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FROM VATICAN OFFICE

PERSONAL FOR THE SECRETARY FROM WALTERS

E.O.12065: XDS-1-3 11/30/2001 (WALTERS, VERNON L.)
TAGS: PEPR, PBOR, PINT, CI, AR, VT, US
SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR WALTERS' AUDIENCE WITH POPE--11/30/81

PLEASE PASS TO S/AL

1. (~~SECRET~~ - ENTIRE TEXT)
2. ON NOVEMBER 30, POPE JOHN PAUL II RECEIVED PERSONAL ENVOY WILSON AND ME ALONE IN HIS VATICAN OFFICE. MR. WILSON REMINDED THE PONTIFF OF THEIR MEETING IN ANCHORAGE AND SAID HE WAS PLEASED TO SEE HIM IN GOOD HEALTH. THE POPE REPLIED THAT HE WAS ESSENTIALLY BACK TO NORMAL AFTER TWO OPERATIONS. HE DID, HOWEVER, APPEAR A BIT TIRED.
3. I THEN EXPLAINED, IN ITALIAN BECAUSE IT SEEMED EASIER FOR HIM THAN ENGLISH, THE NATURE OF MY JOB AS AMBASSADOR-AT-LARGE AND OF MY RECENT TRIP TO SOUTH AMERICA AND AFRICA. HE ASKED ME TO COMMENT ON CHILE AND ARGENTINA. I REPLIED THAT I HAVE KNOWN THE LEADERS OF BOTH COUNTRIES FOR SEVERAL YEARS AND AGREED WITH HIS COMMENT THAT THE PRIME ISSUE

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IN THE BEAGLE DISPUTE IS MILITARY PRIDE. THE CHILEANS ARE HAPPY ABOUT THE PAPAL DECISION; THE ARGENTINES FEAR THE PUBLIC EMBARRASSMENT OF ACCEPTANCE. AN UPSET GENERAL GALTIERI TOLD ME ARGENTINA GOT NOT "A SINGLE SQUARE METER".

Declassified by Oscar J Olson
Senior Reviewer
Declassified on 20111117

PERSONALLY, I SAID, GENERAL VIOLA COULD PROBABLY LIVE WITH IT. PROUD GALTIERI CANNOT. I TOLD THE STORY OF THE MAN WHO WON THE GREATEST LIARS' CONTEST BY SAYING THAT HE'D MET AN ARGENTINE WITH AN INFERIORITY COMPLEX. THE POPE LAUGHED APPRECIATIVELY.

4. I CONTINUED THAT THE U.S. SHOULD STAND CLEAR OF THE DISPUTE BUT SUGGESTED THAT IF THE VATICAN COULD FIND A FACE-SAVING MODIFICATION RE FISHING RIGHTS, THE ARGENTINES MIGHT RESPOND. THE POPE ASKED ME TO EXPLAIN THIS TO CARDINAL CASAROLI TOMORROW. I POINTED OUT THAT AT ANY RATE, THE "PAPAL DIVISIONS" ARE ALREADY AT WORK IN ARGENTINA.

5. WITH RESPECT TO CENTRAL AMERICA, I EXPLAINED OUR EFFORTS TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION WITHOUT CAUSING COUNTER-PRODUCTIVE EMBARRASSMENT TO GOVERNMENTS BY SHOUTING OUT THEIR FAULTS FROM ROOF TOPS. VIOLENCE ACTUALLY ROSE IN THE YEARS THE U.S. USED PUBLIC CONDEMNATION OF GOVERNMENTS TO ATTEMPT TO REFORM THEIR ACTIONS. IN EL SALVADOR, WE HAVE ONLY 50 MILITARY SECURITY PERSONNEL; THE SOVIETS HAVE OVER 300 IN PERU ALONE--MORE THAN THE U.S. HAS IN ALL OF LATIN AMERICA EXCLUDING THE BASE AT PANAMA. HE SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THIS. WHEN I MENTIONED SOVIET AND CUBAN MISCHIEF-MAKING IN THE AREA, THE POPE SAID "THEY ALREADY HAVE A BASE IN NICARAGUA". I POINTED OUT THE NICARAGUANS HAVE 152 MM GUNS, SOVIET BUILT TANKS, AND PILOTS UNDERGOING TRAINING IN BULGARIA. WE SEEK, I SAID, A PEACEFUL SOLUTION THAT WILL NOT ENDANGER THE LINES AND FREEDOM OF THE LATIN AMERICAN PEOPLE. HE AGAIN NODDED

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AGREEMENT.

6. THE RELIGIOUS, I CONTINUED, HAD POSED SOME PROBLEMS FOR US. UNFORTUNATELY, SOME DID HELP THE GUERRILLAS AND THEREBY TENDED TO UNDERMINE THE CREDIBILITY OF MANY RELIGIOUS IN THE AREA. HE SAID HE KNEW THE PROBLEM AND IS MOVING TO CORRECT IT. I SAID I WAS JESUIT EDUCATED MYSELF BUT WAS SURPRISED AT THE LACK OF MODERATION IN SOME OF THOSE JESUITS I ENCOUNTERED IN WASHINGTON. HE LAUGHED AND SAID THAT TOO IS A PROBLEM INTO WHICH HE IS LOOKING. VATICAN II GAVE US GUIDLINES, HE SAID, BUT TOO MANY WITHIN THE CHURCH HAVE WANDERED AFIELD. THE TASK IS DIFFICULT BUT HE INTENDS, WITH THE HELP OF GOD, TO GET THE CHURCH OUT OF POLITICS AND INTO THE GOSPEL AND SOUL-SAVING.

7. I TOLD HIM I WAS IN ST. PETER'S SQUARE WHEN HE WAS ELECTED AND THAT I COMMENTED TO A NEWSMAN THEN THAT I HAD JUST HEARD THE "BEAT OF THE HOLY GHOST'S WINGS". HE SAID WE NEED THE HOLY GHOST NOW IN OUR DIFFICULT TIMES. I REPLIED THAT THE CHURCH HAD A SURE AND STEADY GUIDE.

8. I SAID, POLAND IS THE GREAT SOVIET DILEMMA. THE POPE REPLIED THE SOVIETS THINK ONLY IN TERMS OF MILITARY FORCE. ALL THEIR PLANS ARE BASED UPON THE THREAT OR USE OF FORCE.

9. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING, THE POPE BLESSED US, GAVE US COMMEMORATIVE MEDALS, ASKED ME TO TALK AT LENGTH TO CARDINAL CASAROLI, AND TO COME SEE HIM AGAIN.

10. COMMENT: THE POPE APPEARS ALERT BUT A BIT DRAWN ALTHOUGH HE WALKS SLOWLY AND STIFFLY, HIS HANDSHAKE IS FIRM AND HE APPEARS OTHERWISE IN GOOD HEALTH. END COMMENT. WILSON

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