

NID 81

January 12, 1981

SITUATION REPORT

POLAND

Solidarity showed impressive strength on Saturday when large numbers of Poles ignored government warnings and stayed off the job.

The government contends that two-thirds of the work force reported for the first shift, but it seems clear that many of Poland's industrial centers were idled. The pressure now is on the government to find an acceptable compromise, but it may be content for the moment to let local authorities negotiate accords at the factory level. Attempts by factory managers to follow through on the government's threat to dock the wages of workers who were absent last Saturday will only complicate negotiations and will provoke at least wildcat strikes.

Discussions at the national level will be delayed by the departure for Rome tomorrow of Solidarity leader Walesa and a number of his associates. Walesa is not expected to return to Poland until early next week.

Speaking to a meeting on agricultural issues on Saturday, party leader Kania ignored the dispute over free Saturdays but harshly criticized antisocialist "outsiders" who are trying to use demands for a rural trade union--a so-called rural Solidarity--to create a "political opposition" in the countryside. His remarks apparently led to a harsh reply from a member of Solidarity's National Coordinating Commission, who raised the possibility of a strike in response to what he described as a generally hardened government posture.

an organizer for the rural trade union reacted more moderately, criticizing some provocative posters that had appeared in one town and disclaiming the need for any strikes to buttress the farmers' grievances.

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136
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NID 81

January 12, 1981

Strikers Ousted

Authorities in a southern province yesterday used the police to evict sit-in strikers from a government building. According to a Polish press account, the strikers, who included representatives of the local Solidarity chapter, left the building without resistance. The action, the first of its kind since Solidarity came into existence, could have been taken on the initiative of the local authorities. Nonetheless, it seems likely to sour further the atmosphere between Solidarity and the regime. The authorities apparently made no arrests and reaffirmed their willingness to discuss even the most sensitive issues, actions that could temper Solidarity's reaction to the incident.

Soviet Leadership Split

Recent reports have provided the first specific evidence of division within the Soviet Politburo over whether to intervene militarily in Poland. In early December [redacted] identified Politburo members Suslov, Andropov, and Gorbachev as favoring intervention in Poland, and Brezhnev, Tikhonov, and Ponomarev as taking a more moderate approach. [redacted] did not mention the attitudes of other Politburo members. The moderates clearly prevailed at that time, as indicated by the reprieve granted the Kania regime at the Warsaw Pact meeting held in Moscow on 5 December.

[redacted] described Soviet military preparations in early December as a "scare tactic," although it is doubtful that he would have been knowledgeable about the full extent and purpose of the preparations. The Poles were said not to have crossed the line beyond which their actions would be unacceptable to President Brezhnev.

Hints of disagreement or uncertainty within the Soviet party over the seriousness of the Polish situation have appeared in media handling of the issue since mid-December, suggesting that the Politburo differences

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[REDACTED] NID 81 [REDACTED]

January 12, 1981

remain unresolved. Preparations for the Soviet Party Congress to be held late next month may be a factor hindering resolution of the issue. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] last month reportedly stated in private that Moscow would undertake no new foreign policy initiatives, including specifically an intervention in Poland, until after the Congress was over. [REDACTED] explained that postponement of any use of force to settle the continuing "chaos" in Poland was intended to eliminate potential unpleasantness during the Congress for the many foreign guests and for Brezhnev personally. [REDACTED]