

US/Polish Talks
March 5, 1957

Suggested U.S. Statement
Prior to Consideration of
First Item on Detailed Agenda

Before proceeding to the first item on the detailed agenda on which we have just agreed, which deals with Poland's urgent requirements for dollar goods, I believe it would be helpful to the discussion for me to clarify one or two points relating to the American position insofar as that position relates to possible assistance by the Government of the United States. I should emphasize that I am now speaking only to this question of direct assistance by the Government of the United States in the present circumstances --to which the first item on the agenda is directed--and not to our discussions as a whole, which embrace other matters as well.

First, on the basis of the information presented by the Polish delegation so far, the U.S. delegation is prepared to consider in more detail the possibility of recommending to the appropriate authorities the provision of economic assistance to Poland. I mention this point because I want to be sure that the Polish Delegation clearly understands that the American delegation is authorized to develop proposals and recommendations and that such proposals and recommendations would have to be considered and approved by the appropriate higher authorities within our Government, before final agreements could be made.

Second, the amount of such assistance would, in accordance with our practice, have to meet certain economic justifications. These we would

expect to examine in more detail both in general meetings of the kind we are now having and in meetings of technical working groups to be established.

Third, apart from the detailed economic justifications to which I have referred, there are limitations of form, method and amount which will have to govern our consideration of what the United States Government can do. These limitations arise partly from legislation and partly from established administrative practices and criteria to which we must adhere. For example, even if there were economic justification for the extension of credits to Poland by the Export-Import Bank, the provisions of other legislation, notably the Battle Act, would preclude such credits in present circumstances. With respect to forms of assistance to which the Battle Act would not apply, there are other limitations imposed by legislative appropriations and within these funds our requirements for programs with many other countries.

What I have said, of course, relates only to assistance extended by the United States Government and would not apply to private credits.

These various limitations--economic, legal and practical--mean that the scope of what we may be able to do is very much smaller than may be desired by the Polish side judging from the information received and the news reports that we have heard. Nevertheless, we are anxious that what we can do should be made as useful and helpful to Poland as possible; and to that end should be concentrated on those goods which Poland most urgently needs from the United States. In our discussion of this first item on the agenda, therefore, we would like to find out as much as possible about the relative priorities which Poland attaches to the different commodities involved.