
Interview: Monsignor Elias El-Hayek

'The U.S. has decided that Lebanon is a non-country'

Monsignor El-Hayek is Chor-Bishop of the Maronite Diocese of Canada in Montreal. He was interviewed on Aug. 24, 1989 in Washington, D.C. by Dana S. Scanlon. He was in Washington to speak before the International Club and other groups about the genocide being perpetrated by Syria against the people of Lebanon.

While we concur emphatically in the need to expose U.S. government treachery against Lebanon, perpetrated by Henry Kissinger and his cothinkers, and to stop the Syrian genocide (see Helga Zepp-LaRouche's call to "Stop the holocaust in Lebanon!" in our Aug. 25 issue, page 42), EIR differs from some of the views expressed in the interview. In particular, the statement of the Palestinian problem is oversimplified. Lebanon's civil war was not caused by "the Palestinians," but by the manipulation by foreign intelligence services of a whole complex of religious and political rivalries and blood feuds, toward the end of partitioning Lebanon. The Palestinians, deprived of national sovereignty and a homeland of their own, reduced to abject poverty, forced to live for generations in squalid refugee camps on the fringes of society, naturally added an explosive element to the powder keg—which the Syrians stoked by carrying out massacres against Palestinian camps, and then taking over and running some Palestinian groups as a terrorist capability. Equally important was the manipulation of real and imagined grievances that had been long-simmering between the Christian and Muslim Lebanese themselves. This background makes the efforts by General Michel Aoun, leading a national army that includes Muslims as well as Christians, particularly crucial today.

EIR: Would you first of all, give us an overview of the current situation inside Lebanon?

El-Hayek: In Lebanon today, we have a war of genocide, led by the Syrians against the Christian people of Lebanon. As the Pope has mentioned recently in his prayer, it is a real genocide [see *EIR*, Aug. 25, 1989, "World responses to genocide in Lebanon"]. The Christian enclave is surrounded from all sides, there is an embargo on food, on everything. The people have been shelled to death, in their homes, on the streets, everywhere they are. They have no electricity, no

water, no food. But they are willing to die, to resist until death, to stay free if they can, and they ask the world to look into this matter, to find out how a man could be allowed to destroy a people. So, we appeal to everyone who understands what life is about, and who understands what the cost of freedom and liberty is, to act on your own government and ask them to intervene in this situation.

EIR: How long has this situation been going on?

El-Hayek: The recent war in Lebanon started in March, but that is one chapter of a longer book. The war started in 1975; it was the Lebanese people trying to free themselves from the Palestinians, who wanted to take Lebanon over, with the benediction of some powers. But they did not succeed, the Lebanese people defended themselves.

Now, there is another attempt by the Syrians and their allies to destroy this country for a purpose. Some people say that Lebanon is needed to the solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. This conflict is about land. And Lebanon, even if it is a small country, if we just destroy its people, or make them exiles, refugees in other countries, we could use the land. The land is to be given to Syria for the Golan they have lost, and maybe to the Israelis, South Lebanon for what they might lose on the West Bank.

So, this is the reason why they don't want a stable government, and strong government in Lebanon. When Beshir Gemayel, the President who was assassinated in 1982, died, then we became again a country without a government. If that man had been allowed to live, naturally this would not be the situation now. There is a purpose behind destabilizing Lebanon. It is the purpose of dismembering this country, and dividing it among its neighbors.

EIR: Is this what is known as the Greater Syria plan for the region?

El-Hayek: It is, yes, the Greater Syria plan. As you know, Syria never fully recognized the independence of Lebanon. They always claimed that Lebanon is part of Syria, although historically speaking, Lebanon became independent before Syria became an independent country. Syria was under the Ottoman Empire occupation, Syria was a province, and the

head of this province was a Turk, not a Syrian. Lebanon was autonomous when the Ottoman Empire was in existence, and had a prince selected by the people. So the existence of the independence of Lebanon really is older than that of Syria, and Lebanon is not a part of Syria, historically speaking. And even if it were, we have two developments now, two countries which developed, each one on either side, and we cannot destroy that independence now.

The aim of the Syrians in this war against the Lebanese, naturally is to dominate Lebanon or make Lebanon a satellite of Syria. But it is part of a whole project for the Middle East, which has been worked out by certain politicians in the United States and elsewhere, to solve—at the expense of the Lebanese people—the Arab-Israeli conflict.

EIR: When we hear the word Syria today, many think of two things: international terrorism and drug running. Do you have any comments on that?

El-Hayek: It is no longer a secret that the Syrians have used state-sponsored terrorism to promote their foreign policy. They have done it so well, that they really scared, or intimidated the United States government. They are now doing it through the hostages; they did it with Pan Am Flight 103; they continue to do that, such that the American public and government cannot act to help the Lebanese under siege, for fear that the hostages would be mistreated. So that is something the Syrians have done.

We know that in London, a court has already cited Syria for state-sponsored terrorism in a couple of cases. We know also that the bombing of the Berlin discotheque, they were also instrumental in it. The *Achille Lauro* also. In the matter of drugs, they are using the Bekaa Valley, which is a known area for growing hashish [a stronger form of marijuana-ed.], and this valley is administered by the Syrian Army, and the nephew of [Syrian President Hafez] Assad, a captain of the Syrian Army, is in charge of growing the hashish, and transforming [opium] in these laboratories dotting Mount Lebanon's eastern slopes, into heroin, and smuggling the drugs through these illegal ports, whether on the Christian side or the Muslim side.

Recently Gen. Michel Aoun closed the ports on the Western side, that is the Christian side, and tried to close the ones on the other side, the Muslim side. And then the Syrians started the war against him, because this money, the proceeds of this money made by the trafficking of drugs, is used for terrorist activities.

EIR: So at the same time as President Bush and drug czar William Bennett are saying they are going to launch a war on drugs, they seem to be supporting Syria's role in the Middle East. What do you think about that?

El-Hayek: It is ironic that they speak about Noriega, and the Colombian connection, and all the rest, but they are silent about the major drug trafficking which is going on in Leba-

non, led by the Syrians. They are unwilling to expose this aspect of the Syrian occupation of Lebanon. They have decided, maybe, that Syria has the right to do this, which means dominate Lebanon, for political reasons. And for this reason, they do not want to speak about their drug activities.

EIR: Who in the United States, and what factions in our political Establishment, do you feel are responsible for the kind of policies we see the United States entertaining vis-à-vis the Middle East in general, and most particularly in Lebanon?

El-Hayek: When we speak about foreign policy and the United States, and the formulation of this policy, it is a complex situation. There are so many institutions which are part of this formulation. The State Department, the National Security Council, and many advisers to the President, the President, the Congress. It is a complex situation. But there is no doubt that a framework was established in the 1970s, and within this framework they decided that Lebanon should go. Lebanon is a non-country. They are a non-people. It is not a legitimate country. It is a conglomerate of factions, fighting each other—that is the propaganda they made. Then, on the basis of these inaccurate evaluations of Lebanese society, which is a highly sophisticated society, they made decisions, that this country should be dismembered.

The leader and architect in this was Mr. Kissinger, who in 1975-76, went to see the President of Lebanon, and proposed to him that the United States is ready to take some 450,000 Lebanese and install them in Canada, and the rest would be installed in the United States, if they leave Lebanon for the Palestinians and other factions. So naturally, the Lebanese are people who have been independent for 14 centuries, they are not about now to abandon their country. They have defended it against invaders like the Turks, and other dictators. So they preferred to stay in their country and fight for it.

EIR: Did I hear you correctly, that Dr. Kissinger proposed that 450,000 Lebanese be evacuated from their own country?

El-Hayek: Yes. And he was turned down. The leaders, the Lebanese Christian leaders in particular, were unwilling to abide by this decision.

EIR: This is an amazing revelation, and will be for most Americans hearing this, that an official of the United States government could make such an outrageous proposal.

What is the role now that the Soviet Union plays in this war and the genocide?

El-Hayek: The Soviet Union, as you know, is a supplier of arms to the Syrians, and the Syrians have been their agents—not so obedient, they have their own agenda. But they relied very much on the Soviet support. And there is a treaty of friendship between them. That treaty has been exposed, and maybe exaggerated in the United States. Many times, the

United States government was unwilling to speak strongly with Syria, under the pretext that they might bring the Soviet Union into the discussion. But in fact, they know very well that the Soviets were not about to come down and fight, whether in Syria or elsewhere in the Middle East. But they took it as a pretext, because they had their own agenda with the Syrians.

EIR: In France recently, an attorney by the name of Jean-Marc Vaurat has proposed, in an article published in *Le Quotidien de Paris*, that the Nuremberg Tribunals that we had in the postwar period to try the Nazis for crimes against humanity, should be resurrected and brought to bear in order to put the regime of Syria on trial from crimes against humanity being committed in Lebanon today [see *EIR*, Sept. 1, 1989, "For a new international Nuremberg Tribunal"]. What do you think of this proposal?

El-Hayek: This proposal is a good one and is timely. International public opinion should know exactly what's happening to the Lebanese people, what happened to the people of Hamma, for example, which is a Syrian city, destroyed by Hafez al-Assad, with 30,000 people dying under the rubble of their homes.

We have all the makings here of an international crime against humanity, where innocent people by the thousands are murdered in the streets, in their homes, everywhere, because a man wants to impose his will on them, and they refuse. This man does not abide by any law. The only law is his, whether we like it or not.

I think we have to stop this, either by establishing a tribunal, as it is suggested by this lawyer, or at least, by a conference of free nations about Lebanon, which Syria cannot really avoid attending, and where this could be stopped, if there is a good intention on the part of the free world to stop this genocide.

EIR: What would you like to say directly to the American people, what should they do to stop this genocide?

El-Hayek: What I would like to say to my compatriots is the following: that this country has been established on certain principles, basically principles of freedom and liberty. And human values. Now, it is not the time to abandon these principles and go and follow some of these politicians or experts on foreign policy, who are leading us down to other paths of dictatorship. We cannot defend liberty and freedom in this country and destroy it elsewhere. Liberty and freedom are indivisible. Either we stand for them here and elsewhere—or we do not stand for them.

So our role now, is to call upon our governments, and ask them to change their policies towards Lebanon, and other countries in the world, where dictatorships of this kind are destroying the lives of innocent people. Use the media, use the means at our disposal to make this known to your government. Thank you.

Panama swears in a new President

by Carlos Wesley

Francisco Rodríguez and Carlos Ozores Typaldos were sworn in as, respectively, the new President and vice president of Panama on Sept. 1. They will head a provisional government selected by Panama's Council of State to replace President Manuel Solís Palma, whose constitutional term expired Aug. 31. In announcing the decision, the Council of State said it had to make the selection, because "the general elections of last May 7 were hopelessly tainted by the government of the United States of America and its local allies, who engaged in all sort of dishonest practices."

Those elections were annulled by Panama's Electoral Tribunal, after the Bush administration leaked to the media that it had funneled millions of dollars through the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), to Panama's Democratic Opposition Civic Alliance (ADO-C). The funds, which belonged to Panama, were impounded by the United States as part of the sanctions to force the ouster of the commander of Panama's Defense Forces, Gen. Manuel Noriega, and were employed by ADO-C to buy votes, to suborn officials, and to finance a number of operations to disrupt the country. The Council of State said that the new provisional government will call new elections "as soon as adequate conditions exist." It added that among the "indispensable" conditions for new elections are "an end of United States aggression against Panama and the release of the funds belonging to the Panamanian state which have been arbitrarily withheld by the U.S. government."

President George Bush said that he would not recognize the new government. "Our ambassador will not return, and we will not have any diplomatic contact with the Noriega regime," he said. "The U.S. will continue to take other steps, including the tightening of measures to deprive the illegal regime of funds that belong to the Panamanian people," said Bush, claiming that the intent was "to counter the threat posed by General Noriega's support for drug trafficking and other forms of subversion."

The accusation that Noriega is a partner of drug traffickers and drug-money launderers was also the central feature of a speech delivered by Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger, former president of Kissinger Associates, at an "urgent meeting" of the Permanent Council of the Organi-