

Canadian Delegation
To NATO



Délégation du Canada
Auprès de l'O.T.A.N.

Reg. P.A.
Mr. Pearson
Mr. Miller
Mr. Serbinichoff
Mr. Duchina

REG. P.A.
ACTION SLIP
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CONFIDENTIAL

Mr. W.R. Pearson
Acting Chairman
Political Committee
NATO Headquarters

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Dear Bob,

(Poland).

During our discussion of Poland in Committee on September 13 I mentioned that our Ambassador in Warsaw had met with Prime Minister Mazowiecki as part of his farewell calls. I attach a copy of his report on this meeting which provides some interesting observations on and by the new Prime Minister.

In connection with the Committee's paper on New Thinking in Soviet Foreign Policy, I thought you and colleagues would be interested in the attached account of remarks made by the First Deputy Foreign Minister of the USSR, Mr. Bessmertnykh during his meeting with the visiting Canadian Parliamentary delegation. *(19-1-01)*

Yours sincerely,

Paul Meyer
Counsellor

cc: Political Committee members
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REPORT FROM THE CANADIAN AMBASSADOR, WARSAW

FAREWELL CALL ON PRIME MINISTER

I made my first and farewell call on the new Prime Minister of Poland, Tadeusz Mazowiecki at noon today, (08 September). Quiet and direct in manner, spare in figure and speech, he had no aides with him; we chatted for half-an-hour with an interpreter to assist.

Mazowiecki was in the final stages of putting together the new Polish government which he characterized as "interesting, containing all the colours on the palette". Unfortunately, it included only one woman, but a very energetic one; and it represented a careful balance among the parties. One or two personalities were yet to be fixed; they would be known shortly.

I conveyed the usual greetings and told him of the great wave of interest and sympathy which the accession of his government had called forth in Canada. He reciprocated the greetings very heartily and noted that but for his acceptance of the task of Prime Minister he would have accompanied Lech Walesa to Canada during his forthcoming visit. It was a matter for regret that he would not be able to do so now since he had never visited Canada.

Mazowiecki gave pride of place to the importance of economic reforms which his government would have to carry out. It was a formidably difficult task and he looked forward in particular to any breathing space which Western creditors could provide with respect to the Polish debt. I referred to the Secretary of State for External Affairs press statement regarding "a modest program for Poland" and the emphasis laid on providing debt relief. Mazowiecki said his new Minister of Finance, Leszek Balcerowicz, was an outstanding economist but not versed - any more than he was himself - in the business of government. No doubt they would learn. Balcerowicz had been made both Vice Premier and Minister of Finance in order to signal that he would have the leadership of the government's economic policy right across the board.

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The Prime Minister noted that the application of the economic program required consistency and continuity. There would be hard times ahead but within two or three years people of Poland should have a chance to see some results. He underlined again, however, that it would be impossible to achieve success unless outside support was given to this new political and economic venture.

On foreign policy, Mazowiecki struck a careful balance stating that the choice of Professor Krzysztof Skubiszewski - a non-Party figure - did not represent "a change in Polish policy". On the one hand there would be continuity in Polish foreign policy; its obligations to the Warsaw Pact and to neighbours in its geographic setting would be fully respected and observed. On the other hand, choice of a non-Party figure (with links to the Catholic church) would signal fresh aspects in Poland's relations with the West, within the context of its existing policy. He added that the change in no way represented repudiation of Tadeusz Olechowski, whose great skills and knowledge as a diplomat and Polish representative he greatly respected. (His aide had earlier mentioned that Olechowski might indeed take over the Trade Ministry where his career started.) All this was slightly tortuous, but it probably represents well Mazowiecki's prudence and caution as well as his intent to make substantive changes over time.

At first viewing, Mazowiecki seems a rather grey figure, albeit shrewd, unemotional and balanced in judgement. These qualities, rather than more colourful ones, may serve him well in holding together so disparate a group as his cabinet represents. His tenacity has been in evidence, in any event, in forming a government comprising four Polish parties within a given timeframe. Whether he will have the strength of character to push through programmes he envisages in the face of hostile political forces and inertia and scepticism in the country, or charisma needed to inspire the Poles to accept sacrifices, remains to be seen. Perhaps the Poles need low-key leadership at this juncture.