

SUBJECT.



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Japan

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

10 December 1980

✓ see Minister met.

VISIT BY THE JAPANESE FOREIGN MINISTER

The Japanese Foreign Minister, Mr. Ito, called on the Prime Minister this morning. He was accompanied by the Japanese Ambassador and by Mr. Katori. Sir E. Youde was also present.

After an exchange of courtesies, during the course of which the Prime Minister and Mr. Ito agreed on the need for Europe, North America and Japan, to concert their policies on the major international issues, there was a brief discussion of the IEA meeting which took place yesterday. Mr. Ito described the outcome of the meeting in regard to short term measures as satisfactory. He agreed with the Prime Minister that any further increase in the price of oil would be very damaging. He said that he believed the moderate oil producing countries were well aware of this. He added that Japan was very anxious to see a comprehensive solution achieved to the problems of the Middle East. Failing this, there might well be a major crisis.

Mr. Ito asked the Prime Minister how she viewed the prospect of a Reagan Administration in Washington. The Prime Minister said she was optimistic. She thought that Mr. Reagan would give a clear lead in foreign and domestic affairs and that the policies of his Administration would be reasonable and consistent. In this sense there would be an advance on the situation which had obtained in the last four years. As an example of the kind of inconsistency which had characterised President Carter's Administration, the Prime Minister mentioned the human rights question. No-one believed more strongly than she did in human rights but she was conscious that it had taken the Western nations hundreds of years to obtain them. To expect others to acquire them overnight was to fly in the face of experience. President Carter had misread the significance of the human rights issue in foreign policy, most notably in the case of Iran. The test which should be applied was whether an existing government was more or less likely to accept human rights than the most likely alternative government. It was essential in this area to be realistic rather than idealistic.

In response to a further question from Mr. Ito, the Prime Minister said that she thought there was still a possibility of Soviet intervention in Poland. The Soviet Government were aware

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that what was happening in Poland was something totally new. It was not a question of the replacement of one government by another within the same system. We were watching the growth of a new source of power in Poland. In these circumstances the role of future Polish governments seemed likely to be to regulate relations between a number of centres of power in the country. This was a situation which no Communist state had faced before. Arguably it meant the end of Communism. The Russians therefore faced a major decision. Their experience in Afghanistan would, of course, be relevant. The international reaction to their invasion of that country might make them think twice about going into Poland. Another factor would be whether or not Solidarity would be able to agree to consolidate its gains now and to refrain from pushing things too far. As regards the West's reaction, the Prime Minister said no precise decisions had been taken. Consultations were still continuing but bilateral contacts had indicated agreement that there would probably have to be an end to détente. The Madrid meeting, for instance, could not continue. It would also be difficult for the disarmament talks to continue. Whether or not trade sanctions would be applied was still for determination. It was clear that if the Soviet Union did invade, governments would have to consult quicker than the case after the invasion of Afghanistan.

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