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POLAND: Soviet and Vatican Influences

*Soviet and Polish leaders yesterday signed a trade protocol that permits Poland to run a trade deficit with the USSR of 1.2-billion rubles in 1982. The Pope still is considering a trip to Poland in August, but he and the Church have only limited influence on the martial law authorities. Moscow's initial public criticism of the talks on Tuesday between President Reagan and Chancellor Schmidt was predictable.*

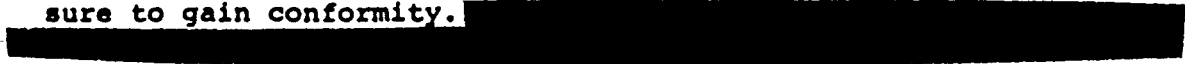
Moscow yesterday granted Poland soft currency credits to cover a 1.2-billion-ruble trade deficit this year as well as the 1.5-billion deficit from 1981. Earlier, the Soviets had threatened to force the Poles to balance their trade with the USSR. There was no mention in the trade protocol of hard currency credits.

Despite their authority, Church leaders--including the Pope--have only a limited ability to affect policy decisions by the martial law regime. This is partly due to the Church's aversion to interfering in clearly political matters. Moreover, some regime leaders accuse the Church of having been too pro-Solidarity and point out that some of Solidarity leader Walesa's advisers were closely associated with it.

The government is also well aware of--and it is exploiting--the fact that the Church will not encourage active opposition to martial law because of its basic interest in preventing bloodshed and a Soviet invasion.



The regime already has demonstrated that it is watching Church activities closely and is willing to use pressure to gain conformity.



[REDACTED] The authorities also prevented a prison priest from visiting detainees after Archbishop Glemp had paid an unexpected visit to the prison. [REDACTED]

Although Moscow criticized the talks between President Reagan and Chancellor Schmidt, it was less critical of Schmidt than of Reagan. TASS attacked both leaders for attempting to "dictate to the Polish leadership" but noted that Schmidt "kept his own opinion" of the inefficacy of sanctions against the USSR. The commentary significantly failed to mention Schmidt's public agreement with the US position that the Soviets ultimately bear responsibility for events in Poland. [REDACTED]

An economic newspaper yesterday accused the US of systematically manipulating its food aid to interfere in Poland's internal affairs. The article alleges "unparalleled duplicity and hypocrisy" on the part of the US in using blockades, sanctions, and other forms of interference throughout the period following World War II. It fails, however, to mention the 1980 grain embargo against the USSR. Moreover, there is no reference to Moscow's own food aid policy, possibly reflecting domestic unpopularity of food aid to Poland. [REDACTED]