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NADA/ASSESSMENT/AUG 002/JIC/131740Z

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC.

POLAND (NATO CONFIDENTIAL)

1. THE POLISH REGIME IS TAKING A HARDER LINE TOWARDS SOLIDARNOSC IN THE FACE OF CONTINUING POPULAR PROTESTS. RECENT CIRCUMSTANCES HAVE FAVOURED THE MILITANTS IN SOLIDARNOSC, BUT MODERATES IN THE LEADERSHIP APPEAR TO HAVE GOT THEIR WAY ON A NUMBER OF ISSUES AT THE GDANSK MEETING ON 10-12 AUGUST.
2. UNCO-ORDINATED STRIKES AND DEMONSTRATIONS HAVE CONTINUED IN VARIOUS PARTS OF POLAND, MAINLY OVER FOOD SUPPLIES, BUT SOLIDARNOSC LEADERS HAVE NOW APPEALED FOR AN END TO THEM. THE AUTHORITIES ARE ALARMED THAT PROTESTS HAVE SPREAD INTO THE STREETS, WHERE THE CHANCES OF VIOLENT CLASHES ARE MUCH HIGHER THAN IN THE CASE OF STRIKES. SO FAR HOWEVER THERE HAS BEEN NO VIOLENCE. THE GOVERNMENT HAS ANNOUNCED THAT IT WILL TAKE STEPS TO PREVENT A PROTEST MARCH ON WARSAW TO DEMAND THE RELEASE OF POLITICAL PRISONERS PLANNED FOR 17-22 AUGUST. THE AUTHORITIES MAY HAVE DECIDED TO STAND FIRM IN THIS INSTANCE BOTH BECAUSE OF THE SUBJECT OF THE MARCH, WHICH WILL MAKE IT PARTICULARLY UNPALATABLE TO THE RUSSIANS AND BECAUSE OF ITS NATURE, WHICH COULD INCREASE THE LIKELIHOOD OF VIOLENT CLASHES. THEY MAY ALSO RECKON THAT IT WILL NOT HAVE THE SUPPORT OF THE MAJORITY OF THE POPULATION. SOLIDARNOSC HAS CALLED ON THE ORGANISERS TO POSTPONE THE MARCH. IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT TACTICS THE GOVERNMENT WILL EMPLOY IF THE MARCH GOES AHEAD ON ANY LARGE SCALE.
3. AT THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ON 11 AUGUST, SOLIDARNOSC EXTREMISTS WERE ACCUSED OF TRYING TO USURP POWER AND OBSTRUCTING GOVERNMENT EFFORTS TO DEAL WITH ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. PARTY SECRETARY BARCIKOWSKI EXPLICITLY WARNED THAT THE PARTY WOULD HAVE TO REVERSE ITS POLICY OF NEGOTIATION IF SOLIDARNOSC WOULD NOT CO-OPERATE WITH THE AUTHORITIES. THE PLENUM RESOLUTION DID NOT REPEAT THIS THREAT. IT STATED THAT COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY ACTIVITIES WOULD BE RESOLUTELY OPPOSED, BUT GAVE NO INDICATION OF SPECIFIC MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED. IT ALSO REAFFIRMED THE POLICY OF RENEWAL AND CALLED FOR THE RESUMPTION OF GOVERNMENT/UNION TALKS. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT TOUGHER MEASURES AGAINST SOLIDARNOSC WERE PROPOSED BUT NOT ACCEPTED BY THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE; OR EVEN THAT SUCH MEASURES WERE AGREED BUT HAVE NOT YET BEEN ANNOUNCED. THE POLISH

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AMBASSADOR TOLD FCO OFFICIALS ON 11 AUGUST THAT THE POLISH GOVERNMENT HAD TO STOP SOLIDARNOSC'S POLITICAL ADVENTURISM AND COULD NOT CONTINUE TO BUY PEACE WITH APPEASEMENT. KANIA AND JARUZELSKI WOULD VISIT BREZHNEV IN THE CRIMEA ON 13 AUGUST AND WOULD DISCUSS ECONOMIC MATTERS. IT IS INEVITABLE THAT POLAND'S POLITICAL SITUATION WILL ALSO BE DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING, AND THE POLISH LEADERS WILL WISH TO SHOW BREZHNEV THAT THEY ARE TAKING A FIRM LINE. THE POLISH AMBASSADOR IMPLIED THAT CERTAIN MEASURES (UNSPECIFIED) WOULD BE TAKEN AS A RESULT OF THIS ENCOUNTER.

4. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE ALSO MADE A BID TO REASSERT DISCIPLINE WITHIN THE PARTY. MEMBERS WERE WARNED THAT THOSE ENGAGED IN ACTIVITIES HOSTILE TO THE PARTY WOULD BE EXPELLED, THAT THEY MUST NOT TAKE PART IN POLITICAL STRIKES, AND THAT FACTIONALISM MUST CEASE. THIS LAST INJUNCTION MUST REFER PARTICULARLY TO THE CONSERVATIVE KATOWICE AND OTHER PARTY FORUMS WHICH HAVE BEEN OPERATING WITH RENEWED VIGOUR SINCE THE PARTY CONGRESS, POSSIBLY ENCOURAGED BY PARTY CONSERVATIVES WHO LOST THEIR POSITIONS IN THE ELECTIONS.

5. SOLIDARNOSC IS DEEPLY DIVIDED OVER HOW FAR IT SHOULD CO-OPERATE WITH OR CONFRONT THE GOVERNMENT. THE ACRIMONIOUS BREAKDOWN OF TALKS LAST WEEK WAS BROUGHT ABOUT BY RADICALS IN THE SOLIDARNOSC LEADERSHIP WHO REJECTED COMPROMISES WORKED OUT BY THE NEGOTIATING TEAM. THESE RADICALS FEAR THAT SOLIDARNOSC WILL LOSE POPULAR SUPPORT IF TOO CLOSELY ASSOCIATED WITH UNPOPULAR GOVERNMENT MEASURES, AND BELIEVE THAT ONLY MILITANCY WILL SECURE FURTHER CONCESSIONS. MODERATES ARE HAMPERED BY THE KNOWLEDGE THAT EVEN IF THE UNION CO-OPERATED WITH THE GOVERNMENT, THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO PRODUCE IMMEDIATE RESULTS IN TERMS OF FOOD SUPPLIES. NEVERTHELESS, UNION LEADERS HAVE URGED MEMBERS TO WORK FREE SATURDAYS DURING THE REST OF THIS YEAR AND HAVE ACQUIESCED IN PRINCIPLE IN INCREASES IN BREAD PRICES. UNION/GOVERNMENT TALKS ARE LIKELY TO RESUME; BUT WITH THE UNION DETERMINED TO EXTRACT MAXIMUM CONCESSIONS ON SUCH THINGS AS WORKERS' SELF-GOVERNMENT AND ACCESS TO THE MEDIA, THE REGIME APPARENTLY DETERMINED TO RESIST POLITICAL CONCESSIONS AND TRY TO DISCREDIT SOLIDARNOSC, AND A DEEP GULF OF MISTRUST ON BOTH SIDES, PROGRESS IS LIKELY TO BE SLOW AND PAINFUL.

6. THE SOLIDARNOSC LEADERSHIP RETAINS LOOSE OVERALL CONTROL OF THE MOVEMENT AND TRIES TO COUNTERACT RASH ACTIONS BY MILITANT REGIONAL LEADERS. THIS HAS BEEN DIFFICULT RECENTLY BECAUSE OF GRASS-ROOTS DISCONTENT OVER FOOD SHORTAGES. AT NEXT MONTH'S SOLIDARITY CONGRESS THERE COULD BE A SHIFT TOWARDS A MORE MODERATE STANCE. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTES WOULD RESTRAIN STRIKE ACTION IN THE REGIONS, AND THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL COUNCIL WOULD PROVIDE GREATER CENTRAL CONTROL.

7. SOVIET REPORTING OF THE POLISH EVENTS HAS RECENTLY BECOME MORE CRITICAL, THOUGH BASED MAINLY ON REPRODUCTION OF POLISH PRESS AND OTHER COMMENT. THE POLISH LEADERSHIP HAS BEEN CRITICISED DIRECTLY IN THE SOVIET MEDIA FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE THE PARTY CONGRESS THROUGH INTERVIEWS WITH INDIVIDUAL POLES. BARCIKOWSKI'S CRITICISM OF SOLIDARNOSC AT THE PLENUM WAS REPORTED AT SOME LENGTH IN PRAVDA. THE WARSAW PACT C-IN-C KULIKOV, RETURNED TO WARSAW ON 6 AUGUST

AND HAD A MEETING WITH JARUZELSKI ON 8 AUGUST AT WHICH THEY DISCUSSED "THE COMBAT READINESS OF THE POLISH FORCES". THE PUBLICITY FOR THIS VISIT WILL SERVE AS AN ADDITIONAL FORM OF PRESSURE ON THE POLES; THE MAJOR MILITARY EXERCISE CURRENTLY TAKING PLACE IN THE BALTIC AREA WILL ALSO REMIND THE POLES OF SOVIET MILITARY POWER IN THE REGION. HOWEVER, THERE ARE NO SIGNS THAT THE SOVIET UNION IS CONTEMPLATING EARLY MILITARY ACTION IN POLAND.

8. DISUNITY IN SOLIDARNOSC AND PROBABLY IN THE POLISH LEADERSHIP IS PREVENTING ACTION TO DEAL WITH POLAND'S PRESSING ECONOMIC PROBLEMS. THE STRUGGLE IN SOLIDARNOSC BETWEEN THOSE WANTING TO TURN IT INTO A MAJOR POLITICAL FORCE CONFRONTING THE EXISTING REGIME, THOSE WILLING TO LET THE UNION CO-OPERATE IN THE GOVERNING PROCESS, AND THOSE FAVOURING A MORE CONVENTIONAL TRADE UNION ROLE IS LIKELY TO CONTINUE AT LEAST UNTIL THE UNION'S CONGRESS IN SEPTEMBER. THE REGIME FOR ITS PART LACKS THE WILL OR CAPACITY TO TAKE INITIATIVES WHICH MIGHT GAIN THE TRUST OR

SUPPORT OF THE UNION. BOTH SIDES SEEM TO SEE SOME ROLE FOR THE CHURCH IN OVERCOMING THE IMPASSE - SOLIDARNOSC HAS INVITED THE NEW PRIMATE TO MEDIATE, AND KANIA HAD A MEETING WITH HIM ON 12 AUGUST - THOUGH THE REGIME WOULD CERTAINLY NOT WISH THE CHURCH TO BE SEEN TO PLAY ANY FORMAL POLITICAL ROLE. MEANWHILE THE POLISH LEADERS SEEM TO BE BRACING THEMSELVES TO TAKE TOUGHER ACTION AGAINST SOLIDARNOSC, THOUGH IT IS NOT CLEAR WHAT FORM THIS MIGHT TAKE, WHEN IT MIGHT BE TAKEN, OR WHETHER, AS HAS HAPPENED BEFORE, THEIR RESOLVE WILL CRUMBLE WHEN FACED WITH THE LIKELY CONSEQUENCES OF STERNER ACTION.

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