

Subject copy:
Poland, Aug 79,
UK / Polish Relations

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. 169/80

CAB/WHITE HOUSE 001/04

Subject copy

PRIORITY
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SECRET

Poland, Aug 79,

TO: THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA, THE WHITE HOUSE,
FROM: THE PRIME MINISTER, THE CABINET OFFICE.

3, SEPTEMBER 1980

DEAR MR PRESIDENT,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR MESSAGE OF 27 AUGUST ABOUT THE SITUATION IN POLAND. I HAVE READ IT WITH VERY GREAT INTEREST.

IN THE FEW DAYS SINCE YOU WROTE, EVENTS HAVE CONTINUED TO MOVE RAPIDLY AND AGREEMENT HAS NOW, OF COURSE, BEEN REACHED BETWEEN THE STRIKERS IN THE NORTH AND SOUTH OF THE COUNTRY AND THE POLISH GOVERNMENT. THE CONCESSIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN WON BY THE SHIPYARD WORKERS AND THE COAL-MINERS, AND THE WAY IN WHICH THEY HAVE BEEN WON, ARE OF ENORMOUS POTENTIAL CONSEQUENCE, NOT ONLY FOR POLAND ITSELF BUT FOR EASTERN EUROPE AS A WHOLE. THEY ALSO HAVE FAR REACHING IMPLICATIONS FOR WESTERN INTERESTS AND POLICIES IN THE AREA.

FURTHER TIME WILL BE NEEDED TO ASSESS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF WHAT HAS HAPPENED. MUCH IS YET TO PLAY FOR. I MYSELF DOUBT WHETHER THE SITUATION HAS YET REACHED THE POINT OF STABILITY. I SUSPECT THAT THE PROCESS NOW LAUNCHED WILL EITHER BE CARRIED FURTHER OR GO INTO REVERSE. THE ATTITUDE OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT WILL, INEVITABLY, BE CRUCIAL. THE IMMEDIATE INDICATIONS ARE NOT ENCOURAGING. THE RUSSIANS CLEARLY DO NOT LIKE THE EXTENT OF THE CONCESSIONS MADE. THEY WILL BE WATCHING CAREFULLY HOW THE AGREEMENT IS IMPLEMENTED AND WILL, NO DOUBT, BE URGING THE POLISH LEADERS TO TRY TO RECOVER SOME OF THE LOST GROUND.

I SHARE YOUR VIEW ABOUT THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ECONOMIC ASPECT. WE HERE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED FOR SOME TIME ABOUT THE DETERIORATING SITUATION IN POLAND AND ABOUT POLAND'S GROWING INDEBTEDNESS TO THE WEST. THE OVERALL EFFECT OF THE RECENT STOPPAGES CAN ONLY HAVE BEEN TO EXACERBATE POLAND'S DIFFICULTIES. LIKE YOU, I AM SURE THE POLES WILL SOON BE ASKING THE WEST FOR FURTHER ASSISTANCE. I NOTE WHAT YOU SAY ABOUT THE OBJECTIVES OF THE WEST'S AID, AND LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING WHAT YOU HAVE IN MIND. I WOULD WELCOME ANY PROPOSAL FOR ENSURING THAT OUR HELP GOES TO BENEFIT THE POLISH PEOPLE RATHER THAN TO THE SHORING UP OF AN UNREFORMED SYSTEM. BUT WE MUST TAKE CARE TO AVOID ACCUSATIONS OF INTERFERENCE.

THESE ARE ALL MATTERS ON WHICH IT WILL BE VITAL FOR OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS TO REMAIN IN THE CLOSEST TOUCH. WE SHALL WANT TO CONSIDER TOGETHER, AND WITH THOSE OF OUR ALLIES MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED, HOW WE REACT TO THE DEVELOPING SITUATION. I HOPE THAT WE CAN ALSO CONTINUE TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION ABOUT OUR CONTACTS WITH THE POLES. APART FROM THE USUAL EXCHANGES OF THE DIPLOMATIC NET, PETER CARRINGTON HOPES TO SEE THE NEW POLISH FOREIGN MINISTER, MR CZYREK, DURING THE U.N. GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW YORK LATER THIS MONTH, AND WILL BE VISITING WARSAW ON 30 AND 31 OCTOBER. I WILL ENSURE THAT YOU ARE KEPT FULLY IN THE PICTURE ABOUT WHAT TRANSPIRES.

MEANWHILE, WE HERE INTEND TO CONTINUE TO TAKE A CAREFUL AND RESTRAINED ATTITUDE IN PUBLIC TO EVENTS IN POLAND. WE HAVE STRESSED OUR VIEW THAT THIS IS A STRICTLY INTERNAL MATTER TO BE SETTLED BY THE POLISH PEOPLE THEMSELVES, PEACEFULLY AND WITHOUT INTERFERENCE. THE POLISH GOVERNMENT HAVE TOLD US, AS THEY HAVE TOLD YOU, THAT THEY APPRECIATE THIS ATTITUDE.

YOURS SINCERELY

MARGARET THATCHER

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AND QSL AT 1030Z MATE TKS KKK

RGRG TKS VM