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22 August 1988

Talking Points for DDCIPoland

The labor unrest in Poland, which escalated today with a walkout at the Gdansk shipyard led by Lech Walesa is potentially the worst crisis for the government since the imposition of martial law in 1981. There are now more workers out on strike than last spring and in more crucial industries.

- o Coal miners, demanding large pay hikes and relegalization of Solidarity, began the walkouts last week and were soon joined by port and transport workers who have crippled the port city of Szczecin.
- o In addition to the Gdansk walkout, ~~new strike actions are reported at a major factory in Warsaw and the Nowa Huta steel mill. At this point, 14 installations are on strike, involving about 75,000~~ ^{work} 25X1

The government strategy thus far is a repeat of last spring, with threats of lost jobs and pay, a media campaign villainizing the strikers, and intimidation by surrounding strike sites with riot police. ~~The government apparently has taken measures to prepare for a use of force against the strikers.~~

- o The authorities, however, would probably have to use greater force than last spring--when they intervened with security forces at Nowa Huta--because of the loss of surprise and greater number of strikes.
- o The government refuses to deal with Solidarity but has given some signals it might be willing to deal with strikers on their economic demands. 25X1

Offering negotiations on pay demands, nonetheless, may not be enough to end the walk-outs because the strikers' insistence on legalization of Solidarity appears stronger than last spring. If worker militancy continues to grow, the odds for forceful government intervention will increase markedly. Although the government has the ability to restore order with force, we believe such a policy would leave an even greater legacy of bitterness and alienation--ensuring that any peace established would be volatile and probably only temporary. 25X1

Czechoslovakia

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As many as 10,000 people [redacted] joined a 25X1
spontaneous protest march in Prague yesterday evening on the 20th
anniversary of the Warsaw Pact invasion that toppled the Dubcek
regime.

- o Even dissidents, who had expected only small-scale protests,
appeared to have underestimated the frustration many
Czechoslovaks, particularly youth, feel with the regime, which
is increasingly out of step with the reforms occurring in the
Soviet Union. [redacted]

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Polish Labor Unrest, August 1988



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