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Session of the CPSU CC Politburo, 10 September 1981 (excerpt)

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Summary:

The Soviet Politburo discusses dissent within Poland and the loss of power of the communist party in Poland.

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SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

10 September 1981

Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin, A. A. Gromyko, N. A. Tikhonov, K. U. Chernenko, P. N. Demichev, M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov, V. I. Dolgikh, M. V. Zimyanin

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9. Exchange of Opinions on the Polish Question

BREZHNEV. Yesterday I familiarized myself with the "Appeal to the Peoples of Eastern Europe," which was adopted by the Congress of Polish Solidarity. It's a dangerous and provocative document. It contains few words, but all of them are aimed at the same thing. The authors of the appeal would like to create confusion in the socialist countries and stir up groups of different types of turncoats.

I think we should not restrain ourselves at all in our condemnation of this insolent stunt. How about having collectives from our large enterprises — say, the Kirov factory, the Magnitka, Kamaz, etc. — give a rebuff to these demagogues? No doubt, it will be difficult to ignore letters from them addressed to the Solidarity congress, particularly because we'll feature these letters prominently in our mass media.

GROMYKO. The situation is getting worse all the time. One might even say that little now remains of the regime. The position of the PZPR CC and the Council of Ministers is diminishing every day. With regard to a face-to-face conversation with Cde. Kania, it's now perhaps not worth speaking with him, since there already was a conversation not long ago.

With regard to leverage from a telephone conversation, that should be pursued, since it is a good way of exerting pressure.

BREZHNEV. To be frank, I myself don't have any great desire to speak right now with Cde. Kania, since nothing will come of it.

CHERNENKO. Conversations were held earlier, sound instructions were issued, and a discussion was held in the Kremlin. But to what end? Cdes. Kania and Jaruzelski are doing everything as they please.

GRISHIN. Now they themselves no longer deny that they are relinquishing one position after another.

ZIMYANIN. I want to tell the Politburo what sorts of publications are planned in connection with the Solidarity congress. We will say that the congress demonstrates a further worsening of the situation in Poland. As you know, they appealed to the parliaments and peoples of certain countries, including the socialist countries, with their program of "renewal." Hence, our press and TASS are now preparing appropriate materials in response. These materials will expose the activities of the

Solidarity trade union. I fully support the proposal by Leonid Il'ich to have the collectives of major large enterprises offer statements. This, too, we will try to prepare.

TIKHONOV. Nonetheless we will still need to react — and by that I mean react concretely — to the stunts of hooligan elements now active in Poland, whom the government has not taken any measures to combat. What's going on there now is that they're defacing the monuments to our soldiers, they're drawing hostile cartoons of the leaders of our Party and government, they're insulting the Soviet Union in every possible manner, etc. In other words, they're mocking us. It seems to me that we can't remain silent any longer, and that we must, either along state lines or through some other channel, issue a protest to the Polish government about this. A failure to react, in my view, would be unacceptable.

GROMYKO. We must think this over carefully. We're talking here about a country that is friendly to us.

GORBACHEV. I believe that Leonid Il'ich was completely right in proposing that the collectives of large enterprises speak out and that the activities of Solidarity be exposed in our press.

GRISHIN. Both in "Pravda" and in other newspapers we must organize statements of this sort. We will do what is needed for collectives at "Zil," "Serp i Molot," and other large factories to issue statements.

BREZHNEV. I think we should instruct the USSR Foreign Ministry and the CC Department to prepare a draft for presentation to the government of the Polish republic about the hooliganistic stunts of Solidarity officials against the Soviet Union. Simultaneously, as the comrades here already mentioned, we should feature a series of items in the press exposing the activities of Solidarity and the decisions of its Congress.

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