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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRIME MINISTER

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Mr. Podoski has just been in to see me, on instructions from his Government. He had been informed that Count Raczynski, the Polish Foreign Minister, had yesterday seen General Vanier and had enquired whether the Canadian Government would be willing to assume the protection of Polish interests in the U.S.S.R. if such a request were made to it by the Polish Government. Before seeing General Vanier, Raczynski had had a talk with Eden, who was reported to be "sympathetic" to the suggestion that Canada might be asked to look after Polish interests. I told Podoski that we had not yet received any report from General Vanier on the conversation to which Count Raczynski had referred in his telegram to the Polish Minister here, but that we had today received a telegram from our Minister in Kuibyshev, informing us, in strictest confidence, that the Australian Government had decided to represent Polish interests in the Soviet Union. This information would indicate that a practical solution of the problem had already been found. In the circumstances, we were both rather puzzled as to why Podoski had been instructed to approach the Canadian Government and why the Polish Ambassador in Washington was to be instructed to make similar enquiries there.

I told Podoski, confidentially, that consideration had been given to the answer that might be returned if the Polish Government should ask the Canadian Government to protect Polish interests in the Soviet Union, and that it was the general feeling that our new, small and inexperienced Legation in Kuibyshev was not in a position to discharge such duties. I told him, however, that I would report our conversation to you and that you would probably wish to consider it with your colleagues. He was anxious that his enquiries this afternoon should not be regarded as a formal request from the Polish Government that Canada assume protection of Polish interests.

The Polish Minister left with me a set of "Accusations and Facts", information which was issued by the Polish Government, rebutting the specific charges made against the Polish Government by the Soviet authorities. I said I would be interested in seeing them, but thought it would be very undesirable to have the debate about Polish-Russian relations thrashed out on the radio or in the press in this country while efforts at mediation were under way. He said he had himself been careful to avoid any controversial or even political statements since diplomatic relations between Poland