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SITUATION REPORT

POLAND

Scattered strikes in as many as 20 of Poland's provinces could indicate how party first secretary Kania will handle contentious workers.

A four-day strike of 18,000 workers at the Mielec aircraft factory in southeastern Poland probably is the most serious. It apparently began after the provincial party first secretary told the workers they did not need free trade unions. The workers disagreed and have since escalated their demands to include the dismissal of local party officials and the introduction of religious training in the schools. Since the beginning of the strikes in early July, local officials have repeatedly caused problems by ignoring instructions from Warsaw.

Although many of the strikes will probably be settled quickly at the local level, Warsaw has shown signs of concern. A commentary Sunday on Radio Warsaw warned that additional demands from strikers threatened the gains won by other strikers.

Increased Union Activity

The interest in free trade unions, meanwhile, continues to spread. Representatives from the strike committee in Gdansk have traveled to various provinces to recruit new union members and distribute handbills outlining plans for the new unions. Teachers at the Jagellonian University in Krakow have also announced the formation of their own free trade union.

In a development certain to raise regime concern, prominent dissident spokesman Jacek Kuron yesterday went to Gdansk to help advise the strike committee there on organizational questions. Gdansk strike leader Lech Walesa continues to make statements that the regime might later try to use against him. He recently told a

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Approved for Release 1
Date AUG 1999

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Western journalist that the new unions intend to work not only at the national level but also hinted they might engage in international activity even though the strike agreement forbids it. [REDACTED]

Regime's Initial Actions

Kania already is moving to establish ties with important political centers and gain a higher public profile. On Sunday he met with the powerful Warsaw party organization. Yesterday he went to a key shipyard in Gdynia to speak with workers, and today he is reportedly slated to go to Katowice. Kania has spent most of his political career either in the Warsaw party or in the central party apparatus, and he probably feels it necessary to meet local leaders, especially to assure the Katowice party apparatus that its interests will be represented. [REDACTED]

Deputy Prime Minister Kisiel announced yesterday that a commission has been established to study ways to improve management of the Polish economy. Kisiel indicated that future reforms would give local officials greater decisionmaking authority in such areas as housing, road construction, retail trade, and local services. Plant managers also would play greater roles in factory management. [REDACTED]

These changes would not represent major administrative reforms and--even if finally passed--would not result in a fundamental improvement in how the economy functions. Kisiel's announcement--simply a restatement of changes suggested in May by former Prime Minister Jaroszewicz--indicates that the new Polish leadership initially plans only superficial changes in the economy. [REDACTED]

Warsaw Pact Exercise

Poland's failure to send Defense Minister and party Politburo member Jaruzelski to the Warsaw Pact exercise in East Germany may reflect Warsaw's concern over the continuing labor unrest. Available information, however, does not indicate that the political or internal security situation requires his presence. [REDACTED]

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