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SPECIAL ANALYSIS

USSR-POLAND: Moscow's Policy Constraints

The first stage of martial law in Poland has met Moscow's immediate objective of restoring public order. In the next year Soviet policy will be directed toward forcing the Polish people to adjust to harsher economic and political conditions and toward rebuilding the Polish Communist Party. Although the Soviets will support cosmetic concessions in the interest of minimizing the international repercussions of the crackdown, they will not favor any degree of genuine autonomy for the union movement.

The Soviets are aware that worker morale and productivity cannot be created by military decree, but they have given little indication of how they believe the Poles should proceed to establish a durable economic and political order even over the long term.

Moscow so far appears to be hoping that Lech Walesa or other Solidarity leaders can be persuaded to work with the regime. The Soviets realize, however, that a resumption of bargaining between labor leaders and Polish authorities could threaten the USSR's main policy objective of eliminating any challenge to centralized and authoritarian control. The Soviets will not tolerate a return to the confrontations between Solidarity and the government that prevailed before martial law.

Limits on Moscow

Severe financial and economic constraints have already forced the USSR to reduce its energy and other raw material exports to its East European allies, and Moscow can continue to support the Polish economy only at the cost of painful adjustments for itself and its other allies. The Soviets will want to enforce discipline, but to allow the Polish economy to run down would pose

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risks that could necessitate Soviet intervention. Some continued Soviet economic concessions therefore appear likely. [REDACTED]

If future developments lead the Soviets to press for harsher measures within Poland, the costs of martial law will become greater for the USSR. Additional Western credits would be jeopardized and this would increase the burden on the USSR's domestic economy. [REDACTED]

The Soviets' caution in dealing with these problems is likely to lead them to show some tolerance for the Polish regime's attempts to convince the population of its good intentions. They probably will accept such concessions as the release of some prisoners and the emergence of a docile Solidarity. Moscow, however, also realizes that easing of restrictions on Solidarity and the freeing of detained individuals could give the union a chance to reestablish itself in factories. [REDACTED]

Potential Friction

For the moment, the Soviets are supporting Premier Jaruzelski--if only to use him as a focus for foreign criticism of martial law. Over the longer term, there is potential for friction between the Soviets and Jaruzelski on a variety of issues, including:

- The adequacy of Soviet economic assistance.
- The acceptable limits of conciliation and compromise with Solidarity.
- Soviet military and security requirements in Poland.
- The pace and scope of the restoration of civilian party rule.
- The traditionally independent role of the Church. [REDACTED]

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Outlook

Although the issues dividing the Soviets and Polish authorities are serious, they should not be overestimated. In the short term, the factors bringing the two sides together will predominate. Both give priority to the strengthening of internal control in Poland. US economic measures against the Soviets and the Poles could be cited by Jaruzelski as justification for closer cooperation.

If, however, Jaruzelski or others on the Supreme Military Council try to work with some elements of Solidarity, Moscow will use its leverage to limit any concessions.

Over the longer term, Jaruzelski's military background and his nationalism may lead Moscow to seek other leaders in whom it can place more reliance. The Soviets are likely to move in this direction if friction becomes serious over the acceptable bounds of reform and political compromise, over economic aid, or over their efforts to strengthen their military presence. At some point, the Soviets will want to demonstrate the re-creation of a party political leadership, and they will work to establish a collective leadership that can be exploited by Moscow.

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