

Saddam Hussein's New Year greetings

On Dec. 30, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein issued the following New Year's message, which has been little publicized in the United States, perhaps because the text belies Bush's label of him as a "new Hitler."

In the Name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful, to the faithful everywhere on Earth I address myself with the words *Assalam Alaykum*—Peace be upon you.

These are the days every year in which Christians have a look of contemplation on themselves, a look through which to reassess and evaluate life with spiritual elevation, a look which preserves the good and dismisses the bad in oneself, one's thinking, and one's behavior. In this climate of Christmas festivities of joy and spiritual meanings, the world at large shares these festivities not only with Arab Christians, including their brethren in Iraq, but also with the people of all faiths in our nation, as a form of spiritual as well as human expression, each proceeding from his own faith; for Jesus Christ was a prophet through whom God desired, as He did through all other prophets and messengers, to convey the meanings of reverence and responsibility which He entrusted our nation as a nation chosen to be at the heart of nations, to be a witness upon all other nations on Earth, while being witnessed upon by Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him). In this, the people of our nation express the meaning of their perception of the essence of religions, of the tasks of messengers, and of the meaning and message of their one Arab Nation.

As we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ and the advent of a new year, the world and all its nations reflect in detail upon the landmarks of a time at which history made a special pause; reflect in accordance with a general human outlook and responsibility, as desired by God through Jesus Christ and afterwards through Prophet Mohammed.

A moral vacuum

Ladies and Gentlemen: People live in the world of today a life in which a feeling of false happiness prevails over real happiness, in a vacuum of decadence; the world of today is one in which the false and superficial prevails over the genuine and true. This is a world in which many are dying because of malnutrition and of lack of medicine and of basic needs of life, at a time when enormous quantities of grain are continually thrown in the sea as a price-protection measure aimed at maintaining a profit. This is a world in which people die of starvation, while billions of dollars are burnt away on

production or purchase of weapons and on the bagatelles of life. This is a world in which many find more attraction in exterior glitter than in inner substance.

Our world today, ladies and gentlemen, is a world in which many either feel, or actually are without a useful role to play or work to do, whether they belong to scientifically and economically advanced societies, or to scientifically and economically underdeveloped societies.

And he who has no work to do, has no function or role to play, a fact that takes away from him part of his humanity and his effectiveness.

If the absence of a function is coupled with an absence of faith, man is left empty, because man finds himself in what he does to the benefit of his fellow men and on the basis of true faith. In such a situation the happiness of the few, while not shared by many, remains not the genuine happiness which God wants for people, nor is it the happiness that Jesus Christ desired for them in his teaching.

Such a happiness comes at the expense of others, thus failing to bring true and deep joy to the soul, cleanse it of the profanities of life and the temptations of the devil.

Security and peace remain today outside the reach of many people in the world. First among such peoples are our brothers the Arabs in occupied Palestine, in the Golan Heights, and in Lebanon. The situation has now been aggravated by the recent occupation, by the armies of tyranny, of the Muslim holy places in Najd and Hijaz.

As for the people of Iraq, this is a people subjected to a threat of new magnitude, always the latest to be hatched in the beehives of evil in the Western world; the West which is fraught in certain corners with such evil and hostility, although there still are, in other parts, noble people who have given their love to goodness and virtue, and who are still working tirelessly for peace.

The fundamental aspect of our struggle is for our nation, which God honored with His choice of the prophets who conveyed, spread, and struggled for His Divine Message to humanity, so that the voice of faith and virtue should prevail, and for our country in which virtue has filled the souls of the majority of the people, while remaining the aspired goal of the rest; I say, the fundamental aspect of our endeavor and struggle is for our nation to carry out once again its true message to mankind, the message which rejects injustice and calls for virtue, while strengthening faith in people's hearts, minds, and conscience. Such a message cannot be carried out but by the free; and in order for the people of a nation to be free, they have to reject injustice in all its forms, including the injustice of imposing the will of those who have assigned to themselves the role of allowing some things and preventing others, on the basis of double standards and such narrow-minded interests as would ensure false happiness and selfish benefits, achieved through oppression by some at the expense of others, in violation of human values in general and in contravention of the will of God Almighty and all the messag-

es conveyed by His prophets and spread by His messengers.

Thus do good and evil enter in eternal conflict; and thus does the Land of the Arabs, the cradle of Prophets and the birthplace of Divine Messages, become the hotbed and the battleground for their elements.

In as much as the Prophets born in the Land of the Arabs, including Jesus Christ, were messengers to man, sent by the will of God to help humanity at large to spread His Divine Word, then the outcome of the conflict, as we envision it, is one of peace, love, the triumph of good over evil, the rejection of the starvation of the poor in order to make the rich richer, and destroying the chains in which tyrants have fettered liberty, the liberty which we pray to see enjoyed by the whole of humanity, oppressor as well as oppressed.

We want freedom for all nations and peoples, be they white, yellow, or black. This cannot be achieved unless the people of our nation become their own masters.

In this great conflict, as in the case of all major confrontations, the powers of evil have stood on the one side led by the devil, while the powers of good have stood on the other side inspired by the high values of God Almighty, emulating the symbols of faith in their patience, their perseverance, their moral rectitude, and their justice.

No one in the history of our nation and of humanity at large is deeper in his faith, higher in his morality, more vigorous in the defense of justice, or stronger in his patience

and perseverance than the Prophets and Messengers of God and those who followed the faith in God guided by the great principles of life and the Jihad for the word and call of God.

In this confrontation there have been traitors to Jesus Christ and traitors to the principles and values of Islam—traitors enticed by the devil, guiding and emulating each other. May God curse them all! For the teachings of Jesus Christ are as absolved of their conduct as are the principles of Islam. In the same way as did Judas betray trust and Jesus Christ, so has Bush betrayed, through his hostility and deep-rooted evil, the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In the same way as did the renegades and hypocrites betray the principles of Islam during the life of the Prophet Mohammed (Peace be upon him), during the early days of Islam, so has the so-called “custodian” of the two Holy Mosques betrayed the trust given to him, the principles of Islam, and the values of Pan-Arabism, hence deserving the more fitting title of “Traitor of the two Holy Mosques,” who has succeeded in bringing more evil and causing more harm and profanity to the will of God and to our great nation than Abu-Rughal, the traitor who guided the army of Abraha along the road to Mecca.

May God bestow health and happiness upon all, fill them with hope, strengthen their faith in all that pleases Him and help them realize their hopes in goodness, love, and peace.

Peace be upon you.

Czechs and Slovaks still together, but . . .

A report from Prague by a guest contributor:

The post-communist wave of nationalism has not missed Czechoslovakia: The center of conflict was and most probably will be again “law on competences,” the division of rights and responsibilities among Czech, Slovak, and federal governments, with the main divide being between the Slovak one and federal one. The question of competences is closely connected to the division of taxes among the governments.

The recent crisis was caused by the threat of Slovak Prime Minister Vladimír Mečiar to declare superiority of Slovak laws over the federal ones in the case that the federal Parliament would not accept the Slovak version of the law on competences. After an emotional appeal by President Václav Havel in the Parliament and his proposal of enlarging the presidential powers, a compromise version, very similar to the Slovak proposal, has been adopted. Part of the law is division of the tax income in the ratio

of 35% for the federal government, 40% for the Czech one, and 25% for the Slovak one, that is highly favorable to the citizens of the Slovak republic, which are only one-third—and substantially less productive—of the Czechoslovak population.

However painful and unacceptable this compromise may be for some Czechs, because it continues a 40-year-old communist policy of subsidizing Slovakia, it will not last very long. In 1991, the new Constitution is on Parliament’s agenda, which will mean reopening of all basic questions of Czech-Slovak relations, not to speak about numerous Hungarians (600,000 in Slovakia), Germans, Poles, Gypsies, and other nationalities. Further on, there is still powerful and influential nationalist movement in Slovakia, that is not content with the very advantageous deal, because it does not look for deals with Czechs.

Given the economic weakness of Slovakia, conventional wisdom expects Slovakia to stay within the borders of the Czechoslovak state. However, there are historical periods, such as the present one, when this kind of wisdom does not count for much. Breaking points of history are seldom expected, and the will of the Slovak nation for its own state may be stronger than economic arguments.

—Dušan Mrňa, Prague