



Prime Minister Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

24 May 1982

1.  
Contact with the  
Attorney General's office?

24-V

reduced to  
a minimum?

Dear Clive,

The Pope's Visit

Michael Palliser and Antony Acland went this afternoon to see Cardinal Hume in order to clarify his attitude and that of the Catholic Bishops in this country to the involvement or non-involvement of Ministers in the Pope's programme, and to deal with other matters which were raised at the OD(SA) meeting on the morning of 24 May.

Cardinal Hume said that tomorrow he would be sending a telex to the Pope confirming that it was the view of the Catholic hierarchy in Britain that the visit should take place. This message would be published. He accepted that there could be a major disaster on one side or the other in the fighting over the Falkland Islands but this was a risk which had to be taken and the decision could not be further delayed.

The Cardinal said that the Prime Minister's suggestion to reduce Governmental involvement in the visit to a minimum in order to emphasise its pastoral nature had been very important - as had the Archbishop of Canterbury's telegram - in influencing the Pope himself (and the Argentine Cardinals) to look more favourably on the visit. The Catholic bishops agreed that Governmental involvement should be so limited. Michael Palliser and Antony Acland stressed that this must be made clear from the beginning so as to avoid press comment that the British Government were snubbing the Pope. After further discussion it was agreed, at the Cardinal's request, that we should send him a suitable passage on this point for inclusion in the message to the Pope.

It followed from the foregoing that Cardinal Hume agreed that the Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary should not be present at Gatwick on the Pope's arrival nor should the Secretaries of State for Scotland and Wales be present on his arrival in Scotland and Wales respectively. There would of course be no meeting with the Prime Minister; nor would Ministers (except perhaps those who are Roman Catholics or were invited in some capacity other than their Ministerial ones) attend the Mass in Westminster Cathedral and the reception afterwards. The Cardinal greatly regretted this on a personal basis but accepted that it was unavoidable.

/It was



It was also understood that the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary would not go to Canterbury Cathedral but that the involvement of the Prince of Wales would continue.

Michael Palliser and Antony Acland also emphasised the importance of what the Pope might say in public about the Falklands crisis. If he seemed to be straying into political comment, the Prime Minister might have to respond, although she greatly wished to avoid this. Cardinal Hume is very well aware of the danger but commented that in present circumstances it would be impossible for the Pope not to say something about his desire for peace and his wish for a just solution and for the avoidance of further bloodshed and suffering. The Cardinal hoped that he could stick absolutely to generalities and asked for suggestions on what the Pope might say and what themes should be avoided. He himself will do his best to monitor in advance the texts of the Pope's sermons or addresses.

There was some discussion about the presence of a representative of The Queen at Gatwick, on which Michael Palliser will have reported to you separately. It had already been agreed that in order to emphasise the pastoral nature of the visit the reception for the Diplomatic Corps would be cancelled.

I enclose a suggested form of words for inclusion in the Cardinal's message to the Pope. Cardinal Hume asked if this could reach him before lunch tomorrow (25 May) and commented that, while he would be most grateful for ideas on what he should say, he might have to adjust any text in order to fit it to the style of the rest of the message.

We will also be preparing points which the Pope might make or should avoid in any public statement.

I am sending a copy of this letter to the Private Secretaries of the Members of OD(SA), to Robert Armstrong and to Michael Palliser.

*Yours ever,  
B. J. P. Fall*

(B J P Fall)  
Private Secretary

C A Whitmore Esq  
10 Downing Street

SUGGESTED FORM OF WORDS FOR INCLUSION IN CARDINAL HUME'S  
MESSAGE TO THE POPE

One of the factors which has influenced our recommendation that your visit should go ahead was the suggestion on the part of the British Government that in order to avoid the introduction of political issues and to emphasise the pastoral nature of your visit ~~the involvement of~~ British Ministers <sup>should not be officially</sup> in the programme ~~should be reduced to a minimum~~. We have welcomed this suggestion since we believe that it is indeed right to concentrate on the pastoral character of the visit and the programme has been adjusted accordingly.

involved in the