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CPC 0

Minister

Do you want to take the initiative suggested in para. 4? CDD 20/11

MP

PRIME MINISTER

YOUR VISIT TO POLAND

1. This morning the new Polish Minister of Education, Professor Jacek Fisiak, called on me. He returns to Poland on Saturday and I think you may well meet him during your forthcoming visit. I am of course aware that you have much more important matters to deal with than education policy during your visit but you may like to know of his approach.

2. First, Professor Fisiak speaks English fluently having taught at UCL and also at the University of California. He has produced a grammar on Middle English. He is very, very pro-British having visited our country forty-five times. He was the Rector of Poznan University and has only been the Education Minister for 14 days! But within that time he has insisted that English should be used by maths and physics graduates in all Polish universities.

3. Professor Fisiak wants to increase English teaching in Poland. Russian is the first language and English is elective but in each of the forty-nine provinces there is at least one school where English is the language of instruction for a large part of the curriculum. We have very few exchanges with Poland but he is asking the British Council to increase their teacher exchanges. I believe the British Council will respond favourably to this. We will prepare you a brief before your trip to Poland.

4. He also would like to have exchanges of pupils. It would appear it is much easier to do this with Poland than Russia as the English children can stay much more easily and freely with Polish families. I think this is something we could certainly encourage and you may like to mention this, if you wished, during your visit. You may care to announce you will arrange an exchange between a school in your own constituency and a school



in Poland next year. Professor Fisiak is particularly keen to make the exchange in the summer vacation next year. As far as the costs are concerned on our side, the LEAs, the schools and the parents would cover the travelling costs. The Polish Ministry are prepared to pick up all the costs on their side.

5. Should you wish to take any initiative in this area I just wanted to let you know that you will be pushing at a very much open door. They really do want to have more exchanges.

6. The Minister has also visited Cranfield and he is going to have exchanges with them in various scientific areas, particularly in biochemistry.

7. You may also like to know that there are a lot of BBC computers in Poland and he is keen to expand the number of computers in schools further. At his own university he said he bought 500 IBMs so it seems to be a rather freer system than that currently operating in Russia.

8. I think he is an impressive man but I cannot judge at all how he fits in politically with the Polish Government. The overwhelming impression of the visit today is that the Polish want to do more with us; there seems to be a real affection for Britain and the English language. This is the first approach of this kind we have had from a country behind the Iron Curtain.

9. The Minister invited me to visit Poland but I think that must await any guidance you give to colleagues in general following your return.

K.B.

M.T.

28 OCTOBER 1988



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*From the Private Secretary*

30 October 1988

**VISIT TO POLAND**

The Prime Minister was grateful for your Secretary of State's minute of 28 October about his meeting with the new Polish Minister of Education. She found this very interesting.

BF || I think the Prime Minister would welcome a brief for her visit to Poland on the prospects for increased teacher exchanges as well as exchanges of pupils. But she is not particularly enthusiastic about the specific suggestion of arranging an exchange between a school in her constituency and a school in Poland, and there is no need for the brief to pursue this further.

(C. D. POWELL)

Tom Jeffery, Esq.,

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