



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

ZCZC 1  
 GRS 2  
 CLASS 3  
 CAVEATS 4  
 DESKBY 5  
 FM FCO 6  
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GRS  
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 CONFIDENTIAL  
 FM FCO 141800Z DEC 81  
 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		
Authorised for despatch		
Comcen reference	Time of despatch	Copied to No 10

CONFIDENTIAL

41285 - 1

GPS 125  
CONFIDENTIAL

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.

CARRINGTON

LIMITED  
WED  
DEF DEPT  
ACDD  
PCD  
NEWS D

PS  
PS/LPS  
PS/MR HURD  
PS/PUS  
MR BULLARD

MR FERLUSON  
MR WILLMORE

COPIES SENT TO  
No. 10 DOWNING STREET

File

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

*file*

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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

*S*

Francis Richards, Esq.,  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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