

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

2 April 1981

Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin,
A. A. Gromyko, A. P. Kirilenko, N. A. Tikhonov,
D. F. Ustinov, P. N. Demichev, V. V. Kuznetsov,
M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov, V. I. Dolgikh,
K. V. Rusakov

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5. On the Matter of the Situation in Poland

BREZHNEV. All of us are deeply alarmed by the further course of events in Poland. What's worst of all is that the friends listen and agree with our recommendations, but in practice do nothing. In the meantime the counterrevolution is on the march all over.

The members of the Politburo are familiar with the content of all the previous discussions with the Polish leaders. I will speak briefly about my most recent telephone conversation with Kania, which was on the 30th of March.¹

¹ Translator's Note: In addition to this phone call on 30 March, Brezhnev had spoken by phone with Kania on 27 March and had transmitted an oral message to Kania on 25 March. In both of these earlier contacts, Brezhnev had concentrated on the Bydgoszcz crisis. (For an explanation of the Bydgoszcz crisis, see my annotations later on in this document.) The Soviet leader had demanded that the Polish authorities use the crisis as a pretext for a wider crackdown, and he warned that some bloodshed might be unavoidable. See "Protokol Nr. 83 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR 27 marca 1981 r.," 27 March 1981 (Secret), in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*, p. 320. Kania, for his part, was able to report that on 27 March he and Jaruzelski had signed three important planning documents that laid the groundwork for martial law: "Mysl przewodnia wprowadzenia na terytorium PRL stanu wojennego ze wzgledu na bezpieczenstwo panstwa," "Centralny plan dzialania organow politycznych wladzy i administracji panstwowej na wypadek koniecznosci wprowadzenia w PRL stanu wojennego," and "Ramowy plan dzialania sil zbrojnych," 27 March 1981 (Top Secret), all in CAW, 1813/92, Sygn. 2304/IV. Drafts of these planning documents had been thoroughly tested a month earlier by 45 Polish General Staff officers and Internal Affairs Ministry officials (as well as two specialists from the PZPR Central Committee Propaganda Department) who took part in staff games at a heavily guarded building operated by one of the country's elite security branches, the Internal Defense Forces. The staff games, conducted in extreme secrecy beginning on 16 February, demonstrated that complete surprise would be required to neutralize Solidarity and round up thousands of opposition figures. The participants concluded that the best time to act would be late at night on a weekend, preferably between Saturday and Sunday (or between Friday and a work-free Saturday). The games also helped clarify the division of responsibilities between the Polish

Kania described the recent plenum of the PZPR CC and, in so doing, complained that they had been roundly criticized at the plenum.² I then said to him: "They were right in doing so. They shouldn't have just criticized you; they should have raised a truncheon against you. Then, perhaps, you would understand." These were literally my words.

Cde. Kania acknowledged that they are acting too leniently and need to be more forceful.

At that point I said to him: "Well, how many times have we insisted to you that you need to take decisive measures, and that you can't keep making endless concessions to 'Solidarity.' You always speak about a peaceful path, but you don't understand (or at least don't wish to understand) that a 'peaceful path' of the sort you're after is likely to cost you blood.³ That's why it's important that you draw the right conclusions from the criticism at the plenum."

The friends succeeded in preventing a general strike. But at what price? The price of a subsequent capitulation to the opposition.⁴ Kania himself acknowledged in a

army and Internal Affairs Ministry. (The army was designated mainly for support and administrative roles, whereas the security units and riot police were supposed to enforce the crackdown.) The results of the staff games were presented on 20 February to Jaruzelski, who made minor revisions in a summary report and approved it the following day. He briefed Soviet officials on the report when he was in Moscow in early March for the 26th CPSU Congress. On 27 March, two high-level Soviet delegations—one consisting of top military officers led by Marshal Kulikov and General Gribkov, and the other comprising senior KGB officials led by Vladimir Kryuchkov, deputy chairman of the KGB—were in Warsaw to review the preparations and pore over the three initial planning documents. (A third group of Soviet officials, led by Nikolai Baibakov, the chairman of Gosplan, arrived soon thereafter.) Once Kulikov, Gribkov, and Kryuchkov modified and endorsed the documents, Kania and Jaruzelski signed them. The three items, along with another document completed in early April on a "Framework of Economic Measures" (*Ramowy plan przedsięwzięć gospodarczych*), brought an end to the conceptual stage of the martial law preparations.

² Translator's Note: The "plenum" cited here is the PZPR Central Committee's Ninth Plenum, held on 29 March 1981, the day before Brezhnev spoke with Kania. The plenum was convened because of widespread dissatisfaction within the PZPR about the Politburo's handling of the Bydgoszcz incident over the previous ten days (see my subsequent annotations in this document). Brezhnev implies here that the complaints came solely from those who believed that Kania was being too lenient, but in fact much of the criticism was voiced by officials who thought the Politburo and government had been heavy-handed. Indeed, the plenum marked a temporary victory for the more conciliatory elements over those who favored a hard line.

³ Translator's Note: Brezhnev is implying here that if a "peaceful solution" were to leave Solidarity extant, that would give free rein to anti-socialist forces, who would then carry out reprisals against "true Communists."

⁴ Translator's Note: In the wake of the Bydgoszcz incident (see annotation below), Solidarity had indicated that it would sponsor a four-hour warning strike on 27 March and a general strike on 31 March unless the authorities acknowledged their mistakes and complied with other demands. A deadlock between the two sides ensued, and the warning strike was held as planned, with the whole country brought to a halt for four hours on 27 March. The prospect that a general strike on the 31st would vitiate any hope of reaching a broader compromise induced the two sides to give renewed emphasis to negotiations. As the deadline neared, the negotiations finally paid off, and the general strike was canceled. A Joint Declaration issued on 30 March by Solidarity's leadership and the Polish government satisfied most of Solidarity's demands, but it came under sharp criticism from a number of Solidarity officials, who believed it was unwise to call off the general strike at a time when millions of workers were poised to go ahead with it. (These criticisms proved

conversation with the ambassador that this new compromise was a huge mistake.

At this point, much depends on the way events over the next several days turn out. In particular, will the friends manage to carry out the measures they arranged with us when they hold the Sejm, which, according to today's report, will be from the 2nd to the 6th of April? Will all these measures be adopted? Will the leadership be resolute and strong enough to implement the measures in practice?

We of course must continue working with the friends and searching for new ways of influencing the situation in Poland.

In particular, I think it would be worthwhile to act in accordance with the wishes of the friends by permitting Cdes. Andropov and Ustinov to go to Brest for a meeting with Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski.⁵ This will allow for a more detailed assessment of the situation in the country, enabling us to gauge the intentions of our friends and again letting them know our position.

If that doesn't work we could still seek a meeting of the Seven at the highest level to discuss the Polish question.⁶

We have a Commission on Poland. Perhaps the comrades from the Commission, who are following events in that country, wish to say something?

ANDROPOV. I believe the proposal offered by Leonid Il'ich regarding our next steps *vis-a-vis* Poland and his assessment of the situation there are absolutely correct. Indeed, what we're trying to find now is some way of exerting greater influence and greater pressure on the leadership of our friends. I believe the proposal for me to travel with Cde. Ustinov for a meeting with Kania and Jaruzelski is appropriate. Based on the exchange of views at the Politburo, and on the decisions adopted earlier by the Politburo and also the conversations that Leonid Il'ich had with Kania, we will perform the necessary function and tell Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski all our demands, proposals, advice, etc.

correct in the sense that Solidarity was never again able to achieve the near-universal mobilization that it attained in late March.) The Joint Declaration also came under attack within the PZPR, especially from hardliners like Tadeusz Grabski and Stefan Olszowski, who believed that the government had conceded too much. Brezhnev was expressing that same complaint here. To offset the criticism voiced by Polish hardliners, Jaruzelski distributed to members of the PZPR Politburo and Secretariat a classified document that purported to show — with a certain degree of verbal legerdemain and obfuscation — how few concessions the government had made. See "Komentarz do wspólnego oświadczenia Komitetu Rady Ministrów d/s Związków Zawodowych oraz delegacji KKP NSZZ 'Solidarność' z dnia 30. III. 1981 r.," 1 April 1981 (Secret), in AAN, Paczka (Pa.) 207, T. 4, Ss. 16-21. This report, however, failed to allay the concerns of Soviet leaders and Polish hardliners.

⁵ Translator's Note: For the results of this meeting, see Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 9 April 1981.

⁶ Translator's Note: The "Seven" to which Brezhnev refers here are the seven member-states of the Warsaw Pact. Such a meeting would be unusual because Romania was excluded from most (though not all) allied deliberations during the crisis.

USTINOV. It seems to me that we indeed must meet with Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski, particularly because Cde. Kania and Cde. Jaruzelski themselves requested this meeting. We must convey to them all our demands and offer advice in accordance with the discussions that Leonid Il'ich had with Kania.

Leonid Il'ich is right in mentioning in his recommendations that we should keep as a fall-back option the possibility of convening the seven member-states of the Warsaw Pact. For now, all necessary measures must be adopted to ensure that the Polish friends act of their own accord.

GROMYKO. Let me briefly inform you about something we received through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. A huge amount of information about Poland is coming in. However, it is worth noting that in the USA, in the FRG, and in other countries they're closely following the situation in Poland and greatly distorting the true state of affairs. Of course both the American and the West European information regarding events in Poland is tendentious. They talk about the "just" demands of Solidarity and the antisocialist forces in Poland and the inability of the Polish leadership to resolve internal problems. In addition, they speak a great deal about the Soviet Union, as though warning us that the Soviet Union must not use its armed forces to interfere in Poland's affairs.⁷ But the whole matter is clear; bourgeois propaganda always comes forth with hostile positions about the Soviet Union and is now purveying this information, as I already

⁷ Translator's Note: Gromyko is right in suggesting that concerns about this matter were widely shared within the U.S. government. On 27 March 1981, an intelligence dispatch from the U.S. Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA), based on information from a well-connected Polish military source (evidently a Polish military officer stationed in Bonn), warned that martial law—and, if necessary, Soviet military intervention—appeared imminent: "[The source] felt that this weekend [i.e., 28-29 March] would be the time for the Polish army to assume control with whatever support was needed from the Soviets, Czechoslovakia and GDR elements. Without question, if no compromise is reached, use of forces are [sic] inevitable, first by the Polish themselves and then by the Russians if necessary." The DIA cable also noted that "[the source] said that there was a marked change in attitude among the Soviet officials, wherein previously they had always stated that the Polish could sort out the problems alone without force, they are now saying that it might be necessary for the Soviets to assist in stopping this counter revolutionary movement in Poland." See DIA, "Weekend of 28-29 March Ominous for Poland," INFO Report 1138Z, 27 March 1981 (sanitized), in National Archives (NA), Record Group (RG) 330, Box 4. The implications of this dispatch (and others like it) were noted in the memoirs of several former U.S. officials. Robert Gates, a senior U.S. intelligence specialist in 1981 who later became director of the CIA, recalled that in 1981 "the first moment of truth seemed to be coming on the weekend of March 28-29. As tensions mounted in Poland at the end of that week, including a four-hour general strike on Friday, we began to get both technical and human intelligence of the kind that makes an intelligence officer's blood run cold — preparations for military action. . . . [A] series of reports came in, none conclusive, pointing to the likelihood of major developments in Poland during the next weekend (the 28th-29th). There was a general belief in both the U.S. intelligence and policy communities that martial law would be imposed that weekend, possibly involving Soviet military intervention." See Robert M. Gates, *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider's Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), p. 230. Similarly, the U.S. Secretary of State in 1981, Alexander Haig, wrote in his memoirs that on 3 April 1981 "in the State Department operations center, we asked ourselves the obvious questions: Were the Russians moving in? Were they raising the level of intimidation? Was this a prelude to a declaration of martial law by the Polish government?" Quoted from Alexander M. Haig, Jr., *Caveat: Realism, Reagan, and Foreign Policy* (New York: Macmillan, 1984), p. 244. The concerns that Haig and other U.S. officials had about Soviet intentions were widely reflected in Western press coverage.

mentioned, in a tendentious manner.

I want to say that things with Kania and Jaruzelski are not particularly good. There are even hints that Jaruzelski is completely worn out and does not know what to do next.⁸ This, of course, is deplorable. During the negotiations with Solidarity, the PPR leaders went back on their word in what they had promised us. That, too, is deplorable. Even the Polish leaders themselves say that the latest agreement with Solidarity was a mistake of the Polish leadership.⁹

With regard to the agreement with Rural Solidarity, it essentially is already ratified. If the matter is turned over for review to the Sejm committee headed by Szczepanski, a deputy who is not a party member, we can certainly expect that the decisions will of course be to the advantage of Rural Solidarity. How are we to assess the situation in Poland in the aftermath of the CC plenum? I think we won't be mistaken if we say that no improvements at all have occurred. On the contrary, things have gotten still worse because the leadership is moving steadily backward. But as Leonid Il'ich already said, Kania is raising the question about having our comrades Andropov and Ustinov go to Brest for an exchange of views with Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski. I believe we should go ahead with this meeting, particularly because it will allow us to convey everything to the Polish friends on a personal basis. This meeting, in my view, is an intermediate type of step, and we should use it to the full. If, as they say, they are going to resort to the partial introduction of emergency measures, one must ask whether they are sure that the army, internal affairs ministry, and state security organs will be on their side. I think it would be appropriate for our military personnel to conduct a far-reaching analysis of how things stand in the Polish armed forces and whether the army is the main force and can be relied upon.¹⁰

⁸ Translator's Note: Concerns about Jaruzelski's health and mental stability were also raised at this time by Marshal Kulikov, who had been in Poland since early March 1981 to confer with Polish political and military leaders about the Soyuz-81 exercises and other matters. According to the top-secret East German notes from a conversation that Kulikov had on 7 April with leading East German military officials, the Soviet marshal believed that "Jaruzelski is physically and mentally exhausted" and is "not always in control of himself." Kulikov went so far as to claim that the reason Jaruzelski "always wears darkened eyeglasses, even on official occasions," is that he "wants to conceal his nervous eye movements." (This last statement, it is worth noting, is spurious. The real reason that Jaruzelski wore darkened eyeglasses is that he suffered optical damage in his youth when he was exiled with his family to Soviet Siberia. His eyes were extremely sensitive to light from that time on.) For the East German account of Kulikov's remarks, see "Bericht über ein vertrauliches Gespräch mit dem Oberkommandierenden der Vereinten Streitkräfte der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 07.04.1981 in LEGNICA," Bl. 53, 54.

⁹ Translator's Note: Again, this is a reference to the Joint Declaration of 30 March.

¹⁰ Translator's Note: Gromyko was raising a key concern here, which Marshal Kulikov had been exploring during his talks with Kania and Jaruzelski in late March and early April 1981. A top-secret East German account of Kulikov's findings indicates that, as of early April 1981, Polish military commanders were voicing serious reservations about the prospects of using the Polish army to impose martial law. According to the report, this pessimism was shared "even by the generals and commanders who had previously assured [Kulikov] that they and their troops would obey any order from the party and state leadership. They now [in early April 1981] averred that they could not be confident about the reliability of at least 50-60 percent of their conscript soldiers and non-commissioned officers." Although Kulikov seemed to imply that these statements may have been "coached" somewhat by Kania and Jaruzelski to suit their own diffident outlook, the report left a distinctly gloomy impression about the feasibility of using the Polish

The CPSU CC Politburo must be clear in its understanding of the current state of forces in the PPR. We must know what it is. The Polish High Command says that the army will fulfill its duty.¹¹ But is that really so? In any case we must be sure to

army and security forces to implement a crackdown. (Quoted from "Bericht uber ein vertrauliches Gespräch mit dem Oberkommandierenden der Vereinten Streitkräfte der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 07.04.1981 in LEGNICA," Bl. 54.) This assessment was in line with Soviet intelligence reports, which by late April and early May 1981 were increasingly pessimistic about the reliability of Polish troops for internal missions. Lieutenant-Colonel O. P. Donchak, the deputy head of the Ukrainian KGB's 7th Border Detachment for Intelligence, warned that "Solidarity officials are currently engaged in a systematic effort to lure soldiers from the [Polish] border guards and the Polish Army into their own organization." The consequences, he added, were grave: "The view has spread within the [Polish] border guards and the Polish Army that the PZPR Central Committee and PPR government do not have as much real power in the country as Solidarity does. . . . The Polish Army is currently being permeated by all the political currents in the country and is taking a neutral position, whereby it will carry out only the orders given by people who exercise real power." Quoted from "Spravka," Dispatch No. 637 (Top Secret), 22 April 1981, and "Spravka," Dispatch No. 676 (Top Secret), 6 May 1981, both in TsDAHOU, F. 1, Op. 25, Spr. 2235, Ll. 27 and 33, respectively. Ustinov's comments at this CPSU Politburo meeting make clear that Soviet military intelligence (GRU) officers, army commanders, and diplomats would be keeping a close eye on the morale and outlook of Polish troops. Over the next several months, Soviet officials in Poland prepared a large number of assessments of the loyalty and reliability of the Polish army. See, for example, "O nastroeniakh sredi soldatov i ofitserov podrazdelenii Voiska Pol'skogo i VMF PNR, dislotsiruyushchikhysya na Gdan'skom poberezh'e," Cable No. 183 (Top Secret), 14 June 1981, from V. Zelenov, Soviet consul-general in Gdansk, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 611, Ll. 17-19; and "Vypiska iz protokola No. 37 zasedaniya Politbyuro TsK KPSS ot 21 noyabrya 1981 goda: O prieme v SSSR partiino-gosudarstvennoi delegatsii PNR i ustnom poslanii t. Brezhneva L. I. t. V. Yarusel'skomu," No. P37/21 (Top Secret), 21 November 1981, in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 27, L. 6; and "Polozhenie v PORP posle IX S"ezda," Cable No. 596 (Top Secret), 4 November 1981, from B. I. Aristov, Soviet ambassador in Poland, to K. I. Rusakov, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 596, Ll. 35-53.

¹¹ Translator's Note: Gromyko evidently is referring here to the assurances that a delegation of eighteen Soviet generals, led by the first deputy commander-in-chief of the Warsaw Pact's Joint Armed Forces, Army-General Anatolii Gribkov, received when they conducted an extraordinary tour of Polish military bases, command staffs, naval facilities, and defense industrial plants in early 1981. Ostensibly, the Soviet generals were monitoring the combat readiness of Polish units that were due to take part in the Soyuz-81 exercises scheduled for late March and early April 1981. In reality, their mission was to determine the willingness of senior Polish commanders to "perform their duty against counterrevolution." The first public revelation that such a tour had taken place came in 1987 in an interview with Ryszard Kuklinski, "Wojna z narodem widziana od srodka," p. 33. Kuklinski revealed, among other things, that one of the Soviet officers on the tour, Army-General Afanasii Shcheglov, who served as special representative of the Warsaw Pact in Poland, had asked the commander of a Polish regiment what his unit would "do if it becomes necessary to remove striking workers from an enterprise or factory by force." Further details about this tour were provided by General Gribkov in an important article he wrote in 1992, "'Doktrina Brezhneva' i pol'skii krizis nachala 80-kh godov," pp. 55, 56. Gribkov indicated that he led the tour during a lull in the artificially prolonged Soyuz-80 exercises. According to Gribkov, the tour confirmed that the Polish High Command consisted of "healthy forces" who were "carrying out their functions in the interests of the state" (p. 56). This upbeat assessment was very much at odds with the gloomy comments that Kulikov heard from Kania and Jaruzelski less than two months later, in early April 1981 (see my preceding annotation). The discrepancy was primarily a matter of timing. The East German account of Kulikov's conversations with Kania and Jaruzelski emphasizes that a fundamental shift occurred after the 9th plenum of the PZPR Central Committee on 29 March 1981, amidst the furor surrounding the Bydgoszcz affair. "Until the 9th Plenum," according to Kulikov, "Comrade Kania and Comrade Jaruzelski had always agreed with [Moscow's] view that the Polish armed forces and security organs were prepared to carry out any assignment they were given by the party and state leadership. After the 9th Plenum, however, Comrade Kania insisted that they could not rely on the [Polish] army and security organs and could not be certain

emphasize to the Polish comrades the necessity of adopting harsher — I would say extraordinary — measures to restore order, and to emphasize that further concessions are simply intolerable. It would be impossible to back down any further.

USTINOV. In the military sphere things stand as follows. Today at 8:00 p.m. the military leadership is meeting with Cdes. Kulikov and Kryuchkov and other of our comrades. As far as the Polish army is concerned, it is, as Cde. Jaruzelski declares, ready to perform its duty.¹² But if we're candid about the matter, we have to recognize that Kania and Jaruzelski are scarcely inclined to pursue a confrontation, bearing in mind the conflict in Bydgoszcz.¹³ The results of this conflict showed that even if just two people

that [the army and security forces] would support the party and state leadership if the situation reached a critical point." Kulikov added that he "tried to dissuade Comrade Kania from this view" by emphasizing that "the Soviet comrades [up to now] have been convinced that the [Polish] army and security organs were prepared to end the counterrevolution when ordered to do so by the party and government leadership." Even as Kulikov spoke, however, he realized that "Comrade Kania did not share [Kulikov's] optimism." Worst of all from Kulikov's perspective, "Comrade Jaruzelski the next day echoed [Kania's] view that the [Polish] army and security forces were unsuitable for internal deployments, and that [the PZPR] could not fully rely on them." (Quoted from "Bericht uber ein vertrauliches Gespräch mit dem Oberkommandierenden der Vereinten Streitkräfte der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 07.04.1981 in LEGNICA," Bl. 53, 54.) Thus, even though Gribkov's optimistic impressions were valid earlier in the year, the outlook in Warsaw seems to have changed markedly by early April.

¹² Translator's Note: Here again, Ustinov's assessment is at variance with the comments that Kulikov reportedly heard from Kania, Jaruzelski, and Polish military commanders later that day. The discrepancy may have arisen for the same reason indicated in my preceding annotation. Ustinov himself presented a much less optimistic view further on in this paragraph, which suggests that he already had some inkling of the change of mood in Warsaw.

¹³ Translator's Note: Ustinov is referring to a controversial event in Bydgoszcz on the evening of 19 March 1981, which was the first real instance of violence during the entire crisis. Earlier that day a few dozen members of Solidarity, who had been denied a chance to speak at the local People's Council meeting, stayed in the Council building to negotiate informally with individual Council members. Over the next several hours the authorities tried unsuccessfully to persuade the Solidarity activists to leave. Eventually, around 200 uniformed police (*Milicja Obywatelska*, or MO) were sent to the building. The police requested the conferees to leave, but the Solidarity delegates refused. The police initially refrained from taking action, but later in the evening, after numerous other requests for Solidarity to depart had gone unheeded, the police moved in. The Solidarity members were removed from the building without injury. Once the activists were outside, however, a group of security personnel in civilian clothing surrounded and beat three of them, including the regional union leader, Jan Rulewski. The three were seriously injured. News of the incident quickly spread through Poland, giving rise to exaggerated rumors about the scale of the violence. The leaders of Solidarity correctly surmised that the incident had been a provocation. Andrzej Paczkowski has marshaled impressive documentary evidence (in his contribution to *Kancelaria Sejmu, O stanie wojennym*, pp. 143-144) about the role of hard-line forces at the Polish Internal Affairs Ministry (MSW), who may have been acting at the behest (or at least with the knowledge) of high-level political authorities. It is also possible that the MSW hardliners were acting without proper authorization. If so, they may have been seeking to undercut Kania and Jaruzelski, give a boost to diehard opponents of Solidarity like Grabski, and create a pretext for the immediate introduction of martial law. Whatever the case may be, the incident developed into a full-fledged crisis by 22 March when the PZPR Politburo released a statement claiming that the "organs of public order in Bydgoszcz" had "acted in accordance with law and order." The highly charged atmosphere that followed led to a four-hour warning strike under Solidarity's auspices on 27 March (see above) and to plans for a general strike on 31 March. The general strike was narrowly averted when the government hastily acceded to most of Solidarity's demands. Despite this last-minute resolution of the crisis, the whole episode provided a valuable lesson to officials at the Polish Internal Affairs Ministry about the prospects of "creating a suitable pretext" for a broad crackdown

from Solidarity are somehow injured, the whole country will literally be up in arms, and that Solidarity was able to mobilize its forces quickly. Of course there is now still some hope that the army, state security organs, and police will put up a united front, but the further things have gone in recent days, the worse they have become. I think that bloodshed can't be avoided; it will occur. And if they're afraid of that, they'll have to keep relinquishing one position after another. In the process, all the gains of socialism could be lost.

I'm thinking also about another question, whether we won't have to take certain economic measures. How do the Polish friends now view this matter? We're helping them, we're taking things from ourselves and from our other friends and giving them to Poland, yet the Polish people know nothing about this.¹⁴ None of the Poles has any idea that Poland is receiving from us full shipments of oil, cotton, and so forth. If in fact they were to take account of all this and see what help the Soviet Union is providing to the Poles, and if they described this help on television, on radio, and in the press, the Polish people, I believe, would understand from whom they are receiving the major portion of their economic assistance. But not a single Polish leader has gone out among the workers and discussed this assistance.

With regard to the Polish leaders, I believe it's difficult to say which of them is best. Earlier we regarded Cde. Jaruzelski as a stalwart figure, but now he has proven to be weak.

BREZHNEV. That's why we must clarify everything for ourselves: to determine what the situation is within their Politburo and to determine who is capable of doing something.¹⁵

against Solidarity. See the comments of General Wladyslaw Pozoga in "Posiedzenie Kierownictwa MSW, 2.IV.1981 r.," 2 April 1981 (Top Secret), in CAMSW, Sygn. 251/1.

¹⁴ Translator's Note: See Letter from Leonid Brezhnev to Erich Honecker, 4 November 1980. Explicit Soviet subsidies to Poland greatly increased during the 1980-81 crisis.

¹⁵ Translator's Note: This comment by Brezhnev is somewhat cryptic, but, combined with the highly negative remarks voiced here about Kania and Jaruzelski, it suggests that Soviet leaders were contemplating the formation of an alternative group of hardline PZPR officials (the so-called "healthy forces" or "real Communists") who could, if necessary, displace Kania and Jaruzelski and impose martial law with ruthless force. This presumably would have been arranged via back channels, similar to the contacts that Soviet leaders clandestinely maintained in 1968 with staunchly pro-Soviet hardliners in Czechoslovakia. In recent years, several former high-ranking Polish officials, including Kuklinski, Jaruzelski, Kania, and Siwicki, have argued that Moscow was secretly fostering an alternative regime in Poland in 1981, which could have been installed if necessary. See "Wojna z narodem widziana od srodka," pp. 4-5; *Stan wojenny dlaczego*, pp. 252-253; Kania, *Zatrzymac konfrontacje*, pp. 154-158; and Wojciech Zaluska, "Strach generalow: Siwicki przed Komisja Odpowiedzialnosci Konstytucyjnej," *Gazeta wyborcza* (Warsaw), 13 May 1994, p. 2. The documentation currently available in Warsaw and Moscow does not permit any conclusive judgments about this matter, but items stored in the former East German archives lend a good deal of credence to the Polish claims. In particular, several documents from the SED archive (cited in my second annotation to Transcript of the CPSU Politburo Session, 18 June 1981) strongly suggest that Soviet leaders supported efforts by Polish hardliners to dislodge Kania in early June 1981. Those efforts did not succeed, but numerous other documents indicate that Soviet, East German, and Czechoslovak officials remained secretly in touch with the Polish hardliners. When Brezhnev and Erich Honecker met in the Crimea in early August 1981, the Soviet leader seemed pleased that "the real

ANDROPOV. I completely agree with you, Leonid Il'ich, in the analysis you provided of the situation in Poland. We find that Solidarity is seizing one position after another. If an extraordinary congress is convened, we can't rule out the possibility that it will be completely dominated by representatives of Solidarity, and that they will then be able to stage a bloodless coup.¹⁶ We need to meet again personally with the Polish leaders, as Leonid Il'ich indicated here, so that we can urge them to adopt severe measures and not to be afraid of what might result, possibly even bloodshed. Instead of taking severe measures, they are proposing to us so-called "political management." We've told them to adopt military measures, administrative measures, and judicial measures, but they invariably limit themselves solely to political measures.¹⁷

In addition, we must seriously ask the Polish friends whether they will hold Solidarity accountable for what's going on in Poland. How do things stand now? Economic chaos, confusion, and all manner of shortcomings in the supply of consumer goods and other things can be attributed to the strikes sponsored by Solidarity, but it's the

Communists [in Poland] have regained self-confidence and have seen that they can rely fully on us." Although Brezhnev and Honecker reluctantly conceded that they would "be forced to put up with Kania for a certain while longer," the East German leader emphasized to Brezhnev that "the CPSU, the KSC, the SED, and other fraternal parties should, in close cooperation with one another, continue to promote the formation of a reliable, combat-ready, Marxist-Leninist leadership in the PZPR. We will use all our contacts toward this end." The specific phrasing used by Honecker—indicating that they must "continue" (*weiterhin*) to promote the formation of an alternative leadership—strongly implies that efforts along these lines had been under way for some time. After Honecker offered this suggestion, Brezhnev asked him for his view on "a delicate question: Can Kania gain control of the situation? Do you personally have confidence in him?" Honecker's reply was blunt: "No, I don't have any confidence in him. He has repeatedly let us down, and he has never made good on his promises. Only recently, when the [PZPR] Politburo met with the first secretaries of the [Polish] wojewodztwa, most of them chided Kania for his failure to resort to decisive measures." Honecker proposed that the Soviet Union convene a meeting of Warsaw Pact leaders to exert pressure on Kania (perhaps paving the way for his removal), and Brezhnev agreed that such a step might soon prove desirable. See "Niederschrift über das Treffen zwischen Genossen L. I. Breznev und Genossen E. Honecker am 3. August 1981 auf der Krim," notes by Bruno Mahlow, deputy head of the SED Central Committee International Department, 3 August 1981 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/2/A-2419, Bl. 336. This does not necessarily mean that Soviet leaders were seeking to establish a full-fledged "shadow Politburo" in Poland (even if Honecker may have wanted to form one), but the evidence does imply that they were leaving their options open.

¹⁶ Translator's Note: This is analogous to what Soviet leaders feared would happen in Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Extraordinary Fourteenth Congress of the Czechoslovak Communist Party, scheduled for September, was going to be dominated by ardently reform-minded delegates. The Soviet invasion on 20-21 August was intended in part to prevent the Fourteenth Congress from taking place. (An emergency congress managed to convene shortly after the invasion, but its results were annulled under the Moscow Protocol, the agreement signed by the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia on 26 August 1968, which forced the Czechoslovak authorities to undo many of the reforms adopted during the Prague Spring.)

¹⁷ Translator's Note: This comment is identical to what Marshal Kulikov concluded after his meetings with Kania and Jaruzelski in early April 1981. According to the East German summary of his findings, Kulikov claimed that "unfortunately, the leading Polish comrades believe that they can solve all their problems through political means in the hope that everything will resolve itself on its own. . . . The distinct impression one gets is that Comrade Kania and Comrade Jaruzelski want to avoid the use of force so that they can remain 'pure' Poles." Quoted from "Bericht über ein vertrauliches Gespräch mit dem Oberkommandierenden der Vereinten Streitkräfte der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 07.04.1981 in LEGNICA," Bl. 56.

government that's being held accountable for this. An absurd situation has emerged. Yet none of the members of the Politburo, and no one from the PPR leadership, is speaking out and telling the workers that the leaders of Solidarity are chiefly responsible for the shortcomings and economic devastation. With regard to the PZPR Politburo, we must advise Cde. Kania to unite the stalwart members of the Politburo and rely on them.

BREZHNEV. We must tell them this means the introduction of martial law and explain it all very plainly.

ANDROPOV. That's right, we must tell them precisely that the introduction of martial law means the establishment of a curfew, limitations on movement along city streets, and stepped-up protection for state and Party institutions, enterprises, etc. Under pressure from the leaders of Solidarity, Jaruzelski has gone soft, and Kania recently has begun to drink more and more excessively.¹⁸ This is a very pathetic situation. I think we have plenty of reasons to hold a meeting with Kania and Jaruzelski. Obviously we need to listen to what they have to say.

In addition, I want to say that the Polish events are influencing the situation in the western provinces of our country, particularly in Belorussia. Many villages there are listening in to Polish-language radio and television.¹⁹ I might add that in certain other regions, especially in Georgia, we have had wild demonstrations. As in Tbilisi not long ago, groups of loudmouths have been gathering on the streets, proclaiming anti-Soviet slogans, etc. Here we, too, must adopt severe measures internally.²⁰

USTINOV. With regard to the army, the situation in their country has substantially deteriorated. This is because they replaced a large segment of old recruits with new inductees, the majority of whom sympathize with Solidarity. Hence the army is being weakened. We believe the old recruits must be kept in the Polish army; it would be undesirable to discharge them.²¹ However, the Poles don't want to keep them. Obviously, we need to talk about this with them.

¹⁸ Translator's Note: By all accounts, this latter criticism was well-founded. Kania had long been known for his fondness of alcohol, and he evidently was prone to excessive drinking on numerous occasions during the 1980-81 crisis.

¹⁹ Translator's Note: Andropov's comment here is fully borne out by the first-hand retrospective comments of Efrem Sokolov, the first secretary of the Brest oblast party committee in western Belorussia: "Many residents of Brest are linked by family ties with the citizens of Poland. We must bear in mind that a large number of the region's inhabitants can watch Polish television broadcasts. Until martial law was introduced in Poland, some of the broadcasts were anti-Communist in nature. These broadcasts crippled the Poles in their struggle for the ideals of the working class and failed to give a class-based analysis of the right-wing leaders of the Solidarity trade union and their KOS-KOR advisers. The broadcasts often distorted historical facts and launched unfriendly attacks against our country. The lack of political vigilance and the insouciance that characterized some Polish leaders could not help but upset the region's inhabitants." Quoted from E. Sokolov, "Za klassovuyu zorkost'," *Kommunist* (Moscow), No. 4 (April 1984), p. 31.

²⁰ Translator's Note: This whole paragraph provides valuable evidence that the KGB and the highest party officials were well aware of the political spillover from Poland into the USSR.

²¹ Translator's Note: This strongly suggests that Jaruzelski's decision in October 1981 to extend the term of military duty by two months was inspired, at least in part, by Soviet "comradely advice." Under the new arrangement (as explained below), conscripts who were due to leave the army in October 1981 were instead required to serve until the end of 1981.

GRISHIN. I believe the proposals offered by Leonid Il'ich are absolutely correct and that we should adopt them, authorizing Cdes. Ustinov and Andropov to go to Brest.

USTINOV. The meeting can be on the border, either on our side or on the Polish side. Let's play it by ear. The most militant members of the PZPR Politburo, it seems to me, are Cdes. Olszowski, Grabski, and Barcikowski, but they're being kept at bay.

ANDROPOV. I think we should not yet expand the group taking part in the meeting and should instead limit it, as they said, to just Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski.

BREZHNEV. When should we inform them of this decision?

ANDROPOV. I think we should inform them about it today.

BREZHNEV. Fine. Then we'll consider that this proposal has been adopted.

EVERYONE. Correct.

* * *

A decision is adopted:

1. To endorse the recommendations offered at the Politburo session by Cde. L. I. Brezhnev regarding the situation in Poland.
2. To take into account the information provided by Cdes. Gromyko, Andropov, and Ustinov about the situation in Poland and the measures adopted by the Foreign Ministry, KGB, and Defense Ministry in connection with events in Poland.
3. To approve the request of the Polish comrades to hold a meeting between Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski and Cdes. Andropov and Ustinov in Brest.

[Source: *TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 39*]