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on Poland & 4
UK/Polish Relations

PRIME MINISTER'S

PERSONAL MESSAGE

SERIAL No. T149/89

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FM THE WHITE HOUSE

TO CABINET OFFICE, LONDON

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S E C R E T VIA CABINET OFFICE CHANNELS WH07185

DEAR MAGGIE:

I KNOW THAT YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER AND SECRETARY HAIG HAVE BEEN IN CLOSE CONTACT, BUT I WANTED YOU TO HAVE MY PERSONAL ASSESSMENT OF THE SITUATION WE FACE IN POLAND.

THERE IS THE DISTINCT DANGER THAT FURTHER REPRESSION BY THE POLISH ARMY AND POLICE WILL LEAD TO MASSIVE RESISTANCE, WIDESPREAD DISTURBANCES, AND MAY ULTIMATELY RESULT IN INTERVENTION BY SOVIET MILITARY FORCES. THIS WOULD BE A PROFOUND TRAGEDY MOST IMMEDIATELY FOR THE POLISH PEOPLE. BUT IT WOULD HAVE WIDER IMPLICATIONS. A SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION WOULD RETARD REFORM EFFORTS IN EASTERN EUROPE FOR A DECADE OR MORE, EMBOLDEN THE SOVIETS FOR ADVENTURES ELSEWHERE, AND IN GENERAL PUT THE SUPERPOWERS ON A CONFRONTATIONAL FOOTING WE COULD NOT EASILY CONTROL.

SUCCESSFUL SUPPRESSION OF THE POLISH PEOPLE BY THE POLISH ARMY AND POLICE ACTING AFTER MONTHS OF SOVIET PRESSURE ALSO WOULD BE A DEVASTATING BLOW TO THE MOST PROFOUNDLY HOPEFUL DEVELOPMENT OF THIS DECADE.

THE TIME HAS COME TO AVERT THIS TRAGEDY. THERE ARE MEASURES WE CAN TAKE NOW TO HELP PREVENT BOTH FURTHER REPRESSION AND SOVIET INTERVENTION. THESE MEASURES MUST BE ADDRESSED TO THE SOVIET UNION AS WELL AS TO THE POLISH REGIME. THERE CAN BE NO DOUBT ABOUT THE ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE PLIGHT IN WHICH THE POLISH PEOPLE FIND THEMSELVES.

ALLIANCE UNITY MUST CONVINCE MOSCOW AND WARSAW OF THE NECESSITY, ON THE ONE HAND, TO PERMIT AND, ON THE OTHER HAND, TO INITIATE A PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION IN POLAND. SECRETARY HAIG IS IN TOUCH WITH YOUR FOREIGN MINISTER ABOUT DEVELOPING A SPECIFIC SET OF MEASURES.

THIS MAY WELL BE A WATERSHED IN THE POLITICAL HISTORY ON MANKIND --- A CHALLENGE TO TYRANNY FROM WITHIN. WE MUST NOT LET THIS MOMENT PASS US BY WITHOUT CLEARLY DEMONSTRATING THAT WE UNDERSTOOD AND THAT WE ACTED.

SINCERELY,

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