
Interview: Roberto Formigoni

Aim of war was to reduce Europe's role

The Hon. Roberto Formigoni, vice president of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, is the Italian and European public figure who was the most determined in opposing the Gulf War. Last autumn he led the delegation that negotiated in Baghdad the release of the Italian nationals still in Iraq. Considered by the media as close to the Pope, Formigoni became in early February the target of that large chunk of the Italian media directly or indirectly influenced by the big international banks or the Freemasonry, after he stated on Feb. 8, that the Pope was running a "serious personal risk" because of his anti-war activities. "Beginning in August, the Pope worked in any way and with every means for a peaceful solution. . . . This . . . is the right position and it is the one the Pope continues to hold, even at the cost of a serious personal risk." Formigoni has reported any information in his possession to the police and the magistracy. The state of the investigations is not known publicly. Mr. Formigoni was interviewed on Feb. 27 by Umberto Pascali.

EIR: Why so many attacks against Pope John Paul II?

Formigoni: The courageous witness of the Pope on behalf of peace, his crystal clear words against this war in the Gulf, which did not have to start and which, he said prophetically, would be "an adventure without return," gave rise to many sympathies in public opinion, but also antipathies in very powerful circles.

EIR: And was it because of this position, because the Pope rejected any compromise on the issue of the war, that this unprecedented campaign was unleashed?

Formigoni: The position of the powerful is a different position, it is the position of those who believe not only that the war had to be unleashed, but also that it had to be presented as a just war, as morally correct and even necessary for the religious spirit. Thus the irritated reactions against John Paul II multiplied. In Italian leading circles there are those like [Socialist Party Secretary Bettino] Craxi who repeatedly attacked the "papists"; there are those like [Republican Party leader Giorgio] La Malfa who accused the Pope of undue interference and reached the point of telling the Catholics that they cannot speak about peace because they once carried out the Crusades.

We witnessed the unleashing of the media and many intellectuals against the Pope's position. There were also private threatening comments in international political and diplomatic circles against the Pope's statements.

EIR: It was at that point that you intervened publicly?

Formigoni: I considered my duty as a member of the Parliament and a Christian to denounce all this with a clear and strong voice, giving the appropriate authorities the most important details I was informed of.

EIR: What have been the reactions of the Italians to the war and to the papal initiatives?

Formigoni: In this period we have seen an almost total alignment of press, television, radio, and many intellectuals all in support of the thesis of the just, holy, necessary war. Part of public opinion distanced itself and preferred to follow the words of the Pope. In the Catholic world there has been an important mobilization of groups, associations, and also in Parliament. Together with me a group of 15 parliamentarians took a position against the government, mostly members of the Christian Democracy but also other parties.

EIR: What do you think is the real motivation of this war?

Formigoni: This war is aimed to broaden the sphere of the already existing political hegemonies and to drastically reduce Europe's role. Above all, to create an inability to communicate between the Middle East and Europe, because the collaboration between these two areas was fostering the economic development of both. In reality this war is creating an enormous wall of grudges and hate, that risks becoming stronger and more impassable than the Berlin Wall. And so after the split of Europe into two parts, we will have now to pay for this enmity, this inability to collaborate between two such important areas of the world.

EIR: The threats against the Pope remind our readers, even considering the two very different levels, of the threats that Aldo Moro received here in the U.S. before he was kidnapped by the Red Brigades.

Formigoni: To establish historical comparisons now, above all for me, considering the information in my possession, would be improper. Once that is clear, let's say there certainly is the tendency to shape, as always, Italian politics from the outside.

EIR: The Vatican is again making an effort to mobilize for peace; the Eastern Rite patriarchs will be in Rome.

Formigoni: Above all, on March 4 the Pope will meet with the bishops of all the countries at war, and it will be a very important time to address Catholic public opinion the world over, and religious public opinion in particular. I hope what is said will be strong enough to shake consciences that otherwise risk adapting to the most extremist pro-war outlook.