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NOTE FOR THE RECORD

cc. Mr. Ingham

Poland

The Foreign and Commonwealth Secretary spoke to the Prime Minister on the telephone at 1740 today. He said that he had talked to M. Tindemans and Herr Genscher since he had last spoken to the Prime Minister and he had told them both that he thought there should be a meeting of Community Foreign Ministers on Thursday. They had agreed with him. M. Cheysson was in Athens, but he had been unable to contact him. He was now inclined to send a message to all Community Foreign Ministers saying that he was calling a meeting of them for Thursday this week and that if any of them was unable to attend, he would be grateful if they could be represented. The main difficulty would be in explaining publicly why the meeting had been arranged.

The Prime Minister said that the announcement of measures against the Soviet Union which President Reagan was due to make later in the day was reason enough to hold a meeting of the Community Foreign Ministers. Mr. Haig's message to Lord Carrington emphasised the need for concerted action by the allies, and this would require a response.

The Foreign Secretary agreed with the Prime Minister that President Reagan's statement could be offered as the reason for holding a meeting, but he remained concerned about the outcome of such a meeting. There was the risk of splitting the alliance. But whatever conclusion the meeting came to would be ad referendum to the Governments of the Ten and would not therefore be final. One possible outcome was that the Foreign Ministers might agree that the Political Directors should produce a programme of work, while looking forward to a meeting of NATO Foreign Ministers. The Political Directors were meeting on Wednesday afternoon, and he would telephone the Prime Minister again as soon as that meeting was over.

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The Prime Minister said that she agreed that Lord Carrington should go ahead with the meeting of Community Foreign Ministers on Thursday, though she was inclined to believe that the meeting should produce something more specific in response to President Reagan's statement than the Foreign Secretary seemed to have in mind.

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29 December, 1981

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