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NADA/ASSESSMENT/MAY 007/JIC/210845Z

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC

POLAND

1. RURAL SOLIDARITY HAS BEEN REGISTERED. THE ECONOMIC SITUATION REMAINS GRAVE. THE GENERAL CALM HAS BEEN DISTURBED BY SEVERAL INCIDENTS INVOLVING THE POLICE. GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTY PROGRAMME ADOPT A CAUTIOUSLY REFORMIST LINE. SOVIET CRITICISM HAS BEEN DIRECTED MAINLY AT SOLIDARNOSC LEADERS AND THEIR KOR ADVISERS.

2. SOME OF THE RECENT INCIDENTS HAVE INVOLVED ALLEGATIONS OF POLICE BRUTALITY OR HARRASSMENT, AND AT LEAST ONE HAS LED TO THE THREAT OF A STRIKE. CROWDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, OFTEN DRUNK, SEEM TO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN SOME OF THE INCIDENTS. SO FAR TENSIONS HAVE BEEN DEFUSED BY RAPID ACTION TO CALM RIOTERS ON THE PART OF SOLIDARNOSC LEADERS AND OTHERS, AND TO DISCIPLINE POLICE ON THE PART OF THE AUTHORITIES. IN OTHER ACTIONS TO AVOID TROUBLE THE AUTHORITIES HAVE DIMISSED A PRISON GOVERNOR FOR CONDONING THE USE OF VIOLENCE AND RELEASED A KPN RIGHT-WING DISSIDENT WHO WAS IN A WEAK CONDITION AS A RESULT OF A HUNGER STRIKE. THE AUTHORITIES ARE CLEARLY WORRIED BY THE INCREASING LEVEL OF HOOLIGANISM AND DRUNKENNESS IN POLAND AND THE DANGER THAT AN INCIDENT COULD LEAD TO WIDER VIOLENCE. THE POLICE ARE DEMORALISED AFTERSOLIDARNOSC'S LENGTHY CAMPAIGN AGAINST THEM. MISTRUST AND LACK OF RESPECT FOR THE POLICE IS FAIRLY GENERAL IN POLAND AND THERE APPEARS TO BE AN INCREASING READINESS TO CHALLENGE THEIR AUTHORITY. ONE OF THE REGIME'S MOST DIFFICULT TASKS WILL BE TO INDUCE A RESPECT FOR THE RULE OF LAW ON BOTH SIDES.

3. RURAL SOLIDARITY WAS DULY REGISTERED ON 12 MAY. THE UNION'S STATUTES ALLOW FOR PROTEST ACTION BY FARMERS AS A LAST RESORT BUT THIS MUST NOT INCLUDE THE WITHHOLDING OF ESSENTIAL FOOD SUPPLIES. IN AN ATTACHED DECLARATION THE UNION STATES THAT IT HAS NO POLITICAL AMBITIONS AND RECOGNISES THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY AND THE CONTRIBUTORY ROLE OF THE PEASANTS' PARTY. A SEPARATE UNION OF PRIVATE FARMERS ASSOCIATED IN THE OFFICIALLY-APPROVED AGRICULTURAL CIRCLES WAS REGISTERED AT THE SAME TIME. THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PEASANTS' PARTY, WHO HAD OPPOSED THE REGISTRATION OF RURAL SOLIDARITY, WAS FORCED TO RESIGN A FEW DAYS LATER. THE PEASANTS' PARTY SEEMS

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- 1 -

This document consists

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LIKELY TO BECOME A MORE ENERGETIC SPOKESMAN FOR THE INTERESTS OF PRIVATE FARMERS IN THE FUTURE. IN A FURTHER ATTEMPT TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE FARMERS THE GOVERNMENT HAS REMOVED CERTAIN SUBSIDIES PAID TO CO-OPERATIVE AND STATE FARMS SO THAT ALL FARMS CAN OPERATE ON AN EQUAL BASIS.

4. THE GOVERNMENT'S LONG-AWAITED REPORTS ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY AND THE DRAFT STABILISATION PLAN HAVE BEEN REJECTED BY THE SEJM ECONOMIC COMMITTEE. THE HEAD OF THE PLANNING COMMISSION, KISIEL, INITIALLY TOOK RESPONSIBILITY FOR REDRAFTING THESE DOCUMENTS BUT THE TASK WAS SUBSEQUENTLY SUBMITTED TO INDEPENDENT EXPERTS. THESE REPORTS APPEAR TO HAVE COVERED THE SAME GROUND AS THE DOCUMENTS PRESENTED TO WESTERN CREDITORS OUTLINING POLAND'S RECOVERY STRATEGY. THE FACT THAT THEY HAVE NOT GAINED EVEN INITIAL ACCEPTANCE IS A CLEAR INDICATION THAT THE GOVERNMENT HAS A LONG WAY TO GO IN ACHIEVING A CONSENSUS ON THE PROGRAMME FOR ECONOMIC RECOVERY. THE PRESENTATION AND DOMESTIC ACCEPTANCE OF SUCH A PROGRAMME IS FUNDAMENTAL FOR SECURING CONTINUED ASSISTANCE FROM WESTERN CREDITORS. MEANWHILE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION REMAINS DESPERATE, WITH SUPPLY AND ENERGY SHORTAGES CAUSING PARTICULAR PROBLEMS. ENERGY DIFFICULTIES CENTRE ON COAL PRODUCTION, WHERE IMPROVEMENTS IN DAILY OUTPUT HAVE NOT COMPENSATED FOR THE REDUCED WORKING WEEK. ONE OFFICIAL HAS REPORTEDLY SAID THAT NATIONAL INCOME COULD FALL BY 14 PER CENT THIS YEAR (THE LATEST REPORT TO WESTERN CREDITORS ENVISAGES A FALL OF ABOUT 9 PER CENT) AND THAT TARGETS FOR INDUSTRIAL PRODUCTION AND INVESTMENT

COULD BE CUT FURTHER.

5. GUIDELINES FOR THE PARTY PROGRAMME TO BE ADOPTED BY THE PARTY CONGRESS IN JULY HAVE NOW BEEN PUBLISHED. THESE ENDORSE THE PROCESS OF RENEWAL AND CLAIM THAT IT SHOULD STRENGTHEN THE SOCIALIST SYSTEM BOTH DOMESTICALLY AND INTERNATIONALLY, FOR QUOTE A TRULY STRONG SOCIALIST STATE IS A STATE WHICH DERIVES ITS STRENGTH FROM THE ACCEPTANCE OF ITS PROGRAMME BY A MAJORITY OF SOCIETY UNQUOTE. THE MISTAKES OF THE 1970S ARE BLAMED MAINLY ON VIOLATIONS OF SOCIALIST PRINCIPLES. THE DOCUMENT CALLS FOR GREATER DEMOCRACY IN THE PARTY AND OFFICIAL ACCEPTANCE OF RELIGIOUS BELIEVERS AS PARTY MEMBERS; BETTER INFORMATION; A BIGGER ROLE IN MANAGEMENT FOR NON-PARTY MEMBERS; STRENGTHENING OF THE RULE OF LAW; AND FREER ELECTIONS TO PARLIAMENT AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THE GUIDELINES ENDORSE THE RIGHT TO STRIKE AS A LAST RESORT AND SUGGEST THAT IF SOLIDARNOSC ACTS RESPONSIBLY IT COULD BE GIVEN SOME SEATS IN PARLIAMENT. THE ECONOMIC SECTION CALLS, INTER ALIA, FOR A RESTRUCTURING OF WAGES, REDUCED DIFFERENTIALS AND PROGRESSIVE TAXATION; RETAIL PRICE REFORM; REDUCTIONS IN THE ECONOMIC BUREAUCRACY; SUBSTANTIAL LABOUR TRANSFERS; AND GUARANTEES FOR PRIVATE FARMING. THE GUIDELINES ARE GENERALLY UNSPECIFIC AND HAVE BEEN CRITICISED ON THESE GROUNDS.

THEIR MODERATELY REFORMIST TONE IS NO DOUBT THE RESULT OF MANY COMPROMISES. THERE WILL BE PRESSURE FROM THE GRASS-ROOTS OF THE PARTY TO STRENGTHEN THE REFORMIST ELEMENT. BUT THE SOVIET MEDIA HAVE NOT SO FAR PRODUCED A FULL REPORT OF THE GUIDELINES, WHICH SUGGESTS THAT THEY ALREADY GO TOO FAR FOR SOVIET TASTE.

6. THERE HAS BEEN NO RECENT REPETITION IN THE SOVIET MEDIA OF EARLIER CRITICISM OF THE POLISH PARTY FOR FAILING TO COUNTERACT DANGEROUS DEVELOPMENTS, DESPITE OCCASIONAL ALLUSIONS TO PROBLEMS IN THE PARTY. THE GENERAL TENOR OF RECENT COMMENT HAS BEEN TO SUGGEST THAT POLISH LEADERS ARE AT LEAST TRYING TO DO THE RIGHT THING. SOVIET CRITICISM HAS SWUNG BACK TOWARDS SOLIDARNOSC LEADERS AND THE ANTI-SOCIALIST ELEMENTS, NOTABLY KOR DISSIDENTS, WHO ARE SAID TO HAVE PENETRATED THE UNION.

THE MOST FREQUENT TARGET OF SOVIET CRITICISM HAS BEEN A DRAFT PROGRAMME PUT OUT BY SOLIDARNOSC'S RESEARCH BODY SEVERAL WEEKS AGO. ASPECTS INCURRING MOSCOW'S PARTICULAR OPPOBRIUM ARE THE DOCUMENT'S FAILURE TO MENTION THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY OR INDEED SOCIALISM, ITS SUGGESTION THAT WORKERS AND THE STATE MAY FIND THEMSELVES IN OPPOSITION, AND THE CLAIM THAT SOLIDARNOSC IS THE SOLE GUARANTOR OF RENEWAL IN POLAND (THIS LAST CLAIM HAS GREATLY IRKED MANY POLISH COMMENTATORS TOO).

THE SOVIET MEDIA CLAIM THAT THE PROGRAMME BEARS OUT THEIR ALLEGATION THAT SOLIDARNOSC IS NOT A TRADE UNION IN ACCORDANCE WITH ITS STATUTES BUT HAS POLITICAL ASPIRATION, INCLUDING THE UNDERMINING OF SOCIALISM IN POLAND. THE MOST IDEOLOGICAL OF THESE ARTICLES WARNED OF A QUOTE CRUEL AND UNCOMPROMISING CLASS STRUGGLE UNQUOTE WHICH WAS ONLY JUST BEGINNING IN POLAND. ADVERSARIES WERE THE TROTSKYISTS AND ANARCHO-SYNDICALISTS IN KOR AND ELSEWHERE ACTING UNDER THE GUISE OF ADVOCATES OF AN IMPROVED NATIONAL OR PLURALISTIC SOCIALISM OR SOCIALISM WITH A HUMAN FACE. OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND THAT HAVE ATTRACTED SOVIET CRITICISM ARE AN EXHIBITION OF BOOKS FORMERLY BANNED IN POLAND, INCLUDING THOSE OF SOLZHENITSYN AND ORWELL, AND THE OFFICIAL PROGRAMME TO REVISE POLISH HISTORY TEXTBOOKS TO MAKE THEM MORE OBJECTIVE - AND INEVITABLY LESS IN TUNE WITH SOVIET PROPAGANDA.

7. THE LATEST SOVIET COMMENT SUGGESTS THAT THE RUSSIANS HAVE FOR THE TIME BEING RECONCILED THEMSELVES TO A POLISH POLICY OF MODERATE RENEWAL BUT ARE STILL CONCERNED TO POINT OUT THE DANGERS OF THE PROCESS AND ENCOURAGE CAUTION IN ITS APPLICATION. THE GREATEST DANGER TO STABILITY IN POLAND IN THE NEAR FUTURE IS THE ESCALATION OF SOME VIOLENT INCIDENT INTO A FULL-SCALE CONFRONTATION. THE RISK OF THIS WILL INCREASE IF HARSH ECONOMIC MEASURES WHICH CANNOT BE LONG DELAYED, ESPECIALLY IN THE FIELDS OF PRICES AND EMPLOYMENT GIVE RISE TO POPULAR DISCONTENT.

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