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From the Private Secretary

20 July 1988

Dear Sir,

I had lunch today with the Polish Ambassador, who was accompanied by Mr. Matuszewski. The purpose was to talk about the Prime Minister's visit to Poland. Mr. Matuszewski played a prominent part in the conversation, frequently interrupting to put the Ambassador right or to stop him when he digressed too much into history.

Much of the conversation was taken up with assurances about the determination of the Polish authorities to make a success of the visit and the warmth of the reception the Prime Minister would receive. We rather circled round each other on the subject of Gdansk, but the Ambassador and Mr. Matuszewski finally came clean and admitted they were aware of the Prime Minister's recent letter to General Jaruzelski. I took them through the reasoning behind the request for a visit to Gdansk. This led the Ambassador into a long disquisition on the subject of the damage done by Solidarity to the Polish economy. This was eventually interrupted by Mr. Matuszewski who said that the Ambassador's comments were beside the point. Obviously a visit to Gdansk was a sensitive matter for the Polish government and only General Jaruzelski could decide upon it. Personally he thought there were arguments both ways. I stressed how much importance the Prime Minister attached to going to Gdansk. Without this, the visit as a whole would be diminished. But I did not give any impression that we were likely to cancel it if the Poles refused to include Gdansk in the programme.

In short, I do not think we are much further forward.

*Yours sincerely,
Chris Powell*

(C. D. POWELL)

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