

W. A. N. Registry

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As far as can be determined from the parts now available, relaxation measures which the Polish government intends to introduce will represent only limited movement towards meeting the Allies' three criteria. They will have relatively little effect on the daily lives of the great majority of Polish people. While the visibility of the armed forces may be reduced at lower levels of national life, the military will continue to take the major national policy decisions given the inability of the Polish United Workers Party to undertake this rôle. Since martial law is to be suspended rather than lifted, the full rigour of its provisions can be reimposed at a moment's notice without further legislative action by parliament. In any case the reserved powers for the authorities which the Sejm is to adopt will allow the régime to act in accordance with the main provisions of martial law without this label being used. They will certainly be sufficient to ensure that any resistance to the régime will be suppressed.

The precise nature and scope of these special powers remain unclear. But the caution with which Jaruzelski is now proceeding leads to the supposition that they will be extensive. Equally, any amnesty which may be granted is likely to be limited, and not all those now interned will be released.

Compared with the expectations which were being fostered only a short time ago, the moves which are now intended cut little ice. Jaruzelski has been concerned to make good his undertaking to relax martial law by the end of the year and thus to present himself and his policies in as favourable a light as possible, not least for Western audiences. But the vagueness with which many of the relaxation measures is cloaked betrays a determination to move very slowly on the path of further liberalisation. In this, Jaruzelski has no doubt the wishes of the Soviet Union well in mind.

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