



Prime Minister

To note

A.J.C. 24. 2

h.a.
25. 2

FCS/82/32

MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE

Poland: Soviet Factory Ships

1. I have seen your letter of 15 February ^{will request if required} to Humphrey Atkins, and also George Younger's letter of 17 February, about the difficulty of taking any immediate decision to restrict the number of Soviet factory vessels participating in the Minch mackerel and herring fisheries.
2. I accept that you and George Younger consider there are too many uncertainties to commit ourselves to a decision on this subject now. I should nonetheless like to emphasise my view that we shall need to impose some restrictions on Soviet factory vessels during the Minch fisheries if we are not to make public fools of ourselves. Having decided to take-and announced - certain measures specifically against the Soviet Union in the Polish context, it is essential that they should not appear to be devoid of meaning. We should be accused of misleading our allies and Parliament if a measure we announced against the Soviet Union turned out to apply without discrimination to other countries, including our partners in the Community. We expect to have discussions over the coming months with our American and European allies about longer term Western economic relations with the Soviet Union and it is important not to change course now. Otherwise our own partners will surely say that we have led them up the garden path.
3. At the same time, I recognise the difficulties currently being experienced by the UK fishing industry, and the need to ensure that any measures taken do not seriously damage British fishing

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interests. It is clear that this is one of several implications which will need to be studied before we can reach any decision on restrictive action against Soviet factory vessels during the Minch fisheries.

4. So even if no immediate decision can be reached, it seems desirable that officials of our two departments, together with those of the Scottish Office and any other interested departments, should now get together, for instance in the Cabinet Office MISC 64 Committee, to discuss the various implications with a view to producing a paper, so that when we come to take decisions the various problems will have been fully gone into.

5. Copies of this letter go to George Younger and to the other Ministers who are present at the Prime Minister's meeting on 2 February, and also to Sir Robert Armstrong.

(CARRINGTON)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

24 February 1982

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