

August 28, 1987

[Polish Government] Report, 'A Synthesis of the Domestic Situation and the West's Activity,' Warsaw

Citation:

"[Polish Government] Report, 'A Synthesis of the Domestic Situation and the West's Activity,' Warsaw", August 28, 1987, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Personal papers of Andrzej Paczkowski. Translated for CWIHP by Jan Chowaniec.
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Summary:

[Polish Government] Report, "A Synthesis of the Domestic Situation and the West's Activity," regarding the economic crisis, liberalization measures, growing discontent, American support of Solidarity and opinions from the West on the situation in Poland

Original Language:

Polish

Contents:

Translation - English

A synthesis of the domestic situation of the country and the West's activity
The moods in social segments against the background of the economic situation

—Generally, anxiety is rising due to the prolonged economic crisis. The opinion is spreading that the economy instead of improving is getting worse. As a result, an ever greater dissonance arises between the so-called official optimism of the authorities (“after all, it's better [now]”) and the feeling of society.

—Criticism directed at the authorities is rising because of the “slow, inept and inconsistent” introduction of economic reform.

—Social dissatisfaction is growing because of the rising costs of living. The opinion is spreading that the government has only one “prescription,” i.e. price increases. Against this background the mood of dissatisfaction is strongest among the workers.

—[The] belief is growing that the reform has not reached the workplaces, [there is] a lack of any improvement in management and organization of work.

—Confirmations of the above moods are [the following factors:]

a) in the period January-July 1987, there were 234 collective forms of protest, i.e. more than in the same period last year;

b) a total of 3,353 people participated in work stoppages, while only 1,729 people participated in such stoppages last year;

c) the role of workplace union organizations in inspiring conflicts that threaten work stoppages is rising.

—Disappointment and frustration is deepening within the intelligentsia, which placed great hope in the reform for overcoming technical and “civilizational” backwardness, and thus in their own social “promotion” and improvement in their standard of living.

—Characteristic of these circles, [which] otherwise stand far removed from the opposition, is the opinion that the “government is strong when it comes to keeping itself in power, but weak and helpless in fighting the wrongs which lead to economic anarchy and the demoralization of society.”

—Consecutive liberalization measures, such as consent to create several associations, publication of the journal Res Publica [1], re-issuing of Lad,[2] or Czyrek's meeting in the Warsaw KIK,[3] have little resonance within society and render little help in improving the “reputation” of the government. One can put forth the thesis that their reception is larger in narrow circles of the so-called moderate opposition and in some circles in the West than in the broader public opinion at home.

—Reaction to the Social Consultative Council, which at the beginning was very positive, is deteriorating. The opinion that the Council has not lived up to expectations, and that it is a “couch” [Kanapowe, meaning: composed of a few individuals who can fit on one couch] device, is gaining [ground]. It is pointed out that only about a dozen members in the Council are active, while the majority is silent or has nothing to say. Even a report submitted in the Council by Prof. Szczepanski on resolving the crisis didn't produce any significant response (except in some circles of the so-called moderate opposition and among some Western correspondents).

—These unfavorable trends are not being compensated [for] by active Polish foreign policy and [its] undeniable successes in overcoming barriers of isolation and restoration of Poland to its proper place in the world [after the sanctions imposed by the West following the December 1981 martial law crackdown]. These successes are being noticed and even present an element of surprise in the West, where the “originality” or “national character” of the so-called Jaruzelski Plan is being stressed. The development of political relations with the West is also observed carefully by the internal enemy, causing it irritation and apprehension that the opposition might be left on its own. But for the “average” citizen, foreign policy is something remote, without an effect on the domestic situation of the country and the standard of living of the society, and, what is worse—an impression is created that the authorities are concentrating their efforts on building an “external” image, neglecting the basic questions of citizens' daily lives.

Generalizing, one can say that:

1) confidence in the authorities and readiness to cooperate in the reconstruction of the country is declining at a very fast rate, which is caused mainly by the ineffectiveness of actions [taken] in the economic sphere. Liberalization measures undertaken so far are not able to stem this process;

2) Against this background, one can also clearly note the declining prestige of the First Secretary of the CC PUWP;

3) A state of discontent is growing ([among] workers and intelligentsia groups, and partly in the villages) and it is gradually, but systematically accumulating.

The situation in the camp of the political adversary.

—A seeming decline of activities “on the outside:” fewer leaflets, new initiatives or provocative appeals. Also, the planned ceremonies of the “August Anniversary”[4] are less impressive and aggressive in content and form than in previous years;

—The adversary admits that in terms of organization it is at a standstill, and in its political and propaganda interaction it made mistakes and found itself on the defensive vis-à-vis the government (see our campaign around US financial support for “Solidarity”);

—However, a number of symptoms indicate that as far as the adversary is concerned, it is the “calm before the storm.” For the adversary says that:

a) each action by the authorities in the economic sphere will be favorable to the opposition (failing to implement it or the incomplete realization of economic reform will cause stagnation or regression, and as a result rising social dissatisfaction, but a similar result can be brought about by full implementation of reform, as it will result in a temporary decline in purchasing power, layoffs, etc.);

b) government policies are approaching bankruptcy, and it must come to the next crisis;

c) the government has already entered into the next curve and is losing control over the development of events;

d) the government is becoming more and more susceptible to social pressure;

—Based on these premises, the adversary has come to the conclusion that it does

not have to bother much—it is enough to sustain a mood of justified anger and wait and join, at the right moment, the eruption of dissatisfaction, as in 1980;

—the adversary has already undertaken specific preparations in this direction:

a) energetic steps are being taken to increase and institutionalize financial grants from the West. These steps, for the time being, have succeeded in the US Congress granting “Solidarity” US\$1 million;

b) under consideration is the reorganization of top leadership bodies, their transformation into a sort of Staff “capable of taking operational decisions and coordinating actions;”

c) communication systems between the underground and diversion centers and “Solidarity” structures in the West and among particular regions are being perfected;

d) a network of alarm communication is being set up in case of a general strike;

e) under consideration is the strengthening of the infrastructure and training for the illegal structures in the regions;

f) printing facilities are maintained in full readiness (fully loaded with equipment, the underground is unable to “absorb” the machines transferred from the West);

—a peculiar kind of “detonator” may turn out to be terrorist actions planned by the extremists, preparations for which are advancing;^[5]

—obviously, all areas of activity of the adversary so far are still valid, thus:

a) criticism of the system and the authorities for economic ineptitude, falling behind the Soviet “perestroika,” for halfway liberalization measures— most often through interviews of opposition leaders to the Western media and in contacts with representatives of foreign governments and embassies;

b) disruptive activities in relations with the West, through repeated demands that the essential condition for changing the Western attitude toward Poland on questions of trade and credit should be the restoration of trade union pluralism and ensuring legal activities for the opposition;

c) strengthening the so-called second circulation publishing;

d) attempts at rebuilding illegal structures at work-places.

Activities of the Western special services and centers of diversion

—Activities of the intelligence services are directed mostly at reconnaissance:

a) the state of the economy, the decisiveness of government in implementing reforms, differences of positions in this regard within the top leadership and mid-level Aktyin [party activists], as well as the implementation of reforms (from the “top” to the workplace);

b) possibilities of eruptions on a larger scale.

—Assuming such a course of developments, the “spectacle” with American donations for “Solidarity” was arranged on purpose. The point was, among others, to show “who is the master here” and as a result to subordinate even more strongly the illegal structures in the country to the power centers in the West, and in fact to the special services in the US.

—This operation turned out to be a success: the under-ground (with few exceptions) agrees to be a US instrument. The adversary is so sure of its power in the under-ground that it steadily extends [the underground's] range of tasks:

a) an ever wider realization of demands in the area of economic intelligence;

b) identification of the Security Services functionaries (names and addresses) and preparations for provocation against our apparatus (this scheme is known from previous crises);

c) inspiring terrorist actions.

—At the same time the process of upgrading the opposition leaders as “trustworthy and legally elected representatives of the society” is continuing (e.g. many recent invitations for Walitsa to foreign events, contacts by Western officials with the leadership of the opposition). The purpose of these measures is quite clearly the re-creation of the opposition leadership elite from the years 1980-1981 in case a similar situation arises.

—Activities coordinated within NATO by the US, aimed at strengthening the position of the Church (contacts with Glemp [6] and other representatives of the hierarchy, new inspirations involving the Church in the matters of foundations), are also continuing.

—Activities aimed at strengthening the American presence in Poland on a larger scale are being intensified:

a) independent of official visits, there are more and more visits of politicians and experts, which the Americans themselves define as study travels (what in practice is tantamount to the realization of intelligence demands);

b) the Americans are strengthening their influence among politically active, opinion-shaping circles, which is confirmed by, inter alia, their current fellowship programs. They are most clearly taking an interest in young people, [who are] outstanding in their field, as their aim is to generate a new pro-American leadership elite.

—Similar activities are directed at the centers of ideological diversion.

Changes in evaluations of the economic situation in Poland formulated in the West

—Already in the first months of this year, Western intelligence and governmental experts' evaluations presented rather positive opinions about a “spirit of change” in Poland and on theoretical assumptions of the reform. Opinions were expressed that if the authorities “introduce proper structures, mechanisms and institutions enabling effective introduction of the second stage of economic reform,” then Poland “will have a chance for economic development”;

—In Western estimates from this period, one can see that at least some forces in the

West have identified their interests with the reform course in Poland. Hence, [there have been] all sorts of “encouragement,” and sometimes pressure, to speed up, deepen, [and] expand the reform process (both in the economy and in the superstructure);

—However, in mid-1987 one can observe increasing criticism in the evaluations and prognoses for the Polish economy made by the Western intelligence services and government experts. These assessments are sometimes extended to the whole domestic situation. For example:

a) intelligence specialists and congressional experts in the US [state]:

- The results of the reform so far are disappointing. So far there is nothing which would indicate that in the near future the authorities will be able to stabilize the economic situation. One should even assume a growing socio-political destabilization.

- Straightening out the mess is dragging on, and as a result Poland may fall into an even more turbulent state than before.

- The inactivity of the authorities may have an exponential effect in the form of increased confrontation and isolation.

- If the government does not take immediate and decisive measures, it may lose an opportunity to escape this labyrinth of difficulties.

b) NATO experts:

- The economic situation is very complex and the opposition's activity is resulting in a situation for the authorities that is no less dangerous than it was in 1980.

c) A new element is that experts from neutral countries are formulating similarly drastic assessments. For example, the Swedes [note]:

- The reform policy is losing speed, and paralysis in the government's activities is increasingly visible.

- The danger of an economic and societal crash is approaching.

- Poland is becoming a keg of gunpowder.

- Such evaluations may result in a fundamental change in the position of the West [with their] slowing down political normalization and gradual reconstruction of economic relations with Poland. One proof of this may be [in the] deliberations among the diplomats of NATO countries in Warsaw:

a) Is it worth it to support reform efforts in Poland since the reform cause is losing, and maybe it has already been lost[?]

b) Is it worth it to still invest in the present team[?]

c) It is not by accident that the embassies of NATO countries are currently conducting investigations [into] organizing people, who “lost hope in the possibility of the PUWP improving the situation” and [into] a possible organizing by those people

into a new party (association), which “would support [the] PUWP on the basic line, but would use different methods.”[7]

[1] Res Publica - a monthly published in the “second circulation.” In June 1987, the authorities in an unprecedented move, gave permission to its legal publication.

[2] Lad [An Order] - a weekly published by a group of Catholics (Polish Catholic-Social Union) cooperating with the authorities.

[3] Józef Czyrek, a CC PUWP Politburo member and secretary, co-chairman of the National Council of PRON; in 1987-1988 initiated and conducted talks with the opposition Catholic intellectual and Church representatives; the meeting mentioned in the document was held on 11 July 1987.

[4] Refers to the anniversary of the 31 August 1980 signing of an understanding between the authorities and the Inter-factory Striking Committee in Gdansk, which opened the way for the birth of NSZZ “Solidarity.”

[5] There were no “terrorist” actions; also nothing is known of any preparation to this kind of actions.

[6] Cardinal Józef Glemp, from 1981 archbishop metropolitan of Gniezno and Warsaw, Primate of Poland, chairman of the Episcopate of Poland.

[7] A “new” workers’ party was not created until the end of the PUWP rule. In the second half of the 1980s, in pro-reform circles on the margins of PUWP, ideas were put forth to bring into being a second Marxist party, which would compete with the PUWP, thus introducing democratic dynamics into the communist system without undermining its fundamentals.