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ON REPORT INFORMATION REPORT CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

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SUBJECT [Redacted] Political

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Developments in Poland

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political developments

in Poland.

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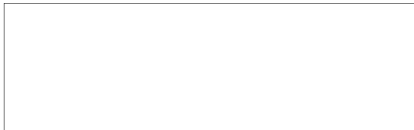
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Developments Prior to VIII PZPR Plenum

3. Gradual relaxation of some of the security police controls over the populace since the spring of 1955 enabled the masses of workers to express their dissatisfaction with the deplorable standard of living, and gave the PZPR members a chance to register their complaints against Party leaders responsible for existing economic and political difficulties. During 1955 the criticism grew bolder; after the denigration of Stalin campaign started in the spring of 1956, the tempo increased with each passing month. Although the Party made a valiant effort to contain this unrest, dissatisfaction with the work of the Politburo reached the point where not only the individual members were maligned but attacks were directed at PZPR itself. The more "conservative" elements within the Party suffered their first great shock when even some of the trusted Party officials tacitly sided with the demonstrators during the Poznan riots.
4. For many months prior to the Poznan incidents and the VIII Plenum, the troubled PZPR members in provincial towns were in the habit of calling upon the First Secretary of the Warsaw PZPR Committee, Stefan Staszewski, for aid in settling their differences and to explain directives or decisions of the Warsaw Politburo or Party headquarters. Staszewski possessed the knack of getting along with low level members of the PZPR organization. Even though he had always been an ardent Stalinist, his common sense prevailed in most disputes and he had gained the friendship of the rank-and-file while frequently antagonizing the country or provincial Party secretaries. Staszewski knew from the questions asked during informal meetings that widespread ferment existed and that Politburo changes would have to be made to placate the mass of PZPR members. At some of the provincial meetings prior to October, the situation was so bad that the presiding officers had to resort to extreme measures in order to prevent the passing of resolutions demanding the removal of Soviet troops from Poland, condemning the USSR for the Katyn massacres and for the slaughter of Poles by the Germans during

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the Warsaw uprising.

Gomulka's Accession to Power

5. Under the circumstances any attempt to reverse the liberalization trend started after the XXth Party Congress in Moscow could easily have precipitated open revolt. Election of Gomulka to the Party Secretariat enabled the more progressive PZPR leaders to placate the Party masses by selecting a person who had suffered at the hands of Moscow. At the same time, it was possible to force the Soviet leaders to accept Gomulka because of his long history as a loyal Party activist.
6. The only real opposition to the selection of Gomulka as a replacement for Edward Ochab during the VIII PZPR Plenum came from those elements within the Politburo known as the 'Natolin Group'. [redacted] the term "Natolin Group" encompasses much more than the mere handful of Party members who usually met in the Warsaw suburb bearing this name. 'Natolinism' takes in elements at all levels from the Politburo to the provincial candidates for Party membership. Within its ranks are ardent Stalinists who are incapable of change, communists who will always remain loyal to Moscow, and the countless Party "yes-men" and opportunists who are afraid that any change will cause them to lose their jobs.

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7.

[redacted]

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General Wacław Komar who commanded the Internal Security Corps (Korpus Bezpieczeństwa Publicznego - KBW) issued orders to all KBW units in the Warsaw area to engage Soviet Army troops at the very first sign of intervention during those critical days. To insure support for Gomulka of the Party masses in the Warsaw area Staszewski obtained the cooperation of a Party leader named Gozdzik who armed many of the workers at the Zeran automobile plant across the river from the capital. These workers were to take direct action backing Gomulka at the very first sign of opposition to his election to the Secretariat.

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[redacted] Staszewski kept Gomulka informed about the sentiment of the workers at all times, [redacted] this knowledge of worker support strengthened Gomulka's hand to the point where he was unwilling to show subservience even to Khrushchev.

Elements of Continuing Crisis

8. [redacted] the internal pressures which had been intensified in the period after Gomulka assumed PZPR leadership would develop to the point of explosion [redacted] this would depend upon a number of factors which fell into two general categories. The first depended upon the various forms of interference from abroad, (i.e., from the Soviet Union) and the second, upon internal economic and sociological factors.
9. The "influence from abroad" does not necessarily have to make itself felt through direct action, but can also be wielded through the Natolin elements when the appropriate moment arrives. [redacted] for example, provincial PZPR organizations, acting on instructions from Stalinist elements from above, may easily refuse to accede to directives of Party Secretary Gomulka. Such insubordination, even on a limited scale, could become the excuse for Soviet interference in Polish political activities. Even though this example represents an extreme case [redacted] other less violent action may be similarly inspired from the East. Natolin elements could easily be used to provoke violent anti-Semitic demonstrations or they may assume the role of an opposition

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which blocks the implementation of Politburo directives through inertia.

10. At present the potential threat of the temporarily eclipsed Stalinist elements within the PZPR presents less of a headache to Gomulka than the severe internal economic and sociological problems. These fluid and disruptive factors include the continuation of the extensive wartime demoralization of the populace, the prevalence of graft and corruption throughout the government, the great number of opportunists within the PZPR ranks and in key positions within the government administration, the sham and falsehood practiced in all planning and manufacture, unreliable statistics, extremely low standards of living, and above all the uncoordinated industrialization of the nation which has not taken into consideration the necessity for compensatory moves in the fields of agriculture and reconstruction.

11. [redacted]

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[redacted] Gomulka's inability to stabilize the Polish economy is building up pressure among the masses.

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[redacted] if left alone by the Soviet Union and assisted financially by the United States, Poland would stand a fair chance of working its way out of the present difficulties. Under present conditions a substantial dollar loan would boost Gomulka's prestige to new heights but as long as the possibility and probability of outside (Soviet) interference exists the stability of the present communist administration cannot be assured for any length of time. [redacted]

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[redacted] the elections of January 20, 1957 will not have a great effect upon the future of Gomulka. It is rather the interaction of the various internal factors with the forces acting from Moscow which will shape future events, leading very likely to an ultimate explosion.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L

COUNTRY	Poland	REPORT	
SUBJECT	<input type="text"/> Political Developments in Poland (economic and political causes of Poznan riots and strength of Komulka)	DATE DISTR.	5 MAY 1949
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political developments in Poland.

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