



Prime Minister

A-J.C. 10/3

From the Secretary of State

The Rt Hon the Lord Carrington KCMG MC
Secretary of State for Foreign and
Commonwealth Affairs
Downing Street
London SW1A 2AH

MS

p.a. M 11/3

(O March 1982

Dear Peter,

POLAND: MEASURES AGAINST THE SOVIET UNION

Thank you for your minute of 8 March, responding to the request in my letter of 26 February that colleagues should have the opportunity to consider a quota package before we committed ourselves to it in Brussels.

My officials have been in touch with yours to say that I am prepared to open the way for UK agreement to the package by withdrawing our reserve over the exemption of existing contracts from the controls. Lifting the reserve should be dependent on the Community agreeing to make a Regulation under Article 113 of the Rome Treaty, and I understand that this requirement has now been met by the Danes falling into line. We also need to ensure a satisfactory translation of the Regulation into English.

I want to stress my reluctance over the step we have taken and my deep concern about the way the Brussels negotiations have progressed. The new restrictions are unlikely to have any significant impact on the Soviet Union, go very far to satisfy the Americans (who did not ask for this measure), or be justified in terms of our long-established trade policies. While efforts have been made to remove features of the package most likely to damage the interests of British firms, some will almost certainly be asked to pay what to them is a high price for a political signal while others secure umerited protection.

When making my request for colleagues to consider the outcome of the COREPER

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From the Secretary of State

meeting on 1 March, I hoped that we would have a breathing space in which to consider the Commission's final proposals before the UK became effectively committed to them. Your officials have been very helpful in consulting mine as the negotiations have developed, but we seem to have been able to exercise little control over the pace of negotiations and have been faced with salami tactics in Brussels. These have prevented us from standing back and looking at what was being achieved overall in a sensible and timely fashion. I appreciate this happens from time to time in Brussels but still do not like it very much.

I am copying this to recipients of the previous correspondence.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, which reads "John Biffen".

JOHN BIFFEN

A red circular stamp with numbers 1 through 10 around the perimeter and a central mark, and a red date stamp below it.

10 MAR 1982