

NATO SITUATION CENTRE
CENTRE DE SITUATION OTAN

COMCENTRE NAC/MC

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(Poland)

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC.

POLAND.

1. THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS APPEARS LIKELY TO GO AHEAD AS PLANNED FROM 26 SEPTEMBER. MUCH WILL DEPEND ON WHETHER PRESSURE FROM THE POLISH LEADERSHIP AND FROM THE SOVIET UNION PERSUADES THE UNION TO MODERATE ITS STANCE.
2. THE SOVIET MESSAGE TO THE POLISH CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND GOVERNMENT PUBLISHED IN POLAND ON 18 SEPTEMBER WAS DIFFERENT IN KIND FROM THE MOSCOW LETTER IN JUNE. THE LATTER WAS A FORMAL DEMAND PRESENTING A FULL INDICTMENT OF THE POLISH LEADERSHIP; BUT THE LATEST MESSAGE APPEARS TO BE A FURIOUS RESPONSE TO A WHOLE SERIES OF ANTI-SOVIET MANIFESTATIONS (AND THE FAILURE OF THE POLISH AUTHORITIES TO PUNISH THEM), CULMINATING IN SOME OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS. IT CANNOT HAVE BEEN A CONSIDERED RESPONSE TO THE CONGRESS AS A WHOLE SINCE THE CONGRESS HAD SCARCELY FINISHED AT THE TIME OF ITS DELIVERY. ALTHOUGH THE SUBJECT-MATTER WAS FAIRLY NARROW, HOWEVER, THE TONE OF THE MESSAGE WAS VERY SHARP AND PEREMPTORY, DEMANDING "IMMEDIATE, RESOLUTE AND RADICAL STEPS" TO STOP ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA AND ACTIONS. THE VERSION SUBSEQUENTLY PUBLISHED IN MOSCOW WAS CONSIDERABLY TONED DOWN, PROBABLY IN ORDER NOT TO RAISE UNDUE EXPECTATIONS IN THE SOVIET PEOPLE. THE FACT THAT THE MESSAGE WAS ADDRESSED TO THE WHOLE CENTRAL COMMITTEE (AND THE GOVERNMENT) IN POLAND SUGGESTS THAT SOVIET CONFIDENCE IN THE POLISH LEADERSHIP IS ONCE AGAIN AT A LOW EBB. SUBSEQUENT SOVIET COMMENTARIES HAVE ACCUSED SOLIDARITY OF USING ITS CONGRESS TO ATTEMPT TO SEIZE POWER; BUT OVERALL SOVIET REACTIONS SO FAR SUGGEST THAT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP IS RESERVING JUDGEMENT ON THE OUTCOME OF THE CONGRESS AS A WHOLE UNTIL AFTER ITS CONCLUSION.
3. THE LATEST OFFICIAL POLISH STATEMENTS SUGGESTS THAT THE REGIME DOES NOT INTEND TO REACT TOO HASTILY EITHER TO THE SOVIET MESSAGE OR TO THE FIRST STAGE OF THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS. IT IS EVIDENTLY THE INTENTION OF THE AUTHORITIES TO GIVE SOLIDARITY THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENDORSE MORE MODERATE POLICIES AT THE FINAL STAGE OF ITS CONGRESS BEGINNING ON 26 SEPTEMBER. MEANWHILE THE REGIME IS KEEPING UP THE PRESSURE ON THE UNION, AND PERHAPS PREPARING THE GROUND FOR FUTURE ACTION. BY GIVING WIDE-

SPREAD PUBLICITY TO THE SOVIET MESSAGE AND REVIEWING ITS CONTINGENCY PLANS TO DEAL WITH EMERGENCIES. WARNINGS OF THE DANGER THAT THE SOVIET UNION MAY CUTS ITS AID TO POLAND CAN ALSO BE SEEN IN THIS LIGHT. THE PRESSURE CAMPAIGN APPEARS TO HAVE HAD SOME EFFECT. SOLIDARITY HAS AVOIDED ANY STRONG CENTRAL RESPONSE TO OFFICIAL STATEMENTS AND HAS MOVED CLOSER TO THE GOVERNMENT'S POSITION ON WORKERS' SELF-MANAGEMENT. THIS MEANS THAT AT LEAST ONE IMPORTANT ISSUE MAY BE LESS PROMINENT AT THE SECOND STAGE OF THE CONGRESS. MODERATES IN THE SOLIDARITY LEADERSHIP SEE A NEED FOR MORE CAREFUL MANAGEMENT OF THE SECOND STAGE IN ORDER TO PREVENT THE ADOPTION OF ILL-THOUGHT-OUT LAST-MINUTE RESOLUTIONS, BUT WILL BE UNDER STRONG PRESSURE FROM RADICALS TO MAINTAIN A HARD LINE ON KEY ISSUES.

4. THE POLISH LEADERSHIP APPEARS TO HAVE DECIDED NOT TO TRY TO PREVENT THE CONGRESS FROM TAKING PLACE. IF THE CONGRESS ADOPTS POLICIES WHICH ARE NOT TOO PROVOCATIVE AND OPTS FOR CO-OPERATION RATHER THAN CONFRONTATION AS THE PRINCIPAL MEANS OF ACHIEVING ITS AIMS, RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNION AND THE AUTHORITIES COULD CONTINUE ON THEIR PRESENT UNEASY AND DETERIORATING COURSE. IF THE UNION PERSISTS WITH ITS RADICAL DEMANDS AND CONFRONTATIONAL TACTICS THE REGIME WILL BE FACED WITH VERY DIFFICULT CHOICES. ONE MEMBER OF THE POLITBURO, SIWAK, HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT HE DISAGREES WITH THE WHOLE POLICY OF DIALOGUE WITH SOLIDARITY, AND OTHERS COULD WELL COME ROUND TO THE VIEW THAT SOLIDARITY IN ITS CURRENT RADICAL FORM CAN NEVER BE SOUGHT TO PLAY A ROLE COMPATIBLE WITH THE CONTINUED EXISTENCE OF COMMUNIST RULE IN POLAND. IN THAT CASE THE LEADERSHIP COULD DECIDE THAT THERE WAS NO ALTERNATIVE TO TOUGH ACTION UP TO AND POSSIBLY INCLUDING THE IMPOSITION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY. IT IS DOUBTED WHETHER TOUGH MEASURES, WHICH WOULD HAVE TO INCLUDE AT THE VERY LEAST THE DETENTION OF SOLIDARITY RADICALS, COULD BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHOUT WIDESPREAD PROTEST, WHILE THE BANNING OF SOLIDARITY OR THE IMPOSITION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY WOULD PROBABLY LEAD TO A GENERAL STRIKE AND CIVIL DISTURBANCES. THERE WOULD, IN OUR VIEW, BE A HIGH RISK OF THESE GETTING OUT OF CONTROL AND LEADING TO SOVIET INTERVENTION. THE ABSENCE AT PRESENT OF ANY SOVIET MILITARY MOVES SUGGESTS THAT MOSCOW IS NOT PRESSING FOR THE IMMEDIATE IMPOSITION OF A STATE OF EMERGENCY.

5. THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS IS ANOTHER CRITICAL POINT IN POLAND'S AFFAIRS. IT WILL TAKE FORMAL POLICY DECISIONS WHICH THE POLISH LEADERSHIP (AND THE SOVIET UNION) CANNOT IGNORE. IN THE PAST, SEVERAL CRISES HAVE BEEN RESOLVED BY LAST-MINUTE CONCESSIONS BY ONE SIDE OR THE OTHER. THIS TIME THERE IS LESS SCOPE FOR THIS SINCE WHAT IS AT STAKE IS NOT A SINGLE ISSUE BUT A FUNDAMENTAL CHALLENGE TO THE EXISTING SYSTEM. THERE HAS RECENTLY BEEN A POLARISATION OF VIEWS IN THE LEADERSHIP AND IN SOLIDARITY AND THE VOLATILITY OF THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS ADDS AN EXTRA ELEMENT OF UNPREDICTABILITY. EVEN A VICTORY FOR THE MODERATES AT THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS WOULD PROVIDE ONLY A BREATHING SPACE BEFORE THE NEXT AND POSSIBLY MORE SERIOUS CRISIS.

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