MEMORANDUM

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.

/K
MEMORANDUM TO: Henry A. Kissinger
FROM: 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
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**

**TO:** PRES  
**FROM:** ELIOT  
KISSINGER  
ROGERS, W.  
HAIG  
LAIRD, M.  
LODGE, HENRY C.

**SUBJECT:** More on Cardenas-Billoet and the Pope's stand on birth control

**REFERENCE:** S/S  
**NOT XEROXED**

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

**INTERNAL ROUTING AND DISTRIBUTION**

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**ACTION REQUIRED**

MEMO FOR HAK  
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MEMO  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
JOINT MEMO  
REFER TO STATE  
ANY ACTION NECESSARY  
CONCURRENCE  
DUE DATE: 04/07

**COMMENTS:** (Including Special Instructions)

**DATE**  
4/5  
4/6  
H5

**ACTION REQUIRED**  
MEMO FOR HAK  
MEMO FOR PRES.  
REPLY FOR  
FOR DISTRIBUTION/DISPATCH  
MEMO  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
JOINT MEMO  
REFER TO STATE  
ANY ACTION NECESSARY  
CONCURRENCE  
DUE DATE: 04/07

**CY TO**

**CROSS REF WITH**  
NOTIFY  
DATE

**SEE LOG**  
DISPATCH: LETTER/MEMO

**JOINED BY LOG**  
COPIES: (AS MARKED ABOVE)

**SPECIAL FILE RQMT:** SA, HP, HM

**SPECIAL DISPOSITION COMMENTS:**

**SUSPENSE CY ATTACHED:** YES  
NO