



From the Secretary of State

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~~Prime Minister~~

A.J.C. 16/3

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h.c.

15th March 1982

Dear Francis,

POLAND: THE BUCKLEY MISSION

Thank you for sending me a copy of your letter of 12 March to John Coles. My Secretary of State has seen this and asked me to convey his reactions.

The objectives of the United Kingdom team for the talks seem right, as is the proposal that our approach should be interrogative. However, my Secretary of State thinks it important that we should not give the Americans the idea that we are particularly receptive. We need to try to avoid a further round of unilateral American measures, while any "receptive" attitude could also too easily lead to building up commitments which in trade terms we would subsequently find costly to meet. The Americans too have a responsibility for maintaining the unity of the Alliance and, from what we have heard so far, seem unlikely to get much out of other European allies in this area. It would be better for us to adopt a strictly neutral stance.

Measures we have taken so far are intended to act as a signal to the Russians and the Poles without serious consequences for West European economic interests. As you know, my Secretary of State feels that we have already gone to the limit on this (if not further). What the Americans now appear to have in mind over changes in credit policy is inflicting significant economic damage to the Soviet Union with long-term aims quite apart from the Polish situation. We agreed in the 11 January NATO communique to reflect on long-term relationships, but to be receptive to the American proposals at this stage would imply an important change of policy for which we are by no means prepared. The credit issue needs to be considered in the context of the relationship as a whole. Ministers would then need to look carefully at all the implications of a change.

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As regards non-undermining, our intention was to maintain a link with United States flexibility over existing pipeline contracts. If the price for the latter is now to be a very restrictive line on credit, this could well prove too high. The Americans should understand that in such circumstances we would have to think again how far we are willing to go in meeting the non-undermining commitment. France, the Federal German Republic and Italy will almost certainly want to do this as well.

I am copying this to the recipients of your letter.

Yours Sincerely,
Jonathan Rees

J N REES
Private Secretary



17 FEBRUARY 1982

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