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FM WARSAW
TO DESKBY 240800Z FCO
TELNO 447
OF 240655Z AUGUST 88

ADVANCE COPY

MY TELNO 445 : POLAND : IMPLICATIONS OF UNREST FOR PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT

SUMMARY

1. LATEST TROUBLES OCCUR WITHIN TWO MONTHS OF PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT. IN THE SHORT RUN, THEY MAY REVIVE POLISH SENSITIVITIES OVER GDANSK LEG. IF THEY CONTINUE IN THE LONGER TERM, THEY COULD CALL IN QUESTION THE BASIS FOR THE VISIT. WE SHOULD BEGIN TO CLEAR OUR MINDS NOW ABOUT SOME OF THE ISSUES THAT COULD BE INVOLVED. BUT AT PRESENT INSTRUCTIONS ARE ONLY NEEDED ON CONTINUING NEGOTIATIONS ON PROGRAMME.

DETAIL

2. THE CURRENT UNREST AND THE AUTHORITIES' RESPONSE TO IT (MY TUR) HAVE OCCURED JUST AS WE HAVE RE-OPENED NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE POLES ABOUT THE PROGRAMME FOR THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT, NOW LESS THAN TWO MONTHS OFF. HITHERTO THE POLES HAVE BEEN EAGER TO PRESS ON WITH THESE DISCUSSIONS. THEY MAY NOW BE A GOOD DEAL LESS KEEN, ESPECIALLY TO DISCUSS THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT TO GDANSK. IT MAY THEREFORE BE THAT WE SHALL NOT GET ANY FURTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS FROM THE POLISH SIDE UNTIL THEY SEE HOW MATTERS DEVELOP INTERNALLY HERE.

3. IF THE CURRENT UNREST IS NOT QUELLED BY THE REPRESSIVE MEASURES NOW ADOPTED OR IF IT DOES NOT ON ITS OWN RUN OUT OF STEAM, WE MAY NEED TO THINK SERIOUSLY ABOUT THE IMPLICATIONS FOR THE VISIT. EVEN IF THE PRESENT UNREST IS SUPPRESSED OR DIES OUT, AND THE SPECIAL MEASURES ALLOWED TO LAPSE OR LIFTED, THERE MUST BE A REAL THREAT OF A REPITION IN SEPTEMBER OR OCTOBER. THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE CONSIDERATIONS THAT ARE LIKELY TO ARISE ON OUR SIDE:

(A) THE PRIME MINISTER MIGHT NOT WISH TO VISIT GDANSK (EVEN IF THE POLISH AUTHORITIES WERE WILLING) IF THE SPECIAL MEASURES ANNOUNCED ON 22 AUGUST (WHICH INCLUDE A CURFEW) WERE STILL IN FORCE THERE.

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(B) MORE GENERALLY, IT WOULD NEED CONSIDERATION WHETHER THE PRIME MINISTER SHOULD VISIT POLAND IF SUCH MEASURES REMAINED IN FORCE ANYWHERE IN THE COUNTRY. THE VISIT WOULD, WHENEVER IT OCCURED, BE EXPLOITED BY JARUZELSKI AS ENDORSEMENT OF HIS REGIME.

(C) IN PRINCIPLE THIS COULD BE OFFSET BY A MESSAGE FROM THE PRIME MINISTER TO THE POLISH PEOPLE AND THEIR LEADERS. THIS WOULD NEED TO BE A GOOD DEAL STRONGER FOR A VISIT OCCURING ONLY A FEW WEEKS AFTER ELEMENTS OF MARTIAL LAW HAVE BEEN IMPOSED IN THREE REGIONS IN POLAND. BUT THE POLISH AUTHORITIES ARE LIKELY TO BE CONSCIOUS OF THIS AND SO DOUBLY ON THEIR GUARD ABOUT THE PROGRAMME AND THE OPPORTUNITIES ACCORDED TO THE PRIME MINISTER TO PUT HER VIEWS ACROSS. THE BEST BET IS THAT THE POLES THEMSELVES WOULD POSTPONE THE VISIT IF PART OR ALL OF THE COUNTRY WAS UNDER QUASI-MARTIAL LAW.

(D) FACED WITH POLICY FAILURES AND CONTINUED MANIFESTATION OF SOCIAL DISCONTENT, THE QUESTION-MARK OVER THE FUTURE OF JARUZELSKI AND HIS TEAM WILL GROW STEADILY LARGER. JARUZELSKI HIMSELF MAY NOT BE UNDER IMMEDIATE THREAT. BUT IT IS REASONABLE TO CONSIDER WHETHER HE WILL LAST ANOTHER YEAR. THERE COULD BE A RISK THAT THE PRIME MINISTER'S VISIT WILL CATCH THE DYING MOMENTS OF THE PRESENT REGIME RATHER THAN ITS MIDDLE YEARS OR EVEN THE EARLY MONTHS OF ITS SUCCESSOR. ON BALANCE THIS FACTOR SHOULD NOT COUNT AGAINST THE VISIT IF OTHER ASPECTS OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION ARE SUITABLE, SINCE SOME AT LEAST OF ANY SUCCESSORS WOULD GET THE PRIME MINISTER'S MESSAGE, DIRECTLY OR INDIRECTLY.

4. DEVELOPMENTS STILL AHEAD MAY SETTLE HOW FAR THESE AND RELATED CONSIDERATIONS NEED TO BE TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. IN THE MEANTIME ONE URGENT DECISION SEEMS NECESSARY I SHOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR INSTRUCTIONS ON HOW TO REACT SHOULD WE BE SUMMONED TO THE MFA TO CONTINUE DISCUSSIONS ABOUT THE PROGRAMME, I RECOMMEND THAT WE SHOULD BE AUTHORISED TO RECEIVE THE RESPONSE TO THE DRAFT IDEAS WE HAVE PUT FORWARD (WARSAW TELNO 434 AND 435), BUT SHOULD NOT COMMENT BEYOND SAYING THAT IT MIGHT WELL PROVE DIFFICULT TO CARRY FORWARD DISCUSSIONS UNTIL THE INTERNAL SITUATION HAD CLARIFIED. THIS WOULD PUT THE POLISH AUTHORITIES ON NOTICE THAT WE WERE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE IMPLICATIONS OF THE INTERNAL SITUATION FOR THE VISIT, WITHOUT, AT THIS STAGE, CLOSING THE DOOR TO FURTHER EXCHANGES SHOULD WE JUDGE RIGHT TO CONTINUE THEM.

PAGE 2
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