

N A T O C O N F I D E N T I A L

P. A. Sub - Registry

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To: Director of Private Office

cc: Director, Economics Directorate
Secretary, IMS

From: ASG for Political Affairs

Subject: Poland

Summary

1. The crisis over the Polish Presidency has deepened. The Party is caught in a cleft stick. On the one hand, they cannot force their preferred candidate, Jaruzelski, to withdraw his decision not to run: on the other, they are unable to assess the strength of likely support for Kiszczak in the National Assembly. Yesterday one of the Solidarity leaders (Michnik) suggested that Solidarity should agree to support a communist candidate for the Presidency in return for the right to form a Solidarity government. The Polish military have since warned against any attempt by the opposition to take over the sources of power from the Party. A spokesman for Gorbachev has said the Soviet Union would maintain relations with any elected government in Poland.

Detail

2. The PZPR have created a power vacuum in Poland by their inability to decide on a candidate for the new-style Presidency, following Jaruzelski's announcement on 30 June that he did not intend to run, largely because public opinion associated him with martial law rather than with the line of reform. His recommendation that General Kiszczak be nominated by the Party instead was apparently received with no enthusiasm by the PZPR Parliamentary group. Neither the opposition nor the small coalition parties showed any inclination to take the Party's decision for it.

3. The latter have thus made it difficult for the Party to assess the strength of likely support for Kiszczak, even though it is well recognised that he is the only other candidate with the political and military qualifications for the job. Some members of the opposition might be ready to vote for Kiszczak if this were necessary to secure his election, but the majority would probably oppose either General.

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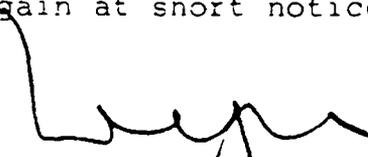
4. A senior member of the Solidarity leadership, Adam Michnik, yesterday published an article in the opposition Gazeta Woborcza in which he proposed that Solidarity should agree to support a PZPR candidate for the post of the country's President in return for the right to form a Solidarity government. To judge from their most recent statements, other Solidarity leaders such as Jacek Kuron and Lech Walesa, remain cautious about the idea: Walesa's view was that Solidarity should wait and prepare for free elections in 1993, "when we would be ready to take power".

5. Meanwhile, the Military Council of the Polish Defence Ministry has issued a statement warning against any attempt by the opposition to take over the sources of authority and power in the country from the PZPR. This may be a warning shot at Solidarity radicals such as Michnik who, unlike Kuron and Walesa, does not believe that a Solidarity government should necessarily leave the Ministries of Defence and the Interior in communist hands. However, it must also reflect a more general concern by the Polish military authorities (who are still the guarantors of Poland's internal security) at the country's gradual slide into political chaos since the elections of 4 and 18 June.

Comment

6. This may be a crucial week for Poland's political future. The current crisis could hardly have come at a worse time, with the Warsaw Pact Summit beginning on 7 July and President Bush due to arrive in Poland on 9 July. However, though the crisis is a more fundamental one than that of 1980-81 - if only because the communists have effectively voted themselves out of power - on the evidence so far we do not believe that Poland is facing any external threat. The Soviet Union is taking its now customary neutral stance on political crises in Eastern Europe. Questioned yesterday in Paris, Gorbachev's foreign policy advisor, Zagladin, said: "This is a domestic matter for our Polish friends to decide. We will maintain relations with any elected government in Poland".

7. As you know, Poland was the subject of an instructed discussion in the Political Committee last week at which the current political and institutional impasse was foreseen. We shall raise the matter in the Committee again today in the hope of obtaining fresh information, as well as to signal the possible need to discuss the situation again at short notice.


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