

VT-877 Transcription

Channel 5 News, CBS, WNYN, CBS Morning News regarding Kurt  
Waldheim's visit to Vatican. 31 August 1987.

JOHN ROLAND: [00:00] -- the pope has a meeting in Miami with a couple of hundred American Jewish leaders. He's meeting with a small delegation tomorrow at his summer home at Castel Gandolfo, nine Jewish leaders, and except for one of them, they're all from this country. The Vatican may have asked for this meeting to sort of smooth things out before that meeting in Miami. The Jews weren't too happy about the meeting that the pope had with Kurt Waldheim, because of his Nazi past. Bob O'Brien is going to be traveling with the pope when he's here, and this week Bob reports on some of the issues the pope will face when he gets here.

BOB O'BRIEN: When John Paul II visited the United States for the first time back in 1979, he had been pope for less than a year. His visit was largely a tumultuous outpouring of love from American Catholics to their new pontiff. When the pope returns to America next month, he'll be facing many tough issues. The pope visited the Auschwitz death camp in Poland earlier in 1979. [01:00] He spoke of the people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination. But, as the pope pointed out the unique

Jewish suffering under the Nazis, he did so without mentioning the Jews by name. The pope visited Rome's Grand Synagogue in April of 1986, making it clear that improving relations between Jews and Catholics is a high priority for the Church. But this June, the pope received Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, despite loud protests from Jews around the world. During the Second World War, Waldheim served in the German army unit implicated in the deportation of Jews in Greece. Some fear the Waldheim audience may jeopardize the September meeting in Miami between the pope and 200 American Jews. Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum is one of the nine Jewish leaders who will meet the pope tomorrow in Rome.

MARC TANENBAUM: We have made greater progress in the past 20 years in Catholic-Jewish relations since Vatican Council II, literally than we have made in the entire 1,900 years that preceded this. Those are not small achievements. Now for Jews, [02:00] as my own family, who suffered losses because of religious anti-Semitism in Europe, to pogroms, and inquisitions, and violence, and bloodshed because of that hatred, you know, this is not an abstract. I mean, we literally are helping save lives of future generations, and we're helping create a whole new society between Christians and Jews in this country, based on mutual respect, even

love and caring for one another. That is a very large responsibility.

O'BRIEN: As the pope received Kurt Waldheim in June, Jewish demonstrators outside the Vatican walls donned concentration camp uniforms in protest. One of those who led that protest, New York rabbi Abraham Weiss, promises to picket the pope's Miami meeting with American Jews unless tomorrow's Vatican session produces certain results.

ABRAHAM WEISS: The Vatican was guilty of many sins of omission. It was asked to intercede on behalf of our people so many times, and refused to do so. And we have United States Army Counterintelligence Corps reports [03:00] which indicate that after the Holocaust, the Vatican was more concerned with fleeing Nazis than it was with surviving Jews. And so the Vatican has to come forward clearly on the Holocaust issues. As it relates to the State of Israel, if you don't recognize the State of Israel, it means you don't recognize me as a Jew.

O'BRIEN: Rabbi Weiss says the prospect of demonstrating against the pope in Miami next week deeply saddens him. It is a spiritual confrontation he says he would rather avoid, but at the same time, a responsibility Rabbi Weiss feels he must fulfill. Bob O'Brien, Fox News Channel 5.

(break in recording)

DAN RATHER: -- who will meet with John Paul II again tomorrow. Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum is the Director of Interreligious Affairs at the American Jewish Committee. Rabbi, thank you for being with us.

TANENBAUM: A pleasure.

RATHER: Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman is the President of the Synagogue Council of America. Gentlemen, let's talk. First of all, what do you expect, Rabbi Tanenbaum, in the meeting tomorrow, and what is your major goal in meeting with the pope?

TANENBAUM: [04:00] Well, we think, in fact, that our major understanding took place with the pope during our meeting on September 1<sup>st</sup> in Rome, with him and other Vatican authorities with whom we spent an entire day the day before. There we got into very detailed discussion on the questions of the Nazi Holocaust, Waldheim, anti-Semitism, diplomatic relations with Israel. We think this is an act of genuine goodwill, first on the part of the pope that he is meeting with Jewish leaders as the first meeting after that of meeting with President Reagan, it's a symbolic sign. We're the elder brother, as the pope keeps saying, and this is a sign, I guess, of regard for that. We're not

clear yet what the pope is going to be saying tomorrow. We're looking forward to seeing that. But we hope it will be a genuine dialogue. And for us, I think the important thing is it symbolizes the great growth in friendship and understanding between the Roman Catholic community in the United States and the American Jewish community. We have made enormous [05:00] progress in the last 20 years, and I think this meeting symbolizes that, ratifies that, and we welcome its happening.

RATHER: Rabbi Klaperman, you were originally scheduled to talk with the pope tomorrow, but that's changed. What happened, and why?

GILBERT KLAPERMAN: Well, what happened was something that, of course, caused me a certain amount of discomfort, personal discomfort. The group that I represent, the Rabbinical Council of America, the Orthodox rabbinical group, decided that they would not be represented at this particular meeting. They felt that the pope had not been sufficiently forthcoming. They were frustrated by the fact that the pope had not truly responded to the issues that we had raised, the Waldheim matter, the recognition of the State of Israel. There wasn't sufficient reaction. As a matter of fact, the truth is that the pope did not personally respond to these issues when they were raised. Consequently, they

decided that they would not come, and since they were not coming, they [06:00] did not want me to appear, because if I did, it would seem as if they were present. And so it's a kind of uncomfortable situation. At the same, I am here as an individual because I believe sincerely that the process has to be carried on. As Rabbi Tanenbaum has already said, in these 20 years, we've made more progress than we made in the 2,000 years preceding.

RATHER: Gentlemen, I think many people -- I know that many people who are neither of Jewish heritage, nor are Roman Catholics, are puzzled by all of this. Could you state for me, Rabbi Tanenbaum, briefly and succinctly, what the problem is, and why anybody should care.

TANENBAUM: The problem of the Waldheim issue for -- ?

RATHER: Yes.

TANENBAUM: Well, that -- well, I think some of us -- we think it was a mistake for the pope and the Vatican Secretariat of State to agree to receive this man. Let me say it dramatically. The pope is scheduled to go to southern Africa in September of 1988. [07:00] The black Catholics of South Africa told him not to come, because in 1984 he received President [Pik?] Botha of South Africa, and they said he is our chief oppressor. He's the architect of apartheid. We cannot understand how you honor a man who

has been responsible for our suffering. Well, Jews understand how black Catholics feel. Kurt Waldheim was a Nazi army officer. He participated in events that led to the deportation and destruction of the lives of 40,000 Jews in Greece who ended up in Auschwitz in crematoria and concentration camps. He massacred -- participated in the activities of a German army unit that led to the destruction of thousands of Christians in Yugoslavia in the Kozara massacres. To receive a man like this in the first place is morally incomprehensible. But having agreed to receive him, for whatever political reasons were involved in relations with Austria, the fact that he did not say a single word about his Nazi past, or the Nazi Holocaust, became [08:00] absolutely mind-boggling for us. And that's why there's so much strong feeling, almost outrage, over that having taken place. We think we have gotten into a very deep understanding with Cardinal Casaroli in the Vatican, Cardinal Willebrands, and others, and I think the Holy Father himself, on that issue.

RATHER: Well, very quickly -- sorry, I didn't mean to step on the end of your sentence there. Rabbi Klaperman, very quickly, because we want to move on to a couple of other things, did you get any indication, any indication, that recognition of Israel is something that may happen soon?

KLAPERMAN: No, we did not get an indication that there would be a political recognition of the State of Israel, but we did get a very interesting perspective. The pope reaffirmed, and it had been clearly stated, that there was no religious bar, and there's no theological impediment, to the Church's recognition of the state of Israel, and we consider that an important step, a first step.

RATHER: Rabbis, thank you very much for being with us this afternoon. Now, when we come back, we'll take a closer look at one of the themes of the pope's trip here, Hispanics [09:00] in the American Catholic Church, so stay with us.

(break in recording)

ANNOUNCER: Live from Channel Five News in New York, this is the ten o'clock news.

ROLAND (on camera): Good evening. Pope John Paul II, the leader of the world's Roman Catholics, met with President Reagan, the leader of the free world. The president and Mrs. Reagan flew down to Florida to welcome the pope as he arrived for a second tour of the United States, and then later on the president and the pontiff had a private talk.

ROLAND (voiceover): They met at a villa on Biscayne Bay called Vizcaya. It used to be a railroad baron's mansion. Now,



it's a tourist attraction. Afterwards, John Paul thanked Mr. Reagan for coming to welcome him personally. The president said they talked about the likelihood of a new Soviet-American arms treaty, and about Central America.

RONALD REAGAN: His Holiness and I had the opportunity to share our views on the progress that had been made toward the establishment of a genuine peace in Central America. I assured His Holiness that the United States is committed to the extension of democracy throughout Latin America.

ROLAND (voiceover): The pope also met with [10:00] 750 of our country's Roman Catholic priests. There are 57,000 of them altogether, and they don't all agree with everything the pope wants. The priest who spoke for them all was Father Frank McNulty of Newark. He said, maybe it's time to let women have more to do in the church.

FRANK MCNULTY: Because of the complexity and urgency of this moment, especially as it relates to the Church, there is need for study, reflection, and above all, more dialogue with women.

ROLAND (voiceover): John Paul didn't say anything directly about a bigger role for women, or about whether priests should be allowed to be married. He's always been against that, but he did give a hint that things could change, even if it takes a while.

POPE JOHN PAUL II: I remember a song. It is a long way, a long way to Tipperary.

ROLAND: Mr. and Mrs. Reagan flew back to Washington tonight.

The ordinary folks got to see the pope when he rode through Miami in a motorcade. [11:00] He also had a brief public appearance at a cathedral in the Little Haiti section. Now, you can imagine how the security has been very, very tight. Well, it got even tighter when they found a man with a gun where Pope John Paul was going to be. Bob O'Brien is in Miami right now. Bob?

O'BRIEN: Detective Ray Valdes is the public information officer for the Metro Dade Police Force. Earlier today, Metro Dade officers at the site of tomorrow's Papal Mass, Tamiami State Park, arrested a day laborer there, Walter Bacon, who was armed not only with a gun, but a knife.

RAY VALDES: Exactly. He was in possession of a .22 caliber revolver, as well as a five-inch hunting knife. What attracted our attention to him was the fact that he was wearing a long-sleeve shirt. It was very hot; he just didn't fit in. There was also a bulge protruding from the back of his waist. Our officers contained him, were able to restrain him, and retained both weapons without any incident, nobody being hurt.

O'BRIEN: Is there any indication this man was a serious threat to the pope?

VALDES: We don't believe so. We don't believe he posed any threat to the pope or any other official going to the Mass.

O'BRIEN (on camera): [12:00] Thank you very much, Detective Valdez. Well, the public portion of the pope's first day in Miami is over now, but already, there are indications that we can expect the unexpected from John Paul.

O'BRIEN (voiceover): Lots of folks were surprised when the pontiff failed to drop to his knees and kiss the ground upon his arrival. But this is John Paul's second visit to the United States, and with the President and his wife standing at the foot of the stairs, the pontiff chose not to do it. Those in charge of protecting the pope are taking extraordinary measures to make sure they aren't surprised. Snipers lined airport rooftops, and police SWAT teams hovered over the airport in helicopters. But the thousands who greeted the pontiff today came here out of love.

REAGAN: Certainly, no one can speak with greater force to our own generation than you yourself. In Poland, you experienced Nazism and Communism. As pope, you suffered a terrorist attack that nearly claimed your life. Still, you proclaim that the central message of our own time, [13:00]

that the central message of all time, is not hatred but love.

POPE JOHN PAUL II: I come as a pilgrim, a pilgrim in the cause of justice and peace and human solidarity, striving to build up the one human family.

O'BRIEN: John Cardinal O'Connor was a welcome, familiar face in the crowd of dignitaries on hand to greet Pope John Paul. The cardinal thinks this is a papal trip in which the accent will definitely be on the positive.

JOHN O'CONNOR I think that there's just going to be such a tremendous outpouring of enthusiasm that all of these negatives that have been talked about for so long now, they're just going to disappear into oblivion if there's any objectivity about it. The man -- as soon as he appears, you know, people just kind of melt, as it were. And I think the secret is that he doesn't believe he's bringing his own message; he believes he's bringing the message of our divine Lord. [14:00] And I've got to get out there and meet him, or I'm in deep trouble.

O'BRIEN: Tomorrow morning, the pope was to have met with 200 American Jewish leaders. But some members of the Jewish delegation now say they will refuse to go to that meeting.

SIMCHA FRIEDMAN: We feel the pope is missing in action. He's here in words and in ceremony, and he's pontificating, but the action that we want and we hope for has yet to happen.

O'BRIEN: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum was among nine Jewish officials who met with the pope in Rome last week. Tanenbaum predicts the pope's words tomorrow may change the course of Judeo-Christian relations forever.

TANENBAUM: As I understand, that he is going to be making an important statement about his own attitudes toward anti-Semitism and the Nazi Holocaust, Catholic-Jewish relations, and more than likely, as I am told, will be saying some things about his own appreciation of the place of Israel and Jerusalem in the consciousness of the Jewish people.

O'BRIEN: The pope's meeting with Jewish leaders is only the beginning tomorrow. At midnight tonight, hundreds of thousands of people will begin pouring into [15:00] Tamiami Park, the site for tomorrow's Papal Mass, set for ten o'clock in the morning. Then, John Paul flies on to stops in Columbia, South Carolina, and New Orleans. We'll be with him all the way. Bob O'Brien, Fox News, Miami.

(break in recording)

CBS Morning News, 11 September 1987

FAITH DANIELS (on camera): The theme of this trip is unity, both inside and outside the Catholic Church. That's evident this morning in John Paul's meeting with American Jewish leaders. Richard Roth is at the Dade County Cultural Center, where the meeting will take place. Good morning, Richard.

RICHARD ROTH (on camera): Good morning, Faith. In other countries and other Papal trips, a meeting like the one this morning would be a largely symbolic gesture, ceremonial and not controversial. The size and importance, though, of the American Jewish community, and recent events, make this meeting something different.

ROTH (voiceover): When the pope received Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in a private audience last June, American Jewish leaders were outraged, claiming the Vatican was insensitive, at the least, in overlooking Waldheim's Nazi's past. When it was plain the criticism wouldn't go away, John Paul and his advisors decided another audience was in order, [16:00] and so last week, nine representatives of American Jewish organizations were granted a 75-minute meeting. The purpose was to clarify the issues and clear the air, to ease tensions over not just the Waldheim audience, but also the Vatican's longstanding refusal to grant formal diplomatic recognition to Israel. Jewish

leaders said enough was gained to go ahead with the planned meeting here and the ceremony in which the pope today will open an exhibit of Judaica, ancient manuscripts from the Vatican archives. But a statement the Jews plan to deliver will again refer to the pope's recognition of Waldheim and his refusal to recognize Israel.

KLAPERMAN:       What the statement, in effect, is saying, is that we are disappointed that the pope did not respond directly to these particular issues. And this is an occasion when it should be said.

ROTH:            As far as the Jewish representatives are concerned, this morning's meeting is more than just ceremonial. It may be viewed as confrontational, Rabbi Klaperman says, but he adds, [17:00] "There's no point in sweeping disagreements under the rug." Faith?

DANIELS:       Richard, how far will the Jewish leaders actually go?

ROTH:           Well, in their prepared remarks, they speak of the healing process that's begun through meetings like this. And I imagine that that's going to be their attitude, that the healing is underway, the anger is diminishing.

DANIELS:       All right, Richard Roth, thank you very much.

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