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February 02, 1981

SITUATION REPORTS

POLAND

Solidarity yesterday agreed to "suspend" a general strike planned for tomorrow but made clear that it will fully support the farmers who seek to form a union and that it will continue to use the threat of strikes to press its demands on a variety of issues.

In a resolution broadcast by Polish television, Solidarity's National Coordinating Commission stated that it considered the agreement concluded with the government on Saturday as "remaining far behind" expectations. It explained that it accepted the agreement as "the initial stage" of a struggle to gain the union's demands.

The Commission said that the union accepted a compromise on the issue of the Saturday workday because of the economic situation in Poland, and it demanded that the government provide more information about the economy and that there be public discussion of economic reform and public control over government economic policy.

Solidarity also vowed to continue to provide assistance to the farmers and said that it would consider any attacks on the farmers' trade unions as attacks on itself. It also recommended that union members support the farmers' unions tomorrow by unspecified "actions"—local chapters of Solidarity might "therefore stage job actions, including strikes.

The government, meanwhile, announced that the Supreme Court would review the question of Rural Solidarity's registration within the next 10 days. A government delegation went to Rzeszow to conduct negotiations with farmers who have been holding a sit-in demonstration for several weeks. The farmers will be advised by Bogdan Lis, one of Solidarity's top leaders.

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Strikes Continue

Although the government apparently will not face a nationwide general strike tomorrow, a regionwide strike continues in the province of Bielsko, and workers in the province of Jelenia Gora remain on a strike alert. The Solidarity chapter in Bielsko is insisting that the government meet several political demands, including the removal of the head of the militia and the firing of various party and state officials.

The party's ability and willingness to meet such demands is limited, but on several previous occasions it did respond to union pressure by sacking local officials on the grounds that they were "corrupt." According to a Polish radiobroadcast, the provincial government leadership in Olsztyn on Saturday requested the national parliament to remove from its ranks the former provincial party first secretary. The political leaders did so after Solidarity leaders in the province threatened a strike for today.

Soviet and East European Criticism

The USSR yesterday again criticized Solidarity, implicitly reminding the Kania regime that it cannot continue to compromise. TASS said that some members of Solidarity continue to undermine stability and pointedly commented that in supporting the farmers' union Solidarity is advancing "political demands." In addition, the Czechoslovak and Hungarian media have run negative commentaries about Solidarity that also contain an implicit criticism of the Kania regime.