

PRIME MINISTER

VISIT TO POLAND

I have had a word with Nicholas Bethell who has spoken during the afternoon to two or three leading members of Solidarity about the Polish government's decision to close the Lenin Shipyard in Gdansk. They take the view that this is not an economic decision but a political and personal decision against Solidarity. They are planning to hold a meeting in the Shipyard on Wednesday to decide whether or not to go on immediate strike and/or occupy the Shipyard. They are aware that this may cause difficulties for your Shipyard visit, but say they are living from day to day. Whatever happens, they hope you will go.

Nicholas Bethell added that his contacts are convinced that the timing of the decision is deliberate and connected to your visit. The Polish government are saying to the people in Poland: look, this is the sort of action your beloved Mrs. Thatcher would take. We are being Thatcherite. See how you like it.

C D P

MS

C. D. POWELL

31 October 1988

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