



Poland. (2)

Prime Minister

To note.

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Treasury Chambers, Parliament Street, SW1P 3AG

Rt Hon Francis Pym MC MP
Secretary of State
Foreign & Commonwealth Office
Downing Street
London SW1A 2A1

21 May 1982

Francis,

POLISH REFUGEES

Thank you for your minute of 11 May.

I remain concerned about the risks to public funds attaching to the admission of Polish Refugees now in Austria. It would seem that, by our acceptance that Poles temporarily resident here can remain, and very likely be joined by dependents, we have already contributed, as we promised in the NATO declaration, to the solution of the problem of Poles now abroad; and it is by no means clear that all our European partners have themselves responded positively to the Austrians' appeal for help. What is more, although you do not mention it in your minute, we have to face the possibility of having to receive refugees from Argentina.

I am prepared, nevertheless, to agree that our Ambassador should tell the Austrian Government that we are prepared to receive Poles in Austria who fulfil the criteria the Home Secretary has proposed, so long as there is reasonable assurance of long-term accommodation. It should be made clear to the Austrians, however, that we might need to reconsider the position at any time. We should not, I accept, publicly set a quota, but we should review the matter collectively after we have taken 100 refugees from Austria, the limit set by those of our partners who have so far responded. We should in any case review our commitment at the time when, as previously agreed, we look again at the arrangements that have been made for possible Falkland evacuees.

A reply in the terms I have suggested would, I recognise, be little more than a gesture, but you have already said that the numbers likely to qualify for acceptance under the Home Secretary's criteria would be extremely small. I therefore hope that you can accept my qualified form of agreement to your proposals.

LEON BRITTAN

20 MAY 1992

