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Délégation du Canada
Auprès de l'O.T.A.N.

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

REPORT FROM THE CANADIAN EMBASSY, WARSAW

POLISH ROUND-TABLE: POLITICAL REFORM

P.A. Sub - Registry
File N° 19-10-01

(Poland).

SUMMARY: POLITICAL TABLE IS FINALIZING AGREEMENT DEFINING RESPECTIVE ROLES OF LOWER CHAMBER OF NATL ASSEMBLY, AND OF NEW SENATE AND PRES. OUTSTANDING ITEMS INCLUDE PERCENTAGE OF VOTES REQUIRED IN LOWER CHAMBER TO OVERRIDE SENATORIAL VETO, AND WORDING OF SECTIONS OF AGMT DESCRIBING CIRCUMSTANCES UNDER WHICH PRES CAN DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT. AMIDST DISCUSSION OF DETAILED AGMT IS SPECULATION THAT SOME POLISH SYMBOLS MAY BE ALTERED TO REFLECT RE-DESIGNING OF POLISH STATE.

2. REPORT: AS ROUND-TABLE TEAM ON POLITICAL REFORM MOVES TOWARD FINALIZATION OF AGREEMENT ELABORATING CONFIGURATION OF NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURES, COMPROMISES HAVE BEEN ACHIEVED IN NBR OF AREAS. NEW UPPER HOUSE OF POLISH PARLIAMENT (STILL BEING CALLED SENATE FOR LACK OF ANY BETTER TERM) WILL BE EMPOWERED TO REVIEW LEGISLATION ON ANY SUBJ INITIATED BY LOWER CHAMBER, ALTHOUGH PERCENTAGE OF VOTES REQUIRED IN LOWER CHAMBER TO OVERRIDE SENATORIAL VETO REMAINS AT ISSUE. SENATE WILL ALSO BE ABLE TO INITIATE LEGISLATION. WHILE FORMERLY 10

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SENATORIAL SEATS ORIGINATING FROM QUOTE NATL LIST UNQUOTE WERE TO BE IN ADDITION TO THOSE 100 SEATS FREELY-ELECTED, IT IS NOW AGREED THAT THEY WILL IN FACT FORM A PART (IE ONE-TENTH) OF THE SENATE. (OPPOSITION WAS OFFERED SOME SEATS ON PRE-SELECTED NATL LIST BUT, DISAGREEING IN PRINCIPLE WITH CONCEPT, REFUSED.)

3. PRESIDENTIAL POSN WILL STILL WIELD LARGE AMT OF POWER, BUT TENTATIVE AGMT HAS BEEN REACHED WHICH WILL ONLY ALLOW PRES TO DISSOLVE PARLIAMENT UNDER THREE CONDITIONS: (1) THAT PARLIAMENT IS UNABLE TO FORM A GOVT WITHIN THREE MONTHS; (2) THAT GOVTS 5-YEAR PLAN IS NOT/NOT APPROVED; AND (3) THAT ASSEMBLY VOTES IN FAVOUR OF WITHDRAWAL FROM WSAW PACT. WORDING OF THIRD CONDITION IS, UNDERSTANDABLY, CAUSING SOME HEARTBURN AMONG THOSE ATTEMPTING TO DRAFT POLITICAL TEAM AGMTS, BUT IS AGREED IN PRINCIPLE. PARLIAMENT IS ALSO EXPECTED TO BE SITTING ON ALMOST PERMANENT BASIS, SO AS TO AVOID EMPLOYMENT OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE, WHICH CAN ONLY BE USED WHEN PARLIAMENT IS NOT/NOT IN SESSION. ELECTIONS TO SENATE WILL NOW ALSO TAKE PLACE IN TWO STAGES, TO BE HELD ONCURRENTLY WITH THOSE FOR THE LOWER CHAMBER. (THIS WAS OPPOSITION DEMAND, WHICH ARGUED THAT TWO-STAGE ELECTIONS WOULD PROVIDE FOR MORE DEFINITE MAJORITY THAN WOULD FIRST-PASS-THE POST SYSTEM.)

4. WHILE POLITICAL TEAM FINALIZES NUTS AND BOLTS OF OPERATION OF NEW POLITICAL STRUCTURES, THERE IS ALSO SPECULATION THAT NAME OF POLAND ITSELF MAY BE CHANGED IN FUTURE, TO SIMPLIFY QUOTE RZECZPOSPOLITA POLSKA UNQUOTE, OR POLISH REPUBLIC. DISCUSSION HAS EVEN ENSUED AMONG

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NORMALLY CONSERVATIVE CONTACTS WITHIN GOVT CIRCLES (AS WELL AS OPPOSITION) AS TO POSSIBILITY/DESIRABILITY OF RE-CROWNING POLISH EAGLE. FACT THAT POLAND WILL NOT/NOT BE RULED BY MONARCH IS APPARENTLY IRRELEVANT; CROWN IS DEEMED TO SIGNIFY FULL POLISH SOVEREIGNTY.

5. WHILE NEXT POLISH PARLIAMENT MAY WELL BOG DOWN QUICKLY IN MORASS OF CONCERNS OVER INFLATION, DEBT AND MARKET SITUATION, FOR MOMENT IT APPEARS SKY IS THE LIMIT FOR RE-DESIGNING POLISH STATE.