

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL ON MONDAY, 13TH SEPTEMBER, 1982Brief for the ChairmanITEM II : POLAND

You may wish to say :

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File No. 19 - 10 - 01

(Poland)

Since the last Council examination in late July of the situation in Poland, the Political Committee has continued its practice of closely monitoring developments there. Clearly, the most significant event during this period took place on 31st July when Solidarity called for public protests to mark the second anniversary of the Gdansk accords. While the turnout was, perhaps, less than the Solidarity leadership might have hoped for, it was sufficiently large and provoked sufficient violence as to give the regime good cause for concern. On the economic side, there has been some improvement in the availability of foodstuffs, but overall short term prospects remain bleak given the severity of Poland's balance of payments difficulties and the absence of a coherent program for reviving industry and reforming the economy in general.

Given the available evidence, it seems safe to conclude that popular discontent in Poland remains deeply rooted and widespread. The authorities have made clear their determination to maintain martial law as long as they deem necessary. Although a large number of Poles detained when martial law was first imposed have now been released, many of their places have been taken by others who have since been arrested. Meanwhile, the regime has made it plain that it has no intention of resuming a genuine dialogue with Solidarity. In the circumstances, I believe the Council's time might best be spent in exchanging views on policy aspects of the Polish problem in light of the certainty that there is no likelihood that the three conditions contained in the January NATO Declaration will be fully met in the foreseeable future, if ever.

The Council will, I believe, also want to consider what should be said to the press following this meeting. If a statement is to be made at all, I would urge that it be very short. For example, the Council may simply wish to authorize the NATO spokesman to confirm on an "if asked" basis that it took advantage of its meeting this afternoon again to compare notes on Poland in keeping with its standing mandate in the matter.

And now, who would like to begin our exchange ?