

CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

April 24, 1981

USSR-POLAND: Suslov in Warsaw

The communique issued after a high-level Soviet party delegation's sudden trip to Warsaw yesterday suggests that the Poles did not promise much and that the Soviets were not satisfied with what they heard. [REDACTED]

The Soviet delegation--led by Politburo member and senior ideologue Suslov--met with Polish party chief Kania and other Politburo members to discuss the Central Committee plenum and current movement toward liberalization in the Polish party. The absence in the communique of any Soviet expression of confidence in the Poles' ability to solve their own problems or of the usual reference to the "unity of views" or "common approach" of the two sides hints that they did not see eye-to-eye. [REDACTED]

Suslov's was the first announced visit to Poland by a Soviet Politburo member that was directly linked with the 10-month-long crisis. The choice of Suslov--a veteran hardliner, who warned at the recent East German party congress that "any deviation" from Marxism-Leninism brings dire consequences--indicates that the Kremlin wanted to deliver a message to the Polish leaders urging them to rein in party liberalization and delay the extraordinary party congress scheduled to take place by mid-July. [REDACTED]

This message was apparent in the reference in the communique that the Soviets support the Polish Communists' efforts to strengthen their party "on the ideological basis of Marxism-Leninism." From Moscow's--and especially Suslov's--point of view, most of the reforms now being proposed by the Polish rank and file violate this basis. [REDACTED]

The Poles, for the first time in a Soviet-Polish document, admitted that they have to overcome the consequences of the party's "departure from the principles

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of scientific socialism." Kania and other Polish officials, however, have often used such phrases while discussing the shortcomings of former party leader Gierek and, in effect, offered the Soviets nothing new. Polish Central Committee propaganda chief Klasa told reporters last night that the Polish Communist leadership hopes to change some of Suslov's views. [REDACTED]

We believe that Kania would have strongly resisted any attempts by Suslov to get him to postpone the Central Committee plenum or the party congress or retreat from his earlier promise to institute reforms within the party. Kania realizes that to agree to any of these would cost him his credibility within the party and widen the divisions that already exist between the rank and file and party leadership. [REDACTED]

Kania, however, is attempting a delicate political balancing act, and Suslov's visit may have strengthened his hand in resisting pressures for radical reform. He can now argue even more forcefully that too many and too precipitous changes will not be acceptable to Moscow and that gradual, systematic reform is necessary. [REDACTED]
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