean Patriarch, who lives in Baghdad, was received on the morning of Jan. 19 by Pope John Paul II at the Vatican in Rome. Bidawid is in Europe for a peace tour.

In a conversation with journalists, the Patriarch stated that there can be no stable peace, in the Gulf or in the world, if the principle of equity is not respected. This principle has been violated by all the belligerents on various occasions, and it is still being violated. The Patriarch referred to the rights of Lithuania, oppressed by the regime in Moscow; the rights of Lebanon, a nation invaded for years and today erased from the map; and the rights of the Palestinians. Replying to a journalist from Panorama magazine, Bidawid stated that no one should deny Israel its security and right to exist as a nation, but that the territories which were occupied after the 1967 war have to be freed. When the journalist said that these were "territories conquered after a war of aggression which Israel won," Bidawid answered that, "This is sophistry. Wars do not justify the conquest of territories in any case.

"If the government of the United States had wanted to think up a pretext to get its hands on the oil of the Middle East, it could not have found a better one than the present Gulf crisis. Surely, if Kuwait had had carrot fields instead of oil fields, very few would have moved."

The Iraqi primate said that the West cannot grasp the Arab mentality, and especially Saddam Hussein's. The Iraqi President, said the Patriarch, has to be treated in the right way, and he will even give you the shirt off his back. But in the case in question, Saddam Hussein was put up against a wall by the embargo and the United Nations ultimatum. Bidawid stated that there was no reason for imposing the ultimatum: "As a man, as a Christian, and as a pastor, I say that the life of one single man is worth five, ten years of negotiations. And today already too many human lives have been sacrificed." What follows is an exclusive interview he granted to EIR's Rome correspondent, Fiorella Operto.

EIR: Can you tell us about the contents of your meeting with the Pope this morning?

Bidawid: The Holy Father is saddened by the war, he could not have imagined that it would happen. He spoke to us of all the efforts he had made to keep the specter of war away, without success. This is very painful for him. The Pope is

thinking about the serious loss of human lives, of property and culture which is yet to come. We know that important cities for world culture have been bombed: Babylon was bombed, but for what motive? Babylon has been restored and was an important world treasure. Takrit was bombed, but that city is a national monument, of the third century, and it was destroyed. Why?

The Pope worries most of all about the poor; he kept telling me, "It is the poor people who will suffer much from this." We have to do whatever we can to stop the war and start peace talks.

EIR: In your view what is the position of the Soviets in this war. Don't you think we are plunging toward a third world war?

Bidawid: Many have spoken of a U.S.-U.S.S.R. deal in this war. I doubt it very much, because, analyzing the situation, I see that the Russians are not convinced of the position assumed up to now. They are seconding the United States because they need Western resources. The Russians have to give in to the United States because the U.S.S.R. is in an economic crisis. But you know that all the weapons the Iraqis are using, are Russian. And I don't know how long things will stay the same in the U.S.S.R.

EIR: You say that Saddam Hussein did not have time to answer the Pope's peace appeal. Do you believe the answer would have been positive?

Bidawid: Yes, I think that the letter was not delivered to the President before the deadline expired. I think that if it had been otherwise, the President would have responded positively.

EIR: Lyndon LaRouche says the reason for this war is that it is a war of the North versus the South, a population war. Do you agree?

Bidawid: We must reestablish equity in the world. What right do the Soviets have to talk about democracy? Of the rights of peoples? How can they speak of sovereignty, when they have crushed entire peoples? Now, they need the United States, they are begging for bread, and they do whatever Bush says. If the Russians were really sincere in their intentions, they would give the oppressed peoples their freedom, starting with Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

How do you Europeans—who call yourselves democratic—ally with those people, who palm themselves off as democratic? Where is the democracy?

And the same goes for the United States. A black bishop came to visit me in Baghdad, at the Council of Churches. Do you know what he told me? "Pray for us, Blessed Father, because we are not free citizens in the United States, we are still slaves."

The United States should think about freeing their own people first, before Kuwait!

EIR: You say that the West did not want to enter a dialogue with Iraq.

Bidawid: I have always repeated that up to now the West has not understood the psychology of the Arab world, and especially of our Iraqi people and President Saddam Hussein. And this is one of the reasons for what is going on now. If there were a profound understanding, we would never have come to this point, we would have found a solution, perhaps not a complete one, but for sure it would not be the tragedy we see now.

EIR: What are your next initiatives?

Bidawid: I am going to visit the Archbishop of Canterbury, then to France, to see the religious who have good contacts with the East, and then to the United States, to meet both the Catholic hierarchy and the Chaldean community. I will also try to meet some politicians there. In Rome, we met Prime Minister Andreotti. In France, we will probably have a meeting at the Quai d'Orsay [Foreign Ministry], a meeting which was already set up with the French embassy in Baghdad. We are on a Church mission, a peace mission. We will not be getting into political questions. But everything which immediately relates to the social and human sphere, we will discuss.

The Patriarch Raphael Bidawid is 68. He was born in Mosul, in northern Iraq, into a Catholic family of 13 children. In 1936-44 he saw the war as a student in Rome. He studied at the Propaganda Fide and the Urbaniana and Lateran Universities, earning degrees in philosophy, theology, and law. Returning to Iraq after the war, he taught for nine years at the seminary in Mosul. In 1956, he was named apostolic administrator in the archdiocese of Kirkuk. In 1957, he was named bishop of Ammadiya in Kurdistan, and remained there nine years, where he again witnessed war.

He participated in all the sessions of the Vatican II Council. At the recent Synod, he was one of only 13 bishops still living, who had taken part in the Council. In 1966, he was sent to Beirut, where he stayed until his election as Patriarch of the Chaldeans, on May 21, 1989.

He first met Saddam Hussein in 1979, after the war in Lebanon, and has met him several times since. The ruling Baath Party is a secular party and does not intervene into religious affairs. Christians in Iraq have full rights as citizens. There are several important Catholic figures, such as Foreign Minister Tariq Aziz, as well as the directors of several ministries. "This is because of the Baath Party and also the President personally, who is very liberal," says Bidawid. Bidawid has been in the United States four times.