

August 18, 1989

Poland: Non-Communist Government to be Announced

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Summary:

An analysis of President Jaruzelski's decision to create a new Polish government led by non-Communists.

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English

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POLAND:

Non-Communist Government To Be Announced

After meeting parliamentary leaders yesterday, President Jaruzelski reportedly agreed to a landmark coalition government to be led by a non-Communist and dominated by Solidarity; the crucial choice of prime minister will be announced soon. [redacted]

[redacted] Jaruzelski has agreed to a Solidarity proposal for the opposition and the United Peasants' and Democratic Parties to form a coalition government committed to reform. [redacted] the Communists apparently will hold at least the Internal Affairs and Defense Ministries. Lech Walesa has hinted he might accept the prime-ministership to promote stability, but Jaruzelski is apparently considering several other candidates, including Solidarity caucus leader Bronislaw Geremek and union leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki. A Communist Party Central Committee plenum is scheduled to meet tomorrow to discuss the crisis. [redacted]

Comment: Any deal between Jaruzelski and Walesa, which almost certainly would be cleared with Moscow, will be widely accepted as a reasonable way out of the current crisis. But Jaruzelski alone must decide on the new premier; [redacted] he has a short list of candidates—including at least one non-Solidarity independent—acceptable to the opposition. Stiff party resistance tomorrow could prolong the crisis, but Jaruzelski probably expects to prevail over hardliners in any showdown. Even if Walesa is not selected, he would remain a top choice to head a future government if this coalition fails. The prospect of a non-Communist or opposition-led government has drawn a cautious reaction in Eastern Europe: the Hungarians claim such a government would not threaten the Warsaw Pact and could accelerate Hungary's progress toward multiparty elections. [redacted]

Only a Solidarity-led government would have enough popular credibility to convince the nation to make painful sacrifices needed for economic reform. Solidarity has not yet fashioned a coherent reform program, however, and would probably renew its calls for a US-led "Marshall Plan" for Poland, to a tune of as much as \$10 billion, to buy time to forge a consensus on reforms. [redacted]

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TCS 2892/89
18 August 1989

3721

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Poland

All Poles agree that the political crisis can be settled only through the personal intervention of both Wojciech Jaruzelski and Lech Walesa. President Jaruzelski, despite his reputation as the father of martial law, habitually has been slow to choose between courses of action proposed by reformers and hardliners. Walesa, although admired by Poles as a man of action, has stood above the political fray since early this year.

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TCS 2892/89

18 August 1989