



FCS/82/62

HOME SECRETARY

Polish Refugees

1. Thank you for your letter of 3 April to Peter Carrington. I agree that we have to see this problem of Polish refugees in the broader context of our immigration policy as a whole and that our first priority must be the resettlement, should this become necessary, of those Poles already in the UK.
  
2. I note too that you consider that there would be an obligation upon us to participate in any general resettlement programme for Polish detainees. As you know, we have worked hard with our partners in the ten and in NATO to convey to the Polish Government the total unacceptability of pressuring detainees to leave their country, but no doubt some may choose to do so of their own accord. If such a resettlement programme becomes necessary I agree with you that the ICRC might be the most appropriate non-governmental authority for the processing of resettlement cases. I also agree that the application of some criteria for admission into the UK, such as those specified in your letter under reference, will be necessary. I shall keep you informed of developments and in particular of the need, if this arises, for further consideration of this aspect of the refugee problem.
  
3. As for the Austrian request, we had hoped as you know that we could adopt a somewhat more flexible approach. I note however from your letter that you feel we should stick to the guidelines suggested in your earlier letter of 20 January, with the additional requirement of satisfactory accommodation for refugees being guaranteed by the UK sponsor in advance of settlement.

/4. While I

Prime Minister

To note.

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Poland (2)



4. While I agree that the response you propose to the Austrian appeal may be the right one at the present time, I hope you will accept that the question of our priorities in this matter is something which will have to be kept under review in the light of developments in Poland and of the likely response of our partners. Although, as you point out, the latter's response to the Austrians has so far been unenthusiastic, we should not ignore the fact that several of our partners face a considerably larger number of requests for asylum from Poles already in their countries (the FRG alone has some 300,000 Poles temporarily resident in that country). If, as may happen, the number of requests for asylum in the UK, from Poles either in the UK or now in Poland, does not reach very high proportions, we may well come under considerable political pressure at home and abroad to do more both to help the Poles and to show that we are sharing the burden with our European partners.

5. I have also noted the Prime Minister's concern that we may have to take in a number of Falkland Islanders at some time, and accept that this is a factor which we shall need to bear in mind when we are reviewing the position.

6. In the circumstances, therefore, I agree that we should reply to the Austrians on the general lines that you propose, and I am instructing my officials to discuss with yours instructions to be sent to our Ambassador in Vienna. I hope that you can agree however that these instructions should include an indication of our readiness to keep this issue under review in the light of further developments. I also hope that on the question of an accommodation requirement in the UK,

/we would



we would be prepared to interpret this flexibly (for example, if the Polish emigre community was prepared to organise reception provision) provided the charge did not fall on HMG.

7. I agree with your proposal for publicizing this decision and have instructed my officials to pursue this point with yours at the same time they prepare instructions for the Ambassador in Vienna.

8. I am copying this letter to the Prime Minister, Members of H Committee and Sir Robert Armstrong.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'FP', written in a cursive style.

(FRANCIS PYM)

Foreign and Commonwealth Office  
19 April 1982