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REPORT FROM THE CANADIAN EMBASSY, WARSAW

NEW POLISH CABINET: A DELICATE BLEND

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In presenting his list of candidates for ministerial posts, Prime Minister Mazowiecki has accepted the need for balance and compromise from all players in the formation of the so-called Fourth Polish Republic. The four groups (Solidarity, PUWP, UPP and DP) will each have one vice-premiership combined with a ministerial portfolio. In addition, Solidarity has nine cabinet posts, UPP has three, DP one and PUWP four. (Poland)

The only survivors of the previous cabinet were General Czeslaw Kiszczak (Vice-Premier and Interior Minister) and General Florian Siwicki (retaining Defence). In addition, the PUWP will hold the Ministries of Transport and Communications (Adam Wieladek), Foreign Economic Cooperation and a post of Minister without Portfolio. For the PUWP this is a favourable mix. The Interior and Defence posts are important in terms of stability and relations with Moscow; the Transport and Communications post fits well from a security and defence standpoint. Should it perform well in the post of Foreign Economic Cooperation (the current nominee being Marcin Swiecicki) it may have the opportunity to recoup some of its badly-shattered credibility. Swiecicki, while a member of the PUWP, has good Solidarity connections (especially Trzeciakowski) and should be able to work with Solidarity ministers in other economic portfolios.

The UPP, predictably, will retain the troubled agriculture sector and is also nominated to high-profile posts attracting much public interest, namely Justice (Alexander Bentkowski) and Environment (Bronislaw Kaminski). As an interesting counterpoint to Justice post, UPP has also received nomination for Health (Andrzej Kosiniak-Kamysz); both of the latter posts could prove tricky if, as expected, the question of abortion legislation is resurrected in the near future. (Having both of these posts in the hands of UPP should allow Solidarity to distance itself from this volatile issue).

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The Democratic Party may be in a position to gain some credit. Jan Janowski, a knowledgeable engineer, will head up the Office of Technological Development in addition to being Vice Premier. The responsibility for the troubled domestic market (Aleksander Mackiewicz) could either provide a sound fillip for DP or the death knell, depending on the status of this troubled sector over coming months.

It is Solidarity, however, that has taken the lion's share of economic portfolios. Leszek Balcerowicz as Vice-Premier will hold Finance and is expected to take the lead for the government economic policy as a whole (some observers regard Balcerowicz as brilliant but also rather provocative and deliberately controversial). Jacek Kuron, who this time last year was considered part of the "destructive opposition" will now take on concomitant responsibilities for juggling pressures from the trade unions with social upheavals accompanying economic reform. Aleksander Paszynski, who served as the Solidarity representative on the round-table sub-team on housing, will continue to wrestle with seemingly insurmountable shortages in this sector. And Witold Trzeciakowski, who authored Solidarity's plan for economic renewal from the safety of Opposition benches must now preside over the Economic Council. Tadeusz Syryjczyk will head Industry. If a few months ago the question was whether Solidarity was willing to accept the responsibility for Poland's economic development, the question now is whether it can survive such a heavy repast of economic problems. Solidarity has also underlined the priority it places on democratization of the grassroots by designing and claiming the post of Minister of Territorial Government (Jerzy Reguiski). By using local elections and the power of appointment, Reguiski will try to reduce the nomenklatura's position in local communities.

Surprisingly, the post of Foreign Minister has not gone to either PUWP or Solidarity but in a clear compromise move has been offered to an academic, formally unaffiliated with either camp. It is also noteworthy that there will be no Minister for Religious Affairs.

Further reflections of Mazowiecki's delicate balancing act can be anticipated in future appointments to the assortment of boards and commissions. Mazowiecki, however, appears to have set the tone of a new administration already, combining the need for stability and balance with the perceived necessity for Solidarity itself to head the drive for economic reform.