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BRIEFS AND COMMENTS

POLAND: Politburo Statement on Strikes

As workers in Lublin and other parts of the country continued to strike yesterday, Poland's Communist Party politburo issued a communique reportedly implying that such activity could result in Soviet intervention.

Lublin is only 50 miles from the Soviet border, and [REDACTED] the communique warned that the strikes could cause "anxiety among our friends." Such a statement could have an adverse effect on the situation by further antagonizing the disaffected Polish workers. The politburo also named a special commission headed by Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Jagielski to review workers' demands, but only after they returned to their jobs.

[REDACTED] there are rumors that workers will stage a general strike and hold a mass meeting outside party headquarters today. Such action would present the regime with its most serious challenge since the unrest began earlier this month and would increase the chances that violence could break out.

Workers in Chelm were also on strike yesterday, and [REDACTED] laborers in many areas of Poland are holding "discussions" about wage increases. Workers in various parts of the country probably are engaged in job actions. In addition to pay increases, strikers are also asking for family allowances equal to those of the police and military, new union elections, and immunity for strike leaders.

The party central committee on 11 July reportedly approved pay increases for transportation and municipal workers in various parts of Poland, including Lublin [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] the regime, although attempting to be conciliatory, is handling the situation very poorly.

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The government's efforts to deal with striking workers on a case-by-case basis only seems to increase the stoppages. Settlement of one strike through a wage increase leads to others as workers seek the rewards walkouts are clearly bringing. Moreover, some plants where settlements have been reached are being struck again, presumably by workers who believe that the rewards they have obtained are less than those secured by other strikers.

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