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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

From the Private Secretary

11 ^{NOV.} December 1988

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO POLAND

I enclose the signed copy of the Prime Minister's further message to General Jaruzelski, together with the text of her written statement to the House. I should be grateful if they could be telegraphed to Warsaw for delivery.

Charles Powell

Lyn Parker Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

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Friday 11th November 1988

(Answered by the Prime Minister on Friday 11th November)

UNSTARRED Sir Peter Blaker: To ask the Prime Minister,
No. 185 if she will make a statement on her recent visit
to Poland.

THE PRIME MINISTER

I visited Poland on 2-4 November and had very full and useful talks with General Jaruzelski and with Prime Minister Rakowski. In Warsaw I met Cardinal Glemp and a large number of representatives of independent political groups. I also laid wreaths at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and the grave of Father Popieluzsko. I unveiled a memorial to allied airmen who flew many sorties to drop supplies to the people of Warsaw during the Warsaw uprising.

I subsequently travelled to Gdansk, where General Jaruzelski and I laid a wreath at the Westerplatte Monument, marking the outbreak of the Second World War. While in Gdansk, I placed flowers at the shipyard workers memorial and met Mr Lech Walesa, the President of Solidarity, together with other members of the Solidarity leadership.

I am most grateful to the Polish Government for enabling me to carry out such a full and varied programme, and to meet spokesmen for so many different political points of view.

General Jaruzelski and Mr Rakowski informed me of the reforms being introduced in the Polish economy. They also expressed the hope that Round Table meetings with representatives of opposition groups would soon be possible. They wished to see closer relations between Poland and Britain, and hoped for British help in overcoming Poland's foreign indebtedness. Our talks also covered East/West relations and other international issues.

Leaders of the various independent political groups explained to me their views on the way forward. Mr Walesa indicated that Solidarity would be ready to take part in Round Table discussions with the Government on the basis of good faith and fairness, and stressed the importance of legalisation of Solidarity.

I told General Jaruzelski that there was a very great interest and sympathy for Poland in this country. We shared the hope for closer contacts and were ready to support economic reform in practical ways. At the same time I stressed that economic reform could not, in our view, succeed unless accompanied by steps to give people greater political freedom. Such freedom would incur greater responsibility. I believed that the international community would be ready to provide help once such reforms were introduced and an agreement with the IMF was in place.

This was an extremely interesting and valuable visit which I hope will lead to increased contacts in future and put Britain's relations with Poland on a firmer and more positive basis.

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From the Private Secretary

10 November 1988

PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO POLAND

I attach a revised answer to the Question from Sir Peter Blaker asking the Prime Minister to make a statement on her visit to Poland. I should be grateful for any comments by 1830 hours this evening.

Charles Powell

Lyn Parker Esq
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

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STATEMENT ON POLAND

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PRIME MINISTER'S
PERSONAL MESSAGE
SERIAL No. T172/88



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Subject cmaster
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10 DOWNING STREET
LONDON SW1A 2AA

THE PRIME MINISTER

11 November 1988

Dear General Jaruzelski.

I should like you to know that I reported fully to Cabinet on 10 November on my visit to Poland. My colleagues in the Government very much welcomed the visit and expressed great interest in the outcome, underlining the special place which Poland has for Britain. Cabinet was unanimous in believing that we should strengthen Britain's links with Poland and offer every encouragement in the tasks of reform and reconciliation which you described to me.

I enclose the text of a Statement which I made to the House of Commons on the outcome of the visit. May I also say that, should your travels bring you close to the United Kingdom, I very much hope that you will take the opportunity to visit London, so that we may continue our discussions.

With every good wish

Yours sincerely

Rafael Deliber

His Excellency General Wojciech Jaruzelski

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Prime Minister's
Visit to Poland

THE PRIME MINISTER said that her visit to Poland the preceding week had been a fascinating experience. General Jaruzelski had made it clear that she would be free to follow her own programme. No obstacles had been placed, for example, in the ^{way} of her visit to Gdansk or to the Church of the murdered Polish priest, Father Popieluszko, She had met the Polish Solidarity leader, Mr Lech Walesa, and a group of independents. She had been given an enormous welcome by the Polish people: 50,000 had turned out to meet her at Gdansk. Singing by packed congregations in the Solidarity church at Gdansk and in the church of Father Popieluszko, including ^{at Gdansk} of the second Polish national anthem, had been moving moments. It was clear that the Polish people hated communism.

That it had been possible for her to witness all this was a great advance. She had nevertheless had to walk something of a tightrope throughout the visit in her talks with the Polish Government on the one hand and with the Solidarity organisation on the other. Solidarity was much more than just a trade union: it was the focus of opposition to the Government and to communism. It was ironic that the Polish Government should be

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inviting Solidarity to sit down with them at a round table for talks, while declining to recognise them as a legal organisation. Mr Walesa himself was a very interesting and articulate man with a gift for expressing his political points well in ordinary language but neither he nor his team of advisers seemed to have a clear idea of their agenda for round table talks, beyond the ^{such} generalities ~~such~~ as trying to get the Polish Government to accept the need for a pluralistic society. She had therefore pressed Mr Walesa to devise a clear and precise agenda of demands of which it would be hard for the Polish Government to refuse, starting with the requirement that Solidarity should be recognised as legal. Mr Walesa had told her that Solidarity was insulted by the ^{MRU} ~~decision~~ to close the Lenin shipyard which they regarded not as an economic, but as a political, decision. ~~Coming in conjunction with the invitation to the round table it was little more than an insult.~~

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She had ^{act} found General Jaruzelski not sinister, ^{he was in fact} and quite easy to get on with. She had told him that as a politician he could not afford to ignore the groundswell of opinion which Solidarity

represented; and that rather than face strikes he would do better to legalise Solidarity, thus providing a proper outlet for dissenting views. He had made the point, which churchmen had confirmed to her separately, that there were extremist groups also associated^{ing} with the Solidarity cause who fomented trouble and caused some of the strikes by intimidation. It was clear to her that General Jaruzelski, who had a good relationship with the President of the Soviet Union, Mr Mikhail Gorbachev, was trying to do something for Poland. He had said that he was trying to follow some of Britain's economic policies. The difficulty was that, as in the Soviet Union, they were looking for the fruits of economic freedom without having to pay the price of the political freedoms that went with this. It had been clear to her, for example, from her talks with independents who knew about agriculture, that although 80 per cent of Polish agriculture was uncollectivised and remained in the hands of small peasants or yeoman^e farmers, these people were not free. They could not sell their land, or make purchases without permits; and they could not easily obtain equipment and were subjected to all manner of constraints.

The United Kingdom's position in Poland was not as well established as ^{that of} some other countries. This was partly still a legacy of the war, despite British help at the time of the Warsaw uprising (she had unveiled a memorial ^{there} ~~there~~ to Royal Air Force pilots), and ^{of} the sense that Britain had let Poland down at Yalta. Thus while the Government's robust stance vis-a-vis the Soviet Union was admired, there was some leeway to make up. General Jaruzelski had said that English was no longer the second language in Poland. Germany was present in greater force, and the Italians were not far behind.

In a brief discussion, it was noted that the Prime Minister's visit to Poland had been very successful but that the outlook for the Polish economy was very gloomy. The difficulty was that even if the Polish Government were to identify and implement the right economic measures, these in current circumstances would be likely to lead Solidarity to go on strike again.) Whilst agreement to an International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme would make it possible for the United Kingdom to help over such matters as debt

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rescheduling, the Polish Government still seemed a long way from that point. Poland still owed Britain money in respect of the abortive experiment over the Ursus tractor factory. There was no point in throwing good money after bad. Nevertheless every sensible opportunity should be taken to open matters up between Britain and Poland, such as the offer to take 200 management trainees, visits, management consultancies and trade on a firm-to-firm basis consistent with commercial prudence. It would be right to try to respond to General Jaruzelski's evident wish for a closer relationship with Britain. Legalising Solidarity and the engagement of genuine talks with them in the round table process might justify some British support for Poland at the IMF.