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GERMAN DELEGATION
TO THE NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

DÉLÉGATION ALLEMANDE
AU CONSEIL DE L'ATLANTIQUE-NORD

REG. P. A.
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Brussels, 22 August 1980

Dear Glenn,

P. A. Sub - Registry
File No. 19-10-01 Poland

Mr Cella
Mr Arnould

Following the discussions on the situation in Poland in the Senior Political Committee of today and in the Political Committee of Tuesday, August 19, 1980 I enclose for your information and convenience

excerpts from two reports of our Embassy in Warsaw concerning

- the situation in Poland; the strikes and Mr. Giereks Speech

- the situation in Poland,

as well as an excerpt from our Embassy in Moscow concerning

- Soviet Reaction to the situation in Poland.

cc Schanker
Mr Cella
Mr Revéque
Mr Leubnickoff
Mr Arnould

I am sending copies of this letter and the enclosures to all members of the Political Committee and to the Representative of the IMS.

Sincerely yours

Anton

Mr. Glenn R. CELLA
Director of the
Political Directorate and
Acting Assistant Secretary General
for Political Affairs

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Subject: Soviet Reaction to the Situation in Poland

1. After the Soviet media had remained silent on Poland's domestic crisis up to now, the TASS report from Warsaw on Gierek's speech was, for the first time, a surprisingly frank description of the Polish crisis. However, the strikes are euphemistically called "Work interruptions". It is interesting that Gierek's concession that the Polish government had made mistakes in the economic field is reproduced just as clearly as Gierek's criticism concerning the attempts of "irresponsible anarchic and anti-socialist groups" which were directed against the "political and social system". Gierek's further remark that there would be no concessions "in this matter of principle" must have sounded strangely alarming in the ears of the Soviet public.

2. If one was able to regard the silence of the Soviet media on the development of the situation as an expression of the Soviet view that the situation in Poland would quickly normalize itself, the present publication and its clear language must almost be regarded as an attempt to seize the bull by the horns. The importance of the TASS report which refrains from any substantive comment lies in the fact that it indicates a reassessment of the Soviet estimate of the situation. The language of the TASS report on Gierek is neutral, i.e. it contains neither criticism nor an expression of solidarity.

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Brussels, 21 August 1980

Subject: The Situation in Poland

1. Agency reports according to which the strikes along the Baltic coast have further spread after Gierek's speech and have in some places even assumed the scope of a general strike (the only exception being vital facilities such as electricity, gas, water, public health etc.) have been confirmed by various sides. On 19 August, there were reports that Prime Minister Babiuch, Politbureau Member Lukasiewicz and Vice-Premier Barcikovsky had been sent to Stettin to take part in the consultations of the local provincial committee.
2. Mr. Jablonsky, Chairman of the State Council, in another appeal to strikers and the population in Danzig, spoke of unacceptable acts against the "interests of Party, State and Nation". Chief Editor Voyciechovsky of Interpress denied to foreign correspondents reports or speculations according to which
 - the government intended to use force to terminate the strikes,
 - some Soviet troop contingents are also said to have arrived in Danzig.

At the same time, he underlined the government's determination not to negotiate with the general strikers' committees which have been formed in Danzig, Zoppot and Gdingen, but only with the strikers' committees of the individual factories.

3. In the meantime, Polish news agencies and the press are informing the Polish population of the irresponsible cost of the persistent strikes. Dissident groups are reporting an extension of the strikes to further towns, especially to the majority of the divisions of the Nova Huta steelworks in Cracow.
4. The restraint shown by the catholic church is remarkable. As far as statements by the Primate of Poland are concerned, only two comments have so far become known:
 - an extract from a speech published in "Osservatore Romano" on 15 August : "It is necessary that everybody is able to obtain his daily bread, and it is also just that we demand this bread so that nobody must go without it. We are doing so in a noble and dignified manner because we know that it is necessary."
 - a quotation published in "Slovo Povechne" on 19 August, according to which he had mentioned the moral obligation to deepen the dignity and fruits of work, but is also said to have recalled the principles of the unity of the nation and the maintenance and consolidation of peace.
5. Eyewitnesses in Danzig report that there was considerable irritation among the strikers and determination to insist on their demands and not to leave the factories voluntarily. There have apparently also been the first isolated acts - committed by young people - of violence against a private Taxi which was still in operation and acts of sabotage against railway and tram lines. Telephone reports which reached our embassy in Warsaw indicate that everything is still quiet in the streets because the strikes are confined to the shipyards and to other factories. Buses and trams are still not operating. Telex traffic with Danzig has been interrupted. Self-dialling telephone

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calls from Danzig to Warsaw are possible, while the manual long-distance exchange connects calls from Warsaw to Danzig. Self-dialling in this direction is impossible.

6. It has been confirmed that the refinery in Danzig is on strike. The city administration issues petrol coupons to tourists. The Danzig tourist authorities have assured a German travel agency that every tourist who wishes to leave Danzig will get enough petrol. There have today been long queues in front of the shops, also in the market halls. About a third of the stands were closed today. Since Monday, helicopters have been observed which drop official leaflets, among them some which promise that supplies of electricity and water will be maintained.

7. The leaflets on Monday (i.e. 18 August) informed the population that the strikers had promised that they would end their strike but that they had not kept their promise. Other leaflets distributed by the shipyard managers contained the demand that the strikers should return to work. These leaflets were confiscated by the strikers. The dairies in Danzig are now also said to be on strike. Milk and butter are getting short. It has been reported that all military personnel in Danzig has been confined to barracks. The Danzig representative of a German travel agency said that if the strikes persisted, the special tourist train which will be sent to Danzig next Sunday to pick up returning tourists will probably be the last one. The ferryboat between Travemünde and Danzig would also stay at home on Monday 25 August in view of the unchanged situation.

N o t e

Subject: The Situation in Poland;
The Strikes and Mr. Gierek's Speech.

1. After Mr. Babiuch's speech on 15 August and the first contacts between the strikers' committee and the factory managements, the strike situation in Danzig seemed to have become somewhat easier, and the end of the strikes appeared to be imminent, especially since there were signs of far-reaching concessions to the strikers' economic demands as well as to those concerning the internal organization of their factories. Nevertheless, it became known on Saturday afternoon that the majority of the strikers' committees have expressed themselves in favour of the continuation of the strikes.

2. In this context, the strikers put forward demands which exceeded the purely economic level and included, for the first time, political demands:

- the recognition of the right to strike,
- the admission of free trade unions,
- the abolition of censorship and of the restrictions of the freedom of opinion,
- free access to the churches and to the mass media,
- the liberation of the political prisoners.

3. In view of these developments, the strike in Danzig assumed new dimensions in the course of the weekend, which had to be regarded as an additional challenge by the government and which was undoubtedly one of the reasons why Mr. Gierek cancelled his visit to the Federal Republic of Germany. On 17 August, a governmental committee chaired by Vice-Premier Pyka

had been appointed for negotiations with the strikers. In the course of 18 August, there were further reports of the strikes spreading in Danzig and sporadic, unconfirmed rumours on the beginnings of strikes in Upper Silesia.

4. Following the Politbureau meeting in the afternoon of 18 August, Gierek addressed his televised appeal to the public and especially to the workers in Danzig. This appeal was characterized by a certain amount of gravity and some understanding for the material expectations of the workers. He tried to make it clear that, in spite of all the sympathy for their demands and in spite of all the readiness of the Government to take remedial action, strikes would not produce anything but could only worsen the country's situation further.

5. Gierek stated clearly and unequivocally the determination of the Party and of the Government to resist resolutely all demands which had been inspired by apparently anti-socialist and anarchic forces within the strikers' movement which were out to change or abolish the socialist system in the country. At the same time, he admitted - even more clearly than had been done in Babiuch's speech - omissions which had been committed in the past. He made further references to the economic measures to be adopted at the next plenary meeting of the Central Committee, among them a freeze of the present meat prices, price controls in important fields, an investigation into the alleged overbureaucratization of the Trade Union Central Committee and an increase in childrens' allowances. What was particularly striking in this appeal to fellow-countrymen and Party comrades was that he made special mention of the Catholics.

6. Our embassy in Warsaw states that eyewitnesses have reported that, even before Gierek's speech, militia units in Danzig were reinforced by air. These militia units were in battle dress and equipped with steel helmets and protective shields. It is also reported that the Government's negotiating

delegation now also includes Mr. Jablonski, the President of the Polish Republic, and Mr. Kania, a member of the Politbureau.

7. It is not easy to foresee how the situation will develop. It appears that Gierek wants to continue to avoid an open conflict, i.e. hard repressive action involving the risk of bloodshed. Kuron as the main spokesman of the dissidents may also have wanted to set a signal for restraint when he said that Gierek had misunderstood and misinterpreted the strikers' demands.

8. The supply situation in Danzig is worsening. According to reports, petrol has not been on sale since yesterday even to tourists. The ferry boat "Robin Hood" was not cleared for departure from the port of Danzig. The port seems to be completely paralyzed.