

# POWER PLAY FOR A “MORAL” VOICE

Few executive leaders in this country’s history have exhibited the restraint in dealing with open resistance as has President Bush. From inside his own cabinet, to congress, foreign countries, U.S. evangelicals and the media have come demands for “more time,” obtain U.N. resolutions or “we need more allies” on the Iraq situation.

This delay, which the President cautiously bowed to, has had enormous risk. One distinctly related to the increased ability of the Iraq regime to hide weapons and woo the sympathies of the world. Another sinister and unexpected challenge emerged as the anti-war voices became louder and the U.N. Security Council resolution for war was sought.

The Vatican began a major anti-war campaign on a fascinating paradigm – “A just war” concern. Catholic literature, the media and papal speeches capitalized on this in an expanding aura of “questions.” These were based on:

“... a kind of ethical calculus, in which moral reasoning and rigorous empirical analysis are meant to work together, in order to provide *guidance to public authorities* on whom the responsibilities of decision-making fall”<sup>[1]</sup>

This opened the door for “philosophical” debate on the “moral grounds” for the U.S. involvement in Iraq. Note how the Vatican formulated the ground rules for this:

“... the eminent Protestant [Protestants drawn into the debate] theologian Paul Ramsey argued that the just-war tradition is an attempt to think through the public meaning of the commandment of love-of-neighbor. In today’s international context, ‘justice’ includes the defense of freedom (especially religious freedom), and the defense of a minimum of order in international affairs. For these are the crucial components of the peace that is possible in a fallen world.

“This presumption – that the pursuit of justice is a moral obligation of statecraft – shapes the first set of moral criteria in the just-war tradition, which scholars call the ‘ius ad bellum’ or ‘war-decision law.’ Is the cause a just one? Will the war be conducted by a responsible public authority? Is there a ‘right intention’ (which, among other things, precludes acts of vengeance or reprisal)? Is the contemplated action ‘proportionate.’ Is it appropriate to the goal (or just cause); is the good to be accomplished likely to be greater than the evil that would be suffered if nothing were done, or if the use of armed force were avoided for the sake of other types of measures? Have other remedies been tried and found wanting or are other remedies *prima facie* unlikely to be effective? Is there a reasonable chance of success?

“It is only when these prior moral questions have been answered that the second set of just-war criteria – what scholars call the ‘ius in bello’ or ‘war-conduct law’ – come into play, logically. The positive answers to the first set of questions, the ‘war-decision’ questions, create the moral framework for addressing the two great ‘war-conduct’ issues: “proportionality,’ which requires the use of no more force than necessary to vindicate the just cause; and ‘discrimination,’ or what we today call ‘non-combatant immunity.’”<sup>[2]</sup>

This opened the door for the pope on January 13, in his “State of the World” address to 174 ambassadors and official representatives to the Vatican to say:

Pope John Paul II addresses Vatican-accredited diplomats from some 174 countries January 13 at the Vatican, giving his view of the state of the world, especially areas which he believes deserves special attention. The Catholic World Report, February 2003: "The Pope's State of the World" Address – in his annual speech to the ambassadors accredited to the Holy See, the Pope offers a rare glimpse of his foreign policy agenda."



“In Iraq, ‘the land of the Prophets,’ ... the population is ‘already sorely tried by more than 12 years of embargo.’ And in a clear indication of severe misgivings about American military plans, he cautioned: ‘War is never just another means that one can choose to employ for settling differences between nations.’ The Pontiff went on to list the demanding criteria for a just war: a clear and grave harm to the *common good*, the exhaustion of all diplomatic means to resolve the problem, and strict adherence to military policies that avoid disproportionate damage and civilian casualties.”<sup>[3]</sup>

Just three days later the Vatican released a strongly worded new document on the responsibility of politicians as world public leaders. It stated that they have “... ‘legitimate freedom’ to pursue any policy that is ‘compatible with the faith and the natural moral law.’ However, the diction observed that ‘a well formed Christian conscience does not permit one to vote for a political program or an individual law which contradicts the fundamental contents of faith and morals.’”

Then the Jesuit *La Civiltà Cattolica* in January 2002, a very precise and “Holy See” representation of the minds of the “insiders” declared, “If the Bush administration chooses to go to war with Iraq, it will do so over the heated opposition of the Holy See.” The journal accused President Bush of “not telling the truth about the real reasons for threatening war with Iraq” and questioned the wisdom of his foreign policy. “There is in the depths of the heart of the United States a messianic vocation on behalf of the human race.” Its words were blistering, acid and close to hateful.

To “rub” the Roman Catholic’s point deep, Pope John Paul II dispatched a special envoy headed by Cardinal Roger Etchegaray to Baghdad on February 10 to help “prevent” a U.S. led attack. The day before the pope told thousands at St. Peter’s Square:

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Pope John Paul’s personal peace envoy, speaks to reporters after he arrived at Saddam airport in Baghdad, February 11, 2003. Etchegaray planned to meet with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein to discuss ways to avert a possible war with the United States. REUTERS/Suhaib Salem

Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, Pope John Paul’s personal peace envoy (L), meets with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin



Ramadan (C) and Iraq's Deputy Prime Minister Tareq Aziz in Baghdad February 12, 2003. Pope John Paul's personal peace envoy arrived in Baghdad for a planned meeting with Iraqi President Saddam Hussein on ways to try to avert a possible war with the United States. Photo by Akram Saleh/Reuters

"In this hour of international concern, we all feel the need to turn ourselves to the Lord to implore the great gift of peace."<sup>[4]</sup> By the time you read this, the pope will have personally met with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tarig Aziz at the Vatican to introject papal diplomacy through him to the U.N., U.S. and Iraq.



To gain Catholic support the U.S. enlisted theologian Michael Novak to *defend* "Preventive War." The Catholic U.S. ambassador to the Vatican, Jim Nicholson, *pled* for the U.S. cause. Cardinal Angelo Sudano, Vatican See of State, began *negotiations* with U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell. Thus, the U.S. government, the strongest in the world, was forced to negotiate with the Vatican and work with the Catholic church. Out of this incredible power position, the Catholic Church, housed in 108 acres of Rome, helped create pressure for delays in the war, wielded unprecedented control over many decisions in Washington, including seeing Bush address many Roman Catholic issues in his State of the Union Message.<sup>[5]</sup>

This is reminiscent of time in history where the Roman Catholic Church controlled civil governments, then its leaders and, finally, their peoples – to Rome's wishes. That era was called the "Dark Ages."

In its most recent "political ploy" the Sacramento, California bishop William Weigand personally told Governor Gray Davis on January 27, "Pick abortion or communion." He then announced to the press he may forbid Davis from receiving communion if he doesn't obey the church dictims.<sup>[6]</sup>

Recently, a Catholic orphanage in California blocked Gray Davis from visiting because of his "anti-life stance." A document from the congregation for the Doctrine of Faith on January 16 entitled *The Participation of Catholics in Political Life* had called Catholic politicians (everywhere) to be "morally coherent" in abiding by church standards.

Finally, there are published questions coming out in the Catholic press, as this document is completed under such titles as *Bush or the Pope – Your Choice*.<sup>[7]</sup>

What is all this doing? It brings the papacy into a position to work at the highest levels of civil governments. It gives them opportunity to promote "answers" to the world's problems. Finally, it gives unprecedented "moral" influence to political decisions. **Never** has a church, since the Dark Ages, wielded so much power over civil leaders. These trends bear careful study and watching. Prophecy makes clear this antichrist leadership would do exactly what is being seen here. The "man of sin," the beast of Revelation 13 and 17, has come to the forefront.

**References:**

- [1] George Weigel, Author of *The Catholic Difference. Getting a “Just-war” Straight.*
- [2] *Zenit*, 10/13/2001.
- [3] *The Catholic World Report*, Feb. 2003.
- [4] AP, 2/9/03 on Fox News.com [5] *National Catholic Register*, 1/26–2/1/03.
- [5] *National Catholic Register*, 1/26–2/1/03.
- [6] *Ibid.*, 2/2-8/03.
- [7] *Ibid.*, 2/9-15/03.