

Vatica

CONFIDENTIAL

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ZZ HOLY SEE
GRS 316
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FM FCO 171215Z MAY 82
TO FLASH HOLY SEE
TELEGRAM NUMBER 14 OF 17 MAY

FROM PUS
YOUR TEL NO 23: PAPAL VISIT

1. IN CONSIDERING THE LIKELY PUBLIC REACTION TO A POSSIBLE CANCELLATION OF HIS VISIT BY THE POPE, MINISTERS ARE CONCERNED NOT ONLY THAT THIS MIGHT BE INTERPRETED BY THE BRITISH PUBLIC AND OTHERS AS A PRO-ARGENTINE GESTURE, BUT ALSO THAT THERE WOULD BE TREMENDOUS DISAPPOINTMENT IN THE ROMAN CATHOLIC COMMUNITY AND MORE WIDELY.
2. PLEASE THEREFORE TELL THE HOLY SEE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE AND AT THE HIGHEST POSSIBLE LEVEL THAT, IF IT WOULD HELP THE POPE TO STAND BY HIS VISIT, HMG WOULD BE READY TO TREAT THE VISIT EVEN MORE THAN AT PRESENT ENVISAGED AS A PURELY PASTORAL EVENT AND THEREFORE TO REMOVE FROM THE PRESENT PROGRAMME MOST OR ALL ASPECTS OF GOVERNMENTAL INVOLVEMENT. IT MIGHT HELP FOR EXAMPLE IN THESE CIRCUMSTANCES IF THE POPE WERE NOT MET AT THE AIRPORT BY THE SECRETARY OF STATE NOR THE GOVERNMENT REPRESENTED AT THE RECEPTION AT WESTMINSTER NOR AT CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL. THE MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER COULD BE CANCELLED, BUT EVEN IN THOSE CIRCUMSTANCES THE CALL ON THE QUEEN WOULD GO AHEAD. WE WOULD MAKE IT CLEAR PUBLICLY THAT IN OUR VIEW THERE WAS NO POLITICAL CONTENT TO THE VISIT.
3. YOU SHOULD SAY THAT THE DECISION WHETHER TO MAKE THE VISIT IS WELL UNDERSTOOD HERE TO BE ENTIRELY ONE FOR THE POPE. IF HE DOES NOT COME HOWEVER THERE WILL BE VERY GREAT DISAPPOINTMENT. SO MINISTERS VERY MUCH HOPE THAT THE POPE WILL STICK TO HIS PLANS. IF HE SO WISHED MINISTERS WOULD BE HAPPY TO MAINTAIN THE PROGRAMME AS ALREADY ARRANGED: THE SUGGESTION IN PARAGRAPH 2 ABOVE IS ONLY INTENDED AS A WAY OF HELPING THE POPE TO COME.
4. I HOPE THAT YOU CAN ACT ACCORDINGLY BEFORE THE ARCHBISHOPS

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OF LIVERPOOL AND GLASGOW CALL ON THE POPE AT 7 PM THIS EVENING. CARDINAL HUME, WHO WELCOMES THIS ACTION BY US, HAS EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SPEAK TO THEM FIRST.

PYM

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