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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
NATIONAL FOREIGN ASSESSMENT CENTER

#WH-1 10 November 1980

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SPOT COMMENTARY: Review of Polish Developments

Press reports from Warsaw and Moscow since yesterday have carried accounts of recent joint maneuvers by Soviet and Polish forces. Warsaw Radio reports claim that the maneuvers were held on Thursday and Friday in a training ground in the Pomeranian Military District. Polish television showed a film of tanks, infantry, and helicopter gunships on maneuvers, indicating that the maneuvers were large scale. TASS reporting stated that Polish and Poland-based Soviet units exercised in accordance with the training plan and years of long tradition.

[redacted] suggests that a small amount of training activity occurred in Pomerania last week. [redacted] of a Polish mechanized infantry [redacted]

[redacted]

A Polish government press spokesman told visiting journalists on Friday evening that there were no joint maneuvers taking place and added that he was in a position to know if any were. He did say, however, that Polish forces were always involved in some form of military training.

We have no evidence that a joint exercise of any significant scope has occurred. Low levels of training or a small-scale set piece exercise possibly could have occurred without being reflected in Sigint. The last joint Polish-Soviet exercise during this time of year--following the Fall troop rotation--was in 1972.

Normally, the Warsaw Pact announces only those large-scale exercises required under the Helsinki Accord--those involving at least 25,000 personnel. These announcements are usually accompanied by information with regard to date and size. The last such announced exercise was the Comrades-in-Arms held in East Germany during September.

We believe the Poles (and later the Soviets) made their announcements in an effort to intimidate the leaders of the trade union Solidarity and the workers--to remind them that their actions might compel the regime to use force and that ultimately

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the Soviets might have to intervene. Tough speeches by party officials and the government's barring foreign reports from entering the country were other indications that the regime over the weekend was preparing for a confrontation with the unions.

Today, however, the regime stepped back by agreeing to register Solidarity with a reference to the leading role of the party in an annex and not in the main body of the new union's charter. Solidarity leaders will reportedly call off the strikes that were slated to begin Wednesday.

The Kania regime retreated probably because it believed it would have to meet another round of strikes with more forceful action, including the use of police or the military and that this confrontation would lead to bloodshed and be uncontrollable. Kania may hope that he has bought more time to rebuild the party's morale and effectiveness and to divide Solidarity's leadership.

The defusing of this particular crisis does not mean, however, that all issues between the regime and Solidarity have been resolved or that the union will not use the strike threat again during the coming months. Such issues as access to the media and the new law on trade unions have yet to be worked out.

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We presume that this compromise will be unacceptable to the Czechoslovak and East German leaderships and that their shrill commentary will continue. Moscow was probably notified beforehand about the compromise, with the Poles arguing that this was the only course open to them.

Prepared by:

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