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POLAND: Suspension of Martial Law

Government officials yesterday said the regime has deferred the "suspension" of martial law to 31 December, with parliament scheduled to pass "necessary" legislation before Christmas.

State President Jablonski yesterday presented to the parliament draft legislation that would lift martial law restrictions on internal travel, communications, and public gatherings. The State Council will be given the authority to reimpose restrictions nationwide or in individual provinces and, according to two parliamentary deputies, may delegate this responsibility to local bodies.

Provisions for internment are also to be dropped, but, according to another parliamentary source, the regime may reserve special powers to extend the detention of certain individuals. Activists convicted of violating martial law regulations can, upon appeal, be granted clemency by the State Council.

Jablonski added that some martial law restrictions designed to protect state security, public order, and the economy will stay in effect. Military commissars will remain in major factories and perhaps the mines. Restrictions on publications will stay intact, and the authorities will retain considerable latitude for employing security forces.

The martial law ban on strikes will be lifted, but recent trade union legislation sets out lengthy procedures that all but preclude strikes. Workers who violate the procedures now can be summarily dismissed.

Parliament may not act on the draft legislation until this Saturday, or, as one government spokesman has indicated, 23 December.

Comment: The regime clearly is moving cautiously. The draft laws appear to set up a maze of legal regulations that will allow the government to do virtually whatever it wants and will not seriously erode its ability to maintain control. Premier Jaruzelski may be committed to a lengthy transition period and probably hopes that the prospect of the full lifting of martial law and a papal visit next summer will induce people to avoid protest activity.

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