

NID 81

February 09, 1981

SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

*Ongoing and threatened labor unrest will provide the backdrop this week for important meetings of the party's Central Committee and the parliament.*

Workers in the province of Jelenia Gora will hold a general strike today over their demands for access by the population to two government sanatoriums, for removal of corrupt officials, and for retraction of new regulations on strike pay. If these demands are not met by Wednesday, workers in neighboring provinces will join the strike on Thursday.

The strike in Lodz continues, where 10,000 students are demanding--among other things--shortened military training and the abolition of compulsory Russian language training and Marxist-Leninist courses. Miners are threatening a strike Wednesday if their demand for a five-day week for all persons in the mining profession is not met. Printers have threatened a strike for Friday if censorship is not eased. Sympathy strikes will be held in several provinces today in support of an independent farmers' union.

In its two-day plenum, the party not only will have to deal with these strike actions but also will carry out a general debate on its future relationship with Solidarity. Some hardliners will probably argue that in his five months as party First Secretary, Kania's tactics of moderation and seeking compromises to Solidarity's demands have failed to reestablish calm. They may also argue that his pledges of reform also have led to unacceptable demands from within the party for democratization.

The party's options, however, are limited. To remove Kania and embark on a tougher course toward Solidarity would risk further incapacitation of the party and heighten the prospects of uncontrollable violence.

--continued

Approved for Release  
Date AUG 1999

157  
122

February 09, 1981

To proceed on a moderate course would put off such a confrontation but at a cost of continued tensions and demands for change.

Parliament to Meet

The two-day session of parliament beginning Wednesday will ratify any governmental personnel changes signaled by the Central Committee plenum. It also will have to deal with difficult substantive issues concerning the budget and possibly also censorship. Over the past several months parliamentary committees have ceased being mere rubber stamps for regime proposals, and tough questions may be put to the ministers. The parliament may also take up the discussion that has appeared recently in the media that the parliament should play a more visible role in negotiating a new social contract between workers and the regime.

Regime Attacks KOR

Tensions between Solidarity and the regime will probably be heightened by the airing yesterday of a report that "prosecution organs" have been investigating KOR, an important dissident organization with close ties to the new unions. The report claims that KOR has been found to be engaged in "antistate activities aimed against the constitutional system of Poland and against its allies."

The regime has long sought, with little visible success, to drive a wedge between workers and their intellectual supporters. The regime has been spurred on by increasingly sharp criticism from Moscow, Prague, and East Berlin of KOR's "antisocialist activities." The publication of this report may, in fact, have been intended to show the allies that the regime is doing something.

Any precipitous move by the regime against KOR, however, would bring a swift and strong reaction from Solidarity, probably in the form of a nationwide general strike.

--continued

February 09, 1981

In the report on KOR, the regime did not commit itself to immediate action, stating only that the investigation is continuing. By voicing the threat of action, however, the regime has pushed itself closer to the time when it may feel compelled to carry through or risk the loss of credibility of the threat. [REDACTED]

Church Activity

The Church continued to play its highly visible moderating role late last week. On Friday evening the Polish Primate, Cardinal Wyszynski, met with union leader Walesa and called on Solidarity to ease spreading tensions "as quickly as possible." [REDACTED]

Wyszynski also met with a delegation of farmers from Rural Solidarity, but the effect of that meeting will probably be to encourage the farmers to continue with their efforts to win recognition of their union. He reportedly told them they have a "natural right" to free assembly that does not originate with any state authority. [REDACTED]

The Polish Supreme Court will rule tomorrow whether Rural Solidarity can be registered as a union. There seems to be widespread agreement in Poland that the court will not rule in the farmers' favor. Some farmers seem prepared for a negative ruling. At a press conference after their meeting with Wyszynski, several farmers said that the government, by conducting negotiations with Rural Solidarity, had, in fact, recognized the new union and "one day" would register it. [REDACTED]

Strained Relations

Poland's strained relations with two of its neighbors were publicly displayed yesterday. Polish radio carried a story describing the "ill-disposed" treatment Polish travelers were receiving from East German and Czechoslovak border guards and customs officials. The Polish Ministries of Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs reportedly have complained to East Berlin and Prague. [REDACTED]