

NSC BRIEFING

15 April 1957

POLISH SITUATION

- I. Major task for Gomulka today is unification of faction-ridden Polish Communist Party in support of his program of "national Communism". Gomulka's keynote (Oct '56 speech) remains same: "roads of achieving goal of socialism can be and are different... the model of socialism can also vary."
- A. Gomulka program includes several deviations from Soviet orthodoxy:
1. Invitation to peasants to abandon unprofitable collectives;
  2. grant of "large-scale control over work of government" to Polish parliament.
  3. Freedoms, unprecedented in Communist society, for Church.
- II. Since "October Revolution", Party factionalism has deepened and Gomulka has made little headway in gaining broad support of Party.
- A. Efforts to unify Party factions have been restricted by stringent requirements of "moderate" course.
- B. "Liberals" have been alienated by Gomulka's curb on their outspoken press and by his inclusion of several orthodox Natolin figures in Warsaw government.
1. High Polish official recently told US ambassador in Warsaw that Gomulka's measures against journalists were necessary because government could not permit "irresponsible advancement of impractical ideas that would divert attention from main effort."

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C. Natolins, on other hand, oppose Gomulka measures as too liberal and long for return to Stalinism.

III. Thus, present stability of Gomulka regime rests not on Party solidarity but instead on base of popular non-Communist support.

A. This support appears essentially unshaken in spite of Gov't measures to restrict press, cancel back wage payments.

B. Popular support probably attributable to real improvements in consumer goods supply.

1. Recent reports indicate more food in shops, thanks to peasant response to new free marketing conditions.

2. People generally feel freer to express selves.

3. Another factor in Gomulka's favor is weakening of Soviet control, mainly due to removal of advisors from army, security forces.

IV. Thus, Achilles heel of Gomulka regime is shakiness of Poland's economy.

A. Inflationary trends are evident, as result of wage increases and stepped-up issuance of currency.

B. Unemployment is rising.

C. Recent reports indicate workers' agitation and demonstrations for higher pay.

D. Serious economic setback for Poland would probably cause public wave of anti-Gomulkaism.

V. As to Soviets, Gomulka's measures to curb liberals and appease Natolins may have reduced any Sov feeling of urgent necessity to oust Gomulka, although they still mistrust him.

- A. Present course of Polish experiment does not appear in Soviet eyes as serious threat to Kremlin control of other Satellites.
- B. Chinese Communist endorsement of Gomulka, implicit in joint Peiping communique of 11 Apr, was probably made without objections from Kremlin.
- C. Thus, Soviet intervention in Poland in near future appears unlikely.