

Rotary Club of New York

International Service Division

Sylvan Barnet, Chairman

The Holy See in the International Arena

Guest Speaker:

His Excellency The Most Reverend

Celestino Migliore

Titular Archbishop of Canosa,

Apostolic Nuncio, Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations

The following remarks were part of a discussion that took place at the monthly breakfast meeting of the International Service Division of the Rotary Club of New York. The meeting was held on June 16, 2004 at the German Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York City. This is a condensed and edited text that is made available as a resource to update Rotarians on current issues facing the International Development Community. The meeting was opened and moderated by Mr. Barnet.

Mr. Barnet: Our guest speaker, His Excellency, Archbishop Migliore, a native of the Piedmont region of Italy, was ordained a priest in 1977. He obtained his master's degree in theology at the Center of Theological Studies in Fossano. He then pursued his studies at the Pontifical Lateran University where he was awarded the Doctorate in Canon Law. In 1980, after graduating from the Pontifical Academy for Ecclesiastical Diplomacy, he joined the Holy See's diplomatic service.

His first assignment was to Angola as Attaché and then as Second Secretary to the Apostolic Delegation of Luanda from 1980 to 1984. From there, he was transferred to the Apostolic Nunciature in the United States of America where he served as First Secretary and Alternate Observer to the Organization of American States. In 1988, he was appointed to the Apostolic Nunciature in Egypt, remaining there for one year. He was then assigned as Counselor to the Apostolic Nunciature on Warsaw, Poland, a post he held until his appointment in 1992 as Special Envoy with a role of Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France.

From 1995 to 2002 he served as Under-Secretary of the Section for Relations with States of the Secretariat of State, at the Vatican. During his term, he was also in charge of fostering relations with several Asian countries that do not yet have formal diplomatic relations with the Holy See. In this capacity, he traveled to Beijing, Hanoi, and Pyongyang as Head of Delegation of the Holy See. He also represented the Holy See at numerous other conferences, symposia and panels held in various European capitals on issues related to the World Trade Organization, the Economic Commission for Europe, the European Union, and the Middle East.

For the past six years, he was also teaching Ecclesiastical Diplomacy at the Pontifical Lateran University in Rome as a Visiting Professor.

On October 30, 2003 His Holiness Pope John Paul II, nominated Archbishop Celestino Migliore as Apostolic Nuncio and Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations in New York. Archbishop Migliore is the fourth Permanent Observer of the Holy See to the United Nations.

**H.E. Archbishop Celestino Migliore
Permanent Observer of the Holy See
to the United Nations**
“The Holy See in the International Arena”
**Rotary Club
New York City
16 June 2004**

We speak today about the diplomacy of the Holy See. Diplomacy and Holy See - that seems to be a contradiction in terms. In fact, diplomacy is a word full of meaning. The popular notion is that which is associated with Machiavelli, when he said: "Diplomacy is the art of getting what you want at any cost and by any means." Can the Holy See accept this concept of diplomacy?

We must first clear the ground of a common equivocation between the Holy See and Vatican City State. The "Holy See" is the Pope, together with all the bodies of the Roman Curia through which he governs the Catholic Church. The Holy See is a sovereign juridical person because it is the supreme organ of the Catholic Church. Its attribute as a sovereign subject is recognized in international law. It is the Holy See, and not Vatican City that is the juridical interlocutor within the international community.

In 1929, the Vatican State was created by the agreement between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy. They decided to establish Vatican City in order to assure the Pope a basis for his absolute independence and autonomy from any earthly power. The Vatican is intended only to ensure independence for the action of the Holy See, thanks to a territorial sovereignty reduced to its minimal expression. The Vatican does not pursue the aims that are proper to a Country, which has to guarantee the political, social and economic rights of its population.

The diplomacy of the Holy See does not lie upon military might or economic strength. Rather, the Holy See participates in diplomacy to have its voice heard within the international community. It is interested in following and participating in the work of the UN more so from its perspective as a

world stage rather than as a center of global governance. Therefore, the diplomacy of the Holy See has characteristics which are different from those of the countries of the world.

One needs to remember that fundamental principle of international law according to which every subject exercises its rights and the proper competence in relation to its nature and interests. It is for this reason that the activity of the Holy See remains concentrated in a certain order of rapport well defined in relation to its nature and end.

When one says that the nature and mission of the Holy See are chiefly of a spiritual order, it follows that its activity tends to highlight a particular vision of the person and therefore, of human society, that is not separated from the transcendence. It is this conviction that has a clear impact on every discourse concerning human rights, development, social and international justice, peace and war, coexistence among peoples, and religious liberty. The universal nature of the Holy See, which does not know national borders, allows the Holy See to be committed not only to hot topics on the international scene, but on all critical situations, and I would like to say, in particular on those which are more easily forgotten or overlooked, because they lack economic, political, or strategic interests. Finally, its ethical and humanitarian nature prompts the Holy See to focus its action and attention not only on institutions, political or social systems, strategic interests, but especially on the human person, as in concentric circles that extend from the human person, to the first communities which are the family, school, work, social places, up to the local and national communities, and then to the international setting.

In sum, these are the specific guidelines of the diplomacy of the Holy See: a precise and distinct anthropological vision, universality and ethical and humanitarian interests.

Perhaps we can better capture these specific facets of the diplomacy of the Holy See with the aid of some examples.

Last week, the mass media in commemorating the special contribution of the late President Reagan to the fall of the Soviet bloc, also mentioned in passing the contribution of Pope John Paul II. Well, if we look back carefully to what John Paul II did, we find that his entire contribution stems from the specific and distinct anthropological vision mentioned above.

The Soviet regime intended to reach a communist globalization. Communism was based on the premise that social class struggle, the real engine of history, would sooner or later result in the solidification of the Communist society all over the world. The tenets of its strategy were namely, the prevalence of collective society on the individual human being

and consequently, the deferral of individual human rights and freedoms to the collective interests. The means to teach a Communist society was basically class struggle, which in the end means delation, mutual mistrust, and even hatred. Specificities of national, cultural and religious identities of the different peoples were considered superstructures, destined to disappear. In point of actual fact, they were diametrically opposed to the social doctrine of the Church which is based on the assumption that solidarity and subsidiarity are the core rules of a globalized society. Both stem from the fundamental principle of respect for the dignity of the human person.

The principle of subsidiarity maintains that nations, communities, ethnic or religious groups, families or individuals, should not be anonymously immersed into a large conglomeration, which will result in their loss of identity. The Catholic Church specifically developed the category of subsidiarity long ago in order to face the stifling regimes like Marxism, Nazism, fascism, and several dictatorships.

A dozen years ago certain European circles complained about the premature recognition by the Holy See of Slovenia and Croatia as autonomous Republics independent from the Yugoslavian confederation. Actually, this decision was grounded in a couple of objective reasons, namely, the need for self-defence against the federal army that Belgrade was employing to fight and crush its own confederated territories. The decision stemmed above all, from the deep conviction of Pope John Paul II, that those Republics, like any other Republic coming from the socialist bloc, regardless of their territorial or demographic size, needed to be given the chance to regain their proper cultural, social, religious, and political identity. They needed to find in their national background and history their own seed of democracy, their own approach and sensitivity for human rights, and rule of law. It was only by becoming deeply-rooted in their own identity, which had been confiscated for so long by an imposed unification, that those countries would be able to join and make their own specific contribution to a larger economic, political or security system, or association of countries. To affirm the necessity to protect the rights of peoples does not simply mean to give them a new subjectivity, rather, to discover and develop a new international order more responsive to the needs of all peoples.

In his second trip to Poland in 1983, John Paul II offered strong support to the newly born *Solidarnosc* movement, lead by Lech Walesa. We could gather from his gestures, as well as from his message, that he did not intend to give a mere, even if vital impetus, to the political, social, and humanitarian uprising in Poland. He saw a glimpse of the germination of a

cultural revolution, capable of allowing the maturation of a new societal organization, suitable not only for Poland but for the entire world.

And it is for this reason that he appealed to the Polish bishops and clergy exhorting them to take this opportunity to create a culture, and to attentively observe the phenomenon of *Solidarnosc*, and to use that as a base upon which to develop a new vision of relations: human, civil, social and international. A culture of solidarity as envisioned by John Paul II was a non-violent approach, precisely because it substituted the battle of classes with solidarity, which intended to erode and eventually dismantle every unjust and evil aspect of the Communist system. The conviction of John Paul II, however, was farsighted: he envisioned in the category of solidarity the possibility to reconstruct a new world order after the fall of Communism and the numerous insufficiencies and deficiencies of capitalism. The category of solidarity retrieves and invigorates the respective rights, not only collective, but above all personal rights, civil, cultural and religious. In the framework of solidarity, society is organized upon rights and the need for individual and group participation; the distribution of goods and riches will no longer be made solely according to the availability of resources, but also in light of the equal dignity of every human person.

So, when the Holy See speaks of global governance in terms of global solidarity, it frequently uses the motto, "let's globalize solidarity," by which it refers not simply to acts of solidarity nor to a generic humanitarian perspective, but to a solid long-lasting cultural, social, economic and political project which encompasses each and every concentric circle of human society.

In the context of the cold war there was a prevalent political vision, often ideological, regarding social realities, economies, cultures and religions. The fall of Communism has contributed to the development of market law. Speaking of economy in a globalized context is equivalent to thinking of a social system involving the daily lives of thousands and millions of people. The Holy See has become particularly attentive to the economy. The Pope has dedicated three great encyclicals: *Laborem exercens*, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, and *Centesimus Annus*, other than the post-synodal Apostolic exhortations to the churches in Africa, America, and Europe, and some programmatic discourses on globalization, directed in particular to the Pontifical Academy of Sciences. In 1988, the Holy See adopted the status of Permanent Observer at the World Trade Organization, closely monitoring the world conferences of Geneva, Seattle, Doha and Cancun. In the context of the United Nations Organization, the Holy See has taken part in the conference at Monterrey on financing for development and

is monitoring closely the different follow-up to this conference; in collaboration with various episcopal conferences, it engaged in finding concrete solutions to the debt owed by some external countries; has taken a clear position on the subject of water, maintaining that it cannot be left to the sole law of the market, but must be declared in some sense a fundamental right of the human person, so that the States will be obliged by their co-respective duty to assure access to water for everyone. In these days, the Holy See is taking part in the debate regarding the necessity of a credible world authority that is politically competent to find solutions to the recurring and grave financial crises of bankrupt countries, of foreign debts considered "odious," because they were contracted to keep a population marginalized and oppressed, and then these same people are asked to make sacrifices to repay those debts.

In recent times, age and health are taking their toll on the Pope. He sees himself inevitably forced to readjust his daily activity, and from my observation, I can see that he has been focusing on a couple of items which constitute a priority for an efficacious presence and mission of the Church in the world. Among the priorities concerning the relations of the Church with other religious communities and political and social forces, I would mention an ecumenical effort, in order to define the modalities of exercise of his primacy conducive to collaboration and unity among Christians. In this respect, I mention in particular his desire and efforts for a decisive rapprochement between the Catholic Church and the Orthodox Churches in Eastern and Southern Europe. And then, the inter-religious encounter or dialogue, where it is possible. All this under the precise conviction that, notwithstanding discordant opinions on these points, we are facing today a serious clash of civilizations, of cultures, which can easily affect the sphere of religions. In this conjunction, therefore, either religion and religious women and men are determined to work for solutions or religion will be part of the problem.

One of the architectonic objectives of the Holy See's diplomacy in the Middle East has constantly been seeking religious tolerance, encounter and cooperation between Christians, Muslims and Jewish communities.

In December 1993, the Holy See signed a Fundamental Agreement with Israel and in February 2000, a Basic Agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Obviously, with these Accords, it intended to guarantee vis-à-vis the internal law of the State of Israel and of the Palestinian Authority the juridical presence of the Catholic Church and to safeguard its proper organization. But the accords that the Holy See signs with States do not limit themselves to placing some juridical guarantees,

some benchmarks in favor of the Catholic community. They are always a valuable instrument in favor of pluralism in society. A State which guarantees a religious community respect for its identity and freedom to express it and live it out, is a State that respects the religious freedom of its population, and this benefits not only the Catholic Church but also other communities and society as a whole. To obtain the respect of the identity and liberty of the Catholic Church with these accords is to verify the tendencies and pretensions of state power.

The main questions, as we all know, are: land, water, refugees and the capital, Jerusalem.

The reference to the religious value of Jerusalem, has been articulated and radicalized by both parties presently in conflict, the Israelis and Palestinians, for the last fifty years. At the very beginning the religious aspect of Jerusalem was almost absent or irrelevant. The Zionist pioneers considered every sentiment for Jerusalem to be simply "reactionary." They intended to construct a socialist society of free men and women, and not a nation with traditional and religious references. Immediately before the Declaration of Independence of the State of Israel, its leaders thought of other cities for its capital. The intransigent Israeli attitude came forth after the UN adopted Resolution 181 in favor of the internationalization of Jerusalem. The decision became a grave wound to the memory of the fallen in defense of Western Jerusalem from the attack of the Jordanian troops, launched the same day of the Declaration of Independence of Israel.

Jerusalem was not even a priority for the Palestinians. It was the Six Days' War that generated new zeal for al-Quds, the Holy City, as Palestinians call Jerusalem. In 1988, the Palestinian Liberation Organization proclaimed in Algeria the Palestinian state "in the name of Allah, with the Capital Holy Jerusalem, al-Quds al-Sharif."

The Holy See has maintained a constructive role throughout the peace process, putting forward a proposal intended to provide Jerusalem, irrespective of whom will have sovereignty over the City, with a special status supported with international guarantees. A formula different from the internationalization of the city of Jerusalem and respectful of the outcome on the negotiations on sovereignty over Jerusalem.

A few days ago, while President Bush was visiting him in the Vatican, the Pope touched upon the past disagreements over the Iraqi intervention in concise terms: "You are very familiar -he told him- with the unequivocal position of the Holy See in this regard". The core of this position is at least twofold: first, the Holy See's conviction that the means to promote human rights and liberties employ conversion by persuasion and negotiation. And

secondly, the Pope's concern with a real risk of clash of cultures and religions. Violence and terrorism stemming from this clash cannot be simply won over or defeated with military solutions, they require a serious response focused on the removal of the root causes. The downside of human nature and society does not allow us to rule out in principle the use of force. Nevertheless, when those who bear the responsibility and the obligation to defend peace and order are called upon to decide whether or not to take up legitimate defense, their decision in this direction can be justified only when all peaceful means of resolving the crisis have been proven to be impractical, ineffective or impossible.

In conclusion, let me say that I thought it was important to give this morning an overall view of what the Holy See is in relation to the Vatican City State, why and how it is a full member within the international community, and the active diplomatic role it plays on the international scene. The personnel of the Holy See's diplomatic service with diplomatic rank is rather limited considering the amount of work that exists: 117 Heads of Mission (Nuncios and Permanent Observers) and about 150 lower level personnel. The same is true in the Section for Relations with States of the Secretary of State in the Vatican, which is comparable to a Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is headed by a Secretary (equivalent to a Minister) and an Under-Secretary. It is composed of about 40 desk-officers who have a rather large "desk," since they cover the 174 countries with whom diplomatic relations exist and the other countries that do not yet have diplomatic relations (like China, Vietnam, North Korea, Saudi Arabia, etc.), as well as the international Organizations.

This is why some time ago, when an Ambassador told the Cardinal Secretary of State that he was honored to serve at the number one diplomacy in the world, His Eminence replied: If ours is the first, in these conditions, I don't want to know what the second or third might be!