

Mr Cella
RSQS
GAS
Reg. PA.



United Kingdom Delegation
To the North Atlantic Council OTAN/NATO 1110 Brussels

Telephone 241 01 15

Mr G R Cella
Director
Political Directorate
Room I206
NATO HQ

REG. P.A.
ACTION SLIP
N° 12467/81

Your reference
Our reference
Date 9 September 1981

P. A. Sub - Registry File N° 19-10-01 (Poland)

Dear Glenn,

POLITICAL COMMITTEE EXCHANGES: POLAND, IRAN AND AFGHANISTAN

1. I enclose three assessments dealing with recent developments in Poland and in Iran and with recent diplomatic moves over Afghanistan. These did not reach me in time to circulate them at the Political Committee yesterday.
2. I am copying this letter to colleagues on the Political Committee and to the Representative of the IMS.

Yours sincerely,

R Fell
R T FELL

Document NOT to be removed
from file.

DECLASSIFIED - PUBLIC DISCLOSURE / DÉCLASSIFIÉ - MISE EN LECTURE PUBLIQUE

POLAND

1. The government and Solidarity have held talks on the question of access to the media; a particular difficulty has been the issue of coverage of the Solidarity Congress which opens on 5 September. Prices of bread, flour and cereals were raised on 31 August.

2. Talks between the government and Solidarity on access to the media opened on 27 August. Solidarity had been complaining of a slander campaign against the union in the media, and accusations that reporting of Solidarity activities has been misleading have been supported by many journalists including the Polish Journalists Association Board and by the Primate, Archbishop Glemp. Solidarity would also like direct access to the media in the form of a Solidarity radio and television reporting team which would not be subject to direct censorship. These issues have become more pressing in the run-up to the Solidarity Congress. So far the government has agreed to two half-hour programmes prior to the Congress to be broadcast on 1 and 3 September. The actual amount of reporting during the Congress, which Solidarity maintains should be comparable to that of the Polish Party Congress and the degree of editorial control allowed to Solidarity have yet to be agreed. Both sides are so far maintaining a hard line. In a speech in Poznan, Kania made a strong restatement of the Party's attitude, saying that it is essential for the party to maintain its leading role in the press in order to promulgate its policies, a role it will not relinquish. Solidarity has threatened a six day press strike to be followed by a series of radio and TV strikes if there is no progress on the general question of access to the media. Some compromise will probably be found over the immediate problem of reporting the Congress. The government might try to arrange for limited printing and distribution of newspapers

by the Armed Forces if the strike threat materialises. A recent government statement has emphasised that any disruption of the broadcasting network which is part of the Warsaw Pact communications system is "inadmissible".

3. The talks are taking place against the background of a continuing strike of print workers in Olsztyn. Archbishop Glemp has sent a representative to mediate in this dispute. Disputes elsewhere include a sit in of printworkers at Rzeszaw, talks in Radom over redress for those victimised after the 1976 riots, which have been adjourned until after the Solidarity Congress, and a ballot at the steelworks in Katowice over a demand for the dismissal of the manager, who closed down Solidarity printing presses. The Solidarity leadership is trying to exercise greater control over such activities and to co-ordinate the Union's overall strategy. This was the main subject of a meeting last week of the Solidarity National Co-ordinating Commission. The Solidarity leadership has taken a firm stand on a number of issues at the meeting of the Commission this week, including a resolution on pay for workers taking part in strikes in June and July. This week's first session of the Congress will deal mainly with organisational and procedural matters. The more important session will be that held from 26 September at which elections will be held and a union programme adopted.

4. On 31 August the government tripled the price of bread and sharply increased the cost of flour and cereals. These increases are the first stage in the elimination of food subsidies. Such increases have long been necessary as a low subsidised price encouraged wastage (some 15 per cent of bread supplies were being used for animal fodder). Recent increases in bread consumption because of the deterioration in supplies of other foodstuffs made the need to raise prices more pressing. Compensation payments to cover the increase in the cost of living are to be made,

and final arrangements for these payments remain open to negotiation. So far there has been no significant outcry at the implementation of the price rises. The Chairman of the "anti-crisis" committee dealing with the economy has warned that the economic situation is worsening daily. The plenum of the Central Committee met on 2 September to discuss the controversial subject of worker self management in the context of economic reform. Jaruzelski has spoken of the need for managers to have full authority. Initial reporting of the plenum suggests that methods of choosing enterprise managers will become a crucial issue. The question of workers rights is deferred and will be defined in a future Sejm statute. The apparent hard line by the plenum could jeopardise any chance of Solidarity and the Government reaching a compromise.

5. The accusations of bad faith on both sides have led to continuing friction between Solidarity and the government, although the present disputes seem unlikely to escalate into serious confrontation before the Congress. Solidarity is apprehensive of the tougher line from the government since the Party Congress which could lead to more radical attitudes at the Solidarity Congress and heighten divisions within the leadership and between it and regional branches. The moderates in the Union would welcome some government gesture to reinforce their position and justify their current policy of maintaining a dialogue with the government.

6. The Soviet Trade Union paper TRUD has claimed that the new draft rules of Solidarity demonstrate that it is an opposition force using strikes as the principal weapon to blackmail the Party and State. TASS has criticised remarks by Solidarity leaders on Polish television, indicating Soviet disapproval of the decision to allow them to appear.

The Czech and East German press have also made harsh attacks on Solidarity's political designs. The usual high-level endorsement of Brezhnev's meetings with East European leaders in the Crimea came in a Soviet Politburo statement of 22 August which enumerated the lessons to be learnt from the Polish crisis: the need to adhere to Leninist standards in the Party, to pursue a realistic economic policy and avoid excessive debts to the West, improve socialist democracy and rebuff anti-socialist forces. There was however no direct criticism of current Polish policies.

7. The head of the main political directorate of the Soviet armed forces, General Yepishev met Kania and Jaruzelski in Poland on 31 August. The talks were said to have underlined that Poland was a firm link in the Warsaw Pact, and probably focussed on ways of improving ideological work amongst the Polish troops.

8. We continue to assess that the major Soviet exercise in the north western area of the USSR scheduled for 4-12 September is not linked with the current Polish situation. We do not believe that the situation in Poland is such that the Soviet Union would contemplate intervention at this juncture, and the Soviet Union has made none of the political moves we would expect to precede intervention. The exercise will nevertheless improve the preparedness of the Soviet troops participating, and will be noted in Poland.

4 September 1981