

Vatican spokesman says pope did not ask Kissinger to be his adviser

VATICAN CITY (CNS) — Pope Benedict XVI does not have a foreign affairs advisory board, and he has not asked former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to become one of his advisers, the Vatican spokesman said.

Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi said it is true that Kissinger met privately with the pope Sept. 28 and that Mary Ann Glendon, a U.S. law professor and president of the Pontifical Academy of Social Sciences, has invited Kissinger to speak to the academy at the Vatican in late April.

“Those are the only two concrete facts,” Father Lombardi told Catholic News Service.

Articles in Italian and U.S. newspapers reporting that the pope had asked Kissinger to become an adviser or consultant “are without any foundation,” he said Dec. 4.

A New York-based correspondent for the Italian newspaper La Stampa wrote Nov. 4 that Kissinger had told an “important member of the Italian government” of the papal offer and that “a diplomatic source” at the Vatican had confirmed that “an important dialogue is under way” between the pope and Kissinger.

The rumor has been circulating in newspapers and on the Internet since the newspaper article was published.