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SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

[REDACTED] we believe that Warsaw Pact military forces designated for use against Poland are being maintained in a state of advanced preparation but not necessarily at full combat readiness. [REDACTED]

Mobilization and field training activity since September have put the ground forces in a posture where they could be prepared to march into Poland in less than 48 hours, even if some divisions have released their reservists and returned to their garrisons. [REDACTED]

We believe that the Soviets have selected the armies and higher commands for potential intervention roles [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] These arrangements appear largely complete [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Some divisions in the western USSR that had conducted mobilization and training activity during November had returned to garrison [REDACTED] in early December. The Soviets would need only about 24 hours to recall their reservists, and one additional day would be needed to concentrate these units for entry into Poland. [REDACTED]

Church Appeals for Calm

The Catholic Church's strongly worded appeal yesterday for restraint by all Poles could help considerably to ensure calm during the potentially volatile two weeks ahead. A communique--released after the regularly scheduled meeting of Bishops--stressed that the country's "very complex situation" makes "impermissible" any actions that endanger Poland's "freedom and statehood" and opposed the abuse of "existing difficulties" for aims "alien to the nation's good." [REDACTED]

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The Bishops urged "everyone" to ensure that next week's commemorations of the 10th anniversary of the Baltic coast riots take place "in a calm and serious atmosphere"--an injunction intended to apply both to the regime and to the populace. To ensure that its appeal for calm has maximum impact, the Bishops designated tomorrow as a day of prayer for national unity and directed that a pastoral letter appealing for calm be read at all services. [REDACTED]

The Bishops' statement seems to reflect considerable fear within the Church about a possible Soviet intervention and a concern that events on the Baltic coast could get out of control. To help prevent the latter, the Church will send Cardinal Macharski--a protege of Pope John Paul II--and several other ranking clergymen to the ceremony dedicating a monument in Gdansk on Tuesday. [REDACTED]

A Church spokesman said the statement had been directed in part at "noisy and irresponsible" assertions by political dissidents. He cited as an example a statement by Jacek Kuron, a dissident who has been advising Solidarity. [REDACTED]

Even implied public criticism by a Church official of a political dissident is highly unusual, if not unprecedented, and seems certain to anger some dissidents and perhaps some within Solidarity. Walesa, for one, has continually stressed his willingness to "stand by" Kuron. [REDACTED]

The Church's actions will be well received by a Kania regime that has been making strenuous--and not entirely successful--efforts to convince Poles of the need for restraint. The Soviets, who have urged the Church to play a moderating role, will also be pleased. [REDACTED]

Although the Church's appeal increases the chances that events will go smoothly next week, it provides no guarantees. A similar appeal for calm by Cardinal Wyszynski in late August--during the Gdansk strikes--was criticized by segments of the populace as premature and unjustified. Some Poles apparently believe the Church leadership has been too willing to side with the regime, and this most recent statement could be greeted with reservations. [REDACTED]

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Soviet Perceptions and Options

A variety of reports indicate that at last week's sudden meeting of the Warsaw Pact leadership in Moscow, Kania received some more time to counter the threat to Polish party rule from the unions and the dissidents. If these reports are accurate, as seems likely, then Moscow's perception of Kania's progress in reestablishing control in Poland will be crucial to its decision whether to introduce Soviet military forces into Poland in the near term. [REDACTED]

The Soviets probably recognize that their military preparations to intervene in Poland have had a sobering impact on the key Polish actors. The Church's willingness to urge calm and Solidarity's agreement, during a secret meeting with government representatives on 7 December, to take steps to avoid a confrontation, are two of the more noteworthy examples. [REDACTED]

Signs of an aggressive agitation-propaganda campaign in the Polish military to enhance its political reliability also indicate sober assessment by this critical organization. Indeed, the relative domestic quiet that preceded the Moscow summit is continuing. [REDACTED]

These developments have for the most part been atmospheric, however, and the Soviets probably see no indication of any fundamental changes in the power relationship between the party and the unions that Moscow finds so alarming. The unions are continuing to make political demands on the regime, most recently for the formation of a joint committee to obtain the release of all political prisoners. Solidarity continues to accuse the government with failing to keep past agreements, and the farmers are demanding an independent union. [REDACTED]

The party itself remains in ferment; no clear line has emerged from the Politburo changes, and there is no evidence that provincial leaders are more willing to follow Warsaw's lead. Furthermore, the regime has not been tested since its capitulation last month to union demands for release of two prisoners. [REDACTED]

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The Soviets could see Tuesday's commemoration of the 1970 riots on the Baltic coast as a crucial test both of Kania's ability to project the party into a more dynamic leadership role and of the workers' ability to act with restraint.

They clearly recognize that the Kania regime has limited maneuverability in countering union and dissident demands without provoking a violent or confrontational response from the workers. Moscow's increasing military preparations since the Moscow summit are a vivid indicator of continued Soviet skepticism about the ability of the Polish regime to turn the situation around.

East European Reaction

The East Germans, among Poland's harshest critics, have at least temporarily ceased their attacks. Speaking at a Central Committee meeting on Thursday, Politburo member Mittag stressed East Berlin's "utmost concern" for events in Poland but also made it appear that East Germany's "fraternal assistance" would be limited to foodstuffs, industrial goods, and perhaps loans.

Mittag said that East German leader Honecker informed the Warsaw Pact leaders last week that East Germany has given emergency economic aid to Poland at a hard currency cost of about \$150 million. The aid includes advanced deliveries of meat, grain, butter, and industrial goods as well as a hard currency credit of about \$72 million on easy terms.

The Bulgarians, who have been unusually reticent in commenting on events in Poland, on Thursday for the first time publicly expressed their conviction that the Polish people will do everything possible to resolve the crisis in the interest of socialism and socialist unity. The statement by the Politburo avoided pointing an accusing finger at the West or anyone in Poland and, unlike similar statements by the Czechoslovak and East German parties, did not include the ominous references to "fraternal assistance" from Poland's Warsaw Pact allies.

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