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PREM 19/945

CONFIDENTIAL FILING

Vatican Delegation's to Heads
of State about Nuclear War

VATICAN

DECEMBER 1981

Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date	Referred to	Date
15-12-81							
16-12-81							
18-12-81							
21-12-81							
5-1-82							
12-1-82							
21-1-82							
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PREM 19/945

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21 January 1982

The Prime Minister has asked me to thank you for your letter of 18 January which she has read with interest.

The points you make have been brought to the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

A J COLES

Dr. M.F. Perutz, C.H., F.R.S.

[Handwritten signature]

Victims
CF ✓

Dr M.F. Perutz, CH, FRS.,
42 Sedley Taylor Road,
Cambridge,
CB2 2PN

18th January 1982

Dear Prime Minister,

P20

Thank you for your letter of the 12th January 1982. I very much appreciate the time and thought you have given to the problems I raised.

I am reassured to know that you regard the prospects of locating submarines under the ocean as remote, and also that in your view neither the United States nor NATO in general entertain illusions about limited nuclear war. In your letter and also during our interview you raised verification as one of the conditions of balanced nuclear disarmament. Since opening the Soviet Union's frontiers to inspection is anathema to the Kremlin, this demand has been a stumbling block to agreement since the early fifties. I wonder whether surveillance from satellites has not made this condition obsolete, which might facilitate agreement.

I am glad that you are encouraging the Americans in their nuclear disarmament talks with the Soviet Union. Many of my colleagues on both sides of the Atlantic believe that the Reagan Administration is set on a crusade to re-establish the United States as the dominant nuclear power, a position which, thanks to its overall technical superiority, it has probably never really lost. My colleagues fear that the Administration may be undertaking these negotiations merely to pacify public revulsion against nuclear weapons in Germany and the Netherlands, but without any real desire to reach agreement on a reduction of nuclear weapons. I hope that the Americans' knowledge of the importance which you attach to the talks will raise their chances of success.

I was so pleased when the news came through that your son is safe and sound.

Yours sincerely,

M F Perutz

The Prime Minister,
The Right Honorable Margaret Thatcher, MP,
10, Downing Street,
London,
W.1.



PONTIFICIA
ACADEMIA
SCIENTIARVM

Il Presidente

STATO DELLA CITTÀ DEL VATICANO
Casina Pio IV, Tel. 06/6983195

Boy

CF

16/2

Rio de Janeiro, January 29th, 1982

mt

Madam Prime Minister,

This is to thank you very much for the very generous and gracious way in which you received myself and my colleagues, Astronomer Royal Prof. H. Bunch and Prof. Max Perutz, on the 18th of December. It was an extremely kind gesture and we are all of us very happy that you could find time to meet with us and to hear my "plaidoirie" for the gradual elimination of the danger of an atomic war.

With my best wishes for the success of your government I pray you to accept the expression of my deepest and thankful regards.

Sincerely yours,

Prof. Carlos Chagas

Président



cc:- FCO

Vatican

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

12 January, 1982

Dear Dr. Perutz,

Thank you for your letter of 21 December about technical developments in nuclear weaponry and associated systems, and the concern that such developments might jeopardise the present relatively stable nuclear balance.

This concern is shared by politicians as well as military strategists and planners. It is true that technical developments have led to an evolution in thinking about deterrence. In particular, the deployment of highly accurate missiles has meant that, for deterrence to remain credible, we must have the ability to respond to limited, as well as strategic, nuclear aggression. This makes the maintenance of deterrence more complex. But it does not mean that the United States or NATO in general entertain illusions about waging limited nuclear war. Indeed, the general effect is to make the nuclear balance more stable than in the past because deterrence now rests on a much wider basis of possible responses to nuclear aggression than was available in the 1960s.

The vulnerability of land-based missiles is of course much debated at present. But we are convinced that ballistic missile carrying submarines will continue to remain immune to detection and thus invulnerable. They therefore provide an assured second strike capability and make it impossible to "win" a nuclear war by means of a disarming first strike.

In general, I believe one should be cautious in trying to deduce propositions about strategy merely from the particular characteristics of any given nuclear system. Presumably the Russians

/ must

RM

must know - as the Western Alliance certainly does - that the outbreak of nuclear war would be an unimaginable catastrophe, and that to gamble the fate of civilisation on an assumed technical virtuosity in the strategic nuclear field would be irrational, to put it mildly. This does not mean that we can afford to let it go unheeded if the Soviet Union seeks to disturb the existing relatively stable balance to its own advantage. But I do not accept the view that the United States is moving to a strategy of a disarming first strike. As President Reagan said on 18 November: "No NATO weapons, conventional or nuclear, will ever be used in Europe except in response to attack". The concept of a pre-emptive first strike has never been and is not a part of Alliance strategy.

At the same time, I fully agree with you about the importance of nuclear arms control. As you will know, negotiations on intermediate range nuclear forces are now under way in Geneva where the United States delegation has the full support of the European allies in proposing the complete elimination of long range land-based theatre missiles on both sides. We now look forward to the resumption of strategic arms reduction talks in the Spring. I welcome American statements of their intention to seek real reductions in strategic weapons. The achievement of verifiable and balanced measures of arms control is a major priority for the Government. I believe that these negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union offer the prospect of genuine progress towards limiting and reducing current levels of nuclear weapons.

Yours sincerely,

MARGARET THATCHER

Dr. M. F. Perutz, C.H., F.R.S.

A3c.



Foreign and Commonwealth Office
London SW1A 2AH

10 January 1982

Type letter please.

FR 11/1

Dear Willie,

Letter to the Prime Minister from Dr Perutz

As requested in your letter of 24 December,
/ I attach a draft reply for the Prime Minister to
send to Dr Perutz.

Yours ever,

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

Wille Rickett Esq
10 Downing Street

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

PRIME MINISTER

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

Top Secret

Dr M F Perutz CH FRS

Secret

42 Sedley Taylor Road

Copies to:

Confidential

Cambridge CB2 2PN

Restricted

Unclassified

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

Thank you for your letter of 21 December about technical developments in nuclear weaponry and associated systems, and the concern *that such developments might jeopardise the present relatively stable nuclear balance.* ~~they cause to scientists who advise the Pope.~~

CAVEAT.....

~~The delegation's concern about technical developments which might jeopardise the present relatively stable nuclear balance~~ is shared by politicians as well as military strategists and planners. It is true that technical developments have led to an evolution in thinking about deterrence. In particular, the deployment of highly accurate missiles has meant that, for deterrence to remain credible, we must have the ability to respond to limited, as well as strategic, nuclear aggression. This makes the maintenance of deterrence more complex. But it does not mean that the United States or NATO in general entertain illusions about waging limited nuclear war. Indeed, the general effect is to make the nuclear balance more stable than in the past because deterrence now rests on a much wider basis of possible responses to nuclear aggression than was available in the 1960s.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

/The vulnerability

The vulnerability of land-based missiles is of course much debated at present. But, contrary to the view of the delegation, we are convinced that ballistic missile carrying submarines will continue to remain immune to detection and thus invulnerable. They therefore provide an assured second strike capability and make it impossible to 'win' a nuclear war by means of a disarming first strike.

In general, I believe one should be cautious in trying to deduce propositions about strategy merely from the particular characteristics of any given nuclear system. Presumably the Russians must know - as the Western Alliance certainly does - that the outbreak of nuclear war would be an unimaginable catastrophe, and that to gamble the fate of civilisation on an assumed technical virtuosity in the strategic nuclear field would be irrational, to put it mildly. This does not mean that we can afford to let it go unheeded if the Soviet Union seeks to disturb the existing relatively stable balance to its own advantage. But I ^{do not accept the view} ~~reject the implication in your letter~~ that the United States is moving to a strategy of ^a ~~disarming first strike~~. As President Reagan said on 18 November 'No NATO weapons, conventional or nuclear, will ever be used in Europe except in response to attack'. ^{The concept of a} ~~Pre-emptive first strike~~ has never been and is not a part of Alliance strategy.

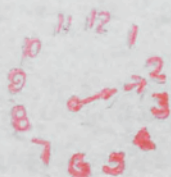
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/support

support of the European allies in proposing the complete elimination of long range land-based theatre missiles on both sides. We now look forward to the resumption of strategic arms reduction talks in the spring. I welcome American statements of their intention to seek real reductions in strategic weapons. The achievement of verifiable and balanced measures of arms control ~~are~~^{is} a major priority for the Government. I believe that these negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union offer the prospect of genuine progress towards limiting and reducing current levels of nuclear weapons.

MC 11.
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71 JAN 1982





Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

6 January 1982

Dear John,

Papal Message on Nuclear Weapons

In your letter of 18 December you requested advice on whether a reply should be sent to the Pope's message to The Queen on the consequences of nuclear war. The message was delivered to the Prime Minister on 18 December by a delegation from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences.

It would in our opinion be appropriate for the Prime Minister, on behalf of The Queen, to reply to the Pope's message. I therefore enclose a draft, which takes into account the points we would wish to make in reply.

Yours ever.

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

DRAFT: minute/letter/teleletter/despatch/note

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

His Holiness Pope John Paul II

Top Secret

Secret

Confidential

Restricted

Unclassified

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has commanded me to thank Your Holiness for your message of 12 December, which she received following my meeting with the Apostolic Delegate and the President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on 18 December. As I explained to Professor Chagas, it is constitutional practice in the United Kingdom that all matters with political implications should be handled by Her Majesty's Government and I am therefore replying on Her Majesty's behalf.

I was most grateful for your thoughtful statement on nuclear weapons and your admirable initiative in addressing Heads of State and Government on the problem of preventing their use. I fully share your concern about the horrific consequences of nuclear war. This has been the subject of authoritative studies by the United Nations Secretary-General and by an international conference of physicians. The British Government's own comprehensive report on the subject reached similar

/conclusions

Enclosures—flag(s).....

conclusions to those of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. In the United Kingdom there is full and open debate about nuclear weapons, the dangers they pose, and the pressing need to negotiate reductions in nuclear arsenals.

The prevention of all war, nuclear or conventional, remains an overriding priority of British Government policy. We have frequently stated our view that there would be no winners in any nuclear exchange. ~~Our possession~~ ^{of} nuclear weapons is precisely to prevent their use.

The purpose of possessing

Despite the widely-felt public concern to which you refer in your message, we do not believe that nuclear war is imminent or inevitable. The strategy of deterrence has remained effective in spite of increasing international tensions. It would be impossible for one side to launch a nuclear attack on the other without the risk of massive retaliation. Arrangements for the prevention of accidental nuclear war are now much more effective.

It is in the interests of world peace that neither side develops a first-strike capability. Nor must a potential aggressor be allowed to acquire great strength with which to threaten those who wish to defend freedom. World peace and security depends on maintaining a military balance between East and West. I share your view that unilateral acts of disarmament which disturbed the balance of deterrence would be potentially dangerous.

I wholeheartedly agree that the way to reduce the present appallingly high level of nuclear armaments is by negotiation between the United States and the Soviet

/Union.

Union. The British Government fully support the objective of the 'zero level outcome' in the current US/Soviet negotiations on the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear forces which threaten Europe. We should be very glad to see the dismantling of the present Soviet missiles in return for the non-deployment of American missiles in Western Europe. Agreement on this category of weapons could open the way for reductions in other intermediate range nuclear systems of the United States and the Soviet Union.

We have also welcomed President Reagan's proposal for Strategic Arms Reduction Talks - START - to begin as soon as possible, with the emphasis on substantial reductions in the strategic arsenals on both sides. We very much hope that President Brezhnev will respond in the same spirit and grasp the opportunities which have been offered to end the nuclear arms race.

The British Government remain committed to the pursuit of balanced and verifiable measures of nuclear arms control and disarmament, leading to the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons and the removal of the spectre of nuclear war for ever. At the same time, we are seriously concerned about the growth of conventional forces and weapons in the world, their use to suppress human freedoms, ^{and} the millions of casualties and ~~the~~ vast amount of suffering caused in numerous wars fought with conventional arms. In our view, this is an immediate problem which needs to be tackled through the United Nations. We have therefore supported a resolution at the General Assembly calling for a UN study of the ^{question} ~~problem~~ to be launched without further delay.

I hope that the initiative taken by Lou Holman will lead to a greater awareness of these dangers, problems and an increased concern to find solutions

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7 JAN 1982

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JR.

cc. FCO

Buckingham
Palace



10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

8 January, 1982

Your Holiness,

Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II has commanded me to thank Your Holiness for your message of 12 December, which she received following my meeting with the Apostolic Delegate and the President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences on 18 December. As I explained to Professor Chagas, it is constitutional practice in the United Kingdom that all matters with political implications should be handled by Her Majesty's Government and I am therefore replying on Her Majesty's behalf.

I was most grateful for your thoughtful statement on nuclear weapons and your admirable initiative in addressing Heads of State and Government on the problem of preventing their use. I fully share your concern about the horrific consequences of nuclear war. This has been the subject of authoritative studies by the United Nations Secretary-General and by an international conference of physicians. The British Government's own comprehensive report on the subject reached similar conclusions to those of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. In the United Kingdom there is full and open debate about nuclear weapons, the dangers they pose, and the pressing need to negotiate reductions in nuclear arsenals.

The prevention of all war, nuclear or conventional, remains an overriding priority of British Government

/policy.

policy. We have frequently stated our view that there would be no winners in any nuclear exchange. The purpose of possessing nuclear weapons is precisely to prevent their use. Despite the widely-felt public concern to which you refer in your message, we do not believe that nuclear war is imminent or inevitable. The strategy of deterrence has remained effective in spite of increasing international tensions. It would be impossible for one side to launch a nuclear attack on the other without the risk of massive retaliation. Arrangements for the prevention of accidental nuclear war are now much more effective.

It is in the interests of world peace that neither side develops a first-strike capability. Nor must a potential aggressor be allowed to acquire great strength with which to threaten those who wish to defend freedom. World peace and security depends on maintaining a military balance between East and West. I share your view that unilateral acts of disarmament which disturbed the balance of deterrence would be potentially dangerous.

I wholeheartedly agree that the way to reduce the present appallingly high level of nuclear armaments is by negotiation between the United States and the Soviet Union. The British Government fully support the objective of the 'zero level outcome' in the current US/Soviet negotiations on the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear forces which threaten Europe. We should be very glad to see the dismantling of the present Soviet missiles in return for the non-deployment of American missiles in Western Europe. Agreement on this category of weapons could open the way for reductions in other intermediate-range nuclear systems of the United States and the Soviet Union.

/ We have

We have also welcomed President Reagan's proposal for Strategic Arms Reduction Talks - START - to begin as soon as possible, with the emphasis on substantial reductions in the strategic arsenals on both sides. We very much hope that President Brezhnev will respond in the same spirit and grasp the opportunities which have been offered to end the nuclear arms race.

The British Government remain committed to the pursuit of balanced and verifiable measures of nuclear arms control and disarmament, leading to the eventual elimination of all nuclear weapons and the removal of the spectre of nuclear war for ever. At the same time, we are seriously concerned about the growth of conventional forces and weapons in the world, their use to suppress human freedoms, and the millions of casualties and vast amount of suffering caused in numerous wars fought with conventional arms. In our view, this is an immediate problem which needs to be tackled through the United Nations. We have therefore supported a resolution at the General Assembly calling for a UN study of the question to be launched without further delay.

I hope that the initiative taken by Your Holiness will lead to a greater awareness of these problems and an increased concern to find solutions.

Yours sincerely

Roger Thatcher

His Holiness Pope John Paul II

SAW.

1127

BF 8-1-82

24 December 1981

I enclose a letter to the Prime-Minister from Dr. Perutz, following up his meeting with the Prime Minister last Friday as one of the Pope's delegates.

I should be grateful if you would provide a draft reply for the Prime Minister to send to him by Friday 8 January.

WR

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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jfh

24 December 1981

I am writing on behalf of the Prime Minister to thank you for your letter of 21 December.

This is receiving attention and a reply will be sent to you as soon as possible.

WR

Dr. M.F. Perutz, CH, FRS.

R 23/12

Dr M.F. Perutz, CH, FRS,
42, Sedley Taylor Road,
Cambridge,
CB2 2PN.

21st December 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

Thank you for receiving me last Friday in the somewhat incongruous guise of the Pope's messenger.

I am not sure that Professor Chagas mentioned one of the vital reasons for the scientists' deep concern. The eminent physicists who advise the Pope believe that technical developments such as the increasing accuracy of missiles, the growing vulnerability of satellites and the probable development of methods of locating submarines are likely to make the present, relatively stable state of mutual surveillance and deterrence obsolete. Technically each of the superpowers is already moving from a strategy of deterrence to one of destroying the other side's nuclear arsenal in a first strike. On each side there are said to be strategists who believe that a nuclear war waged in this way could be won. The scientists fear that these technical developments will lead to a situation of growing mutual suspicion where in an acute political crisis one side may be stampeded into pulling the nuclear trigger by fear that the other side is about to do so.

The scientists therefore suggested to the Pope to appeal to the Governments of the nuclear powers to do their utmost to bring about an agreed reduction both in the scale and quality of nuclear arms now before that unstable situation is reached.

As I said to you when I left, all my colleagues here enjoyed your visit last year enormously and felt very cheered by your great interest in our work. I hope that you will come again.

Yours sincerely,

MF Perutz

The Prime Minister,
The Right Hon. Margaret Thatcher M.P.,
10, Downing Street,
London, SW1.



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM <i>945</i> (one piece/item number)	
Extract/Item details: <i>Letter to Whitmore dated 21 December 1981</i>	
CLOSED FOR <i>40</i> YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	<i>25 June 2013 Wayland.</i>
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
MISSING ON TRANSFER	
MISSING	
NUMBER NOT USED	



MFS 18/12

10 DOWNING STREET

THE PRIME MINISTER

19 December 1981

Your Excellency,

Thank you for your letter of 18 December enclosing a message from His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, for the World Day of Peace, 1 January 1982. It is an inspiring and elevating document.

I enjoyed meeting you yesterday with the delegation from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. I send you my best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

Yours sincerely,

(sgd) MT

His Excellency The Apostolic Delegate

8-12

RESTRICTED



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LH

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

18 December 1981

Message from the Pope about Nuclear Weapons

Thank you for your letter of 17 December. The delegation from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences called on the Prime Minister today. The eventual composition of the delegation was somewhat different from that predicted by your brief. Sir Martin Ryle, who was apparently ill, and Professor Runcorn did not come. The Apostolic Delegate accompanied the delegation.

I enclose a record of the conversation, *Passage deleted and closed, 40 years, under FOI Exemption.*

Wayland

25 June 2013

~~SECRET~~

R.M.J. Lyne, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

cc MasterSet
SUBJECT

RECORD OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND A DELEGATION
FROM THE PONTIFICAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES AT 10 DOWNING STREET AT
1415 ON FRIDAY 18 DECEMBER

Present:

Prime Minister	Professor Carlos Chagas
Mr. A.J. Coles	Professor Max Perutz
	Professor Herman Bruck
	The Apostolic Delegate

Professor Chagas explained the background to the Pope's message. In 1979, he (Professor Chagas) had written a letter about the dangers of nuclear war which the Pope had used in his Peace Message of 1 January 1980. The Academy had also contributed to a speech made by the Pope to UNESCO on disarmament questions. A meeting had been held with the Pope on 7/8 October when the Pope had decided to express his views on the consequences of nuclear war. The Pope had said that he was not a pacifist. He believed that freedom was the most important right. The statement, which Professor Chagas handed over, was not political in character. It demonstrated the medical and environmental consequences of nuclear war, whose gravity was such war must be prevented. The Pope did not wish to enfeeble the defences of the West, quite the contrary. But he wanted political and military leaders to be fully aware of the medical and scientific dangers. As a result of the tensions between the two big powers, people were becoming convinced that nuclear war was inevitable. Medical men and scientists believed that no-one could be a victor in such a war. The Pope was asking for nuclear weapons to be gradually reduced to the point where complete abolition was possible. His message was moral and scientific rather than political in nature.

/The Pope

The Pope had sent a similar message to President Reagan and Mr. Brezhnev before the recent opening of the Geneva arms control talks. Messages had been sent later to the President of the United Nations General Assembly. President Reagan had received a delegation on 14 December. President Mitterrand had received another delegation on 17 December. Delegations had also been received by the President of the UNGA and by Mr. Brezhnev - the latter delegation had received extensive television coverage in Moscow.

The delegation appreciated that the UK faced particularly difficult problems at the present time. The whole world admired the strength and resolution with which the Prime Minister was tackling these problems. The present moment was of particular importance. The idea of some people that nuclear war was winnable was very disturbing. Scientists did not believe that nuclear weaponry was a deterrent. The first explosion would produce war, perhaps localised in Western Europe.

*Passage deleted and closed, 60 years,
under FOI Exemption.*

*CM Wayland
25 June 2013*

She was very grateful to the delegation for conveying the Pope's message. His Holiness' initiative in contacting Heads of State and Government was admirable. His staunch defence of freedom, without which no freedom of worship would be possible, was much appreciated. HMG's purpose was to prevent nuclear war. We agreed with the delegation that such war was not winnable. The best approach was for all to get together and agree on reductions in nuclear armaments. The situation which must be avoided was one where a potential aggressor developed great strength and those who wished to defend freedom became weak.

/The Prime Minister

The Prime Minister said that she was not a unilateralist and never would be. The result of unilateralism would be to expose people to the threats of an aggressor. She had been delighted by President Reagan's speech on the "zero option" which HMG fully supported. We should be delighted if it could be negotiated. Our concern extended beyond nuclear war to conventional war. We were impressed by the numbers of people who had suffered from limited war in the period since the Second World War. The Government fully supported the intermediate range nuclear forces talks in Geneva and the strategic arms reduction talks due to begin in the spring.

The Apostolic Delegate underlined the Pope's disapproval of unilateral disarmament. In this context, the views of Monsignor Bruce Kent were not helpful.

Professor Chagas said that the Pope was aware that the Soviet Union might exploit his message for propaganda purposes but felt he had a moral duty to take this risk. The Prime Minister commented that it was up to other countries to see that the Russians did not have a free run with propaganda about the initiative. In conclusion she conveyed to the delegation the Government's deep concern about the situation in Poland.

At the end of the conversation the Apostolic Delegate gave to the Prime Minister a copy of the Pope's New Year message.

18 December 1981



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
PIECE/ITEM (one piece/item number) <i>945</i>	
Extract/Item details: <i>Letter from Coles dated 18 December 1981</i>	
CLOSED FOR <i>140</i> YEARS UNDER FOI EXEMPTION	<i>25 June 2013</i> <i>Wayland</i>
RETAINED UNDER SECTION 3(4) OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS ACT 1958	
TEMPORARILY RETAINED	
MISSING ON TRANSFER	
MISSING	
NUMBER NOT USED	



APOSTOLIC DELEGATION

N.9750

54 PARKSIDE
LONDON. SW19 5NF

TELEPHONE: 01-946 1410

18th December 1981

Dear Prime Minister,

I have the honour to forward to you, at the request of His Eminence the Cardinal Secretary of State, the enclosed message from His Holiness, Pope John Paul II, for the World Day of Peace, 1st January, 1982.

I take the opportunity of renewing to you my kindest personal regards and all good wishes for Christmas and the New Year,

Yours most sincerely,

Bruno B. Heim.

Archbishop Bruno B. Heim,
Apostolic Delegate.

The Rt. Hon. Margaret Thatcher, MP,
Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street,
LONDON S.W.1.



MESSAGE OF HIS HOLINESS
POPE JOHN PAUL II

FOR THE CELEBRATION OF THE
DAY OF PEACE

1 JANUARY 1982

PEACE:
A GIFT OF GOD ENTRUSTED TO US!

To the young who in the world of tomorrow will make
the great decisions,
to the men and women who today bear responsibility
for life in society,
to families and teachers,
to individuals and communities,
to Heads of State and Government leaders:

It is to all of you that I address this message at the
dawn of the year 1982. I invite you to reflect with
me on the theme of the new World Day: peace is a
gift of God entrusted to us.

1. **T**his truth faces us when we come to decide
our commitments and make our choices. It
challenges the whole of humanity, all men and women
who know that they are individually responsible for one
another, and together responsible for the world.

At the end of the First World War my predecessor
Pope Benedict XV devoted an Encyclical to this theme.
Rejoicing at the cessation of hostilities and insisting on
the need to remove hatred and enmity through reconcil-
iation inspired by mutual charity, he began his En-

cyclical with a reference to "peace, *that magnificent gift from God*: as Augustine says, 'even understood as one of the fleeting things of earth, no sweeter word is heard, no more desirable wish is longed for, and no better discovery can be made than this gift' (*De Civitate Dei*, lib. XIX, c. XI)" (Encyclical *Pacem Dei Munus*: AAS 12 [1920], p. 209).

Efforts for peace in a divided world

2. Since then my predecessors have often had to recall this truth in their constant endeavours to educate for peace and to encourage work for a lasting peace. Today peace has become, throughout the world, a major preoccupation not only for those responsible for the destiny of nations but even more so for broad sections of the population and numberless individuals who generously and tenaciously dedicate themselves to creating an outlook of peace and to establishing genuine peace between peoples and nations. This is comforting. But there is no hiding the fact that, in spite of the efforts of all men and women of good will *there are still serious threats to peace in the world*. Some of these threats take the form of divisions within various nations; others stem from deep-rooted and acute tensions between opposing nations and blocs within the world community.

In reality, the confrontations that we witness today are distinguished from those of past history by certain new characteristics. In the first place, they are *world-wide*: even a local conflict is often an expression of tensions originating elsewhere in the world. In the same way, it often happens that a conflict has profound effects far from where it broke out. Another characteristic is

totality: present-day tensions mobilize all the forces of the nations involved; moreover, selfish monopolization and even hostility are to be found today as much in the way economic life is run and in the technological application of science as in the way that the mass media or military resources are utilized. Thirdly, we must stress the *radical* character of modern conflicts: it is the survival of the whole human race that is at stake in them, given the destructive capacity of present-day military stockpiles.

In short, while many factors could contribute to uniting it, human society appears as a divided world: the forces for unity give way before the divisions between East and West, North and South, friend and enemy.

An essential problem

3. The causes of this situation are of course complex and of various orders. *Political reasons* are naturally the easiest to distinguish. Particular groups abuse their power in order to impose their yoke on whole societies. An excessive desire for expansion impels some nations to build their prosperity with a disregard for—indeed at the expense of—others' happiness. Unbridled nationalism thus fosters plans for domination, which leave other nations with the pitiless dilemma of having to make the choice: either accepting satellite status and dependence or adopting an attitude of competition and hostility. Deeper analysis shows that the cause of this situation is the application of certain concepts and *ideologies* that claim to offer the only foundation of the truth about man, society and history.

When we come up against the choice between peace and war, we find ourselves face to face with ourselves, with our nature, with our plans for our personal and community lives, with the use we are to make of our freedom. Are relationships between people to continue inexorably along lines of incomprehension and merciless confrontation, because of a relentless law of human life? Or are human beings—by comparison with the animal species which fight one another according to the “law” of the jungle—specifically called upon and given the fundamental capability to live in peace with their fellows and to share with them in the creation of culture, society and history? In the final analysis, when we consider the question of peace, we are led to consider the meaning and conditions of our own personal and community lives.

Peace, a gift of God

4. Peace is not so much a superficial balance between diverging material interests—a balance pertaining to the order of quantity, of things. Rather it is, in its inmost reality, something that belongs to the essentially human order, the order of human subjects; it is thus of a rational and moral nature, the fruit of truth and virtue. It springs from the dynamism of free wills guided by reason towards the common good that is to be attained in truth, justice and love. This *rational and moral order* is based on a decision by the consciences of human beings seeking harmony in their mutual relationships, with respect for justice for everybody, and therefore with respect for the fundamental human rights inherent in every person. One cannot see how this moral order could

ignore God, the first source of being, the essential truth and the supreme good.

In this very sense peace comes from God as its *foundation*: it is a gift of God. When claiming the wealth and resources of the universe worked on by the human mind—and it is often on their account that conflicts and wars have sprung up—“man comes up against the leading role of the gift made by ‘nature’, that is to say, in the final analysis, by the Creator” (Encyclical *Laborem Exercens*, 12). And God does more than *give creation* to humanity to administer and develop jointly at the service of all human beings without any discrimination: he also *inscribes in the human conscience* the laws obliging us to respect in numerous ways the life and the whole person of our fellow human beings, created like us in the image and after the likeness of God. God is thus *the guarantor* of all these fundamental human rights. Yes indeed, God is the source of peace: he calls to peace, he safeguards it, and he grants it as the fruit of “justice”.

Moreover, God *helps* us interiorly to achieve peace or to recover it. In our limited life, which is subject to error and evil, we human beings go gropingly in search of peace, amid many difficulties. Our faculties are darkened by mere appearances of truth, attracted by false goods and led astray by irrational and selfish instincts. Hence we need to open ourselves to the transcendent light of God that illuminates our lives, purifies them from error and frees them from aggressive passion. God is not far from the heart of those who pray to him and try to fulfil his justice: when they are in continual dialogue with him, in freedom, God offers them peace as the fullness of the communion of life with God and with their

brothers and sisters. In the Bible the word "peace" recurs again and again in association with the idea of happiness, harmony, well-being, security, concord, salvation and justice, as the outstanding blessing that God, "the Lord of peace" (2 *Thess* 3:16), already gives and promises in abundance: "Now towards her I send flowing peace, like a river" (*Is* 66:12).

A gift of God, entrusted to us

5. While peace is a gift, man is never dispensed from responsibility for seeking it and endeavouring to establish it by individual and community effort, throughout history. God's gift of peace is therefore also at all times a human conquest and achievement, since it is offered to us in order that we may accept it freely and put it progressively into operation by our creative will. Furthermore, in his love for man, God never abandons us but even in the darkest moments of history drives us forward or leads us back mysteriously along the path of peace. Even the difficulties, failures and tragedies of the past and the present must be studied as providential lessons from which we may draw the wisdom we need in order to find new ways, more rational and courageous ways, for building peace. It is by drawing inspiration from the truth of God that we are given the ideal and the energy we require in order to overcome situations of injustice, to free ourselves from ideologies of power and domination, and to make our way towards true universal fraternity.

Christians, faithful to Christ who proclaimed "the Good News of peace" and established peace within hearts

by reconciling them with God, have still more decisive reasons—as I shall stress at the end of this message—for looking on peace as a gift of God, and for courageously helping to establish it in this world, in accordance with this longing for its complete fulfilment in the Kingdom of God. They also know that they are called upon to join their efforts with those of *believers in other religions* who tirelessly condemn hatred and war and who devote themselves, using different approaches, to the advancement of justice and peace.

We should first consider in its natural basis this deeply hopeful view of humanity as directed towards peace, and stress moral responsibility in response to God's gift. This illuminates and stimulates man's activity on the level of information, study and commitment for peace, three sectors that I would now like to illustrate with some examples.

Information

6. At a certain level, world peace depends on better self-knowledge on the part of both individuals and societies. This self-knowledge is naturally conditioned by information and by the quality of the information. Those who seek and proclaim the truth with respect for others and with charity are working for peace. Those who devote themselves to pointing out the values in the various cultures, the individuality of each society and the human riches of individual peoples, are working for peace. Those who by providing information remove the barrier of distance, so that we feel truly concerned at the fate of faraway men and women who are victims of war or injustice, are working for peace. Admittedly,

the accumulation of such information, especially if it concerns catastrophes over which we have no control, can in the end produce indifference and surfeit in those who remain mere receivers of the information without ever doing whatever is within their power. But, in itself, the role of the mass media continues to be a positive one: each one of us is now called upon to be the neighbour of all his or her brothers and sisters of the human race (cf. *Lk* 10: 29-37).

High-quality information even has a direct influence upon education and political decisions. If the young are to be made aware of the problems of peace, and if they are to prepare to become workers for peace, educational programmes must necessarily give a special place to information about actual situations in which peace is under threat, and about the conditions needed for its advancement. Peace cannot be built by the power of rulers alone. Peace can be firmly constructed only if it corresponds to the resolute determination of all people of good will. Rulers must be supported and enlightened by a public opinion that encourages them or, where necessary, expresses disapproval. Consequently, it is also right that rulers should explain to the public those matters that concern the problems of peace.

Studies that help to build peace

7. Building peace also depends upon the progress of research about it. Scientific studies on war, its nature, causes, means, objectives and risks have much to teach us on the conditions for peace. Since they throw light on the relationships between war and politics, such

studies show that there is a greater future in negotiation than in arms for settling conflicts.

It follows that the role of law in preserving peace is called upon to expand. It is well known that within individual States the work of *jurists* contributes greatly to the advancement of justice and respect for human rights. But their role is just as great for the pursuit of the same objectives on the international level and for refining the juridical instruments for building and preserving peace.

However, since concern for peace is inscribed in the inmost depths of our being, progress along the path of peace also benefits from the researches of *psychologists* and *philosophers*. Admittedly, the science of war has already been enriched by studies on human aggressiveness, death-impulses and the herd instinct that can suddenly take possession of whole societies. But much remains to be said about the fear we human beings have of taking possession of our freedom, and about our insecurity before ourselves and others. Better knowledge of life-impulses, of instinctive sympathy with other people, of readiness to love and share undoubtedly helps us to grasp better the psychological mechanisms that favour peace.

By these researches psychology is thus called upon to throw light on and to complement the studies of the philosophers. Philosophers have always pondered the questions of war and peace. They have never been without responsibility in this matter. The memory is all too much alive of those famous philosophers who saw man as "a wolf for his fellow man" and war as a historical necessity. However, it is also true that many of them wished to lay the foundation for a lasting or

even everlasting peace by, for instance, setting forth a solid theoretical basis for international law.

All these efforts deserve to be resumed and intensified. The thinkers who devote themselves to such endeavours can benefit from the copious contribution of a present-day philosophical current that gives unique prominence to the theme of the person and devotes itself in a singular manner to an examination of the themes of freedom and responsibility: This can provide light for reflection on human rights, justice and peace.

Indirect action

8. While the advancement of peace in a sense depends on information and research, it rests above all on the action that people take in its favour. Some forms of action envisaged here have only an indirect relationship with peace. However, it would be wrong to think of them as unimportant: as we shall briefly indicate through some examples, almost every section of human activity offers unexpected occasions for advancing peace.

Such is the case of *cultural exchanges*, in the broadest sense. Anything that enables people to get to know each other better through artistic activity breaks down barriers. Where speech is unavailing and diplomacy is an uncertain aid, music, painting, drama and sport can bring people closer together. The same holds for *scientific research*: science, like art, creates and brings together a universal society which gathers all who love truth and beauty, without division. Thus science and art are, each at its own level, an anticipation of the emergence of a universal peaceful society.

Even *economic life* should bring people closer to-

gether, by making them aware of the extent to which they are interdependent and complementary. Undoubtedly, economic relationships often create a field of pitiless confrontation, merciless competition and even sometimes shameless exploitation. But could not these relationships become instead relationships of service and solidarity, and thereby defuse one of the most frequent causes of discord?

Justice and peace within nations

9. While peace should be everyone's concern, the building of peace is a task that falls directly and principally to *political leaders*. From this point of view the chief setting for the building up of peace is always the nation as a politically organized society. Since the purpose for which a political society is formed is the establishment of justice, the advancement of the common good and participation by all, that society will enjoy peace only to the extent that these three demands are respected. Peace can develop only where the elementary requirements of justice are safeguarded.

Unconditional and effective respect for each one's imprescriptible and inalienable rights is the necessary condition in order that peace may reign in a society. Vis-à-vis these basic rights all others are in a way derivative and secondary. In a society in which these rights are not protected, the very idea of universality is dead, as soon as a small group of individuals set up for their own exclusive advantage a principle of discrimination whereby the rights and even the lives of others are made dependent on the whim of the stronger. Such a society cannot be at peace with itself: it has within it a principle

leading to division. For the same reason, a political society can really collaborate in building international peace only if it is itself peaceful, that is to say if it takes seriously the advancement of human rights at home. To the extent that the rulers of a particular country apply themselves to building a fully just society, they are already contributing decisively to building an authentic, firmly based and lasting peace (cf. Encyclical *Pacem in Terris*, 11).

Justice and peace between nations

10. While peace within individual nations is a necessary condition for the development of true peace, it is not enough in itself. The building of peace on a world scale cannot be the result of the separate desires of nations, for they are often ambiguous and sometimes contradictory. It was to make up for this lack that States provided themselves with appropriate *international organizations*, one of the chief aims of which is to harmonize the desires of different nations and cause them to converge for the safeguarding of peace and for an increase of justice between nations.

By the authority that they have gained and by their achievements, the great International Organizations have done remarkable work for peace. They have of course had failures; they have not been able to prevent all conflicts or put a speedy end to them. But they have helped to show the world that war, bloodshed and tears are not the way to end tensions. They have provided, so to speak, experimental proof that even on the world level people are able to combine their efforts and seek peace together.

The peace dynamism of Christianity

11. At this point in my message I wish to address more especially my brothers and sisters in the Church. The Church supports and encourages all serious efforts for peace. She unhesitatingly proclaims that the activity of all those who devote the best of their energies to peace forms part of God's plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. But she reminds Christians that they have still greater reasons for being active witnesses of God's gift of peace.

In the first place, Christ's word and example have given rise to new attitudes in favour of peace. Christ has taken the ethics of peace far beyond the ordinary attitudes of justice and understanding. At the beginning of his ministry he proclaimed: "Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God" (*Mt* 5:9). He sent his disciples to bring peace from house to house, from town to town (*Mt* 10:11-13). He exhorted them to prefer peace to vengeance of any kind and even to certain legitimate claims on others—so great was his desire to tear from the human heart the roots of aggressiveness (*Mt* 5:38-42). He asked them to love those whom barriers of any sort have turned into enemies (*Mt* 5:43-48). He set up as examples people who were habitually despised (*Lk* 10:33; 17:16). He exhorted people to be always humble and to forgive without any limit (cf. *Mt* 18:21-22). The attitude of sharing with those in utter want—on which he made the last judgment hinge (cf. *Mt* 25:31-46)—was to make a radical contribution to the establishment of relations of fraternity.

These appeals of Jesus and his example have had

a widespread influence on the attitude of his disciples, as two millennia of history testify. But Christ's work belongs to a very deep level, of the order of a mysterious transformation of hearts. He really brought "peace among men with whom God is pleased" in the words of the proclamation made at his birth (cf. *Lk* 2: 14), and this not only by revealing to them the Father's love but above all by reconciling them with God through his sacrifice. For it was sin and hatred that were an obstacle to peace with God and with others: he destroyed them by the offering of his life on the Cross; he reconciled in one body those who were hostile (cf. *Eph* 2: 16; *Rom* 12: 5). His first words to his Apostles after he rose were: "Peace be with you" (*Jn* 20: 19). Those who accept the faith form in the Church a prophetic community: with the Holy Spirit communicated by Christ, after the Baptism that makes them part of the Body of Christ, they experience the peace given by God in the sacrament of Reconciliation and in Eucharistic communion; they proclaim "the gospel of peace" (*Eph* 6: 15); they try to live it from day to day, in actual practice; and they long for the time of total reconciliation when, by a new intervention of the living God who raises the dead, we shall be wholly open to God and our brothers and sisters. Such is the vision of faith which supports the activity of Christians on behalf of peace.

Thus, by her very existence, the Church exists within the world as a society of people who are reconciled and at peace through the grace of Christ, in a communion of love and life with God and with all their brothers and sisters, beyond human barriers of every sort; in herself she is already, and she seeks to become ever more so in practice, a gift and leaven of peace offered by God

to the whole of the human race. Certainly, the members of the Church are well aware that they are often still sinners, in this sphere too; at least they feel the grave responsibility of putting into practice this gift of peace. For this they must first overcome their own divisions, in order to set out without delay towards the fullness of unity in Christ; thus they collaborate with God in order to offer his peace to the world. They must also of course combine their efforts with the efforts of all men and women of good will working for peace in the different spheres of society and international life. The Church wishes her children to join, through their witness and their initiatives, the first rank of those preparing peace and causing it to reign. At the same time, she is very aware that, on the spot, it is a difficult task, one that calls for much generosity, discernment and hope, as a real challenge.

Peace as a constant challenge to Christians

12. Christian optimism, based on the glorious Cross of Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, is no excuse for self-deception. For Christians, peace on earth is always a challenge, because of the presence of sin in man's heart. Motivated by their faith and hope, Christians therefore apply themselves to promoting a more just society; they fight hunger, deprivation and disease; they are concerned about what happens to migrants, prisoners and outcasts (cf. *Mt* 25: 35-36). But they know that, while all these undertakings express something of the mercy and perfection of God (cf. *Lk* 6: 36; *Mt* 4: 48), they are always limited in their range, precarious in

their results and ambiguous in their inspiration. Only God the giver of life, when he unites all things in Christ (cf. *Eph* 1:10), will fulfil our ardent hope by himself bringing to accomplishment everything that he has undertaken in history according to his Spirit in the matter of justice and peace.

Although Christians put all their best energies into preventing war or stopping it, they do not deceive themselves about their ability to cause peace to triumph, nor about the effect of their efforts to this end. They therefore concern themselves with all human initiatives in favour of peace and very often take part in them; but they regard them with realism and humility. One could almost say that they "relativize" them in two senses: they relate them both to the sinful condition of humanity and to God's saving plan. In the first place, Christians are aware that plans based on aggression, domination and the manipulation of others lurk in human hearts, and sometimes even secretly nourish human intentions, in spite of certain declarations or manifestations of a pacifist nature. For Christians know that in this world a totally and permanently peaceful human society is unfortunately a utopia, and that ideologies that hold up that prospect as easily attainable are based on hopes that cannot be realized, whatever the reason behind them. It is a question of a mistaken view of the human condition, a lack of application in considering the question as a whole; or it may be a case of evasion in order to calm fear, or in still other cases a matter of calculated self-interest. Christians are convinced, if only because they have learned from personal experience, that these deceptive hopes lead straight to the false peace of totalitarian regimes. But this realistic view in no way prevents Christ-

ians from working for peace; instead, it stirs up their ardour, for they also know that Christ's victory over deception, hate and death gives those in love with peace a more decisive motive for action than what the most generous theories about man have to offer; Christ's victory likewise gives a hope more surely based than any hope held out by the most audacious dreams.

This is why Christians, even as they strive to resist and prevent every form of warfare, have no hesitation in recalling that, in the name of an elementary requirement of justice, peoples have a right and even a duty to protect their existence and freedom by proportionate means against an unjust aggressor (cf. Constitution *Gaudium et Spes*, 79). However, in view of the difference between classical warfare and nuclear or bacteriological war—a difference so to speak of nature—and in view of the scandal of the arms race seen against the background of the needs of the Third World, this right, which is very real in principle, only underlines the urgency for world society to equip itself with effective means of negotiation. In this way the nuclear terror that haunts our time can encourage us to enrich our common heritage with a very simple discovery that is within our reach, namely that war is the most barbarous and least effective way of resolving conflicts. More than ever before, human society is forced to provide itself with the means of consultation and dialogue which it needs in order to survive, and therefore with the institutions necessary for building up justice and peace.

May it also realize that this work is something beyond human powers!

Prayer for peace

13. Throughout this message, I have appealed to the responsibility of people of good will, especially Christians, because *God has indeed entrusted peace to men and women*. With the realism and hope that faith makes possible, I have tried to draw the attention of citizens and leaders to a certain number of achievements or attitudes that are already feasible and capable of giving a solid foundation to peace. But, over and above or even in the midst of this necessary activity, which might seem to depend primarily on people, *peace is above all a gift of God*—something that must never be forgotten—and must always be implored from his mercy.

This conviction is certainly seen to have animated people of all civilizations who have given peace the first place in their prayers. Its expression is found in all religions. How many men, having experienced murderous conflicts and concentration camps, how many women and children, distressed by wars, have in times past turned to the God of peace! Today, when the perils have taken on a seriousness all their own by reason of their extent and radical nature, and when the difficulties of building peace have taken on a new nature and seem often insoluble, many individuals may spontaneously find themselves resorting to prayer, even though prayer may be something unfamiliar.

Yes, our future is in the hands of God, who alone gives true peace. And when human hearts sincerely think of work for peace it is still God's grace that inspires and strengthens those thoughts. All people are in this sense invited to echo the sentiments of Saint Francis of Assisi, the eighth centenary of whose birth we are cele-

brating: Lord, make us instruments of your peace: where there is hatred, let us sow love; where there is injury, pardon; when discord rages, let us build peace.

Christians love to pray for peace, as they make their own the prayer of so many psalms punctuated by supplications for peace and repeated with the universal love of Jesus. We have here a shared and very profound element for all ecumenical activities. Other believers all over the world are also awaiting from Almighty God the gift of peace, and, more or less consciously, many other people of good will are ready to make the same prayer in the secret of their hearts. May fervent supplications thus rise to God from the four corners of the earth! This will already create a fine unanimity on the road to peace. And who could doubt that God will hear and grant this cry of his children: Lord, grant us peace! Grant us your peace!

From the Vatican, 8 December 1981.

Joannes Paulus PP. II

VATICAN POLYGLOT PRESS



APOSTOLIC DELEGATION

54 PARKSIDE
LONDON. SW19 5NF

TELEPHONE: 01-946 1410

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences was founded in 1603 and reformed by Pius XI in 1936.

The Academy is the only one in the world with international character and scientists are elected to it without any discrimination of nationality or belief.

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At present the Pontifical Academy, under its President Prof. Carlos CHAGAS, numbers 60 members, of whom 8 are most distinguished British scholars:

- | | |
|--------------------------|---|
| Prof. Max PERUTZ, | Professor of Molecular Biology at the University of Cambridge and Nobel Prize Winner. |
| Prof. Hermann BRÜCK, | Emeritus Professor of Astronomy at the University of Edinburgh. |
| Prof. Paul DIRAC, | Professor of Physics in the University of Cambridge and Nobel Prize Winner. |
| Prof. Percy GARNHAM, | Professor of Medical Protozoology at the University of London. |
| Prof. Sir Alan HODGKIN, | Professor of Physiology at the University of Cambridge. |
| Prof. Sir George PORTER, | Professor of Chemistry at the Royal Institute in London and Nobel Prize Winner. |
| Prof. Sir Martin RYLE, | Professor of Radioastronomy at the University of Cambridge and Nobel Prize Winner. |
| Prof. Alfred UBBELOHDE, | Emeritus Professor of Thermodynamics at the Imperial College of Sciences, London. |

(For further details on all these see "Who's Who" passim.)



The National Archives

LETTERCODE/SERIES <i>PREM 19</i>	Date and sign
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

17 December 1981 Prime Minister*Dear John,**11.
12*Message from the Pope about Nuclear Weapons

I enclose a brief for the call on the Prime Minister by a delegation from the Pontifical Academy of Sciences at 2.15 pm on Friday 18 December.

It now appears certain that the Papal Delegation will be received by Presidents Brezhnev, Mitterrand and Reagan. As far as we are aware, there has been no mention of a visit to Peking, but the UN Secretary-General may also receive the Delegation.

The Pope has referred publicly to his message. We therefore have to consider how to handle publicity. The Soviet Union will probably play the matter up and try to imply that the Pope's initiative supports their own proposal for an International Committee of Scientists to study the dangers of nuclear war. If HMG make no public comment, there may well be questions in Parliament. Your press office may therefore wish to issue a statement on the lines of the attached draft.

yours ever
Roderic Lyne

(R M J Lyne)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing St



DRAFT PRESS STATEMENT

The Prime Minister this afternoon received a delegation sent by the Pope and headed by Professor Carlos Chagas, President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. The delegation delivered a message from the Pope addressed to the Queen about the consequences of nuclear war.

The Prime Minister took the opportunity to emphasise that HM Government shares the Pope's concern about the effects of nuclear war. She pointed out that HMG's defence policy was devoted to the prevention of war, both conventional and nuclear, and that in HMG's view the prospect of nuclear war is remote precisely because this strategy of deterrence is working effectively. The Prime Minister went on to emphasise NATO's commitment to reductions in nuclear arsenals by negotiation. She drew attention in this context to the talks currently taking place on Intermediate Range Nuclear Forces in Geneva and the Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) due to begin in the Spring.

CALL BY PAPAL DELEGATION ON THE PRIME MINISTER, DECEMBER 1981

Points to Make

1. Appreciate the Pope's thoughtfulness in sending a message to world leaders about nuclear weapons. Customary in Britain for political matters to be dealt with by Head of Government rather than The Queen. We shall study the message carefully and give Her Majesty our advice on its contents.
2. HMG fully share scientific concern about horrific consequences of nuclear ^{war} ~~war~~ for the whole of mankind. This has been the subject of authoritative studies by UN Secretary-General. Similar reports on nuclear weapons have been issued by HMG and by an international conference of physicians.
3. In the UK there is full and open debate about nuclear weapons, the dangers they pose, and the need to prevent their use. Prevention of war has highest priority in our policy. Our possession of nuclear weapons is precisely to prevent their use. Despite level of public concern we believe the prospect of nuclear war is remote. Deterrence remains effective in spite of increasing international tensions.
4. Peace and security depends on maintaining military balance between East and West. But essential to reduce high level of super-power armaments. HMG fully support US position of zero level on both sides in current negotiations with USSR on intermediate-range nuclear forces. Agreement on this would open

/way

way for reductions in other theatre nuclear systems, eg aircraft. We also welcome US proposal for Strategic Arms Reduction Talks - START - next spring, and hope Soviet Union will respond in same spirit.

5. Preoccupation with nuclear weapons should not blind us to the fact that there is a far more immediate danger to human life from use of conventional weapons throughout the world. Over 120 conventional wars since 1945 have produced millions of casualties and untold suffering. Hence we supported Danish proposal for UN study on all aspects of conventional arms, just adopted by the General Assembly.

Essential Facts

6. The Pope's idea of sending a message to world leaders on the use of nuclear weapons comes uncomfortably close to President Brezhnev's proposal, made at the 26th Congress of the Central Committee of the CPSU in February 1981, that an international committee of scientists should be appointed to study the dangers of nuclear war. The purpose of the Soviet proposal is probably to exploit the world-wide fear of nuclear war and to foster the belief that US nuclear policies render it more likely. A particular aim would be to appeal to anti-nuclear sentiments in Western Europe and to stimulate further opposition to NATO's TNF modernisation plans. We may therefore expect the Russians to give a warm welcome to the Pope's message and to use it in support of their own propaganda.

7. We believe the appalling consequences of nuclear war are well understood by the world community. They were the subject of a comprehensive study by the UN Secretary-General in 1968. As recently as September 1980 the Secretary-General published a report on all aspects of nuclear weapons which included the most up-to-date information on this subject. Similar reports have been issued by the US and British Governments ('Nuclear Weapons', HMSO, 1980), and by an international conference of physicians.

8. In our view, there is no basis for statements about the growing danger of nuclear war. The Pugwash Conference of international scientists in December 1980 concluded that, whereas the devastating effects of nuclear weapons had increased considerably, the likelihood of nuclear war had not. The two factors are clearly related. Most experts agree that we are not on the brink of nuclear war.

9. We believe the attention of the world's religious leaders should be concentrated on efforts to reduce the numbers of nuclear weapons while preserving deterrence. President Reagan's statement of 18 November, the opening of the INF negotiations in Geneva, and the prospect of Strategic Arms Reduction Talks (START) in 1982, show that there is a rational way to end the nuclear arms race. We hope the Soviet Union will grasp the opportunities which have been offered.

10. The Papal Delegation is headed by the President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Professor Carlos Chagas. He will

/be



be accompanied by two eminent Cambridge scientists who are Nobel laureates - Professor Max Perutz (chemistry) and Sir Martin Ryle (physics) - and by Professor Hermann Bruck (Astronomer-Royal for Scotland) and Professor Stanley Runcorn (Institute of Physics at Newcastle University). Sir M Ryle is a unilateralist; we do not know the views of the others.

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FM FCO 141800Z DEC 81
TO FLASH HOLY SEE
TELEGRAM NUMBER 17 OF 16 DECEMBER 1981

YOUR TELNO 025: MESSAGE FOR HM THE QUEEN ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS.

1. PLEASE INFORM SILVESTRINI THAT THE QUEEN, AS A CONSTITUTIONAL HEAD OF STATE, DOES NOT RECEIVE DELEGATIONS OF THIS KIND. SHE HAS ACCORDINGLY INSTRUCTED HER MINISTERS TO DO SO. THE SITUATION IS OF COURSE DIFFERENT FOR EXECUTIVE HEADS OF STATE SUCH AS PRESIDENTS REAGAN AND MITTERRAND.

2. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT THE PRIME MINISTER WILL IN PRINCIPLE BE PLEASED TO RECEIVE THE DELEGATION. A POSSIBLE TIME DURING THE PERIOD PROPOSED (16-19 DECEMBER) WOULD BE 1415 ON ~~17~~ DECEMBER.

18

3. GRATEFUL FOR EARLY ADVICE AS TO WHETHER TIME PROPOSED IS ACCEPTABLE.

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JS

Vatican

FRONT DOOR

MR. TAYLOR

MR. RYLANDS

A delegation will be coming to No.10
on Friday 18 December at 1415 hours
carrying a message from the Pope.

The delegation comprises:

Professor Carlos Chagas
Professor Bruck
Professor Perutz
Professor Runcorn
Professor Ryle

CAROLINE STEPHENS

16 December 1981

RESTRICTED

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B, F 17-12-81

15 December 1981

MESSAGE FROM THE POPE TO THE QUEEN ABOUT NUCLEAR
WEAPONS

Thank you for your letter of 14 December. The Prime Minister agrees to receive the delegation which will be carrying a message from the Pope. She could do so at 1415 hours on Friday 18 December. You will doubtless despatch the draft telegram to the Holy See.

A. J. COLES

9

Francis Richards, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

RESTRICTED



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

14 December 1981

Yes
 Dear John,

Prime Minister
 Agree to see them some time later this week?

A. S. C. 14/12

Message from the Pope to The Queen about Nuclear Weapons

HM Minister to the Holy See has been informed that the Pope wishes to despatch a personal message to HM The Queen about the consequences of nuclear war. He would like to send a delegation consisting of the President of the Pontifical Academy of Sciences, Professor Carlos Chagas, and Professors Bruck, Perutz, Runcorn and Ryle to deliver a document on the subject. We have now obtained a summary of the document, which is attached. In accordance with normal practice The Queen has asked her Ministers to receive the delegation.

Enquiries in Washington and Paris have revealed that President Reagan and President Mitterrand will receive delegations for the same purpose; it is not yet known whether President Brezhnev will do so. Lord Carrington accordingly recommends that the Prime Minister should briefly receive the delegation and should take the opportunity to reaffirm the Government's policy on deterrence. Appropriate briefing will be provided if the Prime Minister agrees. I attach a draft telegram to the Holy See.

yours ever
 Rodric Lyne

PP (F N Richards)
 Private Secretary

John Coles Esq
 10 Downing Street



CONSILIUM
PRO
PUBLICIS ECCLESIAE NEGOTIIS

*This is presumably what the
Papal delegation is going
to say.*

Z. M. Osborne

AV 4/12

*✓ de ACOR
10/12 Defense Agpt
R.D.
me.*

The Pontifical Academy of Sciences recently carried out a review of the consequences of the use of nuclear weapons which it wishes to make known to the leaders of nations and to the public in general. The results can be summarized as follows:

It is a medical reality that any nuclear war would inevitably cause death, disease and suffering of pandemic proportions, with no possibility of effective medical intervention.

The number of immediate fatalities would be enormous. The severely injured would be even more numerous, out of all proportion to surviving medical facilities. Communications and food and water supplies would be completely interrupted. There would be unimaginable social disruption. Radiation would lower immunity to disease, increase cancer, cause brain damage to many of the unborn and genetic damage that would be passed on to future generations, should there be any. Livestock and plants for food would be contaminated.

Even a nuclear attack aimed only at military targets would be devastating to the country as a whole, both directly and through the spread of radiation in the atmosphere. No nation would have medical facilities sufficient to care for the survivors.

These are the known consequences. Many other harmful biological and even geophysical effects are likely.

When a disease cannot be treated, it must be prevented. Prevention is our only recourse against nuclear war.

If this knowledge is presented to people and their leaders everywhere, it may help interrupt the nuclear arms race. This in turn would help prevent what could be the last epidemic our civilization will know.

OUT TELEGRAM

Classification and Caveats

CONFIDENTIAL

Precedence/Deskby

IMMEDIATE

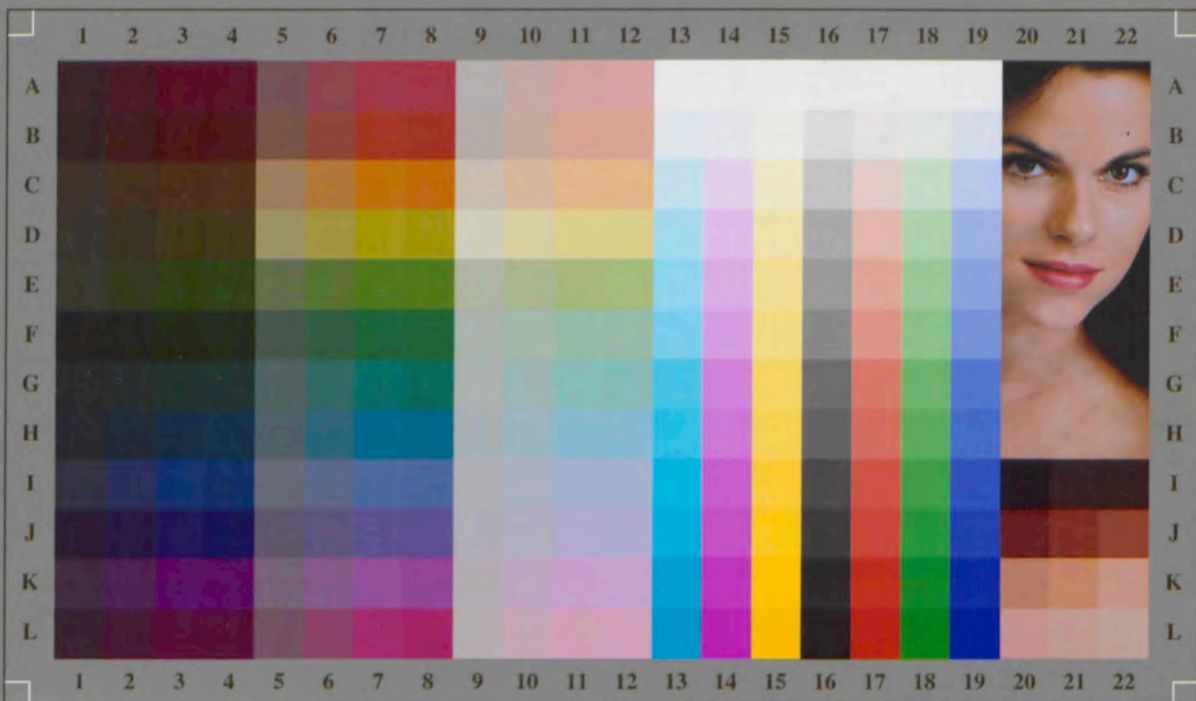
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GRS
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 TO IMMEDIATE HOLY SEE
 TELEGRAM NUMBER
 YOUR TELNO 025: MESSAGE FOR HM THE QUEEN ABOUT NUCLEAR WEAPONS
 1. Please inform Silvestrini that The Queen, as a Constitutional Head of State, does not receive delegations of this kind. She has accordingly instructed Her Ministers to do so. The situation is of course different for executive Heads of State such as Presidents Reagan and Mitterrand.
 2. You should say that the Prime Minister will in principle be pleased to receive the delegation. A possible time during the period proposed (16-19 December) would be on December.
 3. Grateful for early advice as to whether time proposed is acceptable.
 CARRINGTON
 NNNN

NNNN ends telegram	BLANK	Catchword
File number	Dept - PRIVATE OFFICE	Distribution LIMITED WED DEFENCE DEPT ACDD PCD NEWS DEPT PS PS/LPS PS/Mr Hurd PS/PUS Mr Bullard Mr Fergusson Mr Gillmore
Drafted by (Block capitals)	F N RICHARDS	
Telephone number	233-4831	
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Comcen reference	Time of despatch	Copied to No 10

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