



Prime Minister

I think most of this is  
known to you.

A.S.C. 4.  
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Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

31 December 1981

Dear Chris,

Poland

Since I wrote to you on 24 December the military regime has established firm control throughout Poland. Major centres of resistance appear to have been eliminated through a combination of pressure, shows of force and on occasion some brutality, although the authorities seem to have tried to avoid violence in the knowledge that this could make the matters worse for themselves. They are now seeking to convince the world that the situation is rapidly returning to normal, that the Polish people are now working more efficiently than before and that the harsh martial law restrictions will soon be relaxed. Though we still have only fragmentary information, it is clear that the reality is far from this rosy picture. Initial resistance may have been broken, including that at Gdansk and in the mines in the South-West, but at least 5,000 people including many leading intellectuals are being detained without trial; the Polish people are back in the factories, but they are not working with a will; and the continuing restrictions on travel and communication are preventing any early return to normal civil or business activity. It is not clear how the authorities can begin to implement their promises to continue the renewal and pursue economic reforms in the face of a sullen and embittered populace. The only logical course must be a resumption of the dialogue between government, the Church and Solidarity but so far the Church's efforts to bring this about have come to nothing.

In these circumstances it is important that the Western response should be clear and carefully judged so as to promote the objective of ending the repression and persuading the Polish authorities to revert to the path of constructive negotiation with all the national elements including the Church and Solidarity.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary had hoped to hold a meeting of EC Foreign Ministers in London on 30 or 31 December to discuss this problem, but the Greeks and the French made difficulties. However, Political and Economic Directors of the Ten did meet yesterday and identified the main issues which will now be considered by Foreign Ministers in Brussels on Monday, 4 January. At that meeting - and in the meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers likely to be fixed on or about 11 January - we shall be trying to achieve a broad consensus and to identify what actions, if any, should be taken by Europeans to complement the American actions. The signs are that this will be easier as regards Poland than the Soviet Union. Even the French who are the loudest of the Ten in criticism of Moscow (partly for domestic reasons) have strong doubts about the wisdom of economic measures against the Soviet Union at this stage.



At our meeting on Monday we shall therefore try to maximise the possibilities in the political field where the Ten are less constrained than in the economic. We shall also review the question of whether or not we should continue to provide economic assistance of the kind we have been giving to Poland over the past year. Coreper agreed on 28 December that the Christmas gift of 8,000 tonnes of free beef should go ahead in the light of assurances received from the Polish authorities that this food would indeed go to the Polish people for whom it is intended. Of course such assurances cannot be watertight and we shall want to watch closely how the Poles implement them. This will be a factor affecting decisions about any further supplies of food from the Community at special prices. Such decisions have not yet been taken and will also have to take account both of the situation as it evolves in Poland and of the willingness on the part of the Community member states to provide further credit for such supplies. We shall also examine our attitudes towards debt rescheduling and new credits in 1982 and Lord Carrington intends to write to his colleagues next week in the light of these discussions to let you have his views of what UK policy should be.

I am sending copies of this letter to Private Secretaries to all members of OD and to Sir Robert Armstrong.

*Yours ever,*  
*[Signature]*  
for (B J P F) *[Signature]*  
Private Secretary

C A Whitmore Esq  
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