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SUBJECT.

RECORD OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE  
PRIME MINISTER OF ROMANIA, MR. ILIE VERDET, AT 10 DOWNING STREET  
ON MONDAY 13 APRIL AT 1645

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Present: Prime Minister Mr. Ilie Verdet  
Mr. M.O'D.B. Alexander Mr. Alexandru Gheorghiu  
(Deputy Director, Ministry  
of Foreign Affairs)

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After an exchange of courtesies, in the course of which Mr. Verdet conveyed greetings from President Ceausescu and his wife to The Queen and her family and to the Prime Minister, the Prime Minister suggested that Mr. Verdet might like to talk about the situation in and around Poland. The outcome of events there would be important for the whole world. Poland's economy was in a very grave state. The West were giving food aid and were helping with the re-financing of Poland's debt. But they were standing strictly on the proposition that Poland was a Sovereign state and must be allowed to solve its own problems in its own way.

Mr. Verdet said that the situation in Poland was an internal Polish problem. It had its basis in complex political difficulties, notably that of national pride. Mistakes had been made in Poland in recent years. However the economic crisis should not be allowed to obscure the fact that Poland had made great progress.

The Romanian Government's position was that there should be no external interference from any quarter in Polish affairs. The Romanian Government, at the highest level, had expressed their confidence that "Polish political forces" could cope and that they had at their disposal everything they needed to resolve the situation. Romania had said this openly in discussions with friendly neighbouring states. Their approach had been shared by everyone they had spoken to. Romania's own relations with Poland were good.

/ The Prime Minister

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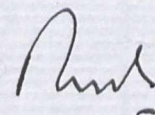
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The Prime Minister repeated her hope that Poland would be left to solve its problems without interference. She had been concerned about the harshness of Mr. Husak's speech in Prague. The military arrangements were still in place which would allow the Soviet Government to take a different decision from that which seemed to be implied by President Brezhnev's own speech in Prague.

In reply to a question from the Prime Minister, Mr. Verdet said that he was optimistic about the future for Poland. When the Prime Minister asked whether he agreed that a Soviet interference would be disastrous for relations between the East and West, Mr. Verdet replied that the question should not be posed in this way. Governments should try to encourage interpretations of the developing situation which would discourage interference and increase confidence in Poland. The Poles had the right to decide the way forward.

The Prime Minister said that she hoped the views which Britain and Romania shared on non-interference would prevail. She was very conscious of the Czechoslovak precedent. Moreover Afghanistan was still occupied. Mr. Verdet replied that he was confident that the principle of non-interference would be observed. As regards Afghanistan he said he thought the time had come to seek a meeting between the Pakistanis, Afghans and the Iranians. The Prime Minister asked who would represent Afghanistan. Mr. Verdet said that it should be the present regime. One must start from the existing reality. The Prime Minister said that she would never accept that Afghanistan could be represented by a puppet regime.

The two Heads of Government then joined the Plenary Session in the Cabinet Room. The tête-à-tête ended at 1750.



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