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SUBJECT: THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT'S FIRST  
HUNDRED DAYS  
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*(Poland)*

SUMMARY: POLISH DEVELOPMENTS IN THIS REMARKABLE YEAR WERE THE FIRST TO PUSH THE LIMITS TO CHANGE FAR BEYOND WHAT ANYONE HAD IMAGINED POSSIBLE, EMBOLDENING OTHER NATIONS TO DEMAND EVEN MORE. THE NEWLY-VICTORIOUS NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT OF POLAND HAS PURSUED A GRADUAL REVOLUTION LEAVING ROOM FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE DEFEATED, AND THEREBY ACHIEVING AN HISTORICALLY UNIQUE PEACEFUL TRANSITION FROM ONE POWER ELITE TO ANOTHER. THE PROCESS BEGUN DURING THIS GOVERNMENT'S FIRST HUNDRED DAYS IS A GRADUAL DECONSTRUCTION OF THE COMMUNIST-DESIGNED EDIFICE, USING THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. FOR THE MOMENT, THE CENTER OF THIS PROCESS IS A HUGELY COMPLEX AND FAR-REACHING PACKAGE OF ECONOMIC MEASURES DESIGNED TO TRANSFORM THE POLISH ECONOMY IN AN AMAZINGLY SHORT TIME. THE GOVERNMENT'S DETERMINATION TO ACCOMPLISH SUCH A FEAT HAS WON APPLAUSE IN THE US AND THE IMF. ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE POLISH GOVERNMENT HAS PURSUED POLICIES DESIGNED TO LEAD TO FULL PLURALISM AND DEMOCRATIZATION OF POLITICAL LIFE. THE FIRST POLITICAL AGENDA ITEM IS THE TRANSFORMATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, LEADING TO ELECTIONS IN JUNE. THOSE ELECTIONS, IN WHICH SOME 100,000 COMMUNISTS WILL BE REMOVED FROM ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, WILL MARK THE TOTAL TRANSFORMATION OF POLISH POLITICAL LIFE. BY THAT TIME AS WELL, THE POLICE AND MILITARY WILL HAVE BEEN LARGELY DEPOLITICIZED. DESPITE THE BROAD HISTORICAL SCOPE OF THESE DEVELOPMENTS, MANY POLES ARE MORE IMPRESSED BY THE SEEMINGLY GREATER VICTORIES ELSEWHERE, AND MORE DEPRESSED BY THE INCREASING HARDSHIPS AT HOME. THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS NOT SHOWN ITSELF TO BE A GOOD COMMUNICATOR, NOT LEAST BECAUSE ITS SPOKESMEN CARRY A MESSAGE THE PEOPLE DO NOT WANT TO HEAR. IN THE MOST RECENT ATTEMPT, PRIME MINISTER MAZOWIECKI APPEARED ON TELEVISION ON CHRISTMAS EVE. HE SHOWED HIMSELF AGAIN TO BE A DEEPLY RELIGIOUS MAN OF ENORMOUS GOODWILL, FOR WHOM MOST POLES HAVE GREAT RESPECT. WITH THESE STRENGTHS AND FEW OTHERS, MAZOWIECKI USED RELIGIOUS SYMBOLISM TO APPEAL TO THE NATION FOR PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING. END SUMMARY.

HOW HAS THE FIRST NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN EASTERN EUROPE PERFORMED IN ITS FIRST HUNDRED DAYS? THE ANSWER TO THAT QUESTION DEPENDS LARGELY UPON WHO IS SPEAKING. OPINIONS DIFFER. MANY, INCLUDING LECH WALESZA, EXPRESS IMPATIENCE WITH

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NATO CONFIDENTIAL

- 2 -

THE SLOW PACE OF CONCRETE NEW STEPS; MANY ALSO VOICE REAL ANXIETY OVER WHAT THEY KNOW WILL BE HARD TIMES AHEAD; MANY FEEL THAT THE NEW GOVERNMENT HAS DONE A POOR JOB OF CONVEYING ITS VISION AND ITS PLANS FOR THE COMING TRANSITION PERIOD. BUT MOST REMARKABLY IN A COUNTRY FULL OF STRONG INDIVIDUALS AND HAVING AN ABIDING DISTRUST OF RULERS, THE PEOPLE OF POLAND EXPRESS NEARLY UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT, ADMIRATION AND SYMPATHY FOR PRIME MINISTER MAZOWIECKI -- A DILIGENT, TIRED MAN WHOSE INTEGRITY IS UNQUESTIONED -- AND PATIENCE FOR THE COMING

THE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS OF THE NON-COMMUNIST GOVERNMENT IN POLAND SPAN A PERIOD OF ASTONISHING REVOLUTION THROUGHOUT EASTERN EUROPE. THIS MULTI-STATE REVOLUTION HAS BOTH ARISEN FROM THE NEW POLITICAL ARRANGEMENT IN POLAND AND EXCEEDED IT IN PACE AND INTENSITY. IN THE DISTANT PAST OF FOUR MONTHS AGO, THE QUESTION ON EVERYONE'S LIPS WAS WHERE WERE THE LIMITS OF CHANGE? WHAT CONSTRAINTS REMAINED? POLAND ANSWERED THAT QUESTION WHEN, TO THE DISBELIEF OF MANY AND THE AMAZEMENT OF ALL, THE ENTRENCHED RULING ELITE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND ITS RELATED MACHINERY VOLUNTARILY YIELDED TO THE FORCES OF HISTORY AND RELINQUISHED POWER. IT WAS ONE OF THE FEW TIMES IN HUMAN HISTORY THAT SUCH PRIVILEGE AND POWER HAD BEEN RELINQUISHED WITHOUT BLOODSHED. PART OF THE ARRANGEMENT THAT MADE SUCH A PEACEFUL REVOLUTION POSSIBLE WAS THE ROUND-TABLE AGREEMENTS CONCERNING THE PRE-COOKED, PARTLY-FREE ELECTIONS AND THE PERCEIVED NEED OF THE MOMENT TO RETAIN SOME COMMUNISTS IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT. PRECISELY BECAUSE OF THAT COMPROMISE, A FIGHT TO THE DEATH WAS AVOIDED. BECAUSE OF THAT COMPROMISE, THE WAVERING LIMITS TO CHANGE WERE PUSHED FAR BACK, BEYOND WHAT HAD BEEN THOUGHT POSSIBLE. IT WAS LARGELY BECAUSE OF THIS SUCCESS, WHICH AT THE TIME SEEMED GENUINELY REVOLUTIONARY, THAT OTHER NATIONS WERE EMBOLDENED TO DEMAND EVEN GREATER AND MUCH MORE RAPID CHANGE. TWO OF THE GREAT IRONIES OF THIS PROCESS ARE THAT POLAND HAS BECOME THE ROCK OF STABILITY AND MODERATION IN EASTERN EUROPE, AND THE POLISH PARLIAMENT, ELECTED IN EASTERN EUROPE'S FIRST LARGELY FREE ELECTIONS, SEEMS DESTINED SOON TO BECOME THE ONLY PARLIAMENT IN THE REGION WITH A LARGE COMMUNIST REPRESENTATION. RELATED TO THIS LAST IRONY IS THE COMPROMISE ARRANGEMENT WHEREBY REMNANTS OF THE OLD ELITE RETAINED KEY POSITIONS IN THE GOVERNMENT AS MINISTERS OF DEFENSE AND INTERIOR.

A GRADUAL REVOLUTION  
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IN THE CONTEXT OF EASTERN EUROPEAN DEVELOPMENTS, MODERATION IS THE HALLMARK OF THE NEW POLISH GOVERNMENT. THIS COMES AS NO SURPRISE TO THOSE WHO KNOW PRIME MINISTER TADEUSZ MAZOWIECKI. AMONG THE FORMER OPPOSITIONISTS, MAZOWIECKI WAS

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

-3-

NOTED FOR HIS CAUTIOUS, DELIBERATE, AND MODERATE APPROACH, COMBINED WITH AN OFTEN INFURIATING DISCRETION THAT SEEMED EXCESSIVELY SECRETIVE. THESE QUALITIES MADE MAZOWIECKI A VALUED AND SUCCESSFUL MEDIATOR WHO MANAGED TO APPEAR NEARLY UNBIASED WHILE HE WAS IN FACT STRONGLY COMMITTED TO THE SOLIDARITY MOVEMENT. JUST AS CONDITIONS LAST SUMMER COMPELLED A BALANCED SOLUTION TO THE POLITICAL CRISIS LEAVING ROOM FOR THE SURVIVAL OF THE DEFEATED, THEY ALSO COMPELLED THE SELECTION OF A MAN LIKE MAZOWIECKI TO FORGE THE NEW "GRAND COALITION." FEW HAD ANTICIPATED THAT SELECTION, BUT WHEN IT WAS MADE, IT SUDDENLY APPEARED INSPIRED. IT WAS NO ACCIDENT THAT HE WAS THE CHOICE OF BOTH LECH WALESZA AND WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI.

ONE OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTIVES OF THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT WAS TO CREATE THE POLITICAL CONDITIONS IN WHICH THE REMNANTS OF THE FORMER REGIME WOULD BECOME COMMITTED TO THE SURVIVAL OF THE NEW. SOLIDARITY'S PARLIAMENTARIANS SPOKE OF THE NEED TO AVOID THE "AFGHANISTAN SYNDROME" IN WHICH THE POLITICALLY DEFEATED COMMUNISTS WOULD SEE NO ALTERNATIVES OFFERED BY THE NEW ORDER OTHER THAN A VIOLENT DEFENSE TO THE LAST MAN. EVENTS IN ROMANIA HAVE SHOWN HOW FAR THIS COULD HAVE GONE IF THE COMMUNISTS HAD FELT PERSONALLY AND MORTALLY THREATENED. ALSO, IT REMAINS OBVIOUS THAT THE NEW POLISH GOVERNMENT, FACING ENORMOUS ECONOMIC CHALLENGES, COULD NOT HOPE TO FIGHT A HOSTILE BUREAUCRACY AS WELL. AND LASTLY, IT WAS FREELY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT SOLIDARITY SIMPLY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH PEOPLE AND EXPERTISE TO REPLACE THE ENTIRE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES, EVEN IF SUCH WHOLESALVE DESTRUCTION OF THE OLD ORDER HAD BEEN POLITICALLY POSSIBLE.

THE RESULT OF THESE FACTORS HAS BEEN A CAUTIOUS AND GRADUALIST APPROACH TO CONTROLLED REVOLUTION, REVEALED MOST CLEARLY BY THE MODEST PERSONNEL CHANGES THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT. BENEATH THE LEVEL OF MINISTER, MANY MINISTRIES HAVE GONE NEARLY UNCHANGED THROUGHOUT THESE FIRST HUNDRED DAYS. THE MINISTRIES OF DEFENSE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS OBVIOUSLY HAVE BEEN SUBJECTED TO ONLY MODEST CHANGES (ALBEIT STILL IMPORTANT ONES) SINCE THEY REMAIN IN COMMUNIST HANDS, BUT MOST OTHER MINISTRIES ALSO REMAIN LARGELY AS THEY WERE. FOR EXAMPLE, THE MINISTRY OF LABOR AND SOCIAL POLICY, UNDER JACEK KURON, THE MINISTER WITH PERHAPS THE FIRREST AND MOST RADICAL REFORMIST CREDENTIALS, HAS EXPERIENCED ALMOST NO CHANGES. WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ONE NEW DEPUTY MINISTER AND SEVERAL NEW "ADVISERS," KURON HAS BEEN CONTENT TO WORK WITH MOST OF THE STAFF LEFT OVER FROM THE PREVIOUS REGIME. HE HAS TOLD US THAT THESE PEOPLE, LIKE MANY OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT AT ALL LEVELS, HAVE PROVEN TO BE SURPRISINGLY ADAPTABLE, AND OFFER THE FURTHER ADVANTAGES OF BEING TRAINED AND COMPETENT. THIS TENDENCY ESTABLISHES THAT THE NEW

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

- 4 -

GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH HAS BEEN CORRECT IN THIS AREA; THAT THE OLD IS SERVING THE NEW, AND THAT BOTH HAVE DEVELOPED COMMON INTERESTS.

EVEN THOSE MINISTRIES THAT HAVE SEEN MORE CHANGES AT THE TOP LEVELS, SUCH AS THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, NEVERTHELESS HAVE NOT FUNDAMENTALLY ALTERED THE REST OF THE MINISTERIAL STRUCTURES AND STAFFS. IN SEVERAL MINISTRIES AND CABINET-LEVEL OFFICES, PARTICULARLY THOSE DEALING WITH THE ECONOMY, THE NEW ARRANGEMENT REFLECTS THE COALITION POLITICS SO OBVIOUS IN THIS GOVERNMENT'S APPROACH. ALTOGETHER, THIS CAUTION THROUGHOUT THE GOVERNMENT, FORCED BY BOTH POLITICAL TACTICS AND LACK OF RESOURCES, INCREASINGLY IS COMING UNDER ATTACK FROM MANY FORMER OPPOSITIONISTS WHO NOW SEE FAR MORE SWEEPING AND IMMEDIATE PERSONNEL CHANGES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES. EVEN THOUGH PZPR (COMMUNIST) LEADERS SEE INCREASING SIGNS OF POLITICAL RETRIBUTION THREATENING THOSE WHO HAD SERVED THE FORMER REGIME, OTHERS SEE THE OPPOSITE. MANY OF SOLIDARITY'S PARLIAMENTARIANS IN PARTICULAR, PRESSED BY THEIR ANTI-COMMUNIST CONSTITUENTS, ARE BECOMING IMPATIENT WITH THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT'S GRADUALIST APPROACH. THIS PRESSURE FOR MORE RAPID CHANGE WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AS THE PZPR DISINTEGRATES, ECONOMIC HARDSHIPS MOUNT, AND THE NEED TO LAY BLAME BECOMES MORE COMPELLING.

DECONSTRUCTION RATHER THAN DEMOLITION  
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THE SECOND DELIBERATE PROCESS OF CHANGE BEGUN BY THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT DURING THE PAST 100 DAYS IS THE GRADUAL DECONSTRUCTION OF THE COMMUNIST-DESIGNED EDIFICE. BRICK-BY-BRICK THE STRUCTURE OF STATE CONTROL OF POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC LIFE IS TO BE DISASSEMBLED THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, GUIDED BY THE METHODICAL HAND OF THE NEW REGIME.

FOR THE MOMENT, THE CLEAR FOCUS OF THE DECONSTRUCTION/RECONSTRUCTION PROCESS IS THE ECONOMY. DURING THE PAST 100 DAYS, THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT, USING THE SEEMINGLY LIMITLESS ADVICE FROM FOREIGN EXPERTS, HAS DESIGNED A PROCESS THAT IS TO GUIDE A TRANSFORMATION FROM A CENTRALLY STATE-CONTROLLED ECONOMY TO A WESTERN-STYLE ECONOMY SUBJECT TO MARKET FORCES OVER A REMARKABLY SHORT TIME SPAN. IN SEPTEMBER, THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT NOT ONLY TOOK OVER AN ECONOMY BADLY IN NEED OF STRUCTURAL REFORM, IT WAS ALSO FORCED TO DEAL WITH AN ADDITIONAL MENACE -- NEW TO THE POLISH SCENE -- HYPERINFLATION. THE PREVIOUS REGIME HAD DEALT WITH LABOR UNREST BY GRANTING LAVISH WAGE SETTLEMENTS AND COVERED BUDGETARY GAPS BY PRINTING LOTS OF EMPTY ZLOTYS. THE NEW LEADERS ACTED QUICKLY AND DECISIVELY. IN HIS FIRST TEN DAYS

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

- 5 -

IN OFFICE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND FINANCE MINISTER BALCEROWICZ OUTLINED A BOLD PLAN OF ACTION DESIGNED TO REIN-IN INFLATION (WHICH SURPASSED 50 PERCENT PER MONTH IN OCTOBER AND REACHED AN ANNUALIZED RATE OF 900 PERCENT) IN THE SHORTRUN AND TRANSFORM THE ECONOMY'S UNDERLYING STRUCTURE IN THE MEDIUM TERM. BALCEROWICZ TOOK THE PLAN TO THE IMF/WORLD BANK MEETINGS IN WASHINGTON IN LATE SEPTEMBER WHERE IT DREW RAVE REVIEWS, THEN RETURNED HOME TO SELL THEM TO HIS OWN PARTY AND COUNTRY IN OCTOBER AND HAS SINCE STEADILY CARRIED OUT THE FIRST STEPS OF IMPLEMENTING IT. THE PROGRAM DEMURS FROM MAKING UNREALISTIC PROMISES -- BALCEROWICZ EMPHASIZES THAT THE TIME FOR PRETENDING IS OVER -- RATHER IT OFFERS THE HOPE OF PUTTING THE ECONOMY ON A SURE FOOTING AFTER A PERIOD OF HARDSHIP.

ONE OF THE MOST INTERESTING PHENOMENONS TO WATCH IN THIS PROCESS HAS BEEN SOLIDARITY'S APPROACH TO INDEXATION -- WHICH IT HAD BATTLED HARD FOR AT THE ROUND TABLE. AN INDEXATION LAW WITH AN 80 PERCENT FLOOR AND NO APPARENT CEILING WAS THE FIRST LAW PASSED BY THE NEWLY RECONSTITUTED BICAMERAL PARLIAMENT IN EARLY AUGUST. BY LATE SEPTEMBER SOLIDARITY LEGISLATORS HAD MOVED TO CURB INDEXATION BENEFITS BY MAKING 80 PERCENT A CEILING AND THE PROGRAM FOR 1990 CALLS FOR SCALING INDEXATION BENEFITS BACK MUCH FURTHER AS THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT DEALS WITH BEATING BACK INFLATION AS ITS TOP PRIORITY. BUT INDEXATION IS NOT THE ONLY EXAMPLE OF THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT'S WILLINGNESS TO STAKE ITS POLITICAL CAPITAL ON ITS ECONOMIC PROGRAM. IT HAS ALLOWED A NUMBER OF PRICES FOR KEY ITEMS TO RISE -- BY SHUTTING DOWN SUBSIDIES -- ONE OF THE MAIN UNDERLYING CAUSES OF INFLATION. FOR EXAMPLE, A TRAM OR BUS RIDE NOW COSTS FOUR TIMES WHAT IT DID IN AUGUST, THE COST OF GASOLINE HAS GONE UP FIVE FOLD, FOOD IS MUCH HIGHER AND NEXT WEEK COAL AND RELATED ENERGY PRICES WILL BE FIVE TIMES HIGHER. THE POLISH POPULACE -- WHICH HAS TOPPLED GOVERNMENTS OVER MUCH SMALLER INCREASES IN THE PAST -- SEEMS TO BE ACCEPTING THE SITUATION.

WHILE MOST OF THE EARLY FOCUS HAS BEEN ON STABILIZATION, POLAND IS NOW ABOUT TO EMBARK ON AN UNPRECEDENTED INSTITUTIONAL TRANSFORMATION OF MONUMENTAL PROPORTIONS. IN ITS SECOND HUNDRED DAYS POLAND WILL INTRODUCE DRAMATIC CHANGES WHICH AMONG OTHERS INCLUDE A CONVERTIBLE CURRENCY, POSITIVE REAL RATES OF INTEREST, CAPITAL MARKETS, A GENUINE BANKING SYSTEM, THE DEMISE OF MONOPOLIES, PRIVATE OWNERSHIP OF INDUSTRY AND PROPERTY, A SIMPLIFIED TAX SYSTEM, A BALANCED BUDGET AND A SOCIAL SAFETY NET. AN ECONOMIC EXPERIMENT OF THIS MAGNITUDE HAS NEVER BEEN CARRIED OUT BEFORE ANYWHERE. TO ACCOMPLISH THIS, PARLIAMENT IS CURRENTLY DEBATING NO LESS THAN 11 NEW LAWS, AND 7 RELATED RESOLUTIONS. WHAT WILL EMERGE IS A NEW SYSTEM OF FOREIGN CURRENCY, MUCH MORE OPEN FOREIGN TRADE,

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

-6-

A DIFFERENT PATTERN OF OWNERSHIP OF ENTERPRISES AND PROPERTY, A SIMPLIFIED TAX REGIME AND PRICES REFLECTING REAL COSTS AND WORLD MARKET CONDITIONS. THE PROGRAM WILL ALSO INTRODUCE SUCH ENTIRELY NEW PHENOMENA TO POLAND AS BANKRUPTCY AND UNEMPLOYEMENT, TO NAME JUST A COUPLE.

GIVEN A CHOICE BETWEEN IMPLEMENTING ITS PROGRAM IN GRADUAL STAGE AND DOING IT WITH ONE "BIG BANG" THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT HAS OPTED FOR THE LATTER COURSE. ITS APPARENT PERCEPTION IS THAT THE POPULACE WILL ENDURE HARDSHIP FOR A TIME (IN EXCHANGE FOR A REAL FUTURE) BUT NOT INDEFINITELY. REFORMS THAT DRAG OUT WILL ONLY EAT INTO ITS CREDIBILITY, IN ITS VIEW. THE GOP IS RISKING ITS SUCCESS IN ONE OR TWO AREAS HOPING THIS WILL PROVIDE ENCOURAGEMENT TO RIDE OUT THE STORM. SPECIFICALLY, IT HOPES TO HAVE MONTHLY INFLATION RATES DOWN TO SINGLE DIGITS BY SPRING AND MAINTAIN A CONVERTIBLE ZLOTY AT A STABLE RATE.

THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS HAVE WON APPLAUSE AND PLEDGES OF TANGIBLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM MULTILATERAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS AND FROM OTHER GOVERNMENTS. IN WHAT HAD TO BE ONE OF THE MOST DIFFICULT PROGRAMS IT HAS EVER WORKED OUT, THE IMF HAS AGREED TO A STAND-BY PROGRAM WITH POLAND; IMF MANAGING DIRECTOR CANDESSUS TRAVELED TO POLAND IN DECEMBER AND BECAME ONE OF THE PROGRAM'S MOST VOCAL ADVOCATES. IT IS EXPECTED THAT SUBSTANTIAL WORLD BANK ASSISTANCE WILL FOLLOW IN 1990. FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS HAVE ANNOUNCED SEVERAL BILLION DOLLARS IN AID PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE SOON TO BE IMPLEMENTED BILLION DOLLAR STABILIZATION LOAN TO SUPPORT THE CONVERTIBLE ZLOTY.

WHILE THE GOVERNMENT DESIGNED ITS ECONOMIC PROGRAM, LARGELY BEHIND CLOSED DOORS, SOME IN THE PARLIAMENT AND ELSEWHERE BECAME IMPATIENT WITH THE APPARENTLY SLOW PACE OF CHANGE. WHEN THE PACKAGE OF LEGISLATION WAS PRESENTED TO THE PARLIAMENT AND THE SCOPE OF THE TASK BECAME CLEAR, LECH WALESZA ISSUED A STATEMENT IN WHICH HE PROPOSED GRANTING SPECIAL POWERS TO THE GOVERNMENT IN ORDER TO ASSURE THAT THESE AND OTHER MEASURES COULD BE ENACTED WHILE AVOIDING THE PROTRACTED LEGISLATIVE PROCESS. THIS SURPRISING PROPOSAL AT A SURPRISING TIME REPORTEDLY GALVANIZED THE GOVERNMENT INTO PUSHING HARDER TO GET THE PROGRAM THROUGH THE SEJM. AS THIS IS BEING WRITTEN, THE SEJM IS MEETING IN A FOUR-DAY MARATHON SESSION, DRIVEN BOTH BY GOVERNMENT PRODDING AND THE OBJECTIVE REQUIREMENTS OF GETTING THE NEW MACHINERY IN PLACE.

ON THE POLITICAL SIDE, THE PROCESS IS ONE OF GRADUAL PLURALIZATION IN WHICH NEW PARTIES ARE EMERGING WHILE THE OLD DETERIORATE GRADUALLY OR COLLAPSE OF THEIR OWN WEIGHT. THE GOVERNMENT'S ROLE HAS BEEN TO REMOVE ITSELF FROM THE PROCESS,

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

- 7 -

NEITHER ENCOURAGING NOR DISCOURAGING THE NATURAL SELECTION OF THE FITTEST. SEVERAL PIECES OF LEGISLATION RECENTLY INTRODUCED IN THE SEJM, DESIGNED TO LIBERALIZE POLITICAL PARTY FORMATION AND ACTIVITY WHILE NEVERTHELESS KEEPING SOME GOVERNMENT CONTROL OVER THE PROCESS, WERE REJECTED BY THAT BODY. THE MOST SIGNIFICANT STEP IN THE REMOVAL OF GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT HAS BEEN THE GOVERNMENT'S DECISION TO HALT ALL OFFICIAL SUBSIDIES TO THE FORMALLY SANCTIONED PARTIES, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME DENYING SUCH SUPPORT TO THE NEWLY DEMOCRATIC ONES AS WELL. AGAIN WITH THE HALLMARK OF MODERATION, THE GOVERNMENT ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT IT WOULD NOT SEEK TO TAKE AWAY FROM THE PZPR AND THE OTHER ESTABLISHED PARTIES THE PROPERTY AND INCOME-PRODUCING ENTERPRISES THAT THEY HAD ACQUIRED DURING 40 YEARS OF COMMUNIST CONTROL. THIS MODERATION AS WELL HAS COME UNDER ATTACK BY MANY OF THE FORMER OPPOSITION, WHO CHARGE THAT THE PROPERTY SHOULD BE RETURNED TO THE STATE. EVEN WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT THERE IS SOME LEGALISTIC SNIPING AT THE POLICY. THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, FOR INSTANCE, HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL SEEK TO REGAIN SOME 700 PROPERTIES THAT ONCE BELONGED TO THE MINISTRY, BUT HAD BEEN "OCCUPIED" BY POLITICAL FORCES, MEANING THE PZPR. CRITICISM OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MODERATE APPROACH TO THIS ISSUE WILL NO DOUBT INCREASE, ESPECIALLY AFTER THE PZPR'S JANUARY CONGRESS WHICH REPORTEDLY WILL CREATE A NEW AND MUCH SMALLER "LEFTIST" PARTY. POLITICAL PRESSURES TO REMOVE THE PARTY'S VAST PROPERTIES AND RESOURCES FROM ITS GRIP WILL MOUNT.

ALSO AT THE TOP OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT'S POLITICAL AGENDA IS THE NEED TO TRANSFORM THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, MAKING IT MORE DEMOCRATIC AND GIVING TO IT MORE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LOCAL INITIATIVE AND FINANCING. IT HAS BEEN DECIDED THAT THIS PROCESS OF REDESIGNING LOCAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS MUST BE COMPLETED BEFORE LOCAL ELECTIONS CAN BE HELD. BECAUSE IT IS NOW COMMONLY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THERE ARE INSURMOUNTABLE PRESSURES TO HOLD THOSE ELECTIONS IN JUNE AT THE LATEST, THERE IS MUCH URGENCY IN DESIGNING THE NECESSARY LEGISLATION AND PRESSING IT THROUGH THE SEJM. THE DRAFTING WORK IS NOW UNDERWAY, BUT THE SEJM, WITH ITS NEW-FOUND SIGNIFICANCE AND FREEDOM OF ACTION, HAS DEVELOPED A LOVE FOR THE DEMOCRATIC PROCESS THAT MAKES IT DIFFICULT TO HASTEN ITS DELIBERATIONS. THE GOVERNMENT, TOGETHER WITH SOLIDARITY'S PARLIAMENTARY LEADERSHIP, WILL HAVE TO PRESS VIGOROUSLY TO HASTEN THIS PROCESS.

DISMANTLING THE FORMER STRUCTURES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT MAY PROCEED AT A PACE CONSISTENT WITH MAZOWIECKI'S DELIBERATE INSTINCTS, BUT THE NATURE OF THE RECONSTRUCTION ONCE IT IS ACCOMPLISHED WILL LEAVE NO ROOM FOR MODERATION. ALSO, THE RESULTS OF THE LOCAL ELECTIONS THAT WILL FOLLOW CLOSE ON THE HEELS OF THAT RECONSTRUCTION WILL OF NECESSITY BRING ABOUT AN

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

- 8 -

END TO THE CAUTIOUS AND MODERATE PERSONNEL POLICIES OF THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT. ON ELECTION DAY IN JUNE, POSSIBLY AS MANY AS 100,000 COMMUNISTS WILL BE THROWN OUT OF OFFICE BY THOSE WHO KNEW THEM BEST, THEIR LOCAL "CONSTITUENTS." THIS IS THE POINT AT WHICH POLAND'S POLITICAL LIFE WILL INDEED HAVE BEEN TOTALLY TRANSFORMED. THOSE COMMUNISTS WHO HAVE NOT ADAPTED TO THE NEW REALITY WILL BE REMOVED, STARTING AT THE BOTTOM, AND THE NON-VIOLENT, DEMOCRATIC PURGE WILL BE COMPLETE. THE PROCESS THAT BEGAN WITH THE DRAMATIC ELECTIONS OF JUNE 1989 WILL HAVE CULMINATED IN JUNE 1990 WITH THE DEFEAT OF NEARLY ALL REMNANTS OF THE FORMER REGIME AT THE PROVINCIAL AND LOCAL LEVELS.

BY THAT TIME AS WELL, THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR'S "FORCES OF REPRESSION" WILL HAVE BEEN LARGELY DEPOLITICIZED OR REMOVED ALTOGETHER. THAT PROCESS IS WELL UNDERWAY. THE HATED "ZOMO" RIOT SQUADS HAVE BEEN DISBANDED, THE MILITIA HAS BEEN UNIONIZED (WITH ASSISTANCE FROM SOLIDARITY) AND MINISTER OF INTERIOR CZESLAW KISZCZAK HAS FORMALLY PROPOSED TO THE PRESIDENT THE FORMATION OF A NATIONAL POLICE FORCE WITH TRADITIONAL NORMAL POLICE FUNCTIONS. MILITIA OFFICERS THEMSELVES, IN A NEARLY FRANTIC EFFORT TO BE PERCEIVED AS PROFESSIONAL, APOLITICAL AND RESPECTED, HAVE BEEN PUBLICLY RESIGNING FROM THE PZPR IN BLOCKS. IN A STARTLING TELEVISED IMAGE OF THE TRANSFORMATION UNDERWAY, SOLIDARITY'S FLAMBOYANT PRIEST, FATHER HENRYK JANKOWSKI EVEN CELEBRATED A MASS OF "RECONCILIATION" WITH UNIFORMED MILITIA OFFICERS AND THEIR WIVES PARTICIPATING.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE ARMY IS ALSO BEING TRANSFORMED INTO A FORCE THAT SERVES THE NATION RATHER THAN A POLITICAL PARTY. STRUCTURAL CHANGES WITHIN THE ARMY, THE DISINTEGRATION OF THE PARTY IT WAS ONCE SEEN TO SERVE, AND EVEN THE ROMANIAN ARMY'S RECENT ROLE AS SAVIOR OF THAT NATION ALL CONTRIBUTE TO THIS TRANSFORMATION PROCESS. MOST IMPORTANT, HOWEVER, IS THE DETERMINATION OF PRESIDENT JARUZELSKI TO BRING ABOUT A GENUINE DEPOLITICIZATION OF THE INSTITUTION WHICH HE HEADS. EVEN THE SOLIDARITY FIGURES MOST HOSTILE TO THE JARUZELSKI OF THE PAST ACKNOWLEDGE THAT JARUZELSKI'S ANNOUNCED INTENTION IN THIS REGARD IS AUTHENTIC. THE MOST COMPELLING URGE FOR THE PRESIDENT IS NOT TO DEFEND AN ALREADY FAILED PAST OR TO PRESERVE SOME REMNANTS OF FORMER SOCIALISM, RATHER IT IS TO "CORRECT" THE JUDGMENT OF HISTORY ON HIM PERSONALLY. THIS FACTOR IS DEFINING ALL HIS PRESENT ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE TRANSFORMATION OF THE CHARACTER OF THE ARMED FORCES.

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

NATO CONFIDENTIAL

- 9 -

SALESMANSHIP POOR, BUT IMPROVING  
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WITH AN EYE ON THE HISTORICAL SWEEP OF EVENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE, IT IS NOT DIFFICULT TO SEE POLAND'S DECISIVE PLACE IN THE DRAMA. THE "GRAND COALITION" OF THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT, WITH ITS COMPROMISES, MODERATION, NON-CONFRONTATIONAL TACTICS, AND SELF-IMPOSED LIMITS, PROVIDED THE CRITICAL LINK BETWEEN THE OLD SYSTEM AND THE NEW. WITH THE IMPRESSIVE VICTORIES NOW IN HAND, IT SEEMS HARD TO FIND FAULT WITH THOSE WHO LAUNCHED THE FIRST SUCCESSFUL ASSAULT. NEVERTHELESS, MANY POLES DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY. THEY ARE BOTH MORE IMPRESSED BY THE SEEMINGLY GREATER VICTORIES ELSEWHERE, AND MORE DEPRESSED BY THE INCREASING HARDSHIPS AT HOME. WHAT LITTLE THEY KNOW OF THE ANTICIPATED PAIN AHEAD OF THEM HEIGHTENS THEIR ANXIETY RATHER THAN STEELING THEIR RESOLVE.

ONE OF THE PERMANENT TENETS OF THOSE SEEKING DEMOCRATIC REFORMS IN POLAND WAS THAT ONLY A REPRESENTATIVE GOVERNMENT COULD CONVINCE THE POPULATION TO TOLERATE THE DISCOMFORT AND SACRIFICE INEVITABLE IN A TRANSITION TO PLURALISM AND A MARKET ECONOMY. WITH SUCH A GOVERNMENT NOW IN PLACE, THE EFFORT BY THAT GOVERNMENT TO COMMUNICATE THE NEW REALITY HAS BEEN LESS THAN A TOTAL SUCCESS, PARTICULARLY IN THE COUNTRYSIDE.

THE MAN ON THE STREET, TO THE EXTENT WE HAVE AN ACCURATE UNDERSTANDING OF THE COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS, SEEMS TO BE CRITICAL OF THE GOVERNMENT'S INABILITY OR UNWILLINGNESS TO TELL THE POLISH PUBLIC WHAT IT IS DOING AND WHY. IN PARTICULAR, PEOPLE ARE UNCOMFORTABLE AND OCCASIONALLY ANGRY BECAUSE THEY DO NOT KNOW WHAT PRICE THEY WILL BE EXPECTED TO PAY. THE MID-DECEMBER APPEARANCE OF DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER LESZEK BALCEROWICZ ON TELEVISION TO OUTLINE AND THEN SELL THE GOVERNMENT'S ECONOMIC PLAN HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF SPECIAL CRITICISM. IN WHAT WAS BILLED IN ADVANCE AS A MAJOR ADDRESS, BALCEROWICZ APPEARED UNCOMFORTABLE, HARRIED AND INARTICULATE. ALTHOUGH KNOWN (CORRECTLY) FOR HIS INTELLIGENCE AND CREATIVITY, BALCEROWICZ FAILED TO COMMUNICATE HIS COMPLEX PLAN IN A WAY THAT EVEN EDUCATED POLES COULD UNDERSTAND. TO THIS FAILURE WE MUST ALSO ADD THE GENERAL DISINCLINATION OF THE POLISH PEOPLE TO HEAR, AND THUS TO UNDERSTAND, A MESSAGE THAT WILL PROVE TO BRING SO MUCH DISCOMFORT.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS LARGELY FAILED TO APPRECIATE THE POLITICAL POWER OF TELEVISION, AND FAILED TO PREPARE ITS SPOKESMEN ADEQUATELY. (THIS IS IRONIC IN VIEW OF LECH WALESZA'S IMPORTANT VICTORY IN THE NOVEMBER 1988 "DEBATE" WITH ALFRED MIODOWICZ, SEEN BY AN ESTIMATED 25 MILLION POLES.) ONE MAJOR SUCCESS DURING THE PAST 100 DAYS IN THIS CRITICALLY IMPORTANT INTERACTION WITH THE POPULACE IS JACEK KURON'S WEEKLY

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-10-

TELEVISION "CHAT." HIS TALKS, LIKE HIS WORKMAN'S ATTIRE, ARE SEEMINGLY ILL-PREPARED FOR TELEVISION BROADCASTS, BUT KURON'S OBVIOUS SINCERITY AND DOWN-TO-EARTH COMMON LANGUAGE MAKE HIM IMMEDIATELY ACCEPTABLE AND UNDERSTANDABLE TO THE AVERAGE POLE -- ESPECIALLY TO HIS TRADITIONAL TRADE UNION CONSTITUENCY.

ON CHRISTMAS EVE, MAZOWIECKI HIMSELF APPEARED ON TELEVISION TO ASK THE POLISH PEOPLE TO BEAR THE FUTURE BURDENS WITH PATIENCE AND UNDERSTANDING. HE ACKNOWLEDGED THAT MANY OF THE GOVERNMENT'S MEMBERS AND FRIENDS HAD BEEN PRESSING HIM TO MAKE AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE FOR JUST SUCH A PURPOSE. THIS PRESSURE WAS MOTIVATED BY AN APPRECIATION FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S GENUINE POPULARITY, CONFIRMED BY RECENT PUBLIC OPINION POLLS. NEARLY 90 PERCENT OF THE ADULT POPULATION SYMPATHIZES WITH MAZOWIECKI'S EFFORTS. IN HIS TV ADDRESS, MAZOWIECKI CHARACTERISTICALLY APOLOGIZED FOR HIS "INTRUSION" INTO PRIVATE HOMES ON SUCH A HOLY DAY AND, WITH AN APPEAL FOR COMPASSIONATE SHARING, HE BROKE A TRADITIONAL BLESSED CHRISTMAS WAFER AND SYMBOLICALLY SHARED IT WITH HIS MILLIONS OF VIEWERS.

THIS ACT OF A RELIGIOUS MAN AS A POLITICAL LEADER EPITOMIZED A FUNDAMENTAL TRUTH OF THE POLISH DRAMA, A TRUTH UNIQUE AMONG THE COUNTRIES OF EASTERN EUROPE: RELIGIOUS FAITH PERMEATES THIS NATION. IT DEFINES SOME OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF MANY IN PUBLIC LIFE AND HAS, FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE ORIGINAL SOLIDARITY ERA, GUIDED THAT NON-VIOLENT MOVEMENT. EVEN THE SUPPRESSION OF SOLIDARITY IN 1981 WAS ACCOMPLISHED WITH MINIMAL VIOLENCE AND FEW DEATHS. ALTHOUGH NEVERTHELESS TRAGIC, THAT SUPPRESSION CANNOT BE COMPARED WITH HUNGARY IN 1956, CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968, OR ESPECIALLY ROMANIA IN 1989. THE COMPARATIVE ABSENCE OF VIOLENCE THROUGHOUT THE PROTEST ERA IN POLAND, RESULTING FROM THE MODERATING ROLE OF THE CHURCH AND THE STRENGTH OF RELIGIOUS FEELING, MADE THE PEACEFUL REVOLUTION POSSIBLE HERE AND, BY EXTENSION, ELSEWHERE.

A CHRISTMAS EVE APPEAL FOR SHARING IS, IN THIS CONTEXT AND FROM THIS PRIME MINISTER, NOT JUST QUAIN T SENTIMENTALITY. IT IS HOW A MAN OF CONSCIENCE IN A NEWLY DEMOCRATIC WORLD SEEKS TO BRIDGE HIS NATION FROM SOCIALISM FORCED EGALITARIANISM TO THE COMPETITION OF A FREE MARKET AND A FREE SOCIETY. THE HARDSHIPS CANNOT BE BORNE BY THE GOVERNMENT, BUT BY THE PEOPLE THEMSELVES, UNINHIBITED, BUT UNAIDED. THIS IS THE MESSAGE SOLD BY THE MAZOWIECKI GOVERNMENT DURING ITS FIRST 100 DAYS, AND WITH THAT NEW REALITY IN MIND, THE POLISH PEOPLE WILL CONFRONT THE NEW YEAR.

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