

NATO SITUATION CENTRE  
CENTRE DE SITUATION OTAN

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NADA/ASSESSMENT/SEPT 001/JIC//051540Z

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC

POLAND

1. MOST POLISH ENTERPRISES HAVE RETURNED TO WORK FOLLOWING THE AGREEMENTS REACHED BETWEEN STRIKERS AND GOVERNMENT COMMISSIONS IN GDANSK, SZCZECIN AND SILESIA. GOVERNMENT SPOKESMEN HAVE SAID THAT THE PROVISIONS OF THE AGREEMENTS SO FAR CONCLUDED WILL APPLY THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY. HOWEVER THE DETAILED WORKING OUT OF THE LEGAL BASIS FOR THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS IS STILL TO TAKE PLACE AND IS LIKELY TO PROVE DIFFICULT. IMPLEMENTATION WILL ALSO CAUSE PROBLEMS. THE SITUATION WILL REMAIN SENSITIVE FOR SOME CONSIDERABLE TIME.

2. THE TERMS OF THE SETTLEMENTS VARY SLIGHTLY, BUT ALL OF THEM PROVIDE FOR THE SETTING UP OF NEW SELF-GOVERNING TRADE UNIONS IN PARALLEL WITH THE EXISTING UNIONS. THE NEW UNIONS WILL BE FREE TO EXPRESS THEIR VIEWS ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF NATIONAL INCOME, USE OF FUNDS FOR SOCIAL SERVICES, WAGES POLICY, ECONOMIC PLANS, INVESTMENT AND PRICES. THEY WILL NOT PLAY THE ROLE OF A POLITICAL PARTY (AND WILL BE OF A SOCIALIST CHARACTER ACCORDING TO THE SZCZECIN VERSION). THEY WILL BE ALLOWED TO ISSUE THEIR OWN PUBLICATIONS, AND TO SET UP AN ECONOMIC RESEARCH ORGANISATION. THE STRIKE COMMITTEES ENDORSED THE PRINCIPLE OF NATIONAL OWNERSHIP OF PRODUCTION, RECOGNISED THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY AND ACCEPTED POLAND'S INTERNATIONAL ALLIANCES. THE GOVERNMENT GUARANTEED THE INDEPENDENCE AND SELF-GOVERNMENT OF THE NEW UNIONS. THE EXISTING TRADE UNIONS WILL REMAIN AND, ACCORDING TO A PRELIMINARY DRAFT OF THE NEW TRADE UNION LAW, WILL BE GIVEN EXTENDED POWERS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO OBJECT TO GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS, TO INITIATE LEGISLATION, AND TO BE CONSULTED IN MANAGERIAL DECISIONS AT THE FACTORY LEVEL. THEY TOO ARE DESCRIBED AS SELF-GOVERNING ORGANISATIONS AND ARE TO HAVE SECRET ELECTIONS WITH AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF CANDIDATES. BOTH TYPES OF UNION WILL HAVE THE RIGHT TO STRIKE.

3. ON THE STRIKERS' PURELY POLITICAL DEMANDS AGREEMENT APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN REACHED ON, INTER ALIA, A BILL TO RESTRICT THE SCOPE OF CENSORSHIP TO CASES INVOLVING MILITARY, POLITICAL OR ECONOMIC SECURITY OR MORAL ISSUES: REVIEW OF CASES AND TEMPORARY RELEASE OF POLITICAL DETAINEES: NON-VICTIMISATION OF STRIKERS AND THEIR HELPERS - UNLESS THEY HAVE COMMITTED CRIMES: REINSTATEMENT OF WORKERS DISMISSED FOLLOWING EARLIER STRIKES - IF ANY IRREGULARITY IS FOUND IN THE WAY THEY HAVE BEEN TREATED: PROMOTION ON MERIT AND REGARDLESS OF PARTY STATUS: AND BETTER ACCESS TO THE MEDIA FOR RELIGIOUS ORGANISATIONS, INCLUDING BROADCASTING OF THE MASS AS PART OF A DETAILED AGREEMENT TO BE REACHED WITH THE EPISCOPATE. ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS INCLUDE MODERATE, GRADUAL WAGE RISES, BETTER MEAT SUPPLIES, CLOSER CONTROL OF PRICES OF

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

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CONSUMER GOODS, PAYMENT FOR THE STRIKE PERIOD, AND SOME IMPROVEMENTS IN PENSIONS, HEALTH AND CHILD CARE, HOUSING AND THE LENGTH OF THE WORKING WEEK. SOME OF THESE MEASURES WERE ALREADY UNDER CONSIDERATION BY THE PARTY EVEN BEFORE THE STRIKES. FURTHER DISCUSSIONS ARE TO TAKE PLACE ON SOME OF THE OTHER DEMANDS. WORK IS TO BE SPEEDED UP ON ECONOMIC REFORM. A COMMISSION CONSISTING OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE GOVERNMENT, WORKERS AND PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES IS TO MONITOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AGREEMENTS: IF DISPUTES ARISE, THE PARTIES WILL BE OBLIGED TO CONSULT EACH OTHER BEFORE TAKING ACTION.

4. THE ECONOMIC COSTS OF THE STRIKES ARE TWOFOLD. THE WORK STOPPAGES THEMSELVES HAVE RESULTED IN LOSSES OF INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND EXPORT REVENUES: DEMURRAGE CHARGES AND OTHER FINANCIAL PENALTIES; AND DISRUPTIONS IN SUPPLIES TO AGRICULTURE AND THE CONSUMER. IN ADDITION TO THIS THERE IS THE COST OF THE CONCESSIONS MADE TO INDUCE THE STRIKERS TO RETURN TO WORK. THE POLISH ECONOMY WAS FACING INTRACTABLE PROBLEMS EVEN BEFORE THE STRIKES AND THE ENSUING SETTLEMENT, AND IT MUST REMAIN DOUBTFUL THAT THE AUTHORITIES WILL BE ABLE TO IMPLEMENT ALL THE ECONOMIC CONCESSIONS THEY HAVE GRANTED.

THEY WILL SEEK MAXIMUM ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND THEIR OTHER CMEA PARTNERS AS WELL AS FROM THE WEST.

5. THE DECISION OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP TO CONCEDE INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS WAS PROBABLY MOTIVATED MAINLY BY FEAR OF WIDESPREAD UNREST OR A POSSIBLE GENERAL STRIKE. THE REGIME WAS PROBABLY PARTICULARLY ALARMED BY THE FIRST REPORTS OF LARGE-SCALE STRIKES BY MINERS IN SILESIA. THE DECISION TO ALLOW FREE TRADE UNIONS WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY TAKEN AGAINST CONSIDERABLE OPPOSITION IN THE PARTY: MANY FEAR THAT SUCH UNIONS COULD BE EXPLOITED BY ANTI-SOCIALIST ELEMENTS WHO WANT TO INTRODUCE A PLURALIST ECONOMIC AND POLITICAL SYSTEM, AND COULD SERVE AS A POLITICAL OPPOSITION. SUCH FEARS MAY HAVE BEEN EXACERBATED BY THE STRIKERS' PRESSURE FOR THE RELEASE OF DISSIDENTS.

6. THE SOVIET UNION HAS SO FAR REPORTED ONLY BRIEFLY AND WITHOUT COMMENT OR DETAIL THE AGREEMENTS REACHED WITH POLISH STRIKERS. WE DO NOT KNOW IF IT WAS CONSULTED IN ADVANCE ABOUT THE SETTLEMENT. PRAVDA IN ANY CASE WENT AHEAD AFTER SIGNATURE WITH AN ARTICLE WHICH TALKED OF ANTI-SOCIALIST ELEMENTS IN POLAND WHO HAD COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY AIMS, WANTED TO DESTROY THE LINKS BETWEEN PARTY AND WORKING CLASS AND DAMAGE SOCIALIST GAINS IN POLAND, AND HAD LINKS WITH WESTERN CENTRES OF SUBVERSION. THE RUSSIANS CLEARLY HAVE SERIOUS MISGIVINGS ABOUT THE CONCESSIONS THAT HAVE BEEN MADE, WHICH THEY MUST SEE AS CHALLENGING THE PARTY'S MONOPOLY OF POWER. THEY WILL EXPECT THE POLISH LEADERSHIP TO CLAW BACK MUCH THAT HAS BEEN CONCEDED. THEIR RESPONSE SO FAR SUGGESTS THAT THEY ARE UNSURE HOW TO PROCEED: BUT THEY ARE LIKELY IN THE INITIAL STAGES TO EXERT PRESSURE ON THE POLISH LEADERSHIP BY POLITICAL AND PERHAPS ECONOMIC MEANS WHILE RETAINING THE ULTIMATE SANCTION OF MILITARY INTERVENTION.

7. THE AGREEMENTS REACHED ARE IMPRECISE ENOUGH TO ALLOW FOR VERY DIFFERENT INTERPRETATIONS. THE ELABORATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONCESSIONS MADE BY THE GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY ON THE ISSUE OF TRADE UNIONS, IS LIKELY TO CAUSE FURTHER CONFLICT BETWEEN STRIKE LEADERS AND THE AUTHORITIES. THE LATTER MAY BELIEVE THAT THE NEW UNIONS CAN BE INFILTRATED AND POSSIBLY EVENTUALLY MERGED WITH THE OFFICIAL TRADE UNIONS, AND MAY EVEN HOPE THAT IN THE MEANTIME THEY CAN PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN REVIVING THE ECONOMY. THE STRIKERS WILL BE WATCHING CAREFULLY TO SEE THAT THEIR HARD-WON GAINS ARE NOT ERODED, AS HAS HAPPENED IN THE PAST. THEY KNOW THAT THEY HAVE THE POWER TO STRIKE AGAIN. THE LEADERSHIP IS ALMOST CERTAINLY DIVIDED. THE POSITION OF THE REGIME IS WEAK, CAUGHT BETWEEN ITS OWN POWERFUL WORKFORCE AND THE SOVIET UNION, WHICH WILL SEEK TO EXCLUDE ANY EROSION OF PARTY CONTROL WITHIN ITS SPHERE OF INFLUENCE.