

April 9, 1981
Session of the CPSU CC Politburo, 09 April 1981
(excerpt)

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Summary:

Soviet leaders discuss the results of a meeting held by Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov and D.F. Ustinov with the Polish, where the Polish reported that it was difficult to conduct business with the counterrevolutionary activity, but that the situation was beginning to stabilize in the wake of CPSU 26th Congress. A discussion of Poland's situation and recommendations ensued.

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SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

9 April 1981

Cde. K. U. CHERNENKO presiding.

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

3. On the Results of the Meeting Held by Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov and D. F. Ustinov with the Polish Friends

CHERNENKO. In accordance with the Politburo's decision, Comrades Andropov and Ustinov met with Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski. Let's listen to what the comrades have to say.

ANDROPOV. Cde. D. F. Ustinov and I, as we agreed with the Polish comrades, traveled to Brest and held a meeting there in a train car right near Brest. The meeting began at 9:00 p.m. and ended at 3:00 a.m. so that no one would discover that the Polish comrades had gone off somewhere.

The task we faced was to listen closely to the Polish comrades and to offer appropriate explanations, as we arranged at the Politburo session.

The general impression from our meeting with the comrades was that they were very tense and nervous, and it was obvious that they were worn out. Cde. Kania said candidly that it's very difficult for them to conduct their business under constant pressure from Solidarity and the antisocialist forces. Despite that, they declared that in the wake of the CPSU's 26th Congress, the situation in Poland is beginning to stabilize. Kania said that they had held electoral conferences in the majority of the primary party organizations, and that typically not a single person belonging to Solidarity had been included among the delegates. That is, our candidates were chosen for the congress. But then Cde. Kania felt compelled to say that recent events, particularly the warning strike and the events in Bydgoszcz, had shown that the counterrevolution is stronger than we are. They were especially frightened by the warning strike and, even more, by the prospect of a general strike. They were doing everything possible to prevent a general strike.

In discussing the tasks still before them, Cde. Kania said that above all they had to restore the people's trust in the Party, improve economic life, and eliminate strikes and work stoppages at enterprises. Of course the Polish comrades have no experience in struggling against these negative phenomena, and therefore they don't currently know what methods to use. They are lurching from side to side. With regard to the introduction of troops, they flatly said that this is absolutely impossible, just as it is also impossible to introduce martial law. They say they won't understand it and will be powerless to do anything. The comrades emphasized in the conversation that they will restore order by their own means. They have in mind that the 9th Congress, for which they are now preparing, will not enable Solidarity to field its own candidates as delegates. In the party organizations they are selecting good workers as delegates for the congress.

During the discussion, Cde. Kania also noted that the Polish people are very sensitive

to truthful messages. For example, the leadership spoke about the congress, then began to hint that the congress might be postponed, and then again said that the congress would be held. This sort of wavering about the schedule for the congress took a heavy toll on the atmosphere in the country in the sense that trust in the party eroded even further. In turn we said firmly to the Polish comrades that the enemy is attacking you while you still have advantages, but you just make concessions and have ended up losing precious time. In September 1980 it would have been possible to put up a serious fight against the enemy. But you didn't do anything; you took no sorts of measures, neither political nor, even more, administrative. We especially emphasized that it's impossible to trade off military-administrative measures for political measures. They must all be pursued together.

With regard to martial law, it would have been possible to introduce it long ago. You know what the introduction of martial law would mean. It would help them smash the onslaught of the counterrevolutionary forces and other rowdy forces, and put an end once and for all to the strikes and anarchy in economic life. A draft document on the introduction of martial law has been prepared with the help of our comrades, and these documents must be signed. The Polish comrades say: But how can we sign these documents, when they haven't yet been approved by the Sejm, etc. We say that there's no need to submit them to the Sejm, and that these documents will specify what they must do when they introduce martial law. We say that now you personally, Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski, must sign the documents so that we can be sure you agree with them and will know what must be done during martial law. When it comes time to introduce martial law, there'll be no time then to work out the measures for doing so; you must work them out beforehand. That's the point of all this.

Then, after our explanation, Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski said that on 11 April they'll look over and sign this document.

We then asked what Cde. Jaruzelski would say in his speech to the Sejm. Jaruzelski spoke a lot, but indistinctly. He explained that he will speak about a ban on strikes for two months. We ask: And what's the significance of two months? What will happen after these two months? Two months will pass quickly, and then strikes will start all over again. You gave many promises to your workers, but you didn't fulfill them, and you're just creating an even greater basis for a lack of trust in the government and the PZPR.

Now an especially urgent question must be addressed about carrying out broad political measures. By way of explaining this question, consider the shortages of bread and other products in your country. Why does this occur? Because the constant strikes are disorienting the whole economy, no more no less. Billions and billions of zlotys are being lost with each strike, but workers don't realize that, and the blame for the whole situation falls upon the government. The government, the Party's Central Committee, and the Politburo are blamed, and the ringleaders and organizers of the strikes stand to the side and appear to be the defenders of workers' interests. But, we say, you know that those who are really to blame for all these economic hardships are Solidarity and the organizers of the strikes. Hence, why is it not possible to bring all this to the attention of the workers?

There's a good deal of talk in your country about the creation of a Front of National Salvation for Poland. Such conversations are taking place in numerous regions. This proposed Front of National Salvation for Poland would include veterans of the revolutionary movement, military commanders such as, for example, Rola-Zymierski, and others. This, too, might be noted. Or consider, for example, that in the Federal Republic of Germany now there's talk about taking Silesia and Gdansk as territories, which are now part of Poland, and giving them back to the FRG. Why isn't this question being played up? I think that the people might unite around such matters. You need to do something to boost people's spirits.

We said that no one in your country is objecting to the creation of a National Front of Salvation for Poland. But this front must not be a substitute for the Party and government.

An especially critical matter is the struggle for unity within the Party and unity of the nation. A good deal has been said about the unity of the Party. We want to encourage you still more to take all necessary measures to unite the Party and create unity within the nation. As far as what measures should be adopted, you yourselves should know that better. But there are many questions. We already mentioned things to you around which it would be possible to unite the nation and create unity within the Party. The Polish comrades spoke about bringing three workers into the Politburo. They got this idea from Lenin, who proposed bringing workers into the Politburo. We said that the situation in our country was such that we didn't need to bring workers into the Politburo. But if you now generally have such a demand, you might bring some workers into the Politburo — though not necessarily three, but perhaps only one. You might select a certain additional number of workers for the Central Committee; these are all measures that could promote the cohesion and unity of the Party. For example, you're now talking about bringing workers into the Central Control Commission. That's not a bad idea. Of course, you'd have to implement it.

In addition, the unity of the Party might also be facilitated by the adoption of measures such as speeches given at Party assemblies by well-qualified, well-prepared comrades. We cited examples from our own experience in which we, right up to the members of the Politburo, have spoken at Party assemblies. They agreed with those recommendations.

We also said that it's not necessary for you, comrades, to burden yourselves with grand, far-flung programs; just adopt moderate programs, but be sure to fulfill them. All the members of the Politburo must speak at large enterprises. Cde. Kania, for example, is going now to Gdansk. And not only Cde. Kania, but also Cde. Jaruzelski and all the other members and candidate members of the Politburo are traveling to different cities to speak at enterprises among workers, that is, to speak against organized Solidarity, juxtaposing their own real solidarity. What makes Solidarity strong? It's strong because of its demagoguery. It demagogically promises increased pay to the workers, and it succeeded in this, as you see. It has also succeeded in defending workers, and its authority has reached the point where a strike is declared when you arrest some workers or other officials of Solidarity.

We directly said to Kania that every day you keep backing down and backing down. You must take action; you must proceed with military measures and emergency measures.

A crucial question has arisen about the complexion of the Sejm. What is Solidarity doing? It is now busy trying to cultivate every member of the Sejm. It is suggesting to workers who are members of the Sejm that they speak at the Sejm and concretely denounce the PZPR and the socialist order. You must thwart these plans of Solidarity. Why, for example, haven't all the deputies of the Sejm been called together and prepared for the session by members of the Politburo, who should say that they are accountable for these deputies? That's where things should go. For example, a worker who is a member of the PZPR plenum received a telegram telling him that he must speak at the plenum in accordance with the instructions he was given. The speech of this worker at the plenum was delayed; that is, he didn't want to speak. He received another telegram which said: "Why didn't we hear you speak?" The worker again didn't deliver a speech, and the plenum ended. He received yet another telegram: "There's no turning back." You see that here Solidarity is terrorizing this worker and intimidating him. That's how Solidarity operates.

With regard to the base of the Politburo and on whom it might rely, their army

numbers 400,000 soldiers, the internal affairs ministry 100,000, and the reservists 300,000 — that is, 800,000 in all. Kania said that tensions have now diminished somewhat, and they have succeeded in preventing a general strike. But whether that will be enough to alleviate the situation is difficult to say.

What are they doing after our meeting? Well, they're doing a few things. For example, Kania is traveling to Gdansk. Cde. Jaruzelski is recasting his speech for the Sejm. But we should note that there are many differences of view between Kania and Jaruzelski on individual matters. Cde. Jaruzelski has again requested that he be released from his post as prime minister. We explained to him that it's essential for him to remain in that post and continue his worthy performance in the duties facing him. We emphasized that the enemy is preparing its forces to seize power.

On the other hand, other members of the Politburo, such as Cdes. Olszowski and Grabski, have embraced a somewhat different position — a position firmer than that of the leadership. We must work with them. In particular, they are proposing to form an underground Politburo and carry out their work. It turns out that they got this idea from advice given to them by Cde. Zhivkov. I don't know whether this is true or not, but they say that Cde. Zhivkov gave them such advice. We, too, must conclude from this that if the leaders of other fraternal parties are going to offer the Polish friends such advice, we of course will gain nothing from it and will only lose by it.

SUSLOV. Perhaps we must prepare information for the other fraternal parties.

GROMYKO. If so, we should definitely not mention that a meeting took place.

ANDROPOV. Yes, it's absolutely impossible to refer to the meeting.

USTINOV. Yu. V. Andropov discussed everything very well, and therefore I just briefly want to mention the following. First, that we were really struck by the dejected condition of our interlocutors. Even so, it seems to me that we still need this pair — Kania and Jaruzelski — to stick together and strengthen their relations. There are indeed disagreements within their Politburo. These of course are caused most of all by the strikes, which they're very afraid of. We asked why they had changed their decision on Bydgoszcz. As you know, they didn't want to back down on the Bydgoszcz conflict, but then they did back down. They asserted that the threat of a general strike was hanging over them. We also asked them why they were paying workers during strikes. They say that Solidarity has demanded this. We responded that this meant they were just adopting Solidarity's own line. On the question of Rural Solidarity, they have not yet reached a final decision, but they have already recognized the de facto existence of this organization.

Yurii Vladimirovich and I gave particular emphasis to the need for unity within the Politburo. There is no need to bring three workers into the Politburo, as they said they were intending to do. This will not strengthen the Politburo. With regard to the Central Committee, there you can bring in workers, but only if it is done in the standard and regular manner, in accordance with the Party statutes. It's especially necessary, we said to the Polish friends, to work properly with the deputies of the Sejm. They are holding so-called selection conferences. These essentially are open telephone conversations. Everything that is said becomes known instantly to a wide circle, including officials of Solidarity. What about the procedure for these conferences? We cited the example of Leonid Il'ich's constant discussions with the secretaries of provincial and territorial CPSU committees and with the secretaries of Central Committees of the union-republic parties. With each he speaks concretely, discussing matters relevant to the particular area.

To diminish their aversion to the introduction of emergency rule or martial law, we

cited the example of many countries in which emergency rule or martial law was introduced as soon as there was even a hint of an uprising or the start of some sort of disorder. Take Yugoslavia: When demonstrations were held in Kosovo, they introduced martial law and no one said a word about it. It's simply incomprehensible to us why the Poles are afraid to introduce emergency rule.

Yurii Vladimirovich spoke well about the plans for introducing martial law. We said that it is necessary to sign the plan drafted by our comrades.

I then directly asked them, as we arranged at the Politburo, what will happen in Poland, what sort of economic state will it be in, if you botch things up there? At the moment Poland is receiving all its oil for about half-price from the Soviet Union. It is also receiving cotton, iron ore, and many other goods. And if it doesn't receive these goods, what will happen? Why isn't this fact being explained and brought to the attention of the workers? It could be a powerful weapon. You must speak about this to the workers, you must also speak about it to Solidarity. Right now Solidarity has entrenched itself at the largest factories. These factories must be taken away from Solidarity. You have good factories where the directors stand behind the leadership. For example, the television factory. You can and must support the branch trade unions and conduct active work with them. Jaruzelski then said to me again that he isn't able to do such work and no longer has any strength, and he urged that he be released from his post.

ZIMYANIN. Being in Bulgaria at the congress, we met with Grabski. Notes from this conversation were distributed, and the comrades have been able to read through them. From this meeting it is clear that the situation within their Politburo is very difficult. There is no unity, and Yurii Vladimirovich and Dmitrii Fyodorovich correctly said that they must work on fostering unity within the Politburo.

They ordered:

1. That the discussions held by Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov and D. F. Ustinov with the PZPR CC First Secretary, Cde. S. Kania, and the Chairman of the PPR Council of Ministers and Minister of National Defense, Cde. W. Jaruzelski, be approved.

2. That the CC Politburo Commission on Poland be instructed to keep close track of the developing situation in the PPR and, in case of necessity, to draft appropriate recommendations.