

Reference ID	Created	Released	Classification	Origin
04VATICAN3213	2004-08-20 06:06	2010-12-10 21:09	CONFIDENTIAL	Embassy Vatican

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

Friday, 20 August 2004, 06:19

C O N F I D E N T I A L VATICAN 003213

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/WE LEVIN; IO/UNP NARANJO; IO/T: BOOTH, COWLEY

; G/TIP: ETERNO

EO 12958 DECL: 08/19/2014

TAGS AORC, ECON, KDEM, PHUM, PREL, VT, UNGA

SUBJECT: HOLY SEE BACKS U.S. UNGA PRIORITIES

REF: A. STATE 152009 B. WILLSON - MARTIN EMAIL AUG 12 C. VATICAN 2518

Classified By: Charge d'affaires D. Brent Hardt for reasons 1.5 (b and d).

Summary

¶1. (C) Holy See Acting Foreign Minister equivalent Parolin told Charge August 18 that the Holy See was on the same page with the U.S. on most UNGA initiatives. On cloning, Charge emphasized the Holy See's potential to influence Catholic countries to support a ban on human cloning. Parolin emphasized the Holy See's agreement with the U.S. position and promised to support fully UN efforts to ban embryonic cloning. He rejected the suggestion that the Holy See's UN mission had sent mixed messages on the issue last year, insisting that their widely disseminated position paper was strongly behind a complete ban. Parolin suggested that the U.S. do more to make the scientific case for the possibilities of adult stem cell research as an alternative to embryonic stem cells as a means to build support for the ban. On human trafficking, Parolin expressed support for the U.S. initiative to increase focus on child sex tourism, and suggested that Permanent Observer Migliore might make a statement on the issue in his UNGA intervention. Turning to economic issues, Parolin agreed with Charge that developing nations had to take responsibility for their own economic and social development, but insisted that internal initiatives had to be bolstered by aid from a reformed international system. End Summary.

Holy See, U.S. on Same Page for UNGA

¶2. (SBU) Charge reviewed the U.S. UNGA priorities with the Holy See's Acting Foreign Minister equivalent Monsignor Pietro Parolin August 18, drawing on ref (a) points. Parolin offered strong support for U.S. priorities on cloning, trafficking, and democracy, and support with caveats on the global development and Middle East priorities. Embassy had shared points prior to the meeting, and Parolin offered the following comments.

Banning Human Cloning

¶3. (C) Charge began by thanking Parolin for the Holy See's recent strong statement against all forms of human cloning issued in the wake of the recent UK decision to permit expanded cloning for therapeutic purposes. Parolin responded that the Holy See's unequivocal position on the issue was well-known, and noted the close agreement between the Vatican and USG on the issue. Charge raised points from ref (b), emphasizing the opportunity the Holy See's UN mission had, particularly among predominantly Catholic countries, to expand support for the Costa Rican resolution banning all forms of embryonic human cloning. Charge stressed that an active role by Permanent Observer Archbishop Migliore could be crucial to several countries, not least of all Poland. After last year's lobbying efforts, Charge noted, some countries appear to have been left with the impression that the Holy See was willing to accept the Belgian compromise on the issue. As it happened, the closeness of the vote showed that any such misconception may have been decisive.

¶4. (C) (Comment: A Polish diplomat accredited to the Holy See subsequently told us that he had found the Holy See's diplomacy on the cloning issue last year "strange." He said that in 2003, the Nuncio to Poland had passed the Vatican paper on the subject not to the Polish Foreign Ministry, but to the Bishops' Conference. This approach did not ensure maximum exposure for the document. Our contact was unaware of the extent of lobbying by the Nunciature this year; in fact, before we spoke to him he had not been aware that the issue was to be taken up again. End Comment.)

¶5. (C) Parolin acknowledged that there had been some internal discussion within the Holy See at the outset of the UN deliberations last year on whether to support the Belgian compromise, but he insisted that the Vatican had rejected that position and gone full speed ahead for the total ban. He maintained that Archbishop Migliore at the UN had been committed to the Holy See's position, and may have simply adopted "tactics" that were misunderstood. Migliore, he added, had hoped to avoid dividing the international

community on the issue. Parolin stressed that there had been "constant communication" on the issue between Migliore and the Secretariat of State. The Permanent Observer continuously updated the Vatican on his lobbying efforts in New York, and advised which countries the Secretariat should approach at the Vatican. Parolin said he expected continuing close cooperation this year, and welcomed U.S. suggestions on countries that might be most susceptible to Vatican pressure.

¶6. (SBU) Parolin observed that while the Holy See would concentrate on the moral side of the argument, the U.S. might be able to sway some missions by being more aggressive in making the scientific case for alternatives to embryonic stem cell research. The Vatican continues to believe that the scientific argument will likely be the most compelling for countries on the fence, and if alternatives to embryonic research can be shown to be credible, these countries will then have an acceptable foundation for supporting a ban on embryonic research.

Human Trafficking

¶7. (SBU) Parolin, who represented the Holy See and spoke at Post's recent anti-trafficking conference (ref c), wanted to know more on how TIP would fit into the UNGA agenda and what specific initiatives we would be pursuing. He expressed support for the U.S. goal of increasing the international focus on child sex tourism, and suggested that Archbishop Migliore might make a statement on the issue. Charge encouraged this idea and went on to discuss further collaboration between the U.S. and Holy See on the issue. (Note: Post plans to increase outreach to seminarians studying in Rome to raise the profile of the "demand"

aspect of TIP -- an aspect of the problem that priests might well be able to address from the pulpit or in their mentoring/pastoral roles. End Note.)

¶8. (SBU) Charge also suggested that pastoral guidance from the Vatican on trafficking could be a big boost for anti-TIP efforts around the world. He noted the usefulness of a 2002 anti-TIP document put out by the Nigerian Bishops' Conference, and guidance that Pontifical Councils had published on other subjects (e.g., the Council for Health Care on the pastoral response to drug addiction and abuse). Parolin seemed intrigued, and promised to speak to the Council for Migrants and Itinerants (nominal lead organization on TIP at the Vatican) to explore ways of expanding Holy See engagement against trafficking.

Advancing Economic Freedom

¶9. (SBU) Turning to economic issues, Parolin agreed that developing nations had to take responsibility for their own economic and social development and focus on good governance and anti-corruption initiatives. In the Vatican's view, however, there had to be a balanced approach to the issue, in which these internal initiatives were bolstered by expanded aid from a reformed international system. "The international community has a duty to help these countries," Parolin insisted. "They cannot do it alone." Charge agreed that a balanced approach was needed, but suggested that UN debates had not reflected this balance, focusing almost exclusively on the international institutions and largely ignoring the critical steps countries needed to take domestically to promote economic growth.

Democracy, Anti-Semitism

¶10. (SBU) In reference to our other UNGA priorities, Parolin said the Holy See agreed fully with U.S. efforts to promote democracy and build a greater voice for democratic countries within the UN. He also indicated that the Holy See would be supportive of a UNGA resolution on anti-Semitism, noting that the Holy See had supported the OSCE's anti-Semitism declaration and believed a similar resolution at the UN would be useful. Charge reviewed U.S. concerns about anti-Israel resolutions and committees. Parolin acknowledged U.S. concerns, but said there was an urgent need to revitalize the Road Map and restart some form of peace process in the region.

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2004VATICA03213 - Classification: CONFIDENTIAL