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TO ROUTINE FCO

TELEGRAM NUMBER 182 OF 1ST APRIL 81

RKI WASHINGTON, PARIS, BONN, UKDEL NATO, WARSAW, PEKING (FOR PRIVATE SECRETARY).

SOVIET POLICY TOWARDS POLAND.

1. THE EVENTS WHICH FOLLOWED THE BYDGOSZCZ INCIDENT MARKED, FOR THE SOVIET UNION, A SERIOUS FAILURE OF THE ATTEMPT TO RESTORE AUTHORITY IN POLAND. IT MAY BE HELPFUL IF I TRY TO SET OUT THE WAY THINGS COULD NOW LOOK TO THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP:

(A) AT THE MEETING ON 4 MARCH, KANIA AND JARUZELSKI WERE TOLD WITH THE FULL FORCE OF THE SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE SOVIET POLITBURO THAT THE COURSE OF EVENTS MUST BE TURNED BACK. AT THAT POINT THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAD CLEARLY CONCLUDED THAT A FAILURE TO RE-ESTABLISH THE POLISH PARTY'S AUTHORITY WOULD PREJUDICE THEIR OWN AIM OF MAINTAINING THE DEGREE OF CONTROL OVER POLISH POLICY WHICH THEY BELIEVED NECESSARY TO SAFEGUARD ESSENTIAL SOVIET SECURITY INTERESTS.

(B) THE POLISH LEADERSHIP WERE THEREFORE EXPECTED TO TAKE FIRM ACTION IN THE EVENT OF ANY FURTHER TRIAL OF STRENGTH WITH SOLIDARITY. THE RUSSIANS MAY NOT HAVE EXPECTED THEM TO PRECIPITATE A CLASH AT BYDGOSZCZ OR ELSEWHERE, BUT WHEN IT OCCURED, THEY MUST HAVE SEEN IT AS A TEST CASE, IN WHICH AUTHORITY HAD TO BE RE-ASSERTED.

(C) THE WARNING STRIKE ON 27 MARCH AND THE THREAT OF AN INDEFINITE GENERAL STRIKE FROM 31 MARCH CONSTITUTED A CHALLENGE WHICH, FROM THE SOVIET POINT OF VIEW, PUBLICLY DEMONSTRATED THAT SOLIDARITY WAS A COUNTER-REVOLUTIONARY POLITICAL ORGANISATION. TASS STATEMENTS MADE PLAIN THAT THE SOVIET UNION SAW SOLIDARITY AS CHALLENGING THE POWER OF THE STATE, SEEKING TO DISCREDIT THE EXISTING AUTHORITIES AND USURPING SOME OF THEIR FUNCTIONS IN MATTERS RELATED TO INTERNAL SECURITY.

(D) FROM THEN ON THERE WAS IN SOVIET TERMS AN IRRECONCILABLE CONFLICT EITHER THE PARTY HAD TO CONTROL THE STATE, ASSERT ITS AUTHORITY AND BREAK SOLIDARITY AS A POLITICAL FORCE, OR AN ESSENTIAL ELEMENT OF SOVIET POWER NOT ONLY IN POLAND BUT THROUGHOUT EASTERN EUROPE WOULD BE PREJUDICED. IN LENINIST TERMS "KTO-KOVO" (ONLY ONE CAN BE THE MASTER).

2. UP TO THIS POINT THE ANALYSIS OF SOVIET POLICY RESTS ON PUBLIC STATEMENTS AND REQUIRES LITTLE BY WAY OF INFERENCE. THE NEXT STAGES ARE MORE SPECULATIVE. WE DO NOT YET HAVE A PUBLIC REACTION

TO THE POLISH CENTRAL COMMITTEE PLENUM, BUT I DO NOT SEE HOW THE SOVIET ASSESSMENT CAN BE OTHER THAN PESSIMISTIC. AT A TIME WHEN IT HAD BEEN MADE ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT COMPROMISE HAD GONE TOO FAR, THE PARTY SEEMS TO HAVE COMPROMISED AGAIN, LEAVING SOLIDARITY WITH THE BEST OF THE ARGUMENT SO FAR AS THE BYDGOSZCZ INCIDENT IS CONCERNED AND WITH ITS WIDER DEMANDS STILL EXTANT. WORST OF ALL FROM THE SOVIET POSITION IS THAT A TIMETABLE FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS HAS BEEN SET BEFORE THE PARTY HAS RESTORED ITS INTERNAL COHESION, WITH THE HAZARD THE GREATER IF DELEGATES ARE TO BE ELECTED BY SECRET BALLOT FROM AN UNLIMITED NUMBER OF CANDIDATES. THE ASSESSMENT HERE MUST BE THAT THE PRESENT POLISH LEADERSHIP HAS LOST THE INITIATIVE, THAT IT HAS LITTLE PROSPECT OF REGAINING CONTROL AND THAT JULY COULD SEE POLAND CONTROLLED BY A WIDELY BASED POLITICAL REFORM MOVEMENT, OPERATING BOTH OUTSIDE THE PARTY AND WITHIN IT- A PROSPECT SIMILAR TO BUT WORSE THAN CZECHOSLOVAKIA IN 1968. HOW THEN TO RESTORE CONTROL ? THE OPTIONS MUST SEEM EQUALLY UNATTRACTIVE:

(A) ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO STIFFEN THE PRESENT LEADERSHIP IN THE HOPE THAT IT WILL AT LEAST PREVENT THE EXTENSION OF SOLIDARITY'S INFLUENCE IN THE POLITICAL FIELD.

(B) A NEW HARDLINE LEADERSHIP READY TO BREAK KOS/KOR, TO USE FORCE AGAINST ANY NEW CHALLENGE BY SOLIDARITY AND TO ASK FOR FRATERNAL HELP IF NEED BE:

(C) SOVIET MILITARY INTERVENTION.

I THINK THE FIRST SOVIET PRIORITY WILL BE TO ASSERT CONTROL OVER THE POLISH PARTY, AT THE LEAST BY FIRMLY ESTABLISHING A MOSCOW-ORIENTED GROUP WITHIN IT, WHICH WILL SEEK BY PRESSURE ON KANIA AND JARUZELSKI TO HOLD THEM IN LINE AND TO DICTATE SUITABLE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE PARTY CONGRESS. MY IMPRESSION FROM READING WARSAW TELNO 231, HOWEVER, IS THAT IT MAY ALREADY BE TOO LATE FOR THIS: THE PRESSURES FOR PROCEEDING WITH THE 'ODNOWA' APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN CONSIDERABLE AT THE PLENUM, THE ALTERNATIVE OF LOOKING TO A HARDER-LINE LEADERSHIP MUST BE TEMPTING, EVEN IF THAT IN EFFECT MEANS BRINGING ABOUT A COUP AGAINST KANIA. THE NEED TO ACT BEFORE THE CONGRESS PREPARATIONS ARE TOO FAR ADVANCED MAY BECOME INCREASINGLY PRESSING. EXTERNALLY ANOTHER SOVIET-POLISH OR WARSAW PACT SUMMIT MAY WELL BE NECESSARY AS A MEANS OF PRESSURE. THE AVOIDANCE OF RECOURSE TO THE USE OF SOVIET FORCE HAS APPEARED TO BE A PRIMARY SOVIET OBJECTIVE UP TO NOW AND IT PROBABLY STILL IS- IF ONLY BECAUSE FORCE WILL BE NO SOLUTION. BUT I SUSPECT THAT THERE IS NOW A GROWING FEELING HERE THAT NO POLITICAL PRESSURE, WHETHER INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL, WILL TAME SOLIDARITY AND THAT AT SOME POINT FORCE WILL BE NEEDED, PROBABLY INCLUDING FRATERNAL HELP. IT MAY BE THAT THE POLITICAL GAME CAN BE PLAYED UNTIL JULY, BUT INTERVENTION COULD COME AT ANY POINT DURING THIS PERIOD. WHETHER AND WHEN IT COMES WILL DEPEND PRIMARILY ON THE POLES. I DO NOT THINK THAT SIX MONTHS AGO

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THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP WOULD HAVE CONTEMPLATED THAT THEY COULD LET THINGS SLIDE AS FAR AS THEY NOW HAVE. THERE MAY YET BE A POSSIBILITY THAT , IF THE POLES STAY JUST SHORT OF THE BRINK (GENERAL STRIKE OR PUBLIC DISORDER) THE RUSSIANS WILL WEEK BY WEEK COME TO ACCEPT AN EVEN MORE UNACCEPTABLE DEGREE OF LIBERALISATION. FROM THE EASERN AND THE WESTERN POINT OF VIEW THE STAKES ARE NOW VERY HIGH INDEED. THERE CANNOT BE MUCH DOUBT IN MOSCOW ABOUTH THE WESTERN REACTION TO INTERVENTION. THIS WILL NOT BE A DECISIVE DETERRENT, BUT (SEE PARA 3 OF MYTEL 749 OF 30 NOV 1980) THE THREAT OF IT MAY BE THE MORE EFFECTIVE IF IT IS BALANCED BY A POSITIVE ALTERNATIVE. ECONOMIC AID TO POLAND WILL BE PART OF THIS, BUT THERE IS ALSO A NEED FOR A CLEAR SIGNAL , IN REPLY TO BREZHNEV'S MESSAGES, THAT , IN THE ABSENCE OF AN INTERVENTION IN POLAND , THERE CAN BE A SERIOUS DIALOGUE WITH THE SOVIET UNION ON STRATEGIC ISSUES.

KEEBLE

[THIS TELEGRAM WAS NOT ADVANCED]

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