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December 19, 1981

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Dear Lord Carrington:

We are now facing a critical, possibly tragic juncture in Poland. Yielding to months of Soviet pressure, the Polish military has now begun to use violence against its own people. Polish workers, students and others are beginning to react and the situation could disintegrate with grave consequences at any time.

The prospect for Soviet military intervention is clear. But even should the Polish Army's suppression tactics succeed, we would face the possible destruction of the reform movement. The Soviets would achieve their objective and the Polish people would pay the price. The West would suffer a profound moral and political defeat.

To forestall further repression, disintegration, and possible Soviet intervention, we must act urgently and simultaneously on two fronts.

-- We must bring pressure to bear on Jaruzelski to make some move toward reconciliation with the Church and Solidarity.

-- And we must take steps to make clear to the Soviets that we understand the role they are already playing and to make more credible our deterrent to their intervening even more directly through the use of their own military forces.

The Right Honorable
The Lord Carrington, KCMG, MC
Secretary of State for Foreign
and Commonwealth Affairs
London

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We are not proposing that we now implement the kind of massive measures which we have agreed in NATO to take in the case of Soviet military intervention. But we do need political and economic measures which we can take now, and others we could take if the situation grows even more ominous but still short of a full-scale Soviet military move. Specifically, I am instructing Larry Eagleburger to concert with the other political directors to develop such measures in the context of the following considerations.

Whatever our assumptions about Jaruzelski, we need to maximize his incentives for reaching out to Solidarity and the Church and to strengthen his hand with the Soviets. To the extent he is an independent agent, he must be brought to understand that the course of repression will not be cost-free in terms of his need for a relationship with the West to preserve his independence. To the degree he is largely a tool of the Soviets, he must be able to convey to the Soviets the increased costs they will bear.

As far as the Soviets are concerned, no reasonable man can believe that this tragedy would be happening without Soviet pressure. The degree of their direct involvement in precipitating and managing the process is largely irrelevant (although the evidence is mounting on that score). The Soviets know they are responsible, and the rest of the world knows this too. Therefore to fail to do anything now with regard to the Soviet Union would send precisely the wrong signal to Moscow about its behavior in Europe and elsewhere for years to come. We cannot be in a position of having the Soviets in their own counsels believe that the United States and the rest of the West stood by and let this happen -- rationalizing our inaction with the transparent absurdity that the Soviet Union should not "intervene" when it so obviously had been doing precisely that for many months, and finally was succeeding in bringing about repression and bloodshed by using their proxy -- the Polish Army, Party and Police.

The situation we face is unpredictable and could disintegrate seriously at any time. We need to come out of the meeting of our political directors on Tuesday with more than just ideas. We need a concrete set of political and economic measures which we can use to

bring about greater restraint both in Warsaw and Moscow. Eagleburger will come to London with our proposed measures and we strongly urge you to do so as well.

I am appealing to you to deal with this matter in terms of its genuine historical importance. Western inaction at this time will not be forgotten by those who assess the character of our nations and our individual qualities as statesmen in the years to come. More important, the Polish people are looking to us today, as are the people of our own countries, for concrete evidence that we understand the magnitude of what is happening before our very eyes -- and who is responsible for it.

Sincerely,

Alexander M. Haig, Jr.