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POLAND-USSR: Signs of Disagreement

Party leader Jaruzelski begins his visit to Moscow today amid signs of Soviet disagreement with his approach to some key issues. The regime has eased some restrictions, while Polish bishops called for a complete lifting of martial law.

Pravda deleted a number of passages in Jaruzelski's speech last week to the plenary meeting of the party's Central Committee, including those dealing with "socialist renewal" and party leadership policy, "reconstruction" of an independent trade union movement, Church-state relations, and the inviolability of family farms. Meanwhile, a Soviet Central Committee official has warned that "counter-revolution" remains active in Poland, implying that Warsaw must continue to deal harshly with dissent.

Comment: In general, Soviet concern is probably over Jaruzelski's future intentions rather than his present policies because his interests for the time being coincide in most respects with those of Moscow. An immediate source of discord, however, could be on party leadership policy, and the Soviets will push Jaruzelski vigorously on this issue during his visit. Moscow has indicated impatience with the delay in consolidating the party and probably had expected a more extensive purge of "unreliable" members from the Central Committee at its plenum last week.

In response, Jaruzelski will offer the toughly worded communique of the Central Committee plenary session as evidence of his readiness to pursue the proper course. He also will argue for continued Soviet economic assistance as a bulwark against domestic unrest.

Limited Easing of Martial Law

The general who heads the Interior Ministry announced yesterday that Poles now may travel freely within the country and promised a further easing of curbs this month. At the same time, however, he affirmed that all the enforcement mechanisms of martial law remain in effect and would be directed at any resistance.

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Comment: Easing domestic travel will facilitate family contacts and thereby alleviate one of the population's main complaints. Also, Solidarity will have a greater opportunity to reconstruct its internal communications--a key element in the effort to regain its strength.

Polish Bishops' Appeal

The communique issued on Saturday, after the two-day meeting of the bishops, strongly renewed their earlier appeal for a speedy end to martial law, release of internees, and resumption of a dialogue between the authorities and society, specifically including Solidarity. The bishops warned that the martial law situation bore the hallmark of an impending "catastrophe," but nonetheless urged caution and a sense of "reality" on the part of the people. An edited version of the message was broadcast by Polish radio.

Comment: The communique represents the most detailed Church pronouncement yet of its demands of the regime and almost certainly contained a strong input from the Pope. The bishops probably felt that they should come down hard in support of including Solidarity in any social dialogue, given the harsh attacks on the union last week at the party's Central Committee plenary session.

The appeal to the people to act "realistically" reflects the bishops' view that any leverage the Church has will be reduced if the regime feels constrained to increase repression. The authorities probably allowed the broadcast of the bishops' message in order to give wider coverage to the part that included a plea for caution.

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