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NADA/ASSESSMENT/JAN 005//JIC/161105X  
THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC  
POLAND

1. THE POLISH REGIME IS ADOPTING A TOUGHER LINE ON A NUMBER OF DOMESTIC ISSUES. IT HAS USED THE POLICE FOR THE FIRST TIME IN A LABOUR DISPUTE. BUT THE CONFLICT OVER FREE SATURDAYS HAS AGAIN UNDERLINED ITS BASIC WEAKNESS.

2. AFTER THE SOLIDARNOSC DECISION UNILATERALLY TO DECLARE ALL SATURDAYS NON-WORKING DAYS, THE AUTHORITIES MOUNTED AN INTENSIVE MEDIA CAMPAIGN TO JUSTIFY THEIR OWN POSITION AND WARN OF THE ECONOMIC EFFECTS OF MASS ABSENTEEISM. WORKERS WERE WARNED THAT THOSE AWAY FROM WORK ON 10 JANUARY, OFFICIALLY A "WORKING" SATURDAY, WOULD HAVE THEIR PAY DOCKED. NEVERTHELESS LARGE NUMBERS OF WORKERS STAYED AT HOME; IN SOLIDARNOSC STRONGHOLDS THE SHUT-DOWN WAS ALMOST COMPLETE AND EVEN OFFICIAL REPORTS ONLY CLAIM 62 PER CENT ATTENDANCE OVERALL. THE SITUATION IS CONFUSED BECAUSE IN SOME FACTORIES 10 JANUARY WAS OFFICIALLY DECLARED A FREE SATURDAY IN PLACE OF 31 JANUARY. SOLIDARNOSC HAS STATED THAT ANY SANCTIONS AGAINST ABSENT WORKERS WILL LEAD TO A STRIKE. HOWEVER SANCTIONS WILL NOT BE PUT INTO EFFECT IMMEDIATELY, SO THAT NEGOTIATIONS COULD BE INITIATED FIRST. THE RESENTMENT OF MANY UNION LEADERS SEEMS TO SPRING MORE FROM WHAT THEY SEE AS THE HIGH-HANDED ATTITUDE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND ITS FAILURE TO CONSULT RATHER THAN FROM THE SUBSTANCE OF THE ISSUE. THE SITUATION MIGHT STILL BE DEFUSED BY A CONCILIATORY GESTURE FROM THE AUTHORITIES. HOWEVER POLITBURO MEMBER OLSZOWSKI, IN A HARD-HITTING RADIO AND TV BROADCAST ON 9 JANUARY, DESCRIBED SOLIDARNOSC'S ACTION AS "A TRIAL OF STRENGTH, A KIND OF POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE GOVERNMENT". THE SPEECH AS A WHOLE SUGGESTED THAT THE REGIME WAS IN NO

MOOD FOR COMPROMISE. OLSZOWSKI SPOKE OF SIGNS OF LAWLESSNESS AND ANARCHY, POINTING TO ATTEMPTS TO FORCE PERSONNEL CHANGES, ATTACKS ON PARTY AND GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES, ILLEGAL OCCUPATION OF BUILDINGS AND OTHER ACTIONS CONTRIBUTING TO THE UNDERMINING OF THE STATE. A FURTHER SIGN OF HARDENING IN THE REGIME'S POSITION WAS THE USE OF POLICE TO END TWO SIT-INS AT GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS IN THE PROVINCES.

3. PROBLEMS OF THE COUNTRYSIDE WERE DEALT WITH AT A MEETING OF PROVINCIAL OFFICIALS HELD ON 9-10 JANUARY AND ATTENDED BY PARTY LEADER KANIA. THE MEETING SHOWED THAT THE REGIME IS TRYING TO BUILD UP THE AGRICULTURAL CIRCLES

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(LONG-STANDING CO-OPERATIVE GROUPS WHICH HAVE HITHERTO NOT PROVED ATTRACTIVE TO MOST PRIVATE FARMERS BUT HAVE RECENTLY BEEN GIVEN INCREASED POWERS) AS A BASIS FOR SELF-MANAGEMENT IN RURAL AREAS. KANIA'S SPEECH COMBINED SUPPORT FOR THESE CIRCLES WITH AN ATTACK ON THE PROMOTERS OF "RURAL SOLIDARITY" FOR ALLEGEDLY HAVING COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY DESIGNS AND TRYING TO STIR UP FEELINGS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, SOW ANARCHY, AND ESTABLISH A POLITICAL OPPOSITION. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE UNITED PEASANTS' PARTY ALSO SUPPORTED THE ROLE OF THE AGRICULTURAL CIRCLES AND CRITICISED "RURAL SOLIDARITY" (IN MODERATE TERMS) AS AN INAPPROPRIATE ORGANISATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE REGIME THUS SEEMS TO BE SET ON OPPOSING THE LEGALISATION OF THE PRIVATE FARMERS' UNION, WHICH IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN RELATIONS WITH BOTH THE FARMERS AND SOLIDARNOSC.

4. THE DESIRE TO SET UP ALTERNATIVE BODIES TO THE NEW TRADE UNIONS IS SEEN AGAIN IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A CONFEDERATION OF AUTONOMOUS TRADE UNIONS TO GROUP TOGETHER THE NEW INDEPENDENT UNIONS SEPARATELY REGISTERED BY THE WARSAW COURT. HOWEVER THE MEETING HELD TO DISCUSS THE SETTING UP OF THIS BODY WAS ATTENDED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF ONLY 19 UNIONS, OUT OF THE 56 SO FAR REGISTERED. THE REGIME MAY FAVOUR A PROLIFERATION OF UNION BODIES NOT ONLY TO CONFUSE THE SITUATION INTERNALLY BUT ALSO TO OBSCURE SOLIDARNOSC'S CLAIM TO REPRESENT POLISH UNIONISTS IN INTERNATIONAL UNION ORGANISATIONS INCLUDING THE ILO. THE ACTIVITIES OF SOLIDARNOSC LEADER WALESKA MUST BE CAUSING CONCERN IN THIS CONTEXT: HE IS TO

MEET ITALIAN UNIONISTS OF VARIOUS POLITICAL COLOURS THIS WEEK DURING HIS VISIT TO ITALY TO SEE THE POPE, IS TO VISIT THE FRG IN FEBRUARY AT THE INVITATION OF ITS TRADE UNION FEDERATION, AND IS TO GO TO FRANCE IN MARCH AT THE INVITATION OF A SOCIALIST UNION THERE. SUCH VISITS ARE LIKELY TO BRING FURTHER ACCUSATIONS OF SOLIDARNOSC'S UNHEALTHY LINKS WITH THE WEST.

5. SOVIET REPORTING ON POLISH AFFAIRS HAS BECOME SOMEWHAT SHARPER. ALTHOUGH DIRECT SOVIET COMMENT ON THE ISSUE OF SATURDAY WORKING WAS INITIALLY LOW-KEY, MERELY POINTING TO THE ECONOMIC CONSEQUENCES, SUBSEQUENT COMMENT HAS CRITICISED THE LEADERSHIP OF SOLIDARNOSC. THE SOVIET MEDIA ALSO REPRINTED OLSZOWSKI'S ATTACK ON SOLIDARNOSC ACTIVITIES AND KANIA'S CRITICISM OF THE FARMERS' UNION. OTHER THEMES HAVE CONTINUED: ACCUSATIONS OF INCITEMENT BY THE WEST AND BY POLISH EMIGRES, ATTACKS ON "ANTI-SOCIALISTS AND COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARIES", WITH KOR DISSIDENTS KURON AND MICHNIK SINGLED OUT; AND ALLEGATIONS OF ATTEMPTS TO TURN SOLIDARNOSC INTO A COUNTER-BALANCING FORCE TO THE PARTY. IN THE REST OF EASTERN EUROPE COMMENT

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ON POLISH AFFAIRS HAS BEEN MORE SUBDUED SINCE THE MOSCOW SUMMIT IN EARLY DECEMBER, THOUGH THE EAST GERMAN AND CZECHOSLOVAK MEDIA - AND PARTICULARLY THE LATTER - CONTINUE TO TAKE A HARDER LINE THAN THE OTHERS. PRAGUE RADIO HAS ACCUSED SOLIDARNOSC OF "INADMISSABLE AND UNHEARD-OF DEMAGOGY" OVER THE ISSUE OF SATURDAY WORKING, BUT ALSO DESCRIBED THE REGIME'S FIRM RESPONSE AS "ONE OF THE FIRST POSITIVE REPORTS COMING FROM POLAND FOR A LONG TIME". THE CZECHOSLOVAK AND EAST GERMAN AUTHORITIES CONTINUE TO BE CONCERNED OVER THE EFFECT OF POLISH DEVELOPMENTS ON THEIR OWN WORKERS. THE EAST GERMANS ARE KEEPING CONTACTS AT A LOW LEVEL, AND THE CZECHOSLOVAK UNIONS ARE REPORTED TO BE TRYING TO IMPROVE PUBLIC RELATIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS IN THEIR TRADE UNIONS. THE SLOVAK PARTY PAPER HAS ALSO ACCUSED POLISH BISHOPS OF INTERFERING IN CZECHOSLOVAK INTERNAL AFFAIRS; UNDERGROUND CATHOLIC CHURCH ACTIVITY IS EVIDENTLY ON THE INCREASE THERE, NO DOUBT ENCOURAGED BY THE HIGHLY VISIBLE ROLE PLAYED BY THE CHURCH IN POLAND.

6. THERE HAS BEEN LITTLE CHANGE IN THE MILITARY SITUATION. GROUND FORCES TRAINING IN AND AROUND POLAND IS CONTINUING AT LEVELS NORMAL FOR THE TIME OF YEAR AND TACTICAL AIR FOR TRAINING IS ROUTINE. IN CZECHOSLOVAKIA CONFERENCES HELD IN DECEMBER MAY HAVE BEEN RELATED TO THE FORTHCOMING EXERCISE DRUZHBA-81 (AN ANNUAL EVENT) WHICH WILL INVOLVE CZECH AND SOVIET TROOPS FROM WITHIN THE COUNTRY. IN ADDITION A MAJOR SOVIET OR WARSAW PACT EXERCISE USUALLY TAKES PLACE IN EASTERN EUROPE IN THE PERIOD MARCH TO MAY. MARSHAL KULIKOV'S VISIT TO WARSAW WAS PUBLICISED BY THE LOCAL MEDIA AS IS USUAL ON HIS FREQUENT VISITS TO WARSAW PACT CAPITALS. DESPITE THE ATTENTION THE VISIT HAS RECEIVED FROM THE WESTERN MEDIA, WE DO NOT ATTACH ANY PARTICULAR SIGNIFICANCE TO IT. THE DISCUSSIONS WITH POLISH LEADERS MAY HAVE FOCUSED ON THE FORTHCOMING EXERCISES, THOUGH THE OPPORTUNITY WILL NO DOUBT HAVE BEEN TAKEN TO DISCUSS OTHER MILITARY-RELATED SUBJECTS.

7. ALTHOUGH THERE HAS SO FAR BEEN NO RENEWAL OF THE STRIKE WAVE OF THE AUTUMN, THE SITUATION IN POLAND IS NOW MORE UNSTABLE THAN AT ANY TIME SINCE LATE NOVEMBER. THE AUTHORITIES AND THE UNIONS ARE BOTH UNDER PRESSURE TO ADOPT A HARDER AND MORE UNCOMPROMISING STANCE, THE FORMER FROM MOSCOW AND PARTY HARDLINERS, THE LATTER FROM RADICALS WITHIN THE MOVEMENT. THE SOBERING EFFECT OF THE THREAT OF SOVIET INTERVENTION HAS WORN OFF, AND IT IS DOUBTFUL WHETHER THE RENEWAL OF THE THREAT COULD HAVE THE SAME IMPACT AGAIN. THE PROSPECT IS FOR A CONTINUING DETERIORATION IN THE SITUATION, AND IT IS PROBABLY ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE SOLIDARNOSC FINDS ITSELF IN OPEN AND DIRECT CONFRONTATION WITH THE LEADERSHIP.

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