

19-10-01 (Poland).

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

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To: Director of Private Office

cc: Director, Economics Directorate
Secretary, IMS
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From: ASG for Political Affairs

Subject: Polish elections

Summary

1. Unofficial results show a Solidarity landslide: no "national list" candidates are likely to be elected. The coalition has been humiliated, but is committed to continuing the round table process. Solidarity seems anxious to help soften the blow and to enable dialogue to continue, though Walesa may now be keen to press home the opposition's advantage. There could be constitutional problems in setting up the new Parliament. Given the size of their success, the opposition will have to take increasing responsibility for what happens in Poland.

Detail

2. Though the final official results are not expected until tomorrow, it is clear both from Solidarity's figures and from government statements that the "Citizens' Committee" (ie Solidarity candidates have swept to victory in the overwhelming majority of seats they were allowed to contest. Majorities in the 70-80% range are the norm. In the Sejm (460 deputies), Citizen's Committee candidates have won all the 160 "independent" seats in the first round. Many coalition seats (where none of the candidates gained the required 50%) will have to go to a second round. In the Senate, which is freely elected, Solidarity candidates have captured 93 of the 100 seats: they can also contest the remainder in a second round.

3. The "national list" (10% of the Sejm), reserved for senior coalition figures, has been a disaster for the government. Walesa's call for the electorate to vote for those on the list who supported the round table has been largely ignored. Standing unopposed, national list candidates had to achieve 50% of the valid votes cast to be elected to the Sejm: so far, none have done so and there is no second round for them. Those who did consistently badly include the defence minister, General Siwicki: it also seems unlikely that Prime Minister Rakowski will scrape through. Many voters are said to have simply crossed out the whole list.

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

Comment

4. Initial Solidarity fears that their lack of organisation and shortage of well-known candidates would prove a handicap were obviously misplaced. The energy and enthusiasm with which their campaign was run stood in stark contrast with the immobilism of the coalition parties. In retrospect, it seems obvious that the Polish people's basic anti-communism was going to assert itself, particularly against those on the national list. Nonetheless, the margin of Solidarity's eventual success exceeded all expectations. It seems possible that when the few Senate seats which remain undecided are run off on 18 June, Solidarity will have won 100% of the seats it was allowed to contest in both houses.

5. As the Solidarity spokesman, Onyszkiewicz, has commented, the results show two things: first, support for the programme of reform and renewal for which Solidarity has fought for so long; second, (so far as the national list is concerned) a settling of accounts and a massive protest against the existing system.

6. The total rout of the coalition in the national list presents the Party and government with a major political crisis. Resignations and leadership changes may occur as a result. Jaruzelski is in any case likely to relinquish the First Secretaryship of the Party after his expected election to the Presidency. But in spite of its humiliation, the Party has made it clear that it remains committed to pursuing the process of democratisation started at the round table. Unless pressure can be brought to bear on the leadership from hard-line elements within the Party, it seems unlikely that the process will be abandoned in the face of electoral defeat. The fact that this has resulted in 35 unfilled seats in the Sejm may well produce constitutional problems. The worst case would be for the Constitutional court to declare the elections invalid, though a re-run would be hardly likely to solve the problem. Meanwhile, Solidarity has made it clear that it recognised that membership of the Sejm for the 35 candidates on the national list was part of the round table agreement and that they would cause no difficulty if the authorities came up with a suitable proposal for arranging this.

Outlook

7. Walesa has now proposed new talks with the government to resolve the political impasse, while insisting that these should "take into consideration the results of the elections". This can be seen as an unexpected attempt by Walesa to press home Solidarity's advantage. Though his statement seems more radical than those made earlier by other Solidarity spokesmen, it is probably tactical and does not represent a shift away from

Solidarity's post-election line. This is that Solidarity would remain a part of the opposition so long as the system of government remained as it was: Solidarity would not take part in a coalition.

8. If and when matters are settled, the opposition's success will strengthen its hand in pressing for more radical change, including fully free elections in four years' time. It may also give it some influence over the composition of the new government, e.g. a new Prime Minister to replace Rakowski, who has never concealed his distaste for Solidarity since its earliest days in 1980. At the same time the unexpected size of Solidarity's success will also increase the pressure on it to take a greater share of the responsibility for future developments in Poland.

9. General Jaruzelski is due to make a one-day working visit to Belgium on 9 June, which will include an audience with The King, and meetings with Messrs Martens, Tindemans and Delors, followed by an address to the Royal Institute of International Relations. He is scheduled to go on to London the next day. Whether or not these visits are postponed may indicate how deep the political crisis in Poland is. Neither the Belgian, nor the UK Delegation are aware of any change in Jaruzelski's plans so far.



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