

May 16, 1981

**Memorandum Regarding the Meeting Between
Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, Erich Honecker,
and Gustav Husak in the Kremlin**

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Summary:

Memorandum Regarding the Meeting Between Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev, Erich Honecker, and Gustav Husak in the Kremlin describing the Polish situation and criticizing Polish leadership

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German

Contents:

Translation - English

Participating in the meeting on the Soviet side were Comrades [CPSU Politburo member and Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Nikolai Aleksandrovich] Tikhonov, [Foreign Minister, Andrei Andreivich] Gromyko, [Politburo member, Konstantin Ustinovich] Chernenko, [Defense Minister, Dmitri Fyodorovich] Ustinov, [KGB chief, Yuri Vladimirovich] Andropov, [CC Secretary, Konstantin Viktorovich] Rusakov, and [Deputy head of the CC Department, Georgi Khosroyevich] Shakhnazarov.

Comrade Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev opened the meeting with the remark that this gathering is being held at the suggestion of Comrade Erich [Honecker], to exchange mutual views, appraise the situation, and draw conclusions.

We must, as he said, proceed from the fact that the situation in Poland has further deteriorated. The party is not just being attacked by "Solidarity". It also finds itself in a process of dissolution, created by internal contradictions. At present this process is self-limiting due to the fear of external intervention.

The information before us, concerning the preparation for the party congress of the PUWP [to be held on 14-18 July 1981], is negative. With the election of delegates to the party congress, not only are new people becoming involved, but hostile forces as well. The 10th Plenum [held on 29-30 April 1981] approved a very weak draft for a [party] program. Thereupon, "Solidarity" published a document containing enemy nationalist positions, and Kania did not call them to order.

Kania spoke briefly before the party aktiv in Gdansk, like Gierek back in those days, that Poles can always come to an agreement with fellow Poles. Consequently, the events in Otwock are a disgrace, which encourages new anti-socialist acts.

Recently, our Comrades Andropov and Ustinov met privately with Polish comrades in Brest, and gave them recommendations on a whole number of concrete matters. To prevent these matters from remaining in a narrow circle, Comrade Suslov traveled to Warsaw to talk things over with all the comrades from the Politburo one more time. We have delivered this information to you.

Verbally, they assented to our suggestions, but in reality the situation further deteriorated. The Polish leadership is panicking from fear, they stare—as if hypnotized—at "Solidarity," without taking any concrete action.

The PUWP can still rely on the Polish army, the security organs, and the party aktiv, but Kania continues to be indecisive and soft, they are not prepared to take a calculated risk. Some comrades believe that [Stefan] Olszowski and [Tadeusz] Grabski are men on whom one can rely. We must see, however, that a change of leadership can also have negative repercussions. We see no real personality who can assume command. We see the danger even that [Mieczyslaw] Rakowski could assume this position. For us there is no other way now than strengthening the present leadership and bringing pressure to bear on the healthy forces.

[Warsaw Pact Supreme Commander, Marshal of the Soviet Union] Comrade Viktor Kulikov worked out plans for several options to be implemented in case of emergency. To strengthen our influence over the mass media, we have sent the Chairman of the Committee for Radio and Television, Comrade Lyapin, to Warsaw.

To stimulate party relations between the municipality and voivodeship committees, eleven delegations headed by the first municipal secretaries will travel to the voivodeships in May/June.

The youth organization is also intensifying its relations with the Polish youth, in order

to exercise greater influence. For the time being, though, the opposition still wields its influence on the PUWP. That is why we must bolster our influence on the healthy forces. On the other side, imperialism is attempting also to exert influence on Poland economically, and to gain control of the economy, leading to a weakening of our community. Due to the absence of coal shipments from Poland, for example, the economies of the GDR and the CSSR have fallen into a difficult position. We have provided the Poles with assistance amounting to four billion dollars.

The situation is at present so grave, that we must elaborate a number of options for a resolution. It would be useful to draft a joint analysis and in doing so spare nothing. We must deliberate on what has to be done. At stake is the fate of Poland.

Then Comrade Erich Honecker spoke. Comrade E. Honecker agreed with the statements made by Comrade L.I. Brezhnev and underlined the full agreement of our parties. Then he proceeded:

1. Recently the Politburo of the SED CC, with great attention, familiarized itself with the report on the result of the discussions between the delegation of the CPSU and the PUWP. The [CPSU] delegation, which was headed by Comrade Suslov, stopped in Warsaw. Our Politburo agreed fully and completely with the assessment of the situation in Poland and the conclusions drawn from it. It articulated its displeasure with the fact that the leadership of the PUWP was apparently not prepared to see matters as they really were, and then draw the necessary conclusions.

2. I would not like, with all due earnestness, to conceal our deep concern over the most recent developments in the People's [Republic of] Poland. From all discussions and material before us, it follows that the PUWP finds itself in the stranglehold of the counterrevolution. Solidarity [members within the party] obviously took the renewal of the PUWP [sic!] propagated by Kania into their own hands. According to the information before us, over 60% of the elected delegates to the Extraordinary Party Congress at this point are members of Solidarity. Among them there are few workers. A large portion of the delegates is part of the scientific-technological intelligentsia. It is already foreseeable that the planned Party Congress implicates the danger of the PUWP being transformed into a social-democratic party that works closely together with the Church and the leadership of Solidarity with the sole goal of leading a renewal process, in the spirit of the goals of the counterrevolution, to its victory.

3. The CPSU, the CPCz, and the SED have given the PUWP leadership a lot of good advice. Comrade Kania and Jaruzelski have agreed with them. Unfortunately one must state that they not only have not implemented it [the good advice], but rather encouraged the enormous process of degeneration in the party and state apparatus through their actions. Now there are already statements in the Polish mass media demanding a democratization of the Polish Army and slandering the organs of the interior, party and state. One must look with open eyes at these things, and recognize that the fate of socialism in the People's Republic of Poland, with all its consequences for Poland and all of its allies, is at stake. Walesa declared publicly in Gdansk on 7 May 1981 that Solidarity is prepared to take over the government's authority in Poland at a given time.

4. In weighing all the details, one can only doubt the sincerity of a large portion of the members of the state and party leadership vis-a-vis their alliance partners. The pressure exerted upon Poland by the imperialist powers, above all the USA and the FRG, is supposed to prevent the healthy forces from taking measures against the counterrevolutionary forces. Comrade Kania uses this for his argument that all matters should be solved politically, repudiating Leninist principle that the party must be prepared to utilize all forms of combat to destroy the counterrevolution and guarantee the socialist development of the People's [Republic of] Poland.

5. At the Moscow conference, all realized that the developments in the People's [Republic of] Poland weren't just a matter for the People's Poland, but an affair of the entire socialist community. From all of this, no conclusions were drawn by the leadership of the People's [Republic of] Poland. What followed is a complicated situation, not just for Poland, but for the entire socialist community.

Let's take the middle and long-term consequences for the GDR.

Politically:

The GDR is located as you know in the center of Europe—we have German imperialism in front of us, and would possibly have a capitalist Poland behind us. The CSSR would find itself in a similar position.

Today already we must wage the battle on two fronts—we have to deal with the FRG and Poland.

I would only like to mention the role of the West German mass media and the large stream of agitation and slander that pours in as a result. The West German television broadcasts its daily programs on Poland, most of all, to influence our people.

Economically:

As per [trade] agreements, we must receive from Peoples' [Republic of] Poland per year 1.9 million tons of bituminous [hard] coal by direct route and 3 million tons by diversion, hence 4.9 million tons altogether. In actuality we received 1.1 million tons in 1980, and in the first quarter of 1981, 1.2 million tons [less than the amount that had been set.—Ed.'s note: Added in handwriting by E. Honecker.]

A large portion of our imports and exports to and from the USSR is transported through Poland. That comes out to be 10 million tonnes of goods per year.

It must not be forgotten that Soviet Group of Forces in Germany communicate via Poland. But Comrade Ustinov is even a better judge of that [than I].

Now, regarding some information that our comrades recently received during talks with Polish comrades.

From May 12-14, a delegation from the Berlin district leadership was in Warsaw. They reported:

1. The situation in the party organization is not unified but very confused.

2. From the rank and file (science and production center for semiconductors "Cemi," housing construction collective combine) there is a pronounced hatred of the old and new party leadership. This concerns in particular the contradictory behavior and decisions of "Rural Solidarity."

3. Among all the comrades there are bitter words regarding the destructive information by the mass media. What the party secretaries defend is revoked, placed into question, and discredited in television programs and press publications. (Good comrades not only feel deserted in their struggle to implement the party line, but also betrayed and even stabbed in the back.)

4. The base organizations [Grundorganisationen] are not familiar with the documents decreed at the 10th CC Plenum for the preparation of the Party Congress. In the election campaign, they occupy themselves primarily with "settling" the mistakes of the past and with the procedural matters regarding the nomination of candidates to

the leadership, delegates to the municipal and city delegation conference as well as to the 9th Party Congress. (As a rule, the election assemblies last 8 to 10 hours, most of which is spent on procedural matters)

Among the cadres there is great uncertainty about the future and the coming work. No one knows whether he will be reelected or elected to the municipal or city delegation conference. On May 13, four of the seven First Municipal Secretaries were appointed as delegates to their own conference. About 50% of the secretaries of the municipal leaderships were not chosen to be delegates.

80% of the members of base organization leaderships are new cadres, chiefly young, inexperienced comrades. The number of Solidarity members in the party leadership has rapidly increased.

5. Our impression of the personnel:

The First Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee, Comrade Stanislaw Kociolek, is an upstanding Communist, who realistically appraises the situation in the country and demonstrates an internationalist attitude. He repeatedly expressed clear positions on the CPSU, the SED, and the CPCz in public.

Unlike Politburo candidate and CC Secretary Jerzy Waszczuk, he stated repeatedly that he couldn't imagine the 9th Party Congress taking place without the participation of the fraternal parties. He repeatedly emphasized that the situation in Poland would only be mastered when the party was built up anew upon the foundations of Marxism-Leninism and internationalism.

Of the seven secretaries of the Warsaw Voivodship Committee, two so far have been chosen as delegates to the city conference (Kociolek, Boleslawski—2nd Secretary). Two secretaries have declared from the outset that there is no chance that they would be elected as delegates. (Com. J. Matuczewicz did not run as delegate for the conference from the concern "Rosa Luxembourg" on the 12 May 1981.) The chances of the three other secretaries are uncertain.

6. The talks with the First Secretaries of the municipal leaderships of [the Warsaw districts] Mokotow, Praga North, and Zoliborz reflected the lack of unity in the party.

While the First Secretary from Mokotow (graduate of the Party School of the CPSU) stated a clear position on the situation, its causes, and the activities of the counterrevolution, an unprincipled social-democratic attitude could be seen on the part of the first secretaries from Zoliborz and Praga North. Their main topics were the causes of the "mistakes" and the guarantees against future repetition. Based on the "feelings of the masses," the independence and sovereignty of Poland, and the honesty of the party and of the whole society was to be guaranteed.

While visiting a construction site for a new bridge over the Vistula, we found the slogan "Down with the dictatorship of the CPSU—Long live Lech Walesa" on a barrel.

The First Secretary from Praga North did not say anything that was party line, when we addressed this anti-Soviet statement as well as the anti-socialist event at Katyn⁵. All in all, the cadres are becoming used to anti-socialist statements, writings, slogans and other machinations. No one thinks about measures to take against the counterrevolutionary intrigue

7. The statements of the Politburo candidate and CC Secretary, Comrade Jerzy Waszczuk, in the presence of Comrade Kociolek (1 1/2 hours), were extremely vague. The fundamental political questions were not clearly addressed. An attempt was made to justify the capitulationist attitude of the leadership when we mentioned it. Questioned about the participation of foreign delegations to the 9th Extraordinary Party Congress, he answered evasively. Essentially it was answered in the negative.

(We do not know how the Party Congress proceeded. There may be provocations, which would be very unpleasant for the fraternal parties.) Comrade Kociolek explicitly spoke out in favor of the participation of the fraternal parties. Otherwise, holding the party congress would be inconceivable. Comrade Kociolek repeatedly stressed that there cannot be a second 14th CPCz Party Congress in Poland. Therefore the remaining days must be used to guarantee a correct composition of the party congress. In relation to this he expressed his opinion on the creation of a clear personnel structure. It was clear from his remarks, that he knew of the statements made by Comrade Mikhail Suslov and supported the implementation of the recommendations given there.

8. Comrade Kociolek beseeched the Berlin District leadership of the SED to take thorough advantage of the various possibilities to influence the Warsaw party organization in the next 30 days, in order to consolidate the party and prepare the party congress in an internationalist spirit. A corresponding proposal of Comrade Kociolek was strictly rejected by Kania. It seems advisable to implement this offer to work with the Warsaw party organization, and to extend further the existing personal contacts with Comrade Kociolek.

- The head of the SED CC International Relations Department, Comrade [Gunter] Sieber, had a discussion with his Polish counterpart, Comrade Wacław Piatkowski, on May 14, in Berlin.

Comrade Piatkowski is a candidate member of the PUWP CC and since 1977 has held the position of head of the CC International Relations Department. Before he was the PPR's ambassador to the FRG for over 8 years. He is 60 years old and possesses a command of the German language without an accent. Piatkowski was a partisan during the Second World War in the area around Lublin, and, during the Soviet army's invasion of Poland, became a regular member of the 1st Polish Army, with which he advanced to the Elbe River. During wartime he was employed as a scout in reconnaissance due to his language abilities. Through the cooperation between the GDR embassy in Warsaw and the PUWP CC International Relations Department, Piatkowski is known as a class-conscious comrade devoted to the party, who assumes internationalist positions and has an unambiguous relationship to the Soviet Union.

Responding to a question on the present situation in the PPR, he stated:

The situation is more dangerous and graver than is generally assumed. The Poles are in a state such that they not only betray their own interests and their own country but brought the socialist community of states the gravest difficulties, and endanger world peace.

The unprincipled degeneration of the party has progressed far, the contradictions are getting ever more critical. What is going on in Poland, and where the development is heading, cannot be read about in the party newspaper, but rather learned about most clearly from the broadcasters "[Radio] Free Europe" and "Deutschlandfunk [Radio Germany]" and other foreign centers.

What is the situation in the Central Committee apparatus?

Answer:

I am actually no longer head of the International Relations Department. My retirement has been arranged. After the Party Congress in Kampuchea [Cambodia], to which I am still going, I must retire.

Was that your own decision?

Answer:

No. Although I am 60 years old, I feel intellectually and physically able to continue working for the party in these difficult times. But my opinions and my attitude do not agree with our present leadership, and so it came to retirement, which I however only

see as temporary.

Is it the same for other comrades as well?

Answer:

Absolutely. In the CC a commission was formed which would make a through study of the entire apparat according to different criteria. Among others, [one would be] whether the comrade was a industrious worker in his development to this point, or not. Those who have ordered this (Kania), cannot so much as once correctly pronounce the word "industrious worker" and do not know at all what industrious work is. The main criterion is, however, the unconditional support of Kania's policy. This policy I can no longer support or reconcile with my conscience. That is a betrayal of the party and of Poland. Kania is incompetent. He possesses neither political knowledge nor political stature. He is a spineless tool, who conforms to opinion polls, without political principles.

Jaruzelski is a hollow dummy, who mostly flatters himself, as he plays the Prime Minister. Nothing good can be expected from him.

What is the situation among the first secretaries?

Answer:

At the last meeting with the first secretaries and the CC department heads, more comrades came forward against the policies of Kania. Among them was Wroclaw First Secretary, Comrade Porebski. He enumerated to Kania how many opportunities to change the situation have come and gone since August 1980. After this speech he no longer has a chance to run for his office again and now wants to resign. Other comrades came forward similarly, and face the same question.

How do you appraise the party program?

Answer:

It is possible to get something out of the party program, if it is interpreted in a Marxist-Leninist fashion. Given the current situation and the balance of power, however, it will become a program of revisionism and social democracy.

Would a new leadership in this position be able to change the revisionist-right course and put an end to the developments?

Answer:

I think so, but there is not much more time for that. I estimate that at most another 14 days remain before the opportunity for such a change has passed.

In your opinion, which people could assume the leadership of the state and the party?

Answer:

I believe absolutely that Olszowski is the man who can do that and who wants to. Grabski is also very strong, and the two of them are on very good terms with one another. The First Secretary of Warsaw, Comrade Kociolek, is a capable person too, with great political experience, whom one must keep in mind. I must, however, say once again, there is only little time left for such thoughts.

What went on at the 10th Plenum?

Answer:

In my opinion, Rakowski exposed himself as an overt traitor. He made a motion to demand the Soviet Union to publicly state their policy west of the Bug River. Kania remained silent on this. Olszowski replied sharply to that and brought about the motion's collapse.

Comrade Piatkowski repeatedly indicated that the revisionist-right development in

the party, state, and in the economy, had advanced much farther than the most negative formulations of the program show.

- Some time ago, the First Secretary of the Frankfurt/Oder SED district leadership met with the First Secretary of the Voivodeship Committee of Gorzow. He reported that in the voivodship, according to instructions that the comrades should not participate in the warning strike (March 1981), everything was done in this direction. Hence 65% of the workers did not take part in the strike. Then, however, everything was called off. Those who went on strike received full wages. There was a very negative reaction coming from those who followed the call of the party and did not go on strike.

- From the head of the PUWP CC Security and State Organs Department [i.e. Michal Atlas] our comrades in Warsaw learned that the deployment of the police in Bydgoszcz was envisaged timely in connection with the provocational demonstrations planned there [March 1981]. The nationwide warning strike announced by "Solidarity" immediately after the incident in Bydgoszcz so frightened the leadership that they were ready to concede everything. The government then also capitulated in the negotiations with Walesa, although at the 9th Plenum a mandate for negotiations had not been debated or decided upon. One result was that the deployment readiness of the police and the state security, which was relatively good beforehand, has been dealt a great blow since.

This appraisal is confirmed by information such as the following:

The "Solidarity" leadership in Bialystok has announced a warning strike for the May 19, Polish radio reported. The decision was justified by the brutal actions of the militia against a disabled person. "Solidarity" demanded the immediate dismissal of those militia men who directly took part in the incident, as well as an investigation into the further members of the police organs. The local militia chief has already stated that both policemen are being relieved of their positions.

A further report stated: at a three-day national meeting of representatives of 16 large-scale combines, theses on a law on worker self-government were formulated. Among other things, it was suggested that a second chamber of the Sejm, a chamber for self-government, be created, whose members would be elected democratically.

During the envisaged new election of the Sejm, they want to depart from the previous practice and vote for lists—meaning the PUWP—"Solidarity", National Front among others separately.

What are the resulting conclusions?

1. The role of the party must be fortified. That means

- purging the party;
- utilizing all means of combat and not allowing the enemy to gain further ground.

2. The present leadership of the PUWP is pulling the wool over our eyes. For us the question now is, who can take over the leadership?

- Comrade Olszowski
- Comrade Grabski
- Comrade Kociolek
- Comrade Zabinski

3. Comrade Jaruzelski has stated that he is prepared to relinquish his post. Accordingly we can comply with his request. The only thing that needs to be clarified is who should take over his office.

4. I am not for a military intervention, although the allies have that right as stipulated in the Warsaw Pact. It would be correct to create a leadership which is prepared to impose a state of emergency, and which takes decisive action against the counterrevolution.

Comrade Honecker handed over a list of the members of the PUWP CC, which shows their present position according to our information. The results are:

51.4% of the CC members might have a positive attitude

41.4% have a negative attitude

7.2% are wavering

Comrade Gustav Husak:

I agree with the statements made by Comrade Brezhnev and Honecker. We also are greatly concerned about the development in Poland, by the PUWP and socialism in Poland. There is plenty of evidence of negative developments, I need not repeat them.

It is a matter now of being able to aid the healthy forces in Poland. For that reason, the CPCz is publishing the documents from its party congress in Polish, and distributing them in Poland.

Tangentially, I would like to mention a tragicomic story: when Kania was with us in the CSSR, he asked me to autograph a brochure on the conclusions of the events of 1968 before he departed.

We also publish a trade union brochure on the conclusions of the events in 1968. Comrade [Albin] Szyszka, head of the branch trade unions, but also other representatives of the branch trade unions have appeared well in principle. They are, however, supported only weakly by the party.

We are now also organizing 3 hours of Polish language radio programs every day, in which we comment on the Polish events from our perspective. At the same time we are strengthening our relationship as partners with the voidvodships, printing flyers and posters which criticize "Solidarity". Unfortunately, though, our actions are not coordinated with others and therefore have a relatively scant effect.

It will be bad if the Polish Communists lose their perspective and do not know how to continue.

As for the comrades whom one can rely on, we also think of such comrades as Olszowski. We also have close relations with Grabski. Our ambassador is expanding his activities here as well. But these and other comrades have great difficulties in becoming elected as delegates to the party congress. With the exception of Kania and Jaruzelski, the possibility exists that others will be elected into the leadership.

It is absolutely possible that a stalemate could develop at the party congress, with neither the present leadership nor the Right achieving a victory.

The healthy forces think that it would be difficult to fight friends and former friends, but Kania and Jaruzelski are capable of being manipulated. Public order is disintegrating more and more, and it is possible that a social democratic or Christian democratic party may develop, disguised with socialist slogans. The Poles have drawn no conclusions from their conversation with Comrade Suslov.

In our estimation, "Rural Solidarity" is more dangerous than "Walesa-Solidarity", because it is oriented to the West. The anti-Soviet currents are very strong, which are

restrained only out of fear of Soviet action. Of the 3 million members of the PUWP, 1 million are estimated to be positively disposed, but poor or very little work is done with them, and more and more good Communists are leaving, or being forced out. They say openly that the politicians look to the left but go to the right, and thus the good Communists see no prospects.

Olszowski, himself, said that he did not know how to continue since the Politburo was giving ground to the increasingly stronger pressure from the right. Jaruzelski is incapable and gives ground.

There are already 7,000 civil servants in the army who are members of "Solidarity," and the influence of "Solidarity" grows in the organs of the Interior Ministry and in particular in the mass media.

Zabinski is losing the ground beneath his feet and fears not being elected, which would mean the end of his activity.

We will support every option:

A new [Warsaw Pact] consultative meeting, like that held in December [1980], would strengthen the healthy forces in Poland. Until now they have not brought much, they have only promised much. The main question remains how to successfully strengthen the healthy forces, which are not few.

At present a hysterical [historical?—Ed.] situation exists, difficult for the good comrades, and therefore we must aid them, we must support them.

We support the proposals by Comrades Brezhnev and Honecker, and have however no illusions of the selection of delegates to the party congress.

Comrade Kapek, First Secretary of the CPCz district leadership in Prague, who was with a delegation in Poland, said, however, that it has become impossible to approach the masses. It is only possible to speak to a narrow circle.

Once again, Kania is constantly disappointing [us]. As for the postponement of the party congress, that is very doubtful. Olszowski is afraid of the party congress, for whoever will come forth against the present leadership is thrown out of the CC [fliegt aus dem ZK heraus]. They are disappointed by Kania and Jaruzelski. Olszowski and Grabski take a positive position, but are they the people to lead Poland out of its present situation?

Have they enough courage, do they have sufficient experience—the question remains then, with whom to work, whom to support[?] There are a million good Communists, but they are scattered, they live like partisans.

If Kania can now carry out his policy of horizontal structures, the healthy forces should also formulate their tactics.

An advisory meeting could be the impetus for a change, but the elections, which are going on at present for the preparation of the party congress, are under the influence of "Solidarity," and it is very difficult to say how the party congress will turn out.

When Kania was in Prague, he stated that he supported convening the party congress, in order to call it off shortly before the date. But you cannot trust Kania. Moreover, he already has his hands tied.

In a discussion with church leaders, they said that the Catholic Church in its history

has found itself in different situations, but it has never allowed the condemnation of its own clergymen.

Comrade Brezhnev said that different options are being formulated as to how the positions of the good Communists can be strengthened. The enemy acts always with greater force. We, however, pay too much heed to diplomacy and protocol. The Polish comrades want contact with us, and we must fortify these contacts.

As for the CSSR, it is true that the West intensifies its propaganda, however, it meets with no response. The Polish events arouse in our people dissatisfaction and anger. There is no danger that the masses support it.

At this point Comrade Tikhonov interjected the remark that this situation can change though.

Comrade Husak: The atmosphere in the "SSR is good. We are preparing for elections, holding election assemblies, and we have no fear that the Polish events could have an effect on our country.

Comrade L.I. Brezhnev: What Erich said is correct— something must be done before the party congress. The appraisal of Kania, and of a necessary change in the leadership is also correct, though the main question is "how" to do so.

Comrade Gromyko: After the Poles had just arranged with Leonid Ilyich to postpone convening the party congress, they convened without consulting with us and merely informed us about their decision.

Comrade Erich Honecker asked the question whether the party congress could be postponed. I think that—although it would be good—it is not realistic. We cannot surely have any great hopes, since Kania and Jaruzelski exercise idle, unprincipled capitulation. We must therefore work with the healthy forces, though none can say how influential these people are.

Comrade Tikhonov: We all have the same appraisal, the facts correspond. We also have information. "Solidarity" has even now formed a militia. What is going to happen? An intervention in the present international situation is out of the question, so the opposition of the healthy forces must be actively supported, but these healthy forces have no outstanding leader.

The healthy forces must appear strong, they must meet in preparation of the party congress. If at present horizontal structures appear in the foreground, then the healthy forces must create their own structures. The healthy forces must be visible, since they are presently not active in the mass media. [The idea of postponing the party congress is not unrealistic. The Polish comrades told us as well, that the meeting of the Sejm could not be postponed. Afterwards they did exactly that.—Ed. note: Added in handwriting by E. Honecker.]

Comrade Andropov: It is surely not possible to find an array of decisive measures to resolve the problems. Therefore we must act in several directions. The postponement of the date of the party congress is not realistic, there I have the same evaluation. They speak, promise, but do nothing. Comrade L.I. [Brezhnev] had a very thorough discussion with Kania. It is then a matter not only who to replace, but also how to do so. According to our information, the balance of power stands at roughly 50-50. But the question remains, who will seize the initiative, who will convene a plenum. In my opinion, this way is unrealistic.

The party congress is the crossroad, where either the party takes the Marxist-Leninist path or it disintegrates. Consequently the healthy forces must use the 11th Plenum to fight the battle.

Four or more good comrades also are well spirited, but we do not know whether it [leading the party into new directions] will work. We know that for example already 26 voivodeship committee secretaries, members of the CC, were dismissed as secretaries.

Kociolek is a serious man.

Zabinski is distantly related to Gierek.

We must not forget also that there is a rivalry between the three.

On the June 10 we will have the names of all party congress delegates, then we will know more, see better.

Comrade Ustinov: I am in agreement with the statements made by Comrades Brezhnev, Honecker, and Husak. Everything points to the failure to formulate lengthy principled proposals. It is a matter now of fighting for every healthy man. We must all support the healthy forces.

It is certainly difficult to postpone the party congress, but one should remember that it also meant that the Sejm cannot be adjourned, then it will have worked though.

It was said correctly that Kania was not living up to our expectations, but who shall take over the leadership[?] There is the 11th Plenum on the daily agenda.

Perhaps a state of emergency should be imposed, if even just partly.

Comrade Rusakov: A postponement of the party congress is no longer possible. The delegates from the factories have already been elected. On the May 30, the delegates from the voivodeships will be elected. Until then, nothing more can be done for the healthy forces.

We also have information that enraged anti-Soviet forces are appearing.

Rakowski wanted Olszowski and Grabski voted out of the Politburo, but we were able to achieve their remaining in the Politburo.

On the May 18 comrades from our Central Committee will travel to Warsaw to discuss with the comrades from the PUWP Politburo and bring them to Marxist-Leninist positions. The comrades from the SED are also exerting their influence on the party congress documents.

We are intensifying the criticism of the events in Poland in the press and radio. It is very important to come forward unambiguously because there are some, like Rakowski for example, who try to hide behind the CPSU.

Our delegations, which have traveled to Poland, were well prepared and armed with well-composed information. That is the way we can usefully support the healthy forces.

At that point Comrade Erich Honecker began to speak. He stated his agreement with the observations of Comrade Ustinov, to consider precisely the possibility of a postponement of the party congress and throwing all force now into preparing for the 11th Plenum as well as possible, proceeding from what is known of the situation, to formulate all essential options.

To conclude the meeting Comrade Brezhnev determined that the exchange of opinions was useful, even if there is no light in sight in regards to a positive change. The comrades are right when they stress that it is essential to employ all levers of pressure. It would be undoubtedly better to postpone the party congress or cancel it shortly before its meeting, as Kania had promised at the time, but that is scarcely possible at this point.

The worst [scenario] would be if the party congress took an openly revisionist position. The central matter remains therefore that the present leadership cannot be depended upon, we see however on the other hand there are no real potential candidates to replace them. We must think of how we will find suitable people and prepare them for extraordinary situations.

For the time being we have the ability to exert economic pressure, since we are the main supplier of petroleum and other raw materials.

We must now task comrades to form operational contacts with comrades in the PUWP in Poland.

We will confidentially inform Comrades Janos Kadar, Todor Zhivkov, and Fidel Castro of this meeting.

Comrade Husak's question whether publication will follow, was answered negatively. Should information reach the West, a possibility excluded by the Soviet comrades and Comrade Erich Honecker, it will be denied.

[Source: SAPMO-BArch ZPA, vorl.SED 41559. Published in Michael Kubina/Manfred Wilke, eds., "Hart und kompromisslos durchgreifen:" Die SED contra Polen. Geheimakten der SED-Führung über die Unterdrückung der polnischen Demokratiebewegung (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1995), pp. 270-285. Translated by Christiaan Hetzner (National Security Archive/CWIHP)]