

January 14, 1982

CPSU CC Politburo transcript, 14 January 1982 (excerpt)

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Summary:

Brezhnev discusses Soviet talks with Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Czyrek. Brezhnev also informs the Politburo about the state of the PZPR, the Polish economy, the newly instituted Polish martial law, and the leadership of Jaruzelski.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

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SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

14 January 1982

Presided over by Comrade L. I. BREZHNEV.

Also taking part: C[omra]des. Yu. V. Andropov, M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin, A. A. Gromyko, A. P. Kirilenko, A. Ya. Pel'she, M. A. Suslov, N. A. Tikhonov, D. F. Ustinov, K. U. Chernenko, P. N. Demichev, V. V. Kuznetsov, B. N. Ponomarev, V. I. Dolgikh, M. V. Zimyanin, K. V. Rusakov

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2. On the Results of the Negotiations with the PZPR CC Politburo Member and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Polish People's Republic Cde. J. Czyrek

BREZHNEV. I think we all agree that Mikhail Andreevich [Suslov]'s and Andrei Andreevich [Gromyko]'s discussions with Cde. Czyrek were useful. Western officials, especially the Americans, are exerting enormous pressure on Poland. In such circumstances, it is important to offer constant political support for our friends and to bolster their spirits. One cannot permit their spirits to sag or to allow them to relinquish what they have achieved with such difficulty.

Martial law in the PPR has already lasted a month. As Jaruzelski says, the counterrevolution is now crushed. However, the tasks ahead are more complicated.

After introducing relative stability in the country, the Polish comrades must now, one might say, resolve the strategic problems of what to do with the trade unions, how to revive the economy, how to change the consciousness of the masses, etc.

The most important question is the situation in the PZPR. Our friends are trying to find a solution. No doubt, Jaruzelski does not intend to disband the party or to change its name, but he can exploit martial law to carry out a sweeping purge. This might yield good results.

In general one gets the impression that the general as a political actor is very strong and is able, on most occasions, to find proper solutions. Sometimes it seems that he is too cautious and acts more often than necessary with an eye to the West and the Church. But in the current situation such gestures will only ruin things. Along with firm, hardline measures on matters of principle, one also needs flexibility and circumspection. It's good that Jaruzelski is studying the Hungarian experience in struggling against counterrevolution.

All of us clearly understand that the decisive precondition for the full stabilization of things in Poland is a revival of the economy. In Czechoslovakia after 1968 political efforts made headway precisely because the counterrevolution had not affected the economic sphere. In Poland just the opposite is true.

In this connection a difficult question stands before us. We already are stretched to the limit in our capacity to help the Poles, and they are making still more requests.

Perhaps we can do a bit more, but we certainly can't give a lot more.

Still, we must of course answer Jaruzelski's letter,[1] explaining in a comradely way what we can and cannot do. By all means we must precisely carry out our agreed deliveries in the first quarter, which for the Poles will be the most difficult winter months.

Quite another matter are projects for political prestige, which should not impose great strains on our economy. For example, we can lend assistance in building the Warsaw subway. We should meet this request, having made our participation a matter of public knowledge.

Incidentally, the food situation in Poland is not so bad. There is enough bread in the country, and they must find a way to motivate the peasantry and to get them to work, arranging, as we sometimes say, a merger of the city and village.

The Polish leadership continues to count on help from the West. Well, in principle we can't be against that, although, to be honest, it's doubtful that Western countries are about to start providing material assistance to a military regime. They undoubtedly will try to extract concessions, which means we must be especially vigilant.

Jaruzelski is raising another question, of whether he should accept help from the Chinese. Well, why not? In the process China will be disassociating itself from the USA and its economic sanctions.

In conclusion, one might say that the Polish question will be at the center of international politics for a long time to come. That is why our Polish commission has continued to work as actively as it has been up to now. "

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1. Translator's Note: Brezhnev later in the meeting described Jaruzelski's letter of 3 January 1982: "...Jaruzelski expresses deep gratitude for the fraternal help provided by the Soviet Union to the Polish People's Republic. At the same time, he requests that the Soviet side reaffirm the volume of deliveries for 1982 contained in the draft protocol on the coordination of both sides' plans for 1981-1985 for oil, gasoline, and oil products. The volume of oil deliveries in 1982 are being kept at the level of 13 million tons, and oil products at 2.94 million tons; and deliveries of combustibles are being retained at the maximum level in the first quarter of 1982.

"Further on Cde. Jaruzelski informs us that he appealed to the General Secretaries of the Communist Party Central Committees of Hungary, the GDR, Bulgaria, Romania, and Czechoslovakia with a request to provide Poland with basic agricultural and industrial goods."

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