

NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL

~~SECRET/NODIS~~

INFORMATION
April 6, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR MR. KISSINGER

FROM: Helmut Sonnenfeldt

SUBJECT: Ambassador Lodge Reports Again on Birth Control

Last month he sent you a copy of a sensitive internal Vatican document re-affirming the Church's traditional stand on birth control. You sent him a brief letter in response, dated April 1 (Tab B).

Ambassador Lodge has now sent another memorandum (Tab A) repeating the same information. In addition, he notes that the secrecy surrounding the Vatican memorandum on birth control indicates that the Vatican still has not decided on the exact course it should steer on birth control, and generally on the broader issue of how fast the Vatican should travel in keeping up with the forces of change.

There seems to be no reason for you to reply.

HK

DECLASSIFIED

E.O. 13526, Section 3.5

NLN 11-02/9826 PER LTR. 12/21/2011

By AM NARA, Date 4/12/2012

[P. 1 OF 4]

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Grand Hotel, Rome,
March 29, 1971.

MEMORANDUM TO: Henry A. Kissinger
FROM: H. C. Lodge *H.C. Lodge*
SUBJECT: Vatican Preoccupations

As I reported, Cardinal Villot, the Papal Secretary of State, has circulated a 15-page study on "population explosion" and birth control to all Vatican representatives who are based abroad with instructions to do their utmost to get the interested organizations and governments to which they are accredited to carry out the provisions of the study.

The study contains a detailed analysis of "population explosion" and comes out squarely against all chemical and mechanical methods of birth control. It endorses the rhythm method which it says has been tried on a large scale on the island of Mauritius, although it does not adduce any facts showing the results obtained there.

Although the language of this memorandum was strong and definite, its effect was diminished by the secrecy which was attached to it. For example, we acquired a copy by a round-about method and under a pledge of secrecy. Thus it appears that although the Pope strongly opposes birth control, he does not wish to be too public about it.

An incident such as this makes one think that the Holy See appears still to be seeking the course which it should steer--on birth control; on the Italian political situation; and on the broad issue of how far and how fast it should go with all the forces of change. Undoubtedly this state of indecision reflects the division of opinion within the Church and the perplexity caused by the fact that the total numbers of priests are gradually dwindling.

VAT:HCLodge:ka

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Jannet Klot files

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

*HHS
LH
JK*

April 1, 1971

Dear Cabot:

Many thanks for your letter of March 17 which certainly demonstrates the breadth of your tasks.

In light of your comment regarding the sensitive nature of the document you enclosed, I shall not pass it any further. However, in your discretion you may wish to consider sending a copy to State so that the Secretary's Special Assistant for Population Matters could have the benefit of this information.

Warm personal regards,



Henry A. Kissinger

The Honorable
Henry Cabot Lodge
The American Embassy
Rome, Italy

NSC CORRESPONDENCE PROFILE

DOC	RECD	LOG NBR	INITIAL ACTION OFF
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03 29	04 05 13	2 1311	Sonnenfeldt

DOC SOURCE/CLASS/DESCRIPTION

LOG IN/OUT ONLY _____

TO: PRES _____ FROM: ELIOT _____ U _____ NO FORN _____ NODIS

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LODGE, HENRY C

CODE WORD _____ RES DATA _____

TS _____ SENSITIVE _____

SUBJECT: *more on Cardinal Villot and the popis stand on birth control.*

REFERENCE: S/S _____ OTHER _____ NOT XEROXED _____

APP'TS: PRES _____ HAK _____ TALKER _____ MEMCON _____ DATE REQ. _____

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STAFF SECRETARY			MEMO FOR PRES. ()
FAR EAST			REPLY FOR _____ SIGNATURE ()
SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA			FOR DISTRIBUTION/DISPATCH ()
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LATIN AMERICA			JOINT MEMO ()
UNITED NATIONS			REFER TO STATE ()
ECONOMIC			ANY ACTION NECESSARY ? (X)
SCIENTIFIC			CONCURRENCE ()
LR PLANNING			DUE DATE: <i>04/09</i>
PROGRAM ANALYSIS			COMMENTS: (Including Special Instructions)
NSC PLANNING			
CONGRESSIONAL			

INTERNAL/INTERIM ROUTING

DATE	FROM	TO	S	ACTION REQUIRED	CY TO
<i>4/5</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>A.J.</i>			
<i>4/6</i>	<i>HS</i>	<i>HAK/CIX</i>		<i>NSC Secretariat Info</i>	
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