

~~Top Secret~~

POLAND: Increasing Ferment

*The strong undercurrent of tension is producing a greater number of more serious protests.*

[REDACTED] the "silent march" last Saturday to unhappiness over price increases and [REDACTED] there will be other such incidents to protest economic and other grievances. As a precaution intensified enforcement of curfew restrictions. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Solidarity activists in the steel mill at Katowice have increased their organizational work, staging some large meetings. The authorities are nervous over the possibility of local demonstrations to mark the two-month anniversary of martial law this weekend. [REDACTED]

Party officials in Warsaw interpret the increased incidents as part of an effort--presumably by Solidarity supporters--to sow unrest, to turn people against the regime, and to create a widespread sense that eventual confrontation is inevitable. They continue to blame some local clergy for adding to the tension. [REDACTED]

Comment: Ferment over the last two weeks stems largely from the price hikes on 1 February and from a pervasive unhappiness over martial law. Although unrest is likely to increase, the regime for now seems able to maintain control. [REDACTED]

The incidents thus far have been scattered, short, and not widely known. Some Poles, tired of constant tension, probably are reluctant to risk their personal welfare. The regime hopes that its willingness to use force will intimidate those inclined to resist, and some security officials probably argue for an occasional clash to maintain a climate of fear. [REDACTED]

In the coming months, however, there may be increased resistance when the full effects of the price increases are felt and the regime implements other unpopular austerity measures. If the government continues to reduce restrictions, it will make it easier for militants to organize. Efforts by the regime to control the situation by force may only create additional resistance, especially if the thinly stretched security services are unable to prevent or suppress demonstrations. [REDACTED]

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