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ORGANISATION DU TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
N A T O S E C R E T

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To : Secretary General
c.c. : Deputy Secretary General
ASG, Political Affairs -
From : Executive Secretary

MISCA
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Summary Record of a Restricted Meeting of the Council
held on Wednesday, 22nd October, 1980 at
10hr15

- I. MEETING OF THE WARSAW PACT POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNIQUE
- II. THE SITUATION IN POLAND AND EASTERN EUROPE

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T. OZGERI

This document consists of : 13 pages

N A T O S E C R E T

TEL : 241.00.40 - 241.44.00 - 241.44.90 TELEX : 23-657

N A T O S E C R E T

- 2 -

PR(80)59

ATTENDANCE : RESTRICTED

AGENDA : YES

MEETING PLACE : ROOM 1

N A T O S E C R E T

- 2 -

I. MEETING OF THE WARSAW PACT POLITICAL CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE
BRIEF ANALYSIS OF THE COMMUNIQUE

1. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said that he was about to circulate to delegations an analysis of the communique issued at the end of the meeting of the Warsaw Pact Political Committee which had taken place in Warsaw on 19th and 20th October. In accordance with the alphabetical order, Poland had to assume the rôle of the host country.

2. He wished to emphasize the following points:

- The document was based on the socialist concept of détente. In this respect it contrasted with recent anti-American and anti-Western polemics.
- It was devoted almost exclusively to matters of security and disarmament in the context of CSCE.
- It did not contain any accusation of Western interference in Poland, no remarks on Iran/Iraq or Afghanistan or Berlin.
- As for the Madrid Conference, it did not contain any new dramatic proposal. Only as regards the conference on military détente did it contain some procedural suggestions. It was envisaged that this conference would be implemented in successive steps. The stage of CBMs would be followed by a stage on limitation of troops and armaments.
- No reference was made of the existing difficulties in the Preparatory Talks in Madrid, although they had certainly been discussed during the meeting.
- The meeting had supported a Romanian suggestion that a third follow-up meeting should take place in Bucharest but it was made dependent on good behaviour on the part of the West.

3. The general impression was that the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries wanted to demonstrate their readiness to continue their efforts towards détente.

II. THE SITUATION IN POLAND AND EASTERN EUROPE

4. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE made the following statement:

"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.

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.

Kania himself seems caught in the middle. He enjoyed some success at the Sixth Party Plenum (October 4th - 6th) in weeding out discredited figures from the previous regime without bowing to reformist clamour for a hasty and premature scheduling 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 programme for dealing with the country's economic woes in the face of conservative opposition and continuing inflationary demands of the workers.

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.

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 cohesion of the Warsaw Pact Alliance;

- Nevertheless, Moscow recognizes the need to help its ally overcome the deepening economic crisis which led to the labour 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; increase of 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, détente 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.

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.

An analysis of the Soviet media suggests:

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

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 significant 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 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-à-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.

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 attacking 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 neighbours are coming up with some economic assistance for Poland which they can ill afford themselves.

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 re-establishing the role of the Polish party, thus forestalling Soviet intervention and limiting the danger to their own parties' positions. They 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.

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.

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

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.

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."

5. The CHAIRMAN agreed that the developments in Eastern Europe were to be followed with great concern, especially the reactions in the GDR. The last harsh speech by Honecker and its exploitation in the East German press had shown that this country was particularly worried at the idea that serious difficulties in Poland might cut its umbilical cord with the USSR. He failed to understand the accusations of interference in Poland by the Federal Republic, which was only providing economic aid.

6. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that some Western Ambassadors in Warsaw had recently been called by the Polish Foreign Minister to hear representations about alleged interference by their respective countries in the internal affairs of Poland. This, he felt, underlined the Polish leadership's extreme lack of confidence.

7. In a recent report, the Canadian Ambassador in Warsaw said that although life was going on normally and without any sense of immediate crisis, there was an underlying uneasiness and apprehension. Everyone agreed that Poland's troubles were far from over and that no one could pretend with any confidence to know how they could be resolved or how the situation would develop.

8. What was striking was a massive lack of confidence in the government and in the party. The new leadership team had given a convincing description of the mess Poland was in and of the errors of previous leadership that had put it there. They had not however given the impression of taking charge over events or of having any clear idea of what to do about the situation.

9. Their plight was, admittedly, unenviable: The need to satisfy the aspirations of workers and the need to demonstrate to Moscow that the party had things adequately under control and that Poland's orientation was not in question.

10. Despite bland assurances from Polish officials that Poles could and must settle their own problems themselves, fears of Soviet intervention were widespread among the general public. Rumours had even chosen November 5th as D-Day.

11. The government had underlined this hazard in constant references to Poland's membership in the Socialist bloc and close relations with the USSR as a decisive guarantee of national sovereignty and independence. The workers had been prepared to believe this up to a point and had refrained from the kind of direct provocation of Moscow that had marked the 1968 "Prague Spring". They had not however been deterred from persisting in their political demands by such warnings, and some of the union and dissident leaders clearly believed that they could push the regime even further without triggering a Soviet response.

12. All this added up to some danger of things getting out of hand, although restraint shown by both sides to date had been remarkable. Lurking behind the politics of the situation of course, was the horrendous state of the Polish economy. As a result of the concessions made to workers involving change in the shift system, coal and copper production might well decline and it was hard to see how the losses in industrial production generally due to strikes could be made up. Meat rationing was almost certain to be imposed as soon as the government could work out how it should be done. The Polish press was full of circumstantial details on the grimness of the economic situation.

13. At the same time, a campaign to root out the wrong doers in the party and government was probably designed to restore credibility of the party as well as to root out Gierak supporters. The party must hope to persuade the population both of the need for tough economic measures and of its moral authority to impose them.

14. Even if they succeeded in winning the co-operation of free trade unions for the economic recovery programme (which would be one way of co-opting them) recovery would be long, slow and painful.

15. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE agreed that a Soviet intervention could very well take place depending on the situation in Poland. In his view, four scenarios could be considered:

- an action by the Polish forces;
- a limited intervention by some Eastern European countries but without any involvement of the Soviet forces;
- an intervention along the lines of what happened in Czechoslovakia in 1968;
- a direct military intervention by the Soviet Union.

16. He suggested that the Polads should consider these four possibilities.

17. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that for obvious psychological reasons it was unlikely that the Soviets would ask the East German forces to intervene in Poland.

18. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE said that his delegation had given to the Poles an analysis of the situation in Poland which might be interpreted as a confirmation of the general insecurity within the Polish leadership. As an example of this insecurity, he explained that according to bilateral arrangements with the Poles, visas were given on the Polish border to Danes seeking entrance into the country. These arrangements had recently been terminated by the Polish authorities.

19. The central question in Poland, he felt, was the fact that independent and free trade unions in the western sense was a contradiction in a socialist system. The basic Soviet consideration would be to what degree the Polish regime would succeed in cutting down the size of the workers' movement.

20. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE very much agreed with the Danish Representative's analysis. The question however was whether the future trade unions' leaders were ready to accept the cut down in size and to moderate their aims. As for a possible foreign intervention, he felt that if this difficult compromise could not be achieved, an external intervention was likely to occur but that a participation of East German troops was very unlikely since it would create an explosive situation. He did not believe either that the Soviet Union would use troops from other Warsaw Pact countries, because it would feel that their reliability was too much in doubt. Therefore if there was to be an intervention, it would be by Russian troops only. He could foresee two possibilities:

- The Polish authorities would have to call in the Russian troops to help them in keeping the situation under control;
- The situation would be so far out of hand that the Soviet Union would decide to intervene without being called in.

21. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said that in his view Moscow would always seek a Warsaw Pact basis for its intervention, if only to show solidarity against Poland. He also felt that any request from Poland would certainly be addressed through the Warsaw Pact. Therefore a token participation of the East German troops could not be excluded. It was also possible that at a given time, prior to a Polish request, the Soviets would reinforce their forces in Poland, under an existing arrangement between the two countries.

22. The MILITARY COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVE said that according to intelligence sources, increased command and control capabilities of Soviet forces in the Western military districts and in the groups of forces in Europe continued to be maintained. Soviet political reactions to the developments in Poland indicated dissatisfaction, but imminent use of force was not expected at this time. There were no reports of any further military preparations. Nevertheless, only minimal warning of Soviet intervention by its forces stationed in the Western military districts and Europe would be available because of their high state of readiness.

