

PRIME MINISTER

VISIT TO POLAND

Our Embassy in Warsaw are anxious to finalise the arrangements for your visit to Poland in October. There are two outstanding areas about the programme, one major, the other minor.

The major point is whether you should visit Gdansk. Such a visit would have tremendous symbolic value and break new ground, marking out your visit as something really special. The Polish Government, however, have so far refused to entertain such a visit and there have been some indications that they would rather call off the whole visit to Poland than agree to a visit to Gdansk. The Foreign Office letter attached argues that perhaps Gdansk is not so well worth visiting after all, given that Solidarity's recent efforts have been redolent of the worst sort of British trade unionism. To my mind, this is close to sacrilege. Gdansk is associated with the most heroic phase of the Polish people's resistance. I think it is still worth making one further effort to get the Polish authorities to agree that you should go there. We might argue that it is in the interests of both Governments that your visit should be a success and should break new ground. Nothing would attract more attention to the visit in this country and more widely than for it to be seen that the Polish Government have no inhibitions about your visiting Gdansk. You might recall that when Mr. Gorbachev invited you to visit the Soviet Union, he specifically said that you could go anywhere you liked. It would be a pity if the Polish Government were to adopt a more restrictive attitude. You would not of course intend to do anything which would be regarded as a slight upon the Polish Government. But we are convinced that a visit to the city and the shipyard memorial would capture the imagination of millions of people and make the visit as a whole something special and memorable. An approach on these lines would have to be made at a high level to have a chance of success. I think it is worth an

attempt but that if the Polish authorities remain adamant, we should settle for a programme without Gdansk while making clear our disappointment. Agree? Yes not

The lesser point concerns where you should stay. The choices are:

- our Residence;
- the Wilanow Palace. The Polish Government have offered this and it has been used by e.g. General de Gaulle. But it is 15 minutes from the centre of town which means wasting a good deal of time;
- a Government hotel in the centre of Warsaw. Vice President Bush recently stayed here. It would be a compromise between the other two.

I think you will probably prefer to stay at our Residence and the Poles would accept that. Agree? Yes not

CDP

CHARLES POWELL

7 July 1988

Chap

cc/c



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

7 July 1988

Dear Charles,

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Prime Minister's Visit to Poland

In your letter of 11 June, you agreed that we should confirm the dates to the Poles (17-18 October). This has now been done.

We now need to consider the programme, on which important points remain unsettled. Our Embassy would like to agree the outline programme by the end of July, before Polish officials go away for their holidays in August. The remaining details can then be sorted out in September.

The main question is whether the Prime Minister should visit Gdansk or not. The attraction (as you pointed out in your letter of 2 February) is that it would have symbolic value and break new ground - no high level Western visitors have met Walesa there. The visit would receive enormous publicity. On the other hand the May events mean that the town is associated with a defeat for Solidarity. The dockyard workers made unreasonable demands, given the current state of the Polish economy. The symbolism of Gdansk has therefore changed. A visit by the Prime Minister could suggest that we endorsed sit-in strikes for unrealistic wage claims, when we otherwise urge on the Polish authorities the need for firm economic policies. The important thing is for the Prime Minister to go to Poland, to meet Walesa, and to visit, among other places, the Popieluszko Church. Mr Walesa himself has said that it would be a tragedy for Solidarity if they could not meet the Prime Minister (Warsaw telno 244, copy enclosed) but he is expecting to see the Prime Minister in Warsaw rather than Gdansk. Mr Barder's advice is that the Polish Government would prefer to call off the visit rather than agree to a visit to Gdansk.

The Foreign Secretary therefore believes we should drop the idea on condition that the rest of the programme is entirely to our satisfaction. We would expect the Poles to abandon the visit to Krakow, which would be touristic and waste valuable time. If you agree we would like to instruct the Embassy to seek Polish agreement to the programme contained in my letter of 22 March.

/The only

[But you
don't endorse
Communism
by going to
Moscow]



The only other question which needs to be resolved soon concerns the Prime Minister's accommodation. In Tony Galsworthy's letter of 1 February, he explained that the Poles would like the Prime Minister to stay in government accommodation. In your reply of 2 February, you said that the Prime Minister would prefer to stay with the Ambassador if the Poles did not object. Subsequently they suggested that she should stay at the Wilanow Palace on the southern edge of Warsaw. This was used by General de Gaulle, President Carter and other prominent visitors. But it is 15 minutes' drive from the centre of town, which would reduce the time available in an already tight programme. The third possibility, which could be suggested as a compromise, is the government hotel which is in the centre of Warsaw and near the Residence. It provides accommodation of a sufficient standard, and was used by Vice-President Bush. Some members of the Party will have to be accommodated there anyway. But the Foreign Secretary sees no real difficulty about taking the line that the Prime Minister normally stays with our Ambassador or High Commissioner when on bilateral visits, if that is what she would prefer.

I should be grateful for your confirmation that we may proceed along these lines.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'L Parker'.

(L Parker)
Private Secretary

C D Powell Esq
10 Downing Street

PM TOURS: Poland Feb 88



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From the Private Secretary

8 July 1988

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO POLAND

Thank you for your letter of 7 July suggesting that we try to agree the outline programme for the Prime Minister's visit to Poland with Polish officials by the end of July.

The main outstanding question is, of course, whether the Prime Minister should visit Gdansk. The Prime Minister would like us to make one more major effort on this. To have any chance of success, it would obviously need to be made at a high level and might take the following form. It is in the interests of both the Government that the Prime Minister's visit should be a success and should break new ground, not just in Poland's relations with the United Kingdom, but more widely, in the perception of Poland in the West. Nothing would command more attention for the visit in this country and more widely than for it to be seen that the Polish Government have no inhibitions about the visit to Gdansk. We recall that, when Mr. Gorbachev invited the Prime Minister to visit the Soviet Union, he specifically said that she could go anywhere she wished. It would be a pity, in view of the new spirit of East/West relations, if the Polish Government were to adopt a more restrictive attitude. The Prime Minister would not, of course, intend to do anything in Gdansk which would be regarded as in any way a slight upon the Polish Government. But she is convinced that a visit to the city and the shipyard memorial would capture the imagination of millions of people and make the visit as a whole something special and memorable.

The Prime Minister would like to see a careful and well prepared effort made to achieve this: she does not accept the suggestion in your letter that the symbolism of Gdansk has changed so drastically. It may be that you are able to refine and improve on the argument set out above. If the Polish authorities nonetheless remain adamant, we should settle for a programme which does not include Gdansk. But we should leave them in no doubt of the Prime Minister's disappointment and our view that this has, in advance, limited and diminished the significance of the visit.

Your letter also deals with accommodation: the Prime Minister's preference remains to stay in the Residence.

C. D. POWELL

Lyn Parker, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.