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6th December 1988

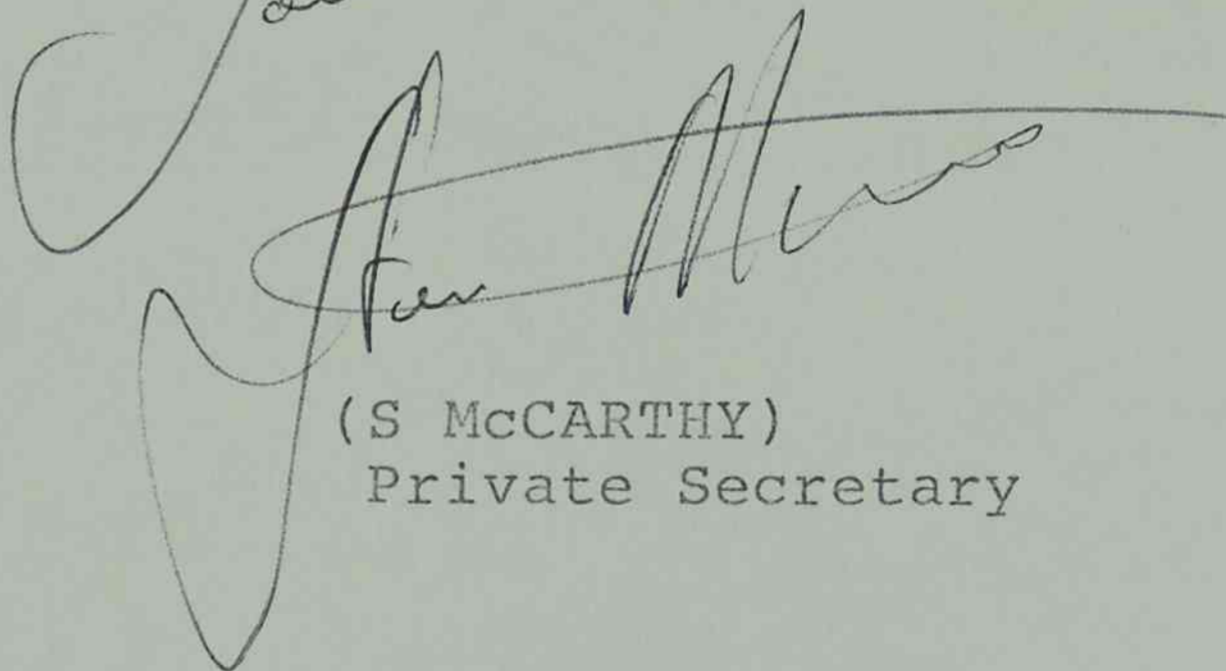
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Dear Dominic

POLAND

We were contacted some time ago by the Number 10 Duty Clerks seeking figures for total British killed in World War II. Our answer, 357,116 was met with a response to the effect that this was very low. We were subsequently asked for the total casualties (ie killed, wounded and prisoners). The answer to this was over 900,000.

The reason for rehearsing all this is merely that the attached extract from the Prime Ministers speech in Poland quotes the higher figure in the (incorrect) context of British killed. There is clearly nothing that can be done about this, and hopefully nobody else will spot this and challenge it publicly. But I thought I should record the discrepancy to prevent it being repeated.

John
even

(S McCARTHY)
Private Secretary

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DINNER SPEECH BY MRS THATCHER

Warsaw home service 2200 gmt 3 Nov 88

Text of broadcast excerpts from Mrs Thatcher's speech, in English with Polish translation superimposed (passages in square brackets added from a version of the speech issued by PAP in English at 2237 gmt)

Gen Jaruzelski, Prime Minister Rakowski, your excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, today I laid a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Warsaw. Tomorrow you, General Jaruzelski, and I together will lay a wreath at the monument at Westerplatte, where the first shots of the second world war were fired. Many of the names on our monuments - Narvik, Tobruk, Monte Cassino and others - call forth particular memories in Great Britain, memories of British and Poles lives lost. Memories of brotherhood, memories of heroic deeds. They remind us how, after the attack on Poland by Nazi Germany, Great Britain joined in the war for freedom for Poland and Europe. Both our countries took part in this war in Europe, from its very earliest until the last. This was a war in which a million British people lost their lives, and at least six million people in Poland lost their lives.

[The Polish government came to London to continue the fight for freedom.

One pilot in eight fighting the Battle of Britain in 1940 was Polish - and, like the British pilots alongside whom they fought, they bore heavy casualties.

We remember, too, the desperate courage of the Warsaw Uprising, against overwhelming odds: and the heroism displayed by British and allied pilots who risked - and often lost - their lives to drop them supplies.

On Remembrance Sunday, in just over a week's time, representatives from the Polish Home Army will once again march proudly alongside their British comrades-in-arms at the Cenotaph in London, in an act of remembrance for all those who gave their lives.]

Nothing is capable of creating stronger links between nations than participation in this type of mutual experience.

[Now, nearly 50 years since Britain gave its historic pledge to fight if Poland was attacked, it is with a profound sense of history and a deep wish that neither of our countries should ever again have to suffer the agonies of war, that I pay this first ever visit by a British Minister to Poland.

Of course, the links between Britain and Poland started long before the second world war.

Two of the more colourful characters in British history - King Canute and Bonnie Prince Charlie - were half-Polish.

For two hundred years there was a large English - and even larger Scottish - population in Gdansk.

The first steam-powered factory in Poland was set up with British help and produced pianos - one of which was owned by Chopin.

Our histories have intermingled in curious ways over many centuries. And I hope that we can recreate those varied contacts in the new climate in Europe today.]

Britain is proud of its history as a nation. So is Poland - and with good reason. In the mid-16th century you were Europe's largest state.

Throughout the whole period of partition and even dismemberment you kept your national spirit alive.

[I recall the moving story of Pope John Paul II on a visit to Poland in 1980. He took a little girl in his arms and asked her where Poland was. When she looked bewildered, he placed his hand gently over her heart and said: "Poland is here".]

The names of your great leaders - King Casimir, Jan Sobieski, Tadeusz Kosciuszko - shine out from the pages of Europe's history.

[We think of Poland's remarkable contribution to science with Copernicus, to literature with Joseph Conrad and Czeslaw Milosz, to music through such great names as Chopin, Paderewski and Rubinstein - all of world renown.]

One thinks, too, of the unbreakable spirit of the Polish people as they set about rebuilding Warsaw to its former glory from the ashes and devastation of the second world war.

Two lessons stand out from this past: Poland's irrepressible sense of nationhood, which survived through centuries of turmoil to regain a national home; and, at the same time, Poland's indisputable place in the mainstream of Europe and its affairs.

For us, Warsaw, Prague and Budapest are just as much great European cities as London, Paris and Rome. Your roots lie as deep in the soil and the history of Europe as do ours.

[President Gorbachev has spoken of building a common European house. But the only wall so far erected is the Berlin Wall, which divides and separates. As so often when one wants to build a new house, you have to start by knocking a few walls down.

We want to see the barriers which have divided Europe for the last 40 years dismantled, so that Poland and other East European countries can once again share fully in Europe's culture, Europe's freedom and Europe's justice - treasures which sprang from Christendom, were developed through a rule of law and found their expression in democracy.]

You will find in Britain and Europe a great readiness for more contacts of every sort, together with a wish to see the peoples of Eastern Europe play a much fuller part in the life of Europe as a whole.

That is why we are keen to expand economic and trade links between the countries of the European Community and of Eastern Europe.

That is also why we welcome the bold and courageous reforms being undertaken by Secretary Gorbachev in the Soviet Union, and earnestly hope that he will succeed.

You yourself have described it, Gen Jaruzelski, as an historic wave of change, and I share that view.

[You will recall the words of Brutus in Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar":

"There is a tide in the affairs of men,
which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune,
omitted, all the voyage of their life
is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
and we must take the current when it serves,
or lose our ventures."

Gen Jaruzelski, we must take that tide at the flood and not lose our ventures. But we need real changes if our hopes are to be realised, changes which go to the root cause of the hostility

and confrontation which has fractured Europe since the second world war.

We hope that very soon agreement will be reached at the meeting in Vienna which will allow talks on conventional security in Europe to begin. That will enable us to tackle the substantial imbalance of conventional forces which is heavily in favour of the Warsaw Pact. For those talks to succeed we shall need to be frank with each other, frank about the numbers of troops and weapons on each side - a frankness which was never achieved by the Warsaw Pact in the earlier and unsuccessful talks on mutual and balanced force reductions.

We also need to remove from Europe - from the world indeed - the threat of chemical weapons, in which the Warsaw Pact countries have a vast preponderance.

Above all, we need to see that the basic human rights enshrined in the Helsinki accords - signed by 35 nations, including all the Warsaw Pact countries and the countries of the NATO alliance - are genuinely and fully respected.

When contemplating closer relations with other countries, we judge them by how they treat their own citizens. We shall not reach the trust and confidence we need for full-hearted co-operation until those rights are entrenched and observed as part of the way of life of the countries of Eastern Europe and of the Soviet Union, [and] until all enjoy freedom under the law, a law which applies not only to those who are governed but to those who govern as well. It is both a moral and a practical matter.

In modern societies, success depends on openness and free discussion. Suppress those things, and you are unable to respond to the need for change. We in the West could never have achieved our great technological advance without them.

Change has been very much the theme of my talks with you today, Gen Jaruzelski, and with Prime Minister Rakowski. Tomorrow I shall have the opportunity to hear the views of Solidarity and its leaders as well.

Reform is never easy or free from painful consequences. But we have to ask ourselves: what would be the cost of failing to carry through change and reform? Would not the consequences be even more painful and more prolonged?

In a smaller way, we faced this problem in Britain in 1979. But the British people rejected the path of economic decline. They knew that the problems would not go away merely because we refused to face them.

People are prepared to endure hardship and difficulty when they believe that the result will be a better life for them and their children, when they know that they are fully involved in decisions, and when they are convinced that what they are doing is right.]

We in Britain now have one of the fastest growing and most successful economies in Europe because we were prepared to face up to difficult choices and make difficult decisions.

You told me today about your plans for economic reform, that you want to remove the restrictions which restrain individual and collective initiative, and that you want to offer greater incentives and reduce the influence of bureaucracy. That is good news. But one of the lessons of the world since 1945 is that greater prosperity comes to those nations which have greater freedom - the USA, Western Europe and now Japan.

Experience teaches us that you will only achieve higher growth, release enterprise, spur people to greater effort and obtain their full-hearted commitment to reform when people have the dignity and enjoyment of personal and political freedom. [Then they have the freedom of expression, freedom of association, the right to form free and independent trade unions and fulfilment of all the other obligations of the Helsinki accords.]

But experience also teaches us that freedom incurs responsibility, responsibility for greater effort, for accepting the hardships and dislocation which are inevitably associated with far-reaching change, for making the necessary commitment to restore the nation's prosperity. Freedom and responsibility go hand in hand. Those who seek one must be prepared to offer the other.

[That is why it is so vital there should be a real dialogue with representatives of all sections of society, including Solidarity.

People have to be involved in decisions about the way forward. They must have the freedom to choose. The chances are that they will then make the right choices.

Only the government and people of Poland herself can provide the commitment, resolve and perseverance to break through to success.

But when that happens, when that great day comes, you will find your friends ready, not just to stand and cheer, but to help in practical ways: by supporting a programme with the IMF, by offering credits, by rescheduling debts, by encouraging investment, by establishing joint ventures and by increasing contacts of every sort between our governments and peoples.]

Gen Jaruzelski, Prime Minister Rakowski, Britain cares deeply about Poland and its people. We passionately want you to succeed. We know the glories as well as the tragedies of your past. We welcome among us many of your fellow countrymen and are deeply grateful for their contribution to our national life. We admire the indomitable spirit of the Polish people.

We thank you for inviting me to make this visit, for the warm reception which I have received and the excellent programme which has been arranged.

I ask you to join me in raising your glasses to the future, peace, prosperity and fulfilment of the Polish people and to friendship between our two countries.

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