

VATICAN OKAYS FORCE IN MIDDLE EAST

The Catholic Church's just-war doctrine allows for a military response to grave conflicts, provided that several criteria are operative. The Vatican has made it clear that the mass murder being committed by Islamic State terrorists meets that standard.

No one has been more pointed than Archbishop Silvano Tomasi, the Holy See's Permanent Observer to the United Nations. He recently emphasized how "there might be occasions in the life and in the relations between states when dialogue, negotiations, fail and large numbers of people find themselves at risk: at risk of genocide, at risk of having their fundamental, their basic rights violated."

"In this case," Tomasi said, "when every other means has been attempted, article 42 of the Charter of the United Nations becomes possible justification for not only imposing sanctions of economic nature on the state or the group or the region that violates the basic human rights of people, but also to use force. All the force that is necessary to stop this evil and this tragedy."

The Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue also released a statement calling on "religious leaders, especially Muslims," to condemn the genocide. It cited "The execrable practice of beheading, crucifixion, and hanging of corpses in public places"; "The choice imposed on Christians and Yezidis between conversion to Islam, payment of tribute or exodus"; "The imposition of the barbaric practice of infibulation" [female genital mutilation]; "The forced occupation or desecration of churches and monasteries"; and "The destruction of places of worship and Christian and Muslim burial places." It also made it plain that "No cause can justify such

barbarity and certainly not a religion.”

Kudos to the Vatican. It is speaking with greater clarity and urgency than our golf-vacationing president.