

# ‘I Hope That Lebanon Can Be An Example Of Peace’

*His Beatitude, Cardinal Nasrallah Boutros Sfeir, of Lebanon, the Patriarch of Antioch and all the East, visited the United States March 14-21, and was received by many leading officials throughout the country, including President Bush and UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.*

*The Maronite Patriarch, who is known in Lebanon by all religions and sects as “the conscience of his nation,” made this diplomatic visit to the United States during a time of great danger and tension for his country. The current, intensely complicated situation in Lebanon is balanced on a precipice between war and peace. Yet, the people of Lebanon, whatever their differences, have one unified determination; they will not be provoked into war again and they will uphold, not only the independence and sovereignty of their own nation, but*



*Patriarch Nasrallah Sfeir, shown at a press conference at the United Nations on March 19, 2005.*

*also that of their neighbors.*

*Throughout his visit to the United States, the Patriarch delivered this consistent message, whether speaking privately to political and religious leaders, or at public gatherings. In his speeches, one could hear a living echo of the Treaty of Westphalia, which ended the bloody Thirty Years' War in Europe in 1648. That Treaty's principles—"This Peace must be so honest and seriously guarded and nourished that each part furthers the advantage, honor, and benefit of the other"—shone through his discussions at the White House Congress, the Senate, and the United Nations. Participants in those meetings told EIR that many parties toned down their demands and rhetoric in the face of the Patriarch's calm and resolved authority.*

*The Patriarch granted the following interview to EIR correspondent Nina Ogden on March 18.*

**EIR:** As you know, we have been discussing with our mutual friends in Lebanon, LaRouche's concept of a New Peace of Westphalia, which is based on the concord that brought peace to Europe after the Thirty Years War.

**Patriarch:** This is our image, and I hope I have gotten the message across in this country—the message that what we want in Lebanon is good relations with all countries in the region. What is good for Lebanon is what is in the common interests of all of our neighbors. We, in Lebanon, want peace. We want to be good friends with all of our neighbors. We

want to walk together hand to hand, heart to heart.

**EIR:** Many have feared the intention of some in the United States and other countries to use Lebanon as a playing card in the region, as a provocation for war.

**Patriarch:** I hope all have understood my message. Lebanon must be independent, sovereign, and free. Up to now we have not been free. Now Syria will have respect for Lebanon as a sovereign country, and Lebanon will have respect for Syria as a sovereign country. Lebanon as a free country must have no interference from any country in the world.

**EIR:** When you met with President Bush at the White House, do you think he understood this?

**Patriarch:** I am sure that he understands our position, because I sent him a message before I came here explaining this position and the context of the situation of our country. I emphasized that an independent, sovereign, and free Lebanon wishes all our neighbors also to be free and to be friendly.

**EIR:** What kind of example do you hope that Lebanon can be?

**Patriarch:** I hope that Lebanon can be an example of peace, of overcoming the problems of the past. A free nation has no reason for any interference from any country from the outside. When we have peace, we can create jobs and a hopeful future that can bring our young people back from all over the world.

**EIR:** I understand that you have identified this concept in the words of Pope Paul VI that "development is the new name for peace."

**Patriarch:** Exactly! It is true that our young people must be able to find this out for themselves. So many of our young people—Muslim and Christian alike—were pushed out of our country by lack of jobs and hopes. They were pushed abroad and are now living in countries all over the globe. I hope they will be happy and come back to Lebanon, when we have peace and a government of our own that can plan for the development of our country.

**EIR:** There were hundreds of young people at the reception for you and they seemed very happy about what you were saying to them.

**Patriarch:** I think the young people understand my message. There was much applause.

**EIR:** I think they were so enthusiastic that if you had asked them to all go back to Lebanon with you next week, they would.

**Patriarch:** Oh, I wish they could—but not yet; not yet. Things must be regularized for them. This is why we are working so hard on the new elections, so the young people will have hope—so the young people of every religion and sect will have prospects for the future—so they will not face fear and oppression, but will have hope for the future.