

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

March 24, 1981

POLAND: Solidarity Discusses Strike

*Solidarity's National Consultative Commission reached tentative agreement late last night to call a nationwide general strike to protest the recent beatings of union followers in Bydgoszcz, but deferred a decision on the timing and other details of the strike to a meeting scheduled to begin early this morning.* [REDACTED]

According to Western press reports, militants argued during the heated debate for an immediate general strike. Walesa proposed instead short warning strikes on Friday and a possible nationwide general strike early next week if the government fails to meet union demands to dismiss officials responsible for the Bydgoszcz incident. Walesa's proposal was narrowly approved but then abruptly opened to new discussion, whereupon Walesa angrily left the meeting. [REDACTED]

The union leaders did agree, however, to call an immediate general strike if the government declares martial law and to move regional union headquarters into large factories for greater protection. It is unclear whether the latter action is to be taken immediately or only upon a declaration of martial law. [REDACTED]

Even if the union delays implementation of a large-scale strike action, its determination to take this course of action strengthens the argument of the regime hardliners that compromise with Solidarity is not possible and that the only recourse is to impose martial law despite the many risks involved. [REDACTED]

Although party moderates probably will try again to convince the union not to strike, the advantage at the moment clearly belongs to those in the regime favoring forceful action. Even some of the moderates apparently are becoming discouraged. For example, Deputy Prime Minister Rakowski said in an interview yesterday that he was no longer interested in a social contract with the union if it continued to use him as a "punching bag." [REDACTED]

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Approved for Release  
Date Aug 1990

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