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NATO SECRET

Dear Joseph:

Attached is a copy of the speaking notes on Poland that I used at the Council meeting October 22. I am also sending copies of the speaking notes to my colleagues for their information.

Yours very sincerely,

Tap

W. Tapley Bennett, Jr.
Ambassador

Attachment
as stated

His Excellency
Joseph M.A.H. Luns
Secretary General
North Atlantic Treaty Organization
Brussels

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This document consists of 8 pages.

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POLAND

1. The Polish domestic, political and economic situation has been in an unsettled state for nearly four months; while the Kania leadership still has time to grapple with the multiple challenges facing it, Moscow and Poland's other Warsaw Pact Allies show signs of growing alarm over the fact that, despite the strike settlements, the number two country in the "Socialist Commonwealth" is in for a long period of turmoil with no solution in sight. Consequently, Warsaw's Allies, especially the more orthodox ones, are becoming less reticent in venting their frustration and consternation over the impact of Poland's prolonged crisis.

2. Aside from the ferment sweeping the country and affecting virtually every constituency, what is particularly disturbing to Warsaw's Allies is the fact that the Polish party, while not spearheading a process of runaway liberalization, is itself divided at the top and demoralized at the rank-and-file level, rendering it less able to lead the country out of its predicament. Thus, while pressure from below for changes chips away the already frayed party authority, significant factions within the party are pushing for major economic reforms and for injecting pluralist ideas into the party as the inescapable price for regaining public confidence.

3. Kania himself seems caught in the middle. He enjoyed some success at the Sixth Party Plenum (Oct. 4-6) in weeding out discredited figures from the previous regime without bowing to reformist clamor for a hasty and premature scheduling

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of an extraordinary party congress. Kania also seems to have gained additional time to consolidate his position. Nevertheless, it remains to be seen whether he will be able to come up with a program for dealing with the country's economic woes in the face of conservative opposition and continuing inflationary demands of the workers.

4. The Independent Trade Union movement poses by far the most difficult dilemma. It is a fact of life, but its registration at the Warsaw Court has thus far foundered on objections involving such issues as the need to include in its charter a declaration of explicit loyalty to party supremacy, and whether it should function regionally or nationwide. Meanwhile, the Official Central Council of Trade Unions has become a mere shadow of its former self as the regime apparently prepares the way for a new umbrella organization that would include all the old-style "Independent Autonomous' Trade Unions" as well as the"Solidarity" Federation.

5. In our view, the current Soviet approach to the Polish situation reflects political, economic, and military concerns:

--Moscow's most obvious concern is that the unchecked growth of political pluralism in Poland could lead to loss of effective communist party control in Poland and endanger the

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cohesion of the Warsaw Pact Alliance;

--Nevertheless, Moscow recognizes the need to help its ally overcome the deepening economic crisis which led to the labor unrest in the first place;

--Moscow is further concerned that the continuing confrontation between party and government and the workers in Poland may produce serious external repercussions: infection of workers in other Eastern European countries with similar aspirations; increased friction within and among communist parties in Western Europe; and the possibility that unrest within the Soviet bloc will undercut Soviet propaganda efforts on such issues as the TNF, detente in Europe, and the activities of "U.S. imperialism," particularly in the Middle East.

--In addition, the USSR may well fear the long-term drain of Soviet and Eastern European economic resources to aid Poland.

6. We have, at best, only sketchy information on how the Soviets are approaching the crisis. There are unconfirmed reports of regular Soviet contact with the Polish authorities through party and diplomatic channels. Other than the fact that the Soviets refuse to accept the idea of independent trade unions, little is known of the substance of the contacts.

Ananlysis of the Soviet Media Suggests:

--Moscow supports the Kania regime, but on the expectation that it will restore order in Poland with no serious

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damage to party rule. (Pravda's unusual publication on October 2 of the full text of Kania's message of thanks to Brezhnev appeared intended to remind the Polish regime that it had pledged fealty to the Socialist order and to economic and military alliance with the Soviet Union).

--The idea that the existence of Independent Trade Unions in unacceptable to Moscow on both political and economic grounds, first surfaced in a September 25 "book review" in Pravda, and has now become the focus of a major propaganda effort in Soviet trade union organs and by Soviet-controlled or influenced foreign unions.

7. We see no indications of large scale mobilization, combat preparations, or deployments by Soviet forces in areas near Poland such as would be expected if Moscow were planning a military intervention. It is our estimate that in an intervention, the Soviets would use at least thirty divisions, and perhaps 45 or more if they anticipated that the Polish army of 15 divisions would resist. A lesser number of divisions could be used if the Polish government, with senior military approval, invited the Soviets to assist in controlling the country. There has been a sigificant level of field training of Soviet forces in East Germany and the western USSR, not unusual this time of year, which puts the ground and air forces in a better posture to take military action. Troop rotation has started in East Germany, which means that conscripts will be entering the divisions. Nevertheless, the

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integrity of several regiments within each division will probably be maintained, so that the troop rotation is not expected to lessen the effectiveness of the Soviet posture vis-a-vis Poland. We believe the Soviet military remain concerned about the Polish situation and are maintaining a necessary level of readiness in case Moscow should decide to take military action.

8. We have looked carefully at a number of other recent developments on the Eastern European scene which have heightened general concern about Soviet intentions with regard to Poland. These have included inter alia the GDR's sharp hikes in mandatory currency exchange levels, the cancellation of Ceausescu's visit to Canada, Husak's speech last week to the Czechoslovak Central Committee attaching the West for trying to upset the unity of the socialist community, and most recently Honecker's October 13 speech in which, extemporaneously or not, he said that "we and our friends would make sure that Poland stayed firmly in the socialist camp". At the same time Poland's Warsaw Pact neighbors are coming up with some economic assistance for Poland which they can ill afford themselves.

9. In our view, the Eastern Europeans' policies are proceeding along three parallel tracks. On the one hand they have a strong interest in seeing Kania succeed in reestablishing the role of the Polish party, thus forstalling Soviet intervention and limiting the danger to their own parties' positions. They

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are prepared to contribute scarce resources to that end. At the same time they want to make it clear to their own people--and to the Polish leadership--that they will not tolerate any slackening of the party's grip at home. This explains the tough propaganda line which would portray events in Poland as the result of western intervention and "anti-socialist" dissident elements in the society. On a third level they want to take other preventive measures to avoid worker discontent, which could grow over time in the face of the economic squeeze all face in the months and years ahead. This leads to cosmetic attention to the Trade Union Movement and to efforts to improve economic performance in their own country without lessening the party's grip.

10. As usual, these various tendencies take different forms in different EE countries, with the GDR running the most scared and demonstrating a willingness to risk losing important economic benefits in order to put a lid on contacts with the FRG and the West in general. We see no sign as of yet of an across-the-board Eastern European effort to draw back from engagement with the West, but would expect these contacts to proceed against a background of domestic vigilance campaigns directed against the West.

11. It is also possible that Eastern European countries rate the possibility of Soviet intervention as high, and that the steps they are taking are designed to prepare for this eventuality while easing Soviet concerns about the security

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of the rest of its domain. Indeed, all of the actions we have noted are consistent with this interpretation.

12. As is usually the case, the missing element in the intelligence picture is any hard information on Soviet intentions. We do not believe that Moscow would intervene under current circumstances. However, if the situation continues to deteriorate and if the party seems to be losing its grip, we believe the Soviets would send troops in regardless of the consequences to their other domestic and foreign policies.

13. We believe it is extremely important to keep in close touch with our allies and friends on this subject in the coming weeks and to share information and estimates concerning the situation in Poland and Eastern Europe.

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