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Mr. Dave McManis
White House Situation
Room

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Attached to Server minutes of WSAG meeting, 18 Dec. 1970

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Directorate of Intelligence
18 December 1970

INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

The Situation in Poland
(Information as of 0200 18 December)

1. Following a televised appeal for order by Premier Cyrankiewicz late yesterday, the government promulgated a decree authorizing police and security forces to fire on demonstrators. The action followed outbreaks earlier in the day of street fighting and rioting in Szczecin, and reportedly in Slupsk. Disorders led by young people resumed in Gdansk last night, and shipyard workers there apparently are not back at work. There have been at least 12 deaths and hundreds injured. Damage to buildings and vehicles is heavy. Polish army regulars have augmented police and security forces in Gdansk. Tactical air surveillance is also being provided. Yesterday apparently was a day of strikes and work stoppages across the country.

2. Bread and butter issues are behind the workers' protests. Because of a mediocre harvest and inadequate fodder supply, there have been frequent shortages since late last summer of certain foods, especially meat, considered a staple in the Polish worker's diet. In addition, a new work-incentive system has been promulgated recently in an attempt to raise productivity. The result reportedly has been a sharp cut in the take-home pay of industrial workers.

Note: This memorandum was produced solely by CIA. It was coordinated with the Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, and with the Defense Intelligence Agency, Department of Defense.

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3. The retail price changes announced last week were designed to re-orient spending away from items in short supply. In instituting them, the regime underestimated the seriousness during the past several months of small scale protests which occurred at many plants and food stores.

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5. There is no evidence that the armed forces of Poland's neighbors, including the Soviet troops stationed in Poland and East Germany, as well as in the USSR, are on alert, but we cannot exclude this.

The Short Term Outlook

6. The Polish Government has enough cohesion and strong enough repressive apparatus to put down the workers, and it appears determined to do so. Nevertheless, outbreaks of dissidence, such as arson, could continue for sometime. The Poles have large numbers of garrisoned troops in the riot areas that apparently have not been committed to action. The regime can be expected to take any measure of force necessary to restore order and is not likely to seek help from outsiders. For their part, the Soviets will probably avoid involvement unless it appears absolutely necessary.

7. There is little evidence of an anti-Soviet bias to the disorders, although last night a bomb reportedly was set off behind the Soviet Embassy in Warsaw. Polish aid to Cuba and Egypt reportedly was cited by rioters as a cause of their economic

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situation, an allegation which is indirectly aimed at Moscow. Fearing a growth of such sentiments, Premier Cyrankiewicz, in his appeal, obliquely warned the people not to antagonize the Soviets, and not provoke intervention.

8. With Soviet support party chief Gomulka survived a serious attempt to unseat him in 1968. He had to compromise, however, and give a number of younger men positions of power, as well as to adopt some of their ideas. The current crisis is partly their doing, largely a result of their plans to modernize the economy, but in the public mind, Gomulka is at fault. At the height of the riots in Gdansk, workers shouted "down with Gomulka." As a result, the party leader may feel that he has done all he can for Poland, and this time offer to step down. Were this to happen under present circumstances, the man best equipped to assume power and pacify the workers would be Edward Gierek, the popular party boss of industrial Silesia.

Long Term Effects.

9. If Gomulka stays on, a test of wills will almost certainly develop between Gomulka and the young Turks, who appear determined to press on with their economic program. Should such a clash occur, the Soviets would most likely be loathe to change their allegiance from Gomulka, and that would be decisive.

10. Difficulties could continue into summer, when food supplies can be expected to improve markedly. In the meantime, the regime will probably seek to assuage the population with minor concessions on take-home pay and prices. In the end, however, the growing involvement of young people in the disturbances may turn out to be the Polish leadership's greatest problem.

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