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Poland V

Otan Secret

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Délégation
Permanente de la Belgique
auprès du
Conseil du Pacte Atlantique Nord
à Bruxelles

Bruxelles, le 10 avril 1981.

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Annexe : 1.

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Monsieur le Secrétaire Général,

Comme suite à l'exposé que j'ai fait ce matin au Conseil sur l'association de certains pays non-membres de l'OTAN aux mesures à prendre en cas d'intervention brutale en Pologne, j'ai l'honneur de vous faire parvenir, en annexe à cette lettre, la photocopie de la note qui a été adressée par le Ministre-Conseiller de l'Ambassade de Nouvelle Zélande au Ministère des Affaires Etrangères de Belgique et qui résume les préoccupations de son Gouvernement en matière de sanctions économiques contre l'Union Soviétique.

Veillez agréer, Monsieur le Secrétaire Général, l'assurance de ma très haute considération.

M. VAN USSEL
Ambassadeur
Représentant permanent de la
Belgique auprès de l'OTAN.

A S.E. Monsieur Joseph M.A.H. LUNS
Secrétaire Général de l'Organisation
du Traité de l'Atlantique Nord

1110

BRUXELLES

Otan Secret

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8 April 1981

Dear Mr Rens,

When I saw you last week I undertook to let you have a general account of the attitude New Zealand would adopt towards the Soviet Union in the event of a Soviet invasion of Poland.

New Zealand has reflected the same concern felt by Belgium and other Nato members about the situation in Poland. In this connection I attach two statements made by our Prime Minister, Rt. Hon. R.D. Muldoon. We are fully prepared to play our part in any Western response to a crisis and to act quickly to implement agreed political actions. In a number of respects this would mean simply continuing to maintain the current policy towards the USSR which has been in force since the invasion of Afghanistan. From that time, all high-level political, diplomatic, economic and cultural exchanges have been suspended and, for other reasons pre-dating Afghanistan, neither New Zealand nor the USSR has an Ambassador in the other's capital.

Following the Afghanistan invasion, a number of economic measures were also taken against the USSR: limits, which are still in force, were imposed on the export of barley and a ban was placed on maize. Other agricultural exports are being kept under review with "normal or currently anticipated levels of trade" as a guideline. Finally, a very sharp cut was made to the Soviet fishing allocation in New Zealand's exclusive economic zone, an area of considerable importance to the USSR in the bilateral economic relationship. Despite Soviet approaches, this has not been restored.

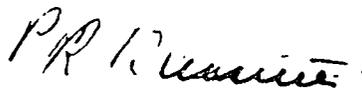
Having adopted these measures, the scope for New Zealand to take further action is strictly limited and it is in this connection that the suggestion of a full embargo placed on agricultural exports to the USSR is of considerable concern to New Zealand. It is an action which New Zealand must view in the light of its overall export earning capacity, bearing in mind also the importance which the Soviet Union has come to have as an export market as a result of our having to diversify away from more traditional markets, especially in the EEC. (The USSR is New Zealand's fifth largest export market (\$251 million), as well as a major purchaser of wool (14 percent of exports), mutton (76 percent of exports) and a significant buyer of butter and barley (60,000 tonnes of the latter commodity).)

Mr A. Rens,
Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Otan Secret
2 Quatre Bras,
BRUSSELS

As I indicated above, New Zealand imposed selective measures in its agricultural trade following the invasion of Afghanistan and those measures remain in force. We imposed them, however, against a background of considerable scepticism about their effectiveness which we have not sought to hide in our exchanges with the United States and other friendly countries. We do not believe that agricultural trade sanctions are effective because they can be easily circumvented. Nor would they, in our view, cause the Soviets to change their policies or even penalise them to any great extent. On the other hand, they would cause great harm to a country such as New Zealand which is dependent upon agricultural commodity exports to a degree exceeding any other Western country, and exposed because of the Soviet Union's role as a major buyer of certain products. (A withdrawal from the Soviet market would also have considerable implications on price levels of commodities in other markets.) Finally, we suspect that a food trade embargo would fall disproportionately heavily on the unsubsidised agricultural exporters such as New Zealand.

I hope that this elaboration of the New Zealand attitude will be helpful to you.

Yours sincerely,



(P. R. Bennett)
Minister

Enclosures

poland

the following statement was issued by the prime minister on 8 december:

commenting upon today's white house press release concerning soviet intentions in regard to poland, the prime minister, the right hon r d muldoon, said that the new zealand government shared the concern of the united states and other western countries over reported developments on the polish border. "any repeat, in poland, of the unhappy events which took place less than a year ago in afghanistan, would constitute a most serious threat to world peace," mr muldoon said. "without delay, the soviet union should heed the warnings of the western world and guarantee poland's right to manage its own affairs free from the threat of external interference. nothing less than that will reassure the international community including the many new zealanders who regard themselves as friends of the polish people."

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poland (u/l)

prime minister released following statement on 30 march:

poland

i have been asked by the polish association of new zealand to state the government's views of the present situation in poland. i do so against the background of information received by the government which confirms recent press reports that the tensions between the polish government and the solidarity movement have again escalated seriously over the possibility of a general strike in poland. i repeat what i said last december when the situation was thought to be equally serious. any action by poland's warsaw pact neighbours which went beyond the internationally recognised norms for relations between sovereign states would be unacceptable to new zealand, as it would be to the vast majority of united nations members. poland's friends must accept its right to sort out its political and economic problems free from the threat of external military intervention. they must act with sympathy and restraint, as i believe the european community and the united states have done. outside interference would solve none of poland's problems but it would raise grave new issues for the world at large.

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