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Poland: UK/Polish relations: Aug 79

PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T 205/80

CAB/WTE 001/20

IMMEDIATE 201315Z OCT 80

FROM: CABINET OFFICE LONDON
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE
ZEM
SECRET

DEAR MR PRESIDENT,

THANK YOU FOR YOUR FURTHER MESSAGE OF 7 OCTOBER ABOUT POLAND. I AGREE THAT IT IS ESSENTIAL FOR US TO REMAIN IN CLOSE TOUCH OVER THIS.

THE SITUATION IN POLAND IS OBVIOUSLY STILL PRECARIOUS AND THE PARTY LEADERSHIP IN DISARRAY. THE RUSSIANS SEEM PREPARED FOR THE MOMENT TO LEAVE IT TO THE POLISH AUTHORITIES TO TRY TO REASSERT CONTROL. BUT THEY ARE CLEARLY NOT CONFIDENT THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT THE AGREEMENTS REACHED LAST MONTH IN A WAY THAT BOTH AVOIDS FURTHER TROUBLE WITH THE WORKERS AND SAFEGUARDS THE SUPREMACY OF THE PARTY. I SHARE YOUR VIEW THAT THE RUSSIANS WOULD INTERVENE IF THEY BELIEVED THAT COMMUNIST CONTROL WAS IN JEOPARDY.

LIKE YOU, WE HAVE BEEN WATCHING CLOSELY THE MILITARY ACTIVITY IN THE WESTERN MILITARY DISTRICTS OF THE SOVIET UNION TOGETHER WITH CERTAIN EVIDENCE FROM THE COMMUNICATIONS FIELD. OUR ASSESSMENT AT THE MOMENT IS THAT THESE ARE CONTINGENCY MOVES AND DO NOT IN THEMSELVES PRESAGE AN EARLY INVASION. BUT THEY HAVE THE CHARACTER OF PRECAUTIONARY STEPS IN CASE AN ARMED INTERVENTION SHOULD APPEAR NECESSARY.

WHILE WE SHOULD HAVE SOME WARNING OF AN IMPENDING INVASION, THIS MIGHT NOT AMOUNT TO MORE THAN A FEW DAYS. IT IS THEREFORE IMPORTANT THAT WE SHOULD BE READY TO REACT QUICKLY IF AN INTERVENTION SEEMED IMMINENT. I KNOW THAT OUR OFFICIALS, TOGETHER WITH THOSE FROM FRANCE AND GERMANY, HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING THE STEPS WE MIGHT TAKE IN SUCH A SITUATION.

I HAVE NO DOUBT THAT THE RUSSIANS KNOW VERY WELL THAT AN INVASION WOULD HAVE VERY SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES FOR EAST/WEST RELATIONS, BUT I AGREE THAT THE POINT IS ONE WHICH CAN USEFULLY BE UNDERLINED. I HAVE MADE IT CLEAR PUBLICLY, MOST RECENTLY DURING THE CONSERVATIVE PARTY CONFERENCE, THAT POLISH AFFAIRS ARE FOR THE POLES ALONE TO RESOLVE: AND WE SHALL BE PUTTING THAT MESSAGE ACROSS ALSO IN PRIVATE.

YOURS SINCERELY
MARGARET THATCHER

NNNN

VRGRG MATE HAVE IT GOOD AT 1353Z AND TKS FOR ALL THE TROUBLEKKK