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NADA/ASSESSMENT/FEB/JIC/161710Z FEB 18

THE FOLLOWING IS AN ASSESSMENT BY JIC
POLAND

1. THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM ON 9 FEBRUARY LARGELY ENDORSED KANIA'S MODERATE LINE, ALTHOUGH THERE WAS SOME HARSH CRITICISM OF SOLIDARNOSC MILITANTS AND DISSIDENTS. THE PARTY CONGRESS HAS IN EFFECT BEEN POSTPONED THE ELEVATION OF DEFENCE MINISTER JARUZELSKI TO THE PREMIERSHIP SEEMS DESIGNED TO INDUCE A MORE CO-OPERATIVE ATTITUDE IN THE WORKERS AND TO BUY FURTHER TIME FOR THE REGIME. JARUZELSKI HAS APPEALED FOR 3 MONTHS WITHOUT STRIKES, AND ANNOUNCED A NEW GOVERNMENT PROGRAMME AND VARIOUS ORGANISATIONAL CHANGES.

2. THE PLENUM SPEECHES AND RESOLUTION REAFFIRMED THE PARTY'S COMMITMENT TO THE PROCESS OF SOCIALIST RENEWAL IN POLAND; TO FULFILMENT OF THE POST-STRIKE AGREEMENTS WHERE POSSIBLE AND IN OTHER CASES TO A NEGOTIATED REVISION OF THE AGREEMENTS; AND TO CO-OPERATION WITH THE INDEPENDENT TRADE UNIONS SO LONG AS THESE OPERATE WITHIN THE TERMS OF THEIR STATUTES. AT THE SAME TIME A STRONG LINE WAS TAKEN AGAINST ANARCHIC TENDENCIES, POLITICAL STRIKES AND FARMERS' TRADE UNIONS. KANIA AND BARCIKOWSKI POINTED OUT THAT POLAND'S ALLIES WERE JUSTIFIABLY CONCERNED AT DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND AND KANIA WARNED THAT ITS FRIENDS AND CREDITORS MIGHT RUN OUT OF PATIENCE IF THE CHAOS CONTINUED. ALL THE MAIN SPEAKERS WARNED OF THE NEED TO PREVENT ANTI-SOCIALIST ELEMENTS USING SOLIDARNOSC TO ACHIEVE POLITICAL AIMS. KANIA SPOKE OF SOME ORGANISATIONS NEEDING TO QUOTE HAVE THEIR ANTI-SOCIALIST STING TORN OUT."

3. THE INCUMBENT PRIME MINISTER WAS, FOR THE THIRD TIME IN A YEAR, MADE THE SCAPEGOAT FOR THE FAILURE OF THE LEADERSHIP TO MANAGE ITS PROBLEMS SUCCESSFULLY. DEFENCE MINISTER JARUZELSKI - WHO RETAINS HIS DEFENCE PORTFOLIO - MAY HAVE BEEN CHOSEN FOR THE POST BECAUSE HE IS NOT DISCREDITED BY ASSOCIATION WITH PAST ECONOMIC FAILURES OR CHARGES OF CORRUPTION. THE ARMED FORCES ARE ONE OF THE FEW BODIES IN POLAND TO RETAIN THE RESPECT OF THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND JARUZELSKI HIMSELF IS WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE OPPOSED THE USE OF THE ARMY AGAINST STRIKING WORKERS. THE POLITBURO MAY HOPE THAT THE UNIQUE STATURE CONFERRED ON HIM BY HIS DUAL MINISTERIAL ROLE, HIS REPUTATION FOR MODERATION, AND HIS MILITARY BACKGROUND WITH ITS OVER-TONES OF PATRIOTISM WILL BE HELPFUL IN

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PERSUADING SOLIDARNOSC TO MODERATE ITS DEMANDS AND ADOPT A MORE CONSTRUCTIVE ATTITUDE. JARUZELSKI MUST ALSO BE WELL-KNOWN AND ACCEPTABLE TO SOVIET LEADERS, AND WE ASSUME THAT THEY WERE CONSULTED IN ADVANCE ABOUT HIS APPOINTMENT. HIS APPOINTMENT COULD PROVIDE SOME REASSURANCE TO POLAND'S ALLIES THAT CURRENT CHANGES WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO JEOPARDISE THE INTERESTS OF THE WARSAW PACT. HIS APPOINTMENT TO AN EXECUTIVE POST WILL NOT HOWEVER AFFECT OVERALL POLICY-MAKING SINCE THE COMPOSITION OF THE POLITBURO REMAINS UNCHANGED. THE APPOINTMENT AS A DEPUTY PREMIER OF RAKOWSKI, A WELL-KNOWN JOURNALIST ON THE MODERATE LIBERAL WING OF THE PARTY, IS NO DOUBT SIGNIFICANT IN TERMS OF THE REGIME'S ATTITUDE TO THE INTELLIGENTSIA.

4. THERE WAS LITTLE DISCUSSION AT THE PLENUM OF INTERNAL PARTY MATTERS. THE MEETING OF THE CONGRESS COMMISSION ON 2 FEBRUARY CLEARLY SHOWED DEEP DIVISIONS IN THE PARTY ON THE EXTENT OF DEMOCRATISATION REQUIRED. THE SECTION ON PARTY AFFAIRS IN THE DRAFT GUIDELINES DRAWN UP BY THE COMMISSION UNDER OLSZOWSKI WERE HEAVILY CRITICISED ESPECIALLY BY MORE LIBERAL ELEMENTS IN THE PARTY, WHO DEMANDED IN PARTICULAR A MORE SEARCHING EXAMINATION OF THE PARTY'S FAILURE TO GAIN THE TRUST OF THE PEOPLE AND THE REASONS FOR POLAND'S REPEATED CRISES. BARCIKOWSKI ANNOUNCED AT THE PLENUM THAT THE DATE OF THE PARTY CONGRESS WOULD BE DISCUSSED AT THE NEXT PLENUM, FOR WHICH NO DATE WAS SET (ALTHOUGH IT SHOULD BE HELD WITHIN THREE MONTHS). THE LEADERSHIP IS CLEARLY GOING TO FIND IT DIFFICULT TO PRODUCE A DRAFT PROGRAMME WHICH WILL SATISFY THE REFORMERS, WHO ENJOY WIDESPREAD SUPPORT AMONG THE PARTY RANK AND FILE, WHILE BEING ACCEPTABLE TO THE RUSSIANS.

5. THE PLENUM SPEECHES CAME OUT STRONGLY AGAINST THE NOTION OF FARMERS' UNIONS AND THE SUPREME COURT ON THE FOLLOWING DAY DULY RULED THAT RURAL SOLIDARITY COULD NOT BE REGISTERED UNDER THE EXISTING TRADE UNION LAW (WHICH CONFERS CERTAIN ADVANTAGES SUCH AS THE RIGHT TO STRIKE). COURT OFFICIALS APPARENTLY ADDED INFORMALLY THAT THE FARMERS COULD APPLY FOR REGISTRATION AS ASSOCIATION AND REFERRED THE FARMERS TO THE WARSAW CITY OFFICE, APPARENTLY WITH THE SUGGESTION THAT THEY COULD APPLY FOR REGISTRATION AS ASSOCIATIONS. A JUSTICE MINISTRY SPOKESMAN LATER SAID THAT ALL ACTIVITIES CONNECTED WITH THE SETTING UP OF A FARMERS' FREE TRADE UNION WERE ILLEGAL. THE REACTION OF FARMERS HAS BEEN MIXED; SOME APPEAR TO HAVE ACCEPTED THE DECISION WHILE OTHERS ARE THREATENING FURTHER ACTION IN SUPPORT OF REGISTRATION AS A UNION. THE LATTER MAY BE ENCOURAGED BY A STATEMENT ISSUED BY CARDINAL WYSZYNSKI AND OTHER CHURCH LEADERS AFTER THE COURT DECISION AFFIRMING THE FARMERS' RIGHT TO HAVE THEIR OWN FREE PROFESSIONAL ORGANISATIONS. SOLIDARNOSC LEADERS INITIALLY CHOSE TO INTERPRET THE COURT RULING AS A COMPROMISE BUT SAID THEY WOULD ATTEMPT TO GET PRIVATE FARMERS COVERED BY THE NEW TRADE UNION LAW NOW BEING DRAFTED. IF THIS ATTITUDE IS MAINTAINED (THE SUBJECT IS TO BE DISCUSSED AT A MEETING OF SOLIDARNOSC'S NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE COMMISSION ON 12 FEBRUARY), IT IS LIKELY TO LEAD TO A FURTHER CLASH WITH THE AUTHORITIES. WALESZA HAS CALLED FOR AN END TO STRIKES AND MOST OUTSTANDING DISPUTES HAVE NOW BEEN ENDED, GENERALLY WITH FURTHER CONCESSIONS BY THE REGIME.

6. THE SOVIET MEDIA HAVE SO FAR REPORTED THE POLISH PLENUM BRIEFLY AND IN A POSITIVE TONE, WITH NO COMMENT ON THE PERSONNEL CHANGES. HOWEVER SOVIET OFFICIALS, WHO WERE EARLIER DISCLAIMING TO WESTERNERS ANY SOVIET INTENTION OF INTERVENING IN POLAND, ARE NOW STRESSING THAT THERE ARE LIMITS TO WHAT THE SOVIET UNION CAN TOLERATE. THE SOVIET MEDIA ARE CONTINUING TO CRITICISE DISSIDENTS AND SOLIDARNOSC ACTIVISTS IN HARSH TERMS AND REPRODUCED A POLISH REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION BY LEGAL OFFICIALS OF THE ALLEGED CRIMINAL ACTIVITIES OF KOR DISSIDENTS. PRAVDA HAS ALSO REPRINTED EVEN HARSHER COMMENT FROM PRAGUE AND EAST BERLIN. RELATIONS BETWEEN WARSAW AND THESE CAPITALS HAVE FURTHER DETERIORATED WITH POLISH ACCUSATIONS OF EAST GERMAN AND CZECHOSLOVAK HARASSMENT OF POLISH TOURISTS. BULGARIA HAS PRODUCED ITS FIRST DIRECT COMMENT ON DEVELOPMENTS IN POLAND SINCE THE CRISIS BEGAN; IT WAS COUCHED IN GENERALLY MODERATE TERMS, ENDORSING THE POLISH POLICY OF CONCILIATION AND NEGOTIATION.

7. RECENT DEVELOPMENTS SUGGEST THAT THE POLISH LEADERSHIP IS GETTING ITSELF INTO POSITION TO ADOPT A HARDER LINE IF NECESSARY, BUT THAT IN THE IMMEDIATE FUTURE IT INTENDS TO PURSUE BROADLY THE SAME COURSE AS BEFORE. IT WILL CONTINUE BUT MORE POSITIVELY AND VIGOROUSLY, TO SEEK A MODUS VIVENDI WITH SOLIDARNOSC WHILE TRYING TO DRIVE WEDGES BETWEEN THE MODERATE ELEMENTS IN THE UNION AND ITS MILITANTS AND DISSIDENT ADVISERS BY ATTEMPTING TO DISCREDIT THE LATTER AND THREATENING THEM WITH LEGAL ACTION. THE RUSSIANS REMAIN PROFOUNDLY DISTURBED BY THE SITUATION IN POLAND AND ARE DETERMINED THAT THE PARTY'S AUTHORITY SHOULD BE RESTORED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. IT IS BELIEVED THAT THEY HAVE BEEN IRRITATED BY THE INEFFECTIVENESS OF THE KANIA REGIME IN TACKLING THE COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS SO FAR; BUT THEY PROBABLY SEE NO ALTERNATIVE AT THIS JUNCTURE TO GIVE THE POLISH LEADERSHIP A FURTHER CHANCE TO RESOLVE THE CRISIS THROUGH CONCILIATION. THERE IS JUST A POSSIBILITY THAT JARAZELSKI WILL IN FACT SUCCEED IN REACHING A MODUS VIVENDI WITH SOLIDARNOSC. BUT EVEN IF THE REGIME DOES NOT RESORT TO STRONG ACTION AGAINST DISSIDENTS AND SO RISK PRECIPITATING SERIOUS CONFLICT WITH THE UNION, THERE IS AMPLE SCOPE IN SUCH AREAS AS ECONOMIC POLICY, TRADE UNION LAW AND CENSORSHIP FOR RENEWED CONFRONTATION.

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