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POLAND

The sudden visit today of party leader Kania and Premier Pinkowski to Moscow will be interpreted in Poland and elsewhere as an expression of increased Soviet nervousness over internal Polish developments.

The trip, which we believe was hurriedly arranged at Soviet insistence, comes as the Polish regime is trying to determine how to respond to the latest demands and threats of strikes by the free trade union Solidarity. The Soviets probably want to discuss Kania's strategy, stiffen his resolve, and signal to the Polish population that Moscow's tolerance may now be reaching a limit. Kania, for his part, will likely seek to determine just what these limits currently are.

The trip to Moscow comes after a month-long period in which the Soviets publicly maintained a reserved approach but obviously were increasing strident criticisms by their East European allies. The chairman of the Czechoslovak trade union council and a Politburo member yesterday said that the establishment of free trade unions is analogous to the "conduct of antisocialist forces in the crisis-ridden years in Czechoslovakia."

Solidarity leaders were scheduled to discuss their demands with Pinkowski tomorrow in Warsaw, and we expect Pinkowski to return in time for what could be a crucial session. After two days of heated discussions earlier this week, the Solidarity leadership announced that if the talks are not successful they will call for strikes on 12 November at selected locales.

Finding compromise solutions will be difficult. The issues at stake--union acknowledgment of the leading role of the party and the union's right to strike--are matters of principle for both sides. Although union leaders disagree on tactics and other demands, they seem united on these issues, fearing that a compromise would be but a first step in allowing the party to take back what it promised in the Gdansk accords.

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The regime, for its part, has taken a more rigid stance on union registration than on any other issue; it has publicly committed itself on the question of its leading role. Its inflexibility is probably due not only to pressure from within the party, but also to real or perceived pressure from Moscow.

Failure of the two sides to reach some sort of accommodation--either tomorrow or soon thereafter--would probably result in a strike. If the more radical forces in Solidarity gain the ascendancy, the strike could be general and nationwide. If union leader Walesa and the moderates maintain their control, it would probably be more limited, possibly similar to the one-hour symbolic strike of 3 October.

The regime's options in either case would be quite limited. It could, as it did on 3 October, wait the strike out, hope rank-and-file support for the strikers will wane. The regime might come under pressure to use force. The use of police to evict strikers from the factories, however, would be very risky, because the regime could quickly lose control of the situation.

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