

STATEMENT BY DEFENCE SECRETARY - 27TH APRIL

Following reports in today's papers, I have been asked if I have had any conversation with Cardinal Hume about the work for CND of Monsignor Kent.

I have had no such conversations with Cardinal Hume or indeed with the Head of any other Church or religious organisation. Nor would I believe it appropriate for me to do so.

This is a free society in which individual conscience and freedom of thought is at the heart of all that I am charged to defend.

My letter to Conservative candidates last weekend arose solely because it is now the policy of CND to attack the Conservative Party by opposing Conservative candidates in marginal constituencies. I make no complaint about that. This is a free society. But CND must not expect the Conservative Party to remain silent in the face of such an attack and the CND must expect its motivation to be scrutinised carefully.

I said that CND was dominated by those of the Left ranging from the Labour Party to the Communist Party. This may be embarrassing for CND but it is not a smear. The facts are often uncomfortable. That is not an argument for suppressing them.