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*file DS*

10 DOWNING STREET

LONDON SW1A 2AA

*From the Private Secretary*

10 November 1988

MESSAGE TO THE POPE

I enclose the Prime Minister's message to the Pope about Poland. I should be grateful if it could be despatched as soon as possible.

C. D. POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.  
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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10 DOWNING STREET  
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

10 November 1988

Your Holiness,

I was most grateful for Your Holiness' great kindness and consideration in replying so promptly and so fully to my request for advice in advance of my visit to Poland. I was much strengthened in all my meetings and contacts there by knowing your views.

I was also most grateful to Cardinal Glemp whom I met on the very first evening of my visit. He gave me a very full account of the Church's role, together with a shrewd and realistic appreciation of the political difficulties in Poland. I was encouraged by his hopes that something positive could be achieved.

I subsequently had a number of meetings with both General Jaruzelski and Prime Minister Rakowski, and talks with a wide range of representatives of opposition opinion. I paid a very moving visit to Gdansk, where I was impressed by the strength of support for Solidarity and its aspirations. I was also struck by the moderation and common sense of Mr. Walesa and others in the Solidarity leadership, and by the order and cheerfulness of the enthusiastic crowds in Gdansk and at St. Stanislaw Kostka's Church. To the Polish authorities' credit, they put no obstacles in the way of any of these meetings.

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I returned from Poland convinced that Solidarity is a force that cannot be denied, and greatly impressed by its leaders' commitment to peaceful discussion. I conveyed this assessment frankly to General Jaruzelski at the end of my visit: and in all my contacts I urged the importance of finding a basis for dialogue between government and opposition, on the basis of good faith and fairness. The situation is indeed very difficult and painful, but I think all sides genuinely want to talk and find a way through. I pray that they will succeed.

May I once again thank Your Holiness for your wise counsel.

Your  
low spirited leadership is so vital  
to the brave people of Poland.

With warm regards,

Your sincerely

Raymond Chalton

His Holiness Pope John Paul II