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Date

08/06/2006

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11:11:55 AM



S-0864-0009-09-00001

Expanded Number **S-0864-0009-09-00001**

Title **Items-in-Public relations files - visit of Pope Paul VI 1965 -
correspondence and cables**

Date Created 19/10/1965

Record Type Archival Item

Container **S-0864-0009: Public Relations Files of the Secretary-General: U Thant**

Print Name of Person Submit Image

Signature of Person Submit

UNITED NATIONS



NATIONS UNIES

INTEROFFICE MEMORANDUM

MEMORANDUM INTERIEUR

TO: U Thant
A: Secretary-General

Thant
10/10

DATE: 19 October 1965

REFERENCE:

THROUGH:
S/C DE:

CONFIDENTIAL

FROM: Constantin A. Stavropoulos, Under-Secretary
DE: Legal Counsel

SUBJECT: Papal Gift
OBJET:

Stavropoulos

1. Pope Paul VI, in presenting to you the cross and ring, suggested that they should be sold to aid the world's needy. This papal gift raises the following questions on which I should like to submit comments.

- A. What is the best way to dispose of the gift in order to meet the purposes for which it was intended?
- B. How should the proceeds be used?
- C. What procedure should be followed in order to reach decisions with respect to the two foregoing questions?

A. Method of disposal

2. The method of disposal must be examined both from the point of view of its effectiveness in raising the most money and from the point of view of appropriateness having in mind that both the Pope and the United Nations will be involved so far as public opinion is concerned. While Pope Paul indicated that he left the decision entirely to you, I would suggest that, whatever your final decision may be, it would be well to consult with him and obtain his agreement.

3. Whatever the method of disposal I should consider it desirable to first have the cross and ring appraised to determine their intrinsic value. This should be done immediately for insurance and security purposes as well. In addition to their intrinsic value, however, they undoubtedly have a historic value - we have requested the Permanent Observer of the Holy See to obtain their history - and also a special value from the fact that they are the Pope's gift to the United Nations for the aid of the needy on the unique occasion of his visit to the United Nations.

4. In principle the following ways of disposing of the gift may be considered:

(1) The most obvious would be by open bidding through such distinguished auction houses as Parke-Bernet in New York or Sotheby's or Christie's in London. Parke-Bernet has already offered to conduct a sale without commission. The possibility should also be examined of conducting a sale at the same time in both New York and London. I understand, for example, that Sotheby's owns Parke-Bernet and has wire or radio facilities for such simultaneous transactions.

(2) A second method would be a limited bidding with a fixed minimum price. Such a limited sale might be open only to Governments, churches, museums and foundations. A limited sale could also be conducted through a firm such as Parke-Bernet or directly by the United Nations. It could be conducted either through sealed offers or by auction, or both.

(3) A third method which might be considered would be a "raffle". Such a raffle could be organized on a world-wide basis with the help of churches, schools, etc.

(4) A fourth method might be to exhibit the gift permanently in a special place within the United Nations either with an admission fee or with a donation box for the world's needy.

Comments

5. Of the four methods the second, that of a limited sale open only to Governments and special institutions, would be the most dignified since it would exclude the possibility of commercial speculation. It nevertheless is undoubtedly the method which would bring in the least money.

6. Of the other methods the third and fourth would probably be financially the most advantageous. The fourth, that of a permanent display within the United Nations building, if successful would ensure both the permanent retention of the gift by the United Nations and also a continuous income which could be placed in a special trust fund established under the Financial Regulations. This method would also have the advantage of flexibility. If successful, it could be continued indefinitely and if a failure one of the other methods might then be used. It could thus be used on a trial basis. Special security requirements for a public exhibit would of course have to be considered.

7. The third method, that of a "raffle", would appear to be the one likely to raise the most money. If well organized one could expect many millions of dollars even if only \$1.00 tickets were sold. The serious disadvantage is that it is the least dignified and gives the impression of a "sweepstakes". It might well be the subject of controversy and criticism. It would also be in violation of the law in various countries and might require consultations in this regard.

8. The first method, that of open bidding through a reputable house, would probably raise a sum considerably above the intrinsic value of the gifts while at the same time it would not reflect unfavourably on the United Nations or the Holy Father. This method does, of course, contain the risk that the gift might be purchased by speculators.

9. If a sale is decided on it should probably be conducted within a reasonable period of time while the interest in the Pope's visit is still fresh. In the meanwhile it might be considered whether the gift should not be put on temporary display at the United Nations prior to the time that it is turned over to the auction house.

10. I am currently examining any question of possible tax problems in connexion with a sale. It seems clear that the United Nations would be exempt on the sale of an item of this kind from the New York sales tax. I am consulting with the United States Mission as to other tax questions which might be involved if a sale is conducted in the United States. Should it be decided to conduct a sale in some other country, I will of course look into the tax situation in respect to that country.

B. Use of proceeds

11. The question of the use of the proceeds must be studied carefully. The Pope indicated that it was his wish that it be used for the poor and hungry people of the world. Since there are so many poor throughout the world it is of course not possible to make a distribution to all. It could probably be most effectively used in connexion with an existing United Nations programme such as that of UNICEF, the World Food Programme, etc. The Technical Assistance programmes might also be considered but they would not seem to be as directly appropriate, and in addition it would seem difficult to imagine how the funds would be allotted to a particular project which normally relates to a single country. Care should also be exercised to avoid involving the Pope in any politically tinged programme.

C. Procedures for reaching decisions

12. Since it appears that the matter is one where teamwork may help in reaching the best conclusions and since any means of disposal and of use may be subject to criticism from various sides, I would suggest that in the first instance you should be advised by a committee of Under-Secretaries and at least all of the Under-Secretaries who are at Headquarters should be given an opportunity to express an opinion. It might also be advisable at some stage to hold a meeting with the heads of delegation groups in order to avoid subsequent criticism that they had not been consulted. These groups may be presented with a paper enumerating, and discussing, in principle, the various alternatives.

cc: Mr. Narasimhan
Mr. Bunche
Mr. Rolz-Bennett
Mr. Vaughan