

Iraq. The situation could set the nuclear stage for a “break-away ally” scenario, where Sharon, or someone even more extreme, such as Israeli Defense Forces Chief of Staff Shaul Mofaz, would lead Israel into a new regional war, including deployment of nuclear weapons.

### Sharon’s Regional War in the Works

A senior Israeli intelligence source warned, “Now is the best time for Sharon to start a small, or even a large Middle East war. Internally Sharon is facing an economic collapse for which he has no solution. The economy is so bad, the polls are now showing negative support for Sharon, but . . . when people are asked who they think would be an alternative to Sharon, they are no longer responding with support for Benjamin Netanyahu. They are simply saying nothing. But the most important fact is that the Bush Administration refuses to dump its support for Sharon. Now is the best time for him to start a war.”

The same issue of the *Washington Post* that confirmed Israel’s submarine-based nuclear capability, reported Sharon’s claims to President Bush during their meeting on June 10, that Hezbollah was stockpiling of weapons in Lebanon, and that an attack on Israeli territory “could be launched within the next several days.” The same week, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk Al-Shara’a cancelled an official visit to Washington because the Bush Administration indicated he was not welcome.

General Mofaz, detailing the Hezbollah buildup to the Knesset (parliament) on June 19, said that an Israeli response to this danger would prompt a retaliatory strike from Hezbollah with long-range missiles, provided by Iran, against northern Israel. Israel would reply, by launching a military strike inside Syrian territory.

An Israeli attack on Syrian territory could have incalculable consequences. Since the end of the 1973 war, neither Israel nor Syria has violated the cease-fire accords. Moreover, Syria is strongly allied, not only to Iran, but to Saudi Arabia as well, and in recent years has expanded its relations with Iraq. In this context, it has been reported that Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak requested President Bush to pass on a letter to Sharon, warning that if Sharon launched a massive military attack on the Gaza Strip, which borders on Egypt, Egypt would consider it a national security danger. This is also a warning to the Bush Administration, since it involves the security clauses of the Egyptian-Israeli Camp David peace agreement, of which the United States is the guarantor. If America should fail to act, Egypt might have to deploy military forces in the demilitarized Sinai.

The senior Israeli intelligence source cited above told *EIR*, “The entire Arab world knows that as long as Sharon is in power, war is certain. If Israel attacks Syria, anything can happen, or nothing can happen. The current situation is just too tense. The most important factor is, what will the Bush Administration do?”

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## ‘Pedophilia Scandals’

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# Cardinal Rodríguez Rips Attack on Church

by Claudio Celani

In his May 28 webcast, Lyndon LaRouche was asked by a leading Catholic figure about the U.S. media campaign against the Catholic Church, on the issue of the so-called pedophilia scandals. He replied that this is part of “the attempt to destroy what might be called traditional religious bodies, and to grind them up, as in a blender . . . into a world religion, as a part of an empire” after the model of the Roman Pantheon. A few days later, LaRouche’s words were echoed by a prominent leader of the Catholic Church, Honduras Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga, Archbishop of Tegucigalpa.

In an interview with the Italian magazine *30 Giorni*, Rodríguez compares the campaign against the Catholic Church in the United States to the persecutions of Christians under Nero, Hitler, and Stalin. The Honduran Cardinal does not deny that there have been cases of pedophilia among Catholic priests, and that such practices have to be exposed and severely punished, but without “witchhunts,” and without having priests turned into “FBI or CIA agents.”

The fact that the Archbishop of Tegucigalpa released his statements in Rome, to a magazine very close to Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, the Prefect of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith at the Vatican, is a strong indication that his statements reflect the views of the Pope’s closest collaborators, who have decided to take the gloves off. At a meeting with the leadership of the U.S. Church in Rome on April 23-24, Cardinal Ratzinger led the discussion. The outcome of the deliberations was that the so-called “zero tolerance” policy was rejected as a surrender to the media-dominated *vox populi*. The media, and even some factions of the U.S. Catholic Church, had demanded the suspension of any priest suspected of pedophilia, even before such allegations could be proven, and called this “zero tolerance.” Curiously, the most zealous supporters of such a policy in the Church itself are the same right-wing circles which, when the first cases were reported, suggested that the Church should pay reparations, in order to avoid a public scandal. In both cases, then and now, this faction objects to establishing the truth, and has been jointly responsible for dragging the U.S. Catholic Church into a very difficult position.

At the meeting in Rome, the Vatican opted for fair trial procedures and transparency in each individual case. At the same time, the root of the problem was exposed: that the

education of priests in the United States has been, in many cases, influenced more by sociological rather than theological doctrine, and that this must be reversed. In his official address at the meeting, the Pope indicated that Church leaders must not allow a few rotten apples to be used by the media to smear the reputation of the Church. This aspect in particular was picked up by Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga.

### ‘Persecution Like Nero, Stalin, and Hitler’

The pedophilia scandal, Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga says, “is a painful issue, manipulated by the media. When you mix money, politics, and justice, justice becomes unjust. We all know that Ted Turner is openly anti-Catholic, and he is the owner not only of CNN, but also of Time Warner. Not to speak of the other dailies, like the *New York Times*, the *Washington Post*, and the *Boston Globe*, which have been protagonists of what I do not hesitate to characterize as persecution against the Church. I reflect on the fact that in a moment when the whole mass media attention was focussed on what was happening in the Middle East, with the many injustices done to the Palestinian people, the U.S. press and television were obsessively concentrated on sex scandals which occurred 40, 30 years ago.” Why? asks Rodríguez, and suggests the reason in the Catholic Church’s support for a Palestinian state, its fight for the defense of life and against “dehumanizing policies.” “Only in this way can I explain to myself this rabid attitude against the Catholic Church in the United States—an attitude reminding me the times of Nero, Diocletian, and, more recently, Stalin and Hitler.”

Those priests “who committed serious crimes must be punished with the appropriate canonic measures [suspension], and, if necessary, must also face state justice. But, without witchhunts, even inside the Church,” says Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga. “We bishops must not forget that we are shepherds of mercy and not FBI or CIA agents. . . . Allegations must always be proven in a just trial and without persecutory modalities by state authorities, such as are instead occurring now. What they are doing, for instance, against [Boston Archbishop] Cardinal Law, is a scandal. . . . I know him well. He is a man who did a lot of good for us in Latin America. . . . I heard that the judge leading the trial is one who supports all feminist movements. Thus, it occurred that, while trials in the U.S.A. last quite a long time, Cardinal Law has been immediately interrogated, with procedures that recall the dark times of Stalin’s trials against priests in Eastern Europe. And the records of such interrogations were immediately circulated via the Internet and published with great emphasis by all major dailies. I disagree with this show-trial justice. This is no justice, I repeat, this is persecution.”

Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga spoke also on the neo-liberal, free-trade economic policies which are victimizing his continent, Ibero-America. Unfortunately, he seems to accept demands for market liberalization, in hopes of allowing poor countries to sell their products—a proposal which has the



*Honduran Cardinal Oscar Andrés Rodríguez Maradiaga (left) compares the media scandal-mongering against the U.S. Catholic Church to “the dark times of Stalin’s trials against priests in Eastern Europe.” He wrote, “I disagree with this show-trial justice. This is no justice, I repeat, this is persecution.”*

appearance of responding to demands for justice in trade relationships, but which is used in reality by financial globalizers as a means of looting. Without protection of national industries and agriculture, as *EIR* has shown, the poor countries become victims of even greater exploitation (as the current case of Argentina shows most vividly), while the advanced agricultural and industrial capabilities of the wealthy countries are also destroyed.

However, on a precise question about economic policies imposed on Ibero-America, Cardinal Rodríguez Maradiaga is right to the point: “For some, unfortunately including Catholic circles, these neo-liberal doctrines are tantamount to the ‘word of God.’ They have been taken uncritically and they thought that by applying all recipes, one would achieve economic welfare. The result has been dramatically negative. Let us, for instance, take so-called privatizations, which such neo-liberal ‘priests’ held to be necessary. What did they produce in reality? In Argentina they privatized everything they could privatize, but the money . . . has disappeared. In Peru, . . . sure, some macroeconomic indicators have improved, but these are relative signs of progress, because we know that those indicators are artificially determined and have no real relationship with the concrete situation of the majority of the population.”