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## Interview: Dr. Geris Sa'ed Khoury

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# U.S., Britain 'may use nuclear weapons'

"Therefore we call again all rulers and peoples of the world, and particularly the West, led by President George Bush, to go back to God, to abide by the message of the Christ Child, abandon all sins and evil, and work for preserving and keeping human dignity, because we are all created in the image of God. We should remember that he who shoots anyone who is open to dialogue and to making peace actually shoots his conscience and diverts his gun toward God."

These words were part of the Christmas message by Dr. Geris Sa'ed Khoury, the well-known Christian Palestinian theologian who directs the Al-Liqa Center for Christian-Islamic ecumenical dialogue in Jerusalem. Dr. Khoury is the author of three books, the last, now being translated into English, is *L'Intifada del cielo e l'Intifada della terra* ("The Intifada of heaven and the Intifada of earth"). He has published at least 13 books on the Arab Islamic-Christian dialogue. He teaches Literature and Religious Studies at the University of Bethlehem. He has taught at the Oriental Institute of Naples University. He holds his Ph.D. from the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. Dr. Khoury also has a degree in theology from the Angelicum and the Pontifical Oriental Institute, and a degree in letters and philosophy at the University of Rome. He spoke with Umberto Pascali in early February.

"Al-Liqa means encounter," Dr. Khoury says, "and that's why we created it. Arab Muslims and Arab Christians are deepening their ecumenical relations. The president of the center is Bishop Lufti Laham, and one of our great friends and supporters is the Latin Patriarch Michael Sabbah. But among the founders and leaders there are some of the most important Muslim Palestinians, like Dr. Ayyoush, the director of the Arab University of Jerusalem, and Mousa Darwish of the University of Bethlehem. Also, under the present conditions, our work continues. For the moment we must think 300,000 times before speaking, before publishing. It is a difficult situation. In Al-Liqa we are collecting certain things but we don't publish them for the moment."

The interview was understandably dramatic, given that any strategic or broader intellectual issue is fatally linked to the personal situation of Palestinian living in Israel at this moment. "I really do not know whether there will be another possibility for me to talk to you, or whether we will all be

incinerated. I stay as much as possible here in my house with my family, and many others do the same. I see ugly signs. The situation is worsening. I see as a concrete possibility the death of my children, of myself. I cannot accept those who don't want to stop this war. I have the feeling that in the end the British and the Americans, or at least their governments, are going to use nuclear weapons."

Two days after this conversation, Dr. Khoury commented on Israeli Prime Minister Shamir's rejection of an international conference and the inclusion of arch-racist Rehavam Ze'evi in the cabinet. "I consider this a defeat of the Israeli people. The government said no to peace."

**EIR:** The use of nuclear weapons is being openly debated in the U.S. media—

**Khoury:** Yes, from the way certain things are developing, I see that this is one of the cards they are going to play, and this is why the British government is preparing its people, and the American government is doing the same. People are being trained to accept the use of nuclear weapons.

**EIR:** What will be the consequence of such a monstrous decision? Will the Muslim nations launch a holy war? At that point, who will be able to stop it?

**Khoury:** Then it would be too late for any peace plan, it would be too late for a ceasefire, too late for justice, for Mr. [Pérez] de Cuéllar to do anything, even if he wanted to. We must do anything to prevent it. You know what the Nazis did. And then, afterward, the whole West felt guilty. But when? After 6 million Jews had been killed, after the holocaust. This is my fear now. Another holocaust, against the Arabs. The Iraqis also threaten to use weapons, chemical or other kinds, against Israel. Maybe in a moment of insanity or desperation this will happen, and then the answer will be to attack Iraq with nuclear bombs, or maybe Iraq will be attacked first and it will answer with some airplanes that are somewhere. I see the concretization of this danger over the next days or few weeks. Thus I call on all the leaders involved, from President Bush to Saddam Hussein, to Giulio Andreotti, to François Mitterrand, to the European Community, to launch a peace plan now, to direct their attention to that and not to think how to destroy the East, how to destroy millions of human beings.

**EIR:** How could the war be stopped?

**Khoury:** This is a colonial war, in the tradition of the British colonial wars. I must say that I expect something from many leaders involved in this war, but at the same time I expect very little from the British government. Wherever the British Empire has been, evil was spread, and they did evil also against their own citizens. I am against war, but even more against a colonial war, because to kill any person in a colonial war represents an eternal sin. Every person—American, Iraqi, Israeli, European—is a person created in the image of

God, in the image of which we all have been created. Every person is a loved one.

I want to invite Israel in particular, through any interview or public statement I can make, to have the courage to say only one word. After all the support, the love they received from the West following the bombings, now that everybody has shown that they shared the suffering of Israel, now Israel must say: "I am ready to go to an international conference for peace in the Middle East." I am sure that after this word, the war in the Gulf will end, Iraq will withdraw from Kuwait, all the Arab countries will state their availability to make peace with Israel. I am sure that Israel, which has been at war since 1948, will have peace. All the children of Israel will live in peace. From the economic, political, social standpoint, the East will be a Paradise, while now it is an Inferno and knows only war.

**EIR:** What do you think will happen now?

**Khoury:** This war is insane. I ask myself every day: How could the West be so evil toward us? The Western world, the United Nations are silent. They are silent after they saw the bombing of civilian houses, the destruction of half of Baghdad, of hospitals, the death and suffering of children . . . and the world is silent. This is really a surprise. The Anglo-Americans continue to bomb hospitals, schools. It is a terrible thing that a nation like the U.S.A. commits this act of terrorism against civilian populations. And what do we see? Pride over the tons of bombs unloaded, pride over the scale of the killing. The West is proud of how many bombs it has dropped. It is absurd; there is not a trace of humanity. I want to ask the West, what do you value more, oil or human dignity? If you are for human dignity, it is necessary to look for peace and justice and not oil, because in human dignity you then find oil, but never will you find human dignity in oil.

The other thing that upsets me is that the U.S. continues talking about moral values, human values. There is a great contradiction. Bush asked his people to pray. But why? To end the war or to continue the war? I don't know if the Lord will accept those prayers. These are ugly signs. I would not have imagined that the West had such a grudge against us. Why? Where is the civilization, where is the humanism, the humanity of the West? This is not a traditional war: It endangers the world community, the relations between Muslims and Christians, West and East. The hate will grow, it will be terrible. Tell the Americans, this insane people, that there are other human beings like them in the Middle East, they are not the only people in the world. The Americans must understand that they will not be considered anymore as friends. They can wipe out Iraq, but the danger is that the real war will start after the end of the war. If it is not stopped, the consequences will continue for hundreds of years, nobody should doubt that.

**EIR:** Why was this war engineered, in your opinion?

**Khoury:** The British and the Americans did not want a strong Arab state in the Middle East, like Iraq, and wanted to take away from Europe and Japan the possibility to have access to important natural resources. There is a chain of clear reasons, above all they do not want Europe and Japan to be strong and independent. Look at the attitude of England toward the rest of Europe.

Think of the Iran-Iraq war. The Anglo-Americans made sure the war lasted as long as possible. They thought that Iraq would win the war but would be devastated. On the contrary, Iraq emerged from the war 10 times stronger than before. And the Americans and the British don't want this. They don't want a strong Arab government, a country that will be a strategic force. So they waited for the right moment to attack Iraq.

I would like to ask Saddam Hussein: These weapons, who gave them to you? The Americans, the British, the Germans, the French, the Italians. They gave them to kill, to win the war with Iran, because they got scared of Islamic fundamentalism. And to stop its spread, they were ready to give everything. Two million Iranians were killed, and the West was very calm, was able to watch that war at a distance for eight years. There was no justice, morality, no human values, nothing.

Then suddenly, after the occupation of Kuwait by Iraq, morality, justice, human values emerge like a mushroom after a rainy night. But the U.N. resolution was not justice, it was a resolution the Americans and British wanted as a pretext, as if the world had fallen on Kuwait.

My position is clear. I am against the occupation of every country, Palestine or Kuwait. But the West did not give negotiations with Iraq any chance. They wanted a war. They used people like Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, who cheated the Kuwaitis when there were negotiations between Iraq and Kuwait, and Mubarak acted as a mediator. He instigated the Sabah family against Iraq, reporting false intelligence.

**EIR:** Can you state your position on the Israeli-Palestinian question?

**Khoury:** We and the Israelis have lived in a state of war since 1948. British colonialism started this. Wherever they went, they left destruction, social injustices. But now the state of war here is supported above all by the Americans. The West is pushing Arabs and Israelis to fight. The West sells weapons and keeps strategic control of the region, and this is how imperialism survives. I personally, as a Palestinian, would like Israel to remain a democratic, independent, sovereign state, as it was up to 1967, and I want a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories. And I would like to live in peace with Israel and to have peace between Arabs and Israelis. But the U.S. does not want this, nor the British. So I want to invite the whole world not to be victims of the Anglo-Americans, and to push Arabs and Israelis toward peace.