

UNCLASSIFIED

DOCUMENT_ID: 27617404
INQNO: DOC21D 00320703
DOCNO: TEL 003087 92
PRODUCER: ROME
SOURCE: STATE
DOCTYPE: IN
DOR: 19920220
TOR: 132204
DOCPREC: R
ORIGDATE: 199202201555
MHFNO: 92 7301548
DOCCLASS: U

HEADER

RR RUEAIIB
ZNR UUUUU ZOC STATE ZZH
MSI3522
RR RUEHC
DE RUEHRO #3087 0511555
ZNR UUUUU ZZH
R 201555Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4189
INFO RUFHTV/AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV 7623
RUFHJU/AMCONSUL JERUSALEM 1984
RUEHBU/AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES 1940
BT

CONTROLS

UNCLAS ROME 03087

FROM EMBASSY VATICAN/MESSAGE NO. 0105/92

E.O. 12356: N/A

TEXT

TAGS: PREL, VT, IS, AR
SUBJECT: VATICAN REACTION TO PRESS REPORTS OF POST-WWII
ASSISTANCE TO WAR CRIMINALS

1. ON FEBRUARY 12 LOCAL PRESS REPORTED EXTENSIVELY ON THE REQUEST BY THE SIMON WIESENTHAL CENTER TO HOLY SEE SECRETARY OF STATE SODANO FOR THE RELEASE OF THE VATICAN DOCUMENTATION CONCERNING THE ESCAPE OF WORLD WAR II **NAZIS** FROM ROME TO SOUTH AMERICA. THE RECENT RELEASE OF SECRET POLICE FILES IN **ARGENTINA** REPORTEDLY SHOW THAT WAR CRIMINALS TRAVELLED TO SOUTH AMERICA WITH PASSPORTS ISSUED BY THE VATICAN AND THE RED CROSS.

2. IN AN INTERVIEW PUBLISHED BY "LA REPUBBLICA" ON FEBRUARY 13, FORMER VATICAN FOREIGN MINISTER CARDINAL ACHILLE SILVESTRINI DENIED THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE HOLY SEE IN ISSUING VATICAN PASSPORTS TO WAR CRIMINALS BUT ADDED THAT SOME INDIVIDUAL CLERGY MIGHT HAVE HELPED PEOPLE TO FLEE FOR HUMANITARIAN REASONS. SILVESTRINI NOTED THAT ALL VATICAN DOCUMENTS OF THE YEARS 1939-1945 RELATING TO THE

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2001 2007

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
2000

CIA HAS NO OBJECTION
DECLASSIFICATION AND/OR
RELEASE OF CIA INFORMATION
IN THIS DOCUMENT

UNCLASSIFIED

WAR HAVE BEEN RELEASED.

3. VATICAN SPOKESMAN NAVARRO VALLS ISSUED A STATEMENT ON FEBRUARY 14 DENYING ALLEGATIONS THAT THE HOLY SEE PROVIDED NAZI WAR CRIMINALS WITH PASSPORTS WHICH ENABLE THEM TO FLEE EUROPE. "ON THE CONTRARY - NAVARRO VALLS STATED - PIUS XII AND THE HOLY SEE CONTRIBUTED TO SAVE THE LIFE OF THOUSANDS OF JEWS." NAVARRO VALLS REFERRED TO THE PONTIFICAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES WHICH OPERATED AFTER THE WAR UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF ALLIED AND ITALIAN AUTHORITIES. "IT WAS EASY TO ASSUME A FALSE IDENTITY AND TO DISAPPEAR AMONG THE REFUGEES TRYING TO ESCAPE" - HE ACKNOWLEDGED - "BUT TO CHARACTERIZE THE WORK OF THE PONTIFICAL ASSISTANCE COMMITTEE AS DIRECTED TO ASSIST WAR CRIMINALS IS HISTORICALLY FALSE."

4. THE POPE, SPEAKING TO REPORTERS ON HIS PLANE TO AFRICA FEBRUARY 19, DISMISSED ALLEGATIONS OF ORGANIZED VATICAN AID TO ESCAPING WAR CRIMINALS. HE REFERRED TO NAVARRO VALLS AND THE ARGENTINE FOREIGN MINISTER'S STATEMENTS AND ALSO NOTED THAT SIMILAR ACCUSATIONS IN THE PAST HAD BEEN INVESTIGATED AND DISCOUNTED BY "COMPETENT AUTHORITIES."
MELADY

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

UNCLASSIFIED