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LADY THATCHER'S VISIT TO POLAND

SUMMARY

1. LADY THATCHER'S PRIVATE VISIT INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH SUCHOCKA AND MAZOWIECKI AND A NUMBER OF PUBLIC APPEARANCES. BOSNIA AND THE NEED TO HELP THE DEMOCRATIC REFORM MOVEMENT IN RUSSIA WERE HER TWO MAIN THEMES BOTH IN PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, BUT NO NEW ELEMENTS IN THE BOSNIA CASE.

DETAIL

2. LADY THATCHER PAID A THREE DAY PRIVATE VISIT TO WARSAW FROM 16-18 APRIL. HER FULL PROGRAMME INCLUDED MEETINGS WITH PRIME MINISTER SUCHOCKA AND MAZOWIECKI, AND OTHER POLITICIANS: OPENING THE REFURBISHED HOTEL BRISTOL (A TRUSTE HOUSE FORTE JOINT VENTURE): OPENING THE MARGARET THATCHER FOUNDATION OFFICE IN WARSAW: A SPEECH TO THE NEW BRITISH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE IN POLAND AND POLISH BUSINESSMEN: AND A FASCINATING MEETING WITH MAREK EDELMAN, ONE OF THE FEW SURVIVORS OF THE WARSAW GHETTO UPRISING. SHE LAID A WREATH AT THE MONUMENT TO THE UPRISING, WHICH IS BEING OFFICIALLY COMMEMORATED TODAY, 19 APRIL, IN THE PRESENCE OF VICE PRESIDENT GORE AND PRIME MINISTER RABIN.

3. BOSNIA WAS A THEME IN MOST OF HER PRIVATE MEETINGS, AND IN HER SPEECHES AND PRESS INTERVIEWS. I DO NOT THINK SHE DEVELOPED ANY NEW IDEAS. HER MAIN POINTS WERE :

- THIS WAS A MORAL QUESTION AT THE HEART OF EUROPE. THE WEST COULD TAKE ACTION TO HALT THE KILLING OF THE INNOCENT IF ONLY THEY HAD THE WILL:
- THE ARMS EMBARGO SHOULD BE LIFTED SO AS TO GIVE THE BOSNIAN MUSLIMS A FAIR CHANCE, CONSISTENTLY WITH THEIR INHERENT RIGHT OF SELF-DEFENCE. (IN RESPONSE TO

SUGGESTIONS THAT AIR STRIKES WOULD NOT BE DECISIVE. LADY THATCHER ARGUED, BY ANALOGY WITH ALLIED SUPPORT FOR TITO DURING THE WAR AND GREECE DURING THE GREEK CIVIL WAR, THAT THE COMBINATION OF ARMS SUPPLIES AND SELECTIVE AIR STRIKES COULD BE SUCCESSFUL WITHOUT THE INTERVENTION OF GROUND TROOPS.)

- THE UN WAS BEING HUMILIATED. IT WAS WRONG TO PUT OFF VOTING ON A SANCTIONS RESOLUTION UNTIL AFTER THE RUSSIAN REFERENDUM (THOUGH IT WAS VERY IMPORTANT THAT YELTSIN SHOULD WIN, AND IT WAS RIGHT FOR THE WEST TO HELP HIM).

POLISH OFFICIAL INTERLOCUTORS DID NOT SERIOUSLY CONTEST HER POINTS BUT DID NOT ENDORSE THEM ALL EITHER. FOR THE MOST PART, THEY EXPRESSED GENERALISED CONCERN.

4. I ACCOMPANIED LADY THATCHER ON HER CALLS ON MS SUCHOCKA AND MAZOWIECKI. SHE WAS IMPRESSED BY SUCHOCKA'S GRIP AND DETERMINATION TO PUSH ON WITH THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAMME. HER DISCUSSION WITH MAZOWIECKI COVERED POLAND, RUSSIA, THE EC (WHERE SHE AGREED STRONGLY THAT THE COMMUNITY SHOULD OPEN ITS MARKETS MORE QUICKLY) AND NATO. LADY THATCHER AGREED WITH HIM THAT POLAND SHOULD BE INVITED TO JOIN THE ALLIANCE AND DISMISSED THE ARGUMENT ADVANCED BY SOME THAT THIS WOULD CREATE DIFFICULTIES IN RUSSIA'S RELATIONS WITH THE WEST. SURPRISINGLY SHE DID NOT EXPLORE IN ANY DETAIL MAZOWIECKI'S ROLE AS UN RAPPORTEUR ON HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA.

COMMENT

5. LADY THATCHER COMMANDS ENORMOUS RESPECT IN POLAND FOR HER POLITICAL ACHIEVEMENTS AND ESPECIALLY HER CONTRIBUTION TO THE TURNING BACK OF COMMUNISM. HER PUBLIC ENDORSEMENT OF MS SUCHOCKA WILL HAVE BEEN HELPFUL TO THE PRIME MINISTER. HER REFERENCES TO BOSNIA WILL ALSO HAVE HAD AN EFFECT IN BRINGING HOME THE TRAGEDY, BUT SOME OF HER LISTENERS WERE AWARE THAT THE ISSUES ARE MORE COMPLEX THAN SHE SUGGESTED. THE SAME APPLIES TO THE EC, WHERE HER STRICTURES ON MAASTRICHT WERE LISTENED TO POLITELY BUT WITHOUT EFFECT ON POLISH DESIRE TO JOIN THE COMMUNITY (IN WHATEVER FORM IT TAKES).

6. IT WAS VERY GOOD THAT LADY THATCHER WAS ABLE TO
COMMEMORATE THE 50TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE WARSAW GHETTO
UPRISING AS SHE DID.

LLEWELLYN SMITH

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