SUBJECT: Gorbachev's Visit to Poland

2. SUMMARY: GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV'S VISIT TO POLAND WAS A WELL-RUN AFFAIR, ACHIEVING SOME PROGRESS TOWARD ITS CAREFULLY-DESIGNED OBJECTIVES. IF IT FAILED TO MEET THE EXAGGERATED EXPECTATIONS OF SOME OPPOSITION INTELLECTUALS, IT NEVERTHELESS WAS UNIQUE IN MANY RESPECTS FOR A VISIT HERE BY A SOVIET LEADER. GORBACHEV VISITED A WORKING CHURCH, LAID FLOWERS ON THE KOSZCIOUSKO PLACZE IN KRAKOW WHERE THE POLISH HERO BEGAN AN UPRISING AGAINST RUSSIA, MET WITH POLISH WORKERS, LISTENED TO STRONGLY WORDED STATEMENTS FROM POLISH INTELLECTUALS, AND SAT THROUGH SOME RIOTING FROM POLISH YOUTH. RAIASA SHED REAL TEARS AT AUSCHWITZ AND SHOWED A WARM HUMAN TOUCH THROUGHOUT THE VISIT.

FIVE YEARS AGO SUCH BEHAVIOR BY A SOVIET LEADER WOULD HAVE HAD ALL POLAND IN A FEVER OF EXCITEMENT. TODAY EXPECTATIONS ARE PUMPED SO HIGH THAT THE OPPOSITION, AT LEAST, IS EXPRESSING MAINLY DISAPPOINTMENT TO SATISFY THEM GORBACHEV WOULD HAVE HAD TO REMOUCGE THE LEADING ROLE OF THE PARTY, ENFORCE THE RECOGNITION OF SOLIDARITY AND THE HOLDING OF FREE ELECTIONS IN POLAND AND APOLOGIZE FOR KATYN. SINCE PERESTROIKA INTENDED TO MAKE "SOCIALISM" WORK BETTER, NOT REPLACE IT, GORBACHEV UNSURPRISINGLY DID NONE OF THESE THINGS. INSTEAD HE SOUGHT TO IDENTIFY POLISH "RENEWAL" WITH HIS OWN PERESTROIKA, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME REASSURING CONSERVATIVES WITH OCCASIONAL GENUINE EXPRESSIONS OF LENINIST FUNDAMENTALISM. GORBACHEV'S SUPPORT FOR JARUZELSKI WAS STRONG AND EXPLICIT. THE POLITICAL REFORM MESSAGE WAS GENUINE, BUT "SOCIALISM" WAS NOT REDEFINED. THE VISIT'S MOST IMPORTANT AND GENUINELY HISTORIC RESULT MAY HAVE BEEN A SMALL CHANGE IN THE PREVAILING NEGATIVE POLISH ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SOVIET UNION—ATTITUDES THAT HAVE BEEN CENTURIES IN THE MAKING. END SUMMARY.

3. PARTNERS IN REFORM: GORBACHEV'S CENTRAL OBJECTIVE WAS TO DEMONSTRATE THAT HIS REFORMIST VISION, RECENTLY STRENGTHENED BY THE CPSU CONFERENCE, WAS NOT ONLY CONSISTENT WITH POLISH SOCIALIST RENEWAL, BUT HAD BENEFITED FROM POLISH PRECEDENTS. HE ARGUED THAT REFORM EFFORTS OF THE TWO COUNTRIES WERE INTERDEPENDENT AND TOGETHER COULD HAVE FAR-REACHING EFFECTS. DESPITE STODGY, OLD-THINKING OPPOSITION, THIS MESSAGE SHOULD PROVE TO BE GOOD NEWS FOR THE POLISH REGIME—A LICENSE TO PURSUE REFORM OBJECTIVES MORE VIGOROUSLY AND WITH FULL SUPPORT FROM THE SOVIET UNION. WHETHER OR NOT THE POLES FOLLOW UP THE POSSIBILITIES WILL REVEAL JUST HOW MUCH OF A GAMBLER JARUZELSKI IS. GORBACHEV'S "FORTH TOGETHER" MESSAGE PROBABLY
HAVE LESS IMPACT ON THE POLISH PEOPLE, FEW OF
WHOever HAVE ANY BELIEF IN ANY KIND OF SOCIALISM.
IT WILL BE UP TO JARUZELSKI, ARMED WITH MOSCOW'S
APPROVAL, TO GIVE PERSUASIVE SUBSTANCE TO THE
EXPANDED POSSIBILITIES.

4. THE OLD RELIGION: RELATED TO THE REFORM
MESSAGE WAS A CLEAR APPEAL TO THE FEW REMAINING
SOCIALIST BELIEVERS IN POLAND AND THE LARGER
NUMBER PACK IN THE USSR. GORBACHEV MADE AN
IMPORTANT PILGRIMAGE TO LENIN'S VILLAGE
IN THE TATRA MOUNTAINS WITH THE PRECISE
INTENTION OF CONFIRMING THAT PERestroika
AND RENEWAL WERE STILL SOCIALIST, LENINIST, AND
IDEOLOGICALLY SOUND. SOCIALIST CHANGE WAS THUS
VAGUELY ASSOCIATED WITH LENINIST THEOLOGY.

5. BEST FRIENDS: GORBACHEV GAVE STRONG PERSONAL
SUPPORT TO JARUZELSKI. OUR OPPOSITION FRIENDS
INSIST THAT HE DOESN'T MEAN IT BUT THEY CANNOT
EXPLAIN WHY. HE SOUNDED PERFEETLY SINCERF TO
MOST OBSERVERS. GORBACHEV DECLARED ON TELEVISION
THAT POLAND SHOULD CONSIDER ITSELF LUCKY TO HAVE,
AT A CRITICAL MOMENT, A LEADER OF SUCH INTELLIGENCE
PATRIOTISM AND COURAGE; SUCH AN OUTSTANDING
INTERNATIONALIST.

6. WHATEVER THEIR PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP AND
PUBLIC CAMARADERIE, THERE IS A STRIKING CONTRAST
BETWEEN GORBACHEV'S ELEGANT PUBLIC RELATIONS
MASTERY AND JARUZELSKI'S PUBLIC WOODENNESS.
JARUZELSKI'S SPEECHES ACTUALLY READ BETTER THAN
GORBACHEV'S BUT HIS DELIVERY IS FLAT AND
UNINSPIRING, PERHAPS DELIBERATELY SO, GIVEN
HIS DETERMINATION NOT TO MAKE EMPTY PROMISES
OR ENGAGE IN THE HOLLOW "PROPAGANDA OF SUCCESS"
CHARACTERISTIC OF THE 1970'S. HOWEVER, HE HAS
SWUNG SO FAR THE OTHER WAY THAT HE HAS ALMOST
CONVINCED MANY PEOPLE THAT THE SITUATION IS
HOPELESS.

7. EXPANDING DIALOGUE: GORBACHEV'S MESSAGES ON
POLITICAL REFORM WERE THE MOST DISAPPOINTING
ASPECTS OF THE VISIT FOR OUR OPPOSITION CONTACTS,
MANY OF WHOwhproFESS TO SEE IN GORBACHEV
AN ALTERNATIVE TO THE POLITICAL STAGNATION
THEY DEPLORE IN POLAND. THIS DISAPPOINTMENT
WAS LARGELY A MATTER OF EXCESSIVE EXPECTATIONS.
THROUGHOUT THE VISIT, HE DID IN FACT MAKE A
NUMBER OF THE SYMBOLIC GESTURES THAT POZPES
DOTE ON. HE MET A BISHOP; HE MET WITH INTELLECTUALS,
INCLUDING IMPORTANT CHURCH AND OPPOSITION FIGURES
WHO SPOT A HOST OF TOUGHE QUESTIONS AT HIM
HE MET WITH WORKERS AT A SHIPYARD FAMOUS FOR
ITS PARTICIPATION IN 1970 AND 1980 STRIKES; AND
HE LAID A WREATH ON THE KOSZCIUSZKO PLAQUE IN
THE KRAKOW RYNK. WHAT HE SAID--OR DID NOT
SAY--DISAPPOINTED MANY. ONE SOLIDARITY ADVISER
TOLD USE THE INTELLECTUALS' MEETING WAS A "JOKE"
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PREMISABLY BECAUSE NO ONE DEMANDED THAT GORBACHEV ENDORSE THE LEGALIZATION OF SOLIDARITY. Nonetheless, the meetings did take place, and they demonstrated that for the leader of the socialist world, the circle of acceptable dialogue participants had expanded. This important fact should not be buried beneath jaded skepticism or failed expectations. There certainly were no taboo topics at the intellectuals' meeting. "Is religion still the opiate of the people?" asked Father Krapiec from Catholic University. "What about the Breshnev doctrine?" said Catholic journalist Martin Krol. "Is Leninism still relevant? He died early," asked Professor Sandaver. It went on for three and a half hours, and whilst they didn't get immediate answers, they were promised them in writing. The whole session was carried live on TV.

9. A NEW BEGINNING: GORBACHEV'S SILENCE ON SATIN WAS A MISSED OPPORTUNITY TO PLACE A NEW CORNER POST IN THE FOUNDATION OF POLISH/SOVIET RELATIONS. Nonetheless, the visit itself was an important contribution. These Soviet-Catholic bilateral visits are burdensed with so much traditional jargon on mutual friendship and cooperative this-and-that, that it is difficult to say what is different and important. In this case, however, reform, and its most articulate salesman, Gorbachev, needed enhanced credibility and acceptance in Poland, and they got it. There now is a new policy of interdependence, and a spectacular failure of economic reform in either country will critically affect the other.

10. ALSO, THE NEW ELEMENTS OF ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE, FINANCIAL RELATIONS, DIVISION OF LABOR, AND JOINT ACTIVITIES ARE GAINING IMPORTANCE IN REGIONAL ECONOMIC RELATIONS. EFFORTS TO BEGIN BY PUSHING JOINT VENTURES ARE FAITAERING. A RETURN TO BASICS WOULD START INSTEAD WITH ENHANCED HUMAN CONTACTS. THIS MEANS MORE PEOPLE-TO-PEOPLE PROGRAMS; GREATLY FACILITATED EXCHANGES WITH ETHNIC POLES IN THE SOVIET UNION; AND EASIER CROSS-BORDER TRAFFIC. MANY OF THE GORBACHEV INITIATIVES IN THIS AREA WERE MEANT TO DEVELOP NEW ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL INTERACTIONS, PARTICULARLY IN THE BORDER REGIONS. THE HUMAN CONTACTS AGENDA ALSO FOCUSED ON THE NEW GENERATION. THE MEETING WITH YOUTH IN KRAKOW MAY HAVE BEEN ONLY SYMBOLIC, BUT IT WAS NOT ACCIDENTAL. THE INTENTIONAL EMPHASIS ON YOUTH IN THAT CITY DOVETAILED INTO A COMPLIMENTARY EMPHASIS ON HISTORICAL INTERDEPENDENCE: YOUNG POLES TODAY OWED MUCH TO THE SACRIFICE OF YOUNG RUSSIANS YESTERDAY.

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11. Gorbachev was also taking advantage of a new Soviet weapon - his personal popularity. The phrase itself may seem grotesquely out of place in Poland. It's hard to think of any Soviet leader as popular. But, as with so many elements of this visit, it is more a matter of comparative change. Gorbachev showed himself to be vastly more popular - or perhaps less unpopular - than any of his predecessors, including the Tsars. This is nothing less than an historic accomplishment.

12. Although Poland is threatened by profound economic weaknesses, ideological chaos, and major internal divisions, the two regimes are linked by a kind of reciprocal interdependence. To prosper, they must move with sufficient dispatch along the road to reform. Laggers must be reassured that the path is socialist, but the road must be as wide as possible to accommodate as many as possible. And most importantly, fellow travelers have to get along. This was Gorbachev's message.