

January 26, 1990

Poland: Communists Struggle fro Political Survival□□

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Summary:

An analysis of Poland Communist Party reforms to bolster their success in forthcoming local elections.

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English

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3371

~~Top Secret~~

[Redacted]

6.2(d)

POLAND:

Communists Struggle for Political Survival

6.2(d)

Any change made at Poland's Communist party (PZPR) congress this weekend undoubtedly will do little to reduce public hostility or enable the party to compete successfully in local elections in April. [Redacted]

The three-day meeting will be devoted to recasting the PZPR as a new, purportedly democratic party. Party reformers, however, have warned [Redacted] that differences between the old and new parties may be cosmetic. [Redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

The new party will inherit financial difficulties resulting from the loss of massive government subsidies. Moreover, anti-Communist activists are daily occupying numerous party offices, and Warsaw is moving to reclaim state assets held by the party. [Redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

Comment: Antipathy for the PZPR remains almost universal, making any successor party unlikely to be electorally competitive. Nor is the new party, which probably will be dubbed Socialist or Social Democratic, likely to attract leftwing Solidarity members. Some reformers may exit the Congress if their demands are not met, but rising anti-Communist sentiment has inspired a siege mentality that probably will hold the party together for now. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

The party's choice of a leader is wide open, particularly because most delegates are not tied to either reform or hardline factions. The top candidates—Rakowski, Tadeusz Fiszbach, and Leszek Miller—are actively campaigning; each has sought to improve his image by meeting with Lech Walesa. Miller probably has the best chance of being accepted by both reformers and hardliners. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

Important organizational questions must also be decided, particularly whether PZPR memberships will be automatically transferred to the new party. Transferring memberships would seriously undercut any portrayal of a break from the past. Following the recent example of the Hungarian Communists by requiring applications to the new party, however, probably would have the same embarrassing result: a paucity of applicants. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

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