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Mr Bullard

~~Hd/WK~~

Hd/News

Re

MY TELNO 36: PRIME MINISTER'S CALL ON THE POPE

1. I CALLED THIS MORNING ON MONSIGNOR SILVESTRINI, SECRETARY OF THE COUNCIL FOR THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS OF THE CHURCH. I ASKED FOR THE APPOINTMENT LAST WEEK IN ORDER TO DISCUSS CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI'S VISIT AND THE CHURCH IN POLAND. (YOUR TELNO 34). I TOOK THE OPPORTUNITY FOR A WIDER DISCUSSION OF THE CURRENT POLITICAL SCENE AND OF THE TOPICS WHICH THE VATICAN ARE MOST LIKELY TO DISCUSS.
2. ON POLAND MGR. SILVESTRINI EXPRESSED HIS INTEREST IN THE ACCOUNT OF YOUR VISIT TO WARSAW LAST MONTH. HE AGREED THAT THE POSITION REMAINED DELICATE. THE VATICAN WERE GIVING DISCREET SUPPORT TO THE AUTHORITIES IN ORDER TO PROTECT THE INTERESTS OF THEIR OWN PEOPLE. THEY SHARED YOUR ASSESSMENT OF THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ECONOMIC BACKGROUND. THE POLES FACED A HEAVY TASK IF THEY WERE TO COVER THEIR FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS. HE THOUGHT THAT HELP FROM THE WEST WOULD BE IMPORTANT.
3. MGR. SILVESTRINI SAID LITTLE ABOUT THE VISIT OF CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI EXCEPT TO REFER TO THE POPE'S PUBLIC STATEMENTS. ACCORDING TO THE PRESS CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI EXTENDED HIS STAY IN ROME AND MADE CLEAR HIS WISH TO HAND OVER TO A SUCCESSOR. MGR. SILVESTRINI SIMPLY SAID THAT WYSZYNSKI LEFT ROME IN A CONFIDENT FRAME OF MIND. HE MEANT THAT THE VATICAN AND THE CARDINAL WERE REASONABLY CONFIDENT THAT THE PRESENT COURSE COULD BE MAINTAINED AND THAT INTERVENTION COULD BE AVOIDED.

BE AVOIDED.

4. MGR. SILVESTRINI ADDED THAT POLAND WAS A SUBJECT OF PARTICULAR SENSITIVITY TO THE VATICAN AND EXPRESSED SOME DOUBT WHETHER THE POPE WOULD BE ANXIOUS TO DISCUSS IT WITH THE PRIME MINISTER.

5. OTHER SUBJECTS WHICH MGR. SILVESTRINI THOUGHT SHOULD FIND A PLACE ON THE AGENDA ARE BROADLY THOSE LISTED IN MY TELEGRAM UNDER REFERENCE. HE MENTIONED THE POPE'S VISIT TO BRITAIN IN 1982, MIDDLE EAST PROBLEMS, DEFENCE AND THE MADRID CSCE CONFERENCE FROM WHICH HE HAD JUST RETURNED. HOWEVER, THE MAIN SUBJECT IS LIKELY TO BE NORTHERN IRELAND. THE POPE'S MESSAGE TO THE PRIME MINISTER ABOUT THE HUNGER STRIKE AT THE MAZE PRISON WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY SENT AT THE INSTANCE OF CARDINAL O'FLAICH. THE FACT THAT THE VATICAN ADVISED THE POPE TO SEND IT DESPITE THE QUANTITIES OF BRIEFING WE HAVE BEEN GIVING THEM ON THE SUBJECT AND THAT WE KNOW THE DESK OFFICER RESPONSIBLE IS SEIZED OF AND SYMPATHISES WITH HMGS POSITION IS A REFLECTION OF THE VATICAN'S DIFFICULTIES IN THIS AREA.

6. MGR. SILVESTRINI MADE ONLY PASSING REFERENCE TO THE MIDDLE EAST. THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE STATUS OF JERUSALEM AND THE PROTECTION OF THE HOLY PLACES. THEY WERE INTERESTED IN M. THORN'S RECENT VISIT AND KING HUSSAIN IS A REGULAR VISITOR HERE. THE IRAQI/IRANIAN WAR IS OF COURSE OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO THEM.

7. MGR. SILVESTRINI INDICATED THAT THE POPE'S TALK WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD BE WITHOUT ADVISERS SINCE THIS WAS HIS NORMAL PRACTICE. MGR. SILVESTRINI IS CONSULTING THE SECRETARY OF STATE, CARDINAL CASAROLI, ON WHOM THE PRIME MINISTER WOULD NORMALLY CALL AFTER SEEING THE POPE. SIR MICHAEL PALLISER WOULD CERTAINLY BE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING. MGR. SILVESTRINI WOULD ALSO PROBABLY ATTEND ON THE VATICAN SIDE.

HEATH

