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(Poland)

Subject: Internal Situation in Poland;
 Dialogue between the Leadership and the Opposition.

1. There are a number of indications that the Polish leadership as well as the opposition and independent catholic circles are at present prepared to enter into a dialogue in order to try to overcome the country's difficult crisis jointly. This development began during the strikes in May of this year from which - also according to their own opinion - none of the sides emerged as the victor. This encouraged the view that it was necessary to make substantive concessions to the other side in the interest of one's own cause. The result is that both sides have stretched out some cautious feelers, and the intensification of these contacts can be expected after the summer break.
2. A first clear signal was sent out by the leadership in the form of one of the decisions taken by the 7th Central Committee plenum of the Polish United Worker's Party which took place on 13 and 14 June 1988. It said there that it would be one of the most important tasks of the development of the Polish political system "to enrich the form in which power is exercised by the development of the coalition formula" beyond the traditional sphere (PUWP, bloc parties, christian organizations which support the system) to include new partners who are "prepared to participate in the efforts of reform and reconciliation". In his speech before the Sejm on the occasion of Gorbachov's visit on 11 July, Jaruzelsky said: "We do not ask anybody where he comes from or what he believes; we only want to know: what are you

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prepared to do that is useful for Poland." Other members of the leadership have recently spoken along similar lines, such as Central Committee Secretary Czyrek to a number of Members of the European Parliament from the European People's Party, Central Committee Secretary Ciosek in an background talk with western correspondents at the beginning of this month and the Sejm member Wojna on several occasions.

3. No agreement seems so far to have been achieved within the leadership on the real form which is to be given to the extended possibilities for participation. However, there will hardly be any doubt that authentic representatives of the opposition and independent catholics cannot be lured with possibilities for "participation" which, in the final analysis, only impose a share of the responsibility on them. The following political changes and innovations are at present under discussion:

- the establishment of a catholic/christian-democratic party with a firm number of seats in the Sejm;
- the liberalization of the law on associations;
- the creation of additional consultative bodies at various levels;
- the modification of the electoral law applying to the next Sejm elections;
- the creation of a second chamber of the Sejm;
- the selection of cadres more on the basis of qualifications than on party membership.

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4. The foundation of an authentic - i.e. approved by the episcopate - catholic or christian-democratic party before the next Sejm elections (i.e. the summer or the autumn of 1989) is not likely to stand any great chance of success. Leading representatives of catholic lay organizations (KIK, ZNAK), such as Stelmakhovsky, Vielowiejsky, Turowicz, reject the hasty setting-up of such a party "from above". The representatives of the pro-leadership christian groups in the Sejm (PAKS, CHSS, PZKS) are also reserved since they fear - not unreasonably - for their sinecures. The ODIS group has its position midway between these two orientations. It is led by the former independent Sejm member Zablocki, who is also a member of the consultative council. He is said to harbour the most serious ambitions for the creation of such a party. However, he made it clear in a recent talk that negotiations with the leadership on such a step would only be meaningful in the context of a broad dialogue on pluralism also in other fields (especially as far as the trade unions are concerned) and would also require the consent of the Polish episcopate in order to have a chance for success.

The liberalization of the law on associations which the leadership has announced for a date before the end of this year is probably the most likely way to introduce a process of political participation of opposition and catholic groups. The latter circles confirm this themselves; this is at the same time one of the major demands of the Polish episcopate. The development of independent political, religious and social groups and formations, starting at the local level, would enable both sides to meet each other half way without losing too much face. A christian party or an independent trade union - this is the concept of the opposition - could form the final stage of this development.

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A public opinion poll recently carried out by the government-owned public-opinion research institute for internal information purposes is said to have indicated that, in free elections, about 40 % of the voters would vote for such a catholic, christian-democratic party. The form in which the law on association will be changed will be of considerable importance. The opposition has been included in talks about this subject.

The other proposals for political reforms are, for the most part, viewed with scepticism. In view of the failure of the attempt to reform the electoral law for the most recent local and regional elections, the opposition does not expect too much from the announced modification of the electoral law. The change of the cadre policy would be a protracted process which would be difficult to control. The proposal to set up a second chamber in the Sejm is still vague. The creation of new consultative bodies is dismissed as a pseudo-democratic manoeuvre as long as they are not placed in the context of additional reforms.

5. The readiness of at least parts of the leadership for a genuine dialogue and for substantive concessions is regarded as credible by large parts of the opposition. This is also in line with a changed attitude on the part of leading opposition representatives and independent catholics. An article recently published by the leading KIK member A. Vielowiejsky and by the Solidarity adviser R. Bugaj said that "in spite of all the risks involved in supporting the changes which are now being introduced by the leadership: an alternative which would better serve the national interest is not in sight". A number of meetings have taken place in recent weeks between members of the leadership (Viosek, Czyrek, Wojna) and prominent members of the

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opposition (Walesa adviser Geremek, KIK President Stelmakhovsky, the philosopher Szaniavsky, among others) at which the conditions for possible cooperation were discussed. In their article, Vielowiejsky and Bugaj mentioned the following conditions for cooperation: at least a minimum of trade union pluralism, freedom of association, freedom to state one's opinion including freedom of the press, democratic election procedures.

The opposition has made it clear that additional meetings are only meaningful if the leadership provides practical evidence of its readiness for political changes. This might be done, for example, by the permission to establish political clubs at the local level which has already been applied for.

6. The delicate process which has been set in motion in Poland can be upset already by minor disturbances. The experience of the years 1980 and 1981 continues to represent a serious burden; members of the opposition ready for compromise solutions and the reformers in the party are being watched with mistrust by their respective hardliners. It is still not easily imaginable that the party will allow others to participate in its power. On the other hand, the ball is in its court: already at the present time, it is constantly compelled to make far greater political allowances than any other ruling socialist party; already now, there are a growing number of political and social groups - up to and including overtly-working factory groups of "Solidarity" - which do not even wait until they have received permission to work. Time is short, but the circumstances for a national dialogue are still favourable.