

The Policy Response of the United States to the Polish Crisis, 1980-1981

Dissertation submitted to the Jawaharlal Nehru University
in partial fulfilment of the requirements
for the award of the degree of
MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY

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July 1987**

TABLE OF CONTENTS



PREFACE	..	1
CHAPTER ONE	INTRODUCTION	.. 1
CHAPTER TWO	THE POLISH CRISIS OF 1980	.. 42
CHAPTER THREE	THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLISH CRISIS	.. 72
CHAPTER FOUR	THE REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLISH CRISIS	.. 110
CONCLUSION	..	173
BIBLIOGRAPHY	..	181

PREFACE

PREFACE

This dissertation is an attempt to study the US response to the crisis in Poland in 1980-1982. Effort, however, is also made to bring out the Super Power rivalry in the context of this crisis. Poland concerned both the Super Powers and hegemony over their respective spheres of influence. As the movement sought to change the essential characteristics of a communist state, it was unacceptable to the Soviet Union. And for this very reason, the US and the West wanted it to succeed. They projected the leadership of the movement as the soldiers of freedom. The developments in Poland were marked by an uprising of a popular movement from below against the system "imposed" from above. In 1981, it threatened to engulf the world in a major international crisis. It also became one of the factors driving the Reagan Administration to embark upon an aggressive Cold War against the Soviet Union. In these respects, the US policy towards Poland in 1980-82 was enmeshed with its policy towards the Soviet Union.

It highlights how the United States tries to evolve unity with its allies in Western Europe and Japan when it pursues a confrontationalist policy vis-a-vis the Soviet Union. The US policy in evolving a united response with the allies in the context of the Polish crisis did not succeed. The thesis makes an effort to demonstrate why it did not. In this case an aggregation of interest could not take place because the sacrifices, which the allies were asked to make, were unequal.

The thesis covers two years of the Carter Administration and

four years of the first term of the Reagan Administration. The contrast in the styles of the two administration is quite clear. The context in which this study of US policy has been made is that of Eastern Europe. It has certain peculiar features, which have been elaborated here and which give shape to US policy in the region.

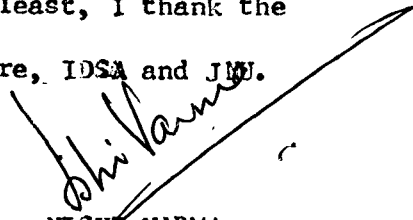
As the crisis came to its end by 1984, we are at a vantage point to draw conclusions about the US policy and also learn some lessons from the movement.

Chapter One is essentially an introduction to the US foreign policy vis-a-vis Poland and Eastern Europe. It broadly traces the nature, limitations and direction of the US policy. Chapter Two focusses upon the causes leading to the outbreak of the crisis in 1980. It deals with the external and the domestic factors that contributed to the Polish upheaval. Chapter Three and Four deal with responses of the United States under Carter and Reagan.

This dissertation was prepared under the supervision of Dr. B.K. Shrivastava, Professor in the American Studies Division of the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. I am greatly indebted to him for his constant and unfailing help, patient guidance and encouragement at all stages of the

of the writing of this work. I also express my sincere gratitude to Dr. O.N. Mehrotra, Research Officer, Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses and Dr. Christopher Sam Raj, Associate Professor in the Division for West European Studies, SIS, JNU, for their help and advice in the collection of material. I extend my profound gratitude to my parents for their guidance, blessings and encouragement throughout the period of my work. I am also thankful to my friends, especially, Ms. Pratima Tripathi, Ms. Anita Upadhyay, Ms. Sangeeta Goyal and Vijaya Venkataraman for suggestions and help and Smt. J. R. Aiyer for painstakingly typing my dissertation. Last, but not the least, I thank the library staff at Sapru House, American Centre, IDSA and JNU.

New Delhi-67
17 July 1987


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CHAPTER ONE

Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

UNITED STATES, EASTERN EUROPE AND POLAND SINCE SECOND WORLD WAR

THE international environment exercises a powerful influence on the domestic and foreign policies of states. History of Poland is a living illustration of this interaction between national interests and international system. Geopolitics has been yet another important determinant of the course its history has followed.¹ Lying between 14° East and 24° East Longitudes and from 49° North to 55° North latitudes, in the present century, Poland has always been exposed to strong influences from East and West. It lies in the middle of the Great North European Plain or the Great Eurasian Steppes extending from the low lands of western Europe to the Urals. Therefore, except for ineffective barriers provided by Oder and Vistula, Poland lacks natural barriers on its eastern and western borders. However, in the north and south, the country is protected by natural barriers - the Baltic Sea and the Carpathian mountain ranges respectively. Due to exposed borders on east and west, Poland became a prey to the

1 Norman J.G. Pounds, Poland Between East and West (Princeton, N.J., D. Van Nostrand, 1964).

aggressive instincts of its neighbours and warring races, while at the same time, it expanded eastwards or westwards when conditions permitted.

Poland's productive soil and rich mineral resources in the Silesian region also attracted foreign invaders through ages. In addition, Poland's neighbouring areas have two historically distinct segments of Europe - the east and south of Poland are predominantly Slavonic while the west is inhabited by the descendants of Nordic race (which is also found in North America and Australia, making them a close fraternal community).¹ Both the races are quite different in economic, cultural, religious, political and ideological aspects. Although Poles belong to the Slavonic group,² they became a part of the western civilisation in the second half of the tenth century in ideological terms. In 966 A.D., King Mieszko-I of the

2 Historical studies establish the entry of the Slavonic race into East Central Europe during the 6th Century A.D. All historians agree that the 'proto-poles' were settled in the region somewhere between the shores of Baltic Sea and the Carpathians in the Eurasian landmass, although the Polish 'Autochthonous School' locates the homeland of the Polish fraction of Slavs as the region between rivers Oder ('Odra') and Bug. Difficulty in locating the exact place of origins arises out of the presence of the most assorted mixtures of peoples in the pre-historic times, including Balts, Celts, Germans, the Scythians, the Samaritans, the Huns, the Mongols and finally, the Magyars. Norman Davies, Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland (Oxford, Clarendon, 1984), pp.279-306; Also by the same author, God's Playground: A History of Poland (Oxford, Clarendon, 1981), vol.I; also see introduction in Piotr Wandycz's The Lands of Partitioned Poland, 1375-1918 (Seattle, University of Washington, 1975) and Paul W. Knoll, The Rise of the Polish Monarchy, Piast Poland in East Central Europe, 1320-1370 (Chicago, University of Chicago, 1972), pp.1-28.

ruling Piast dynasty transformed Poland into 'a Christiana Republica' after accepting baptism from the Holy Roman Empire. This led to the beginning of struggles between the East and the West in Poland. The Slavs viewed Poland as a part of their empire by virtue of their Slavonic ancestry, while the West claimed that⁴ Poland belonged to peripheries of western civilisation³, since its cultural development was guided by the Roman Catholic Church and it witnessed all major cultural and political trends of Western Europe including Renaissance, Reformation, Enlightenment, Romanticism, Positivism, Constitutionalism and Democracy.⁴

In addition to these factors, struggle in Poland also increased due to another feature -- its sharing of borders with two exceptionally strong European powers, Germany and Russia. Benes and Pounds suggest,

The population and resources of both Germany and Russia have always been greater than those of Poland. When both were weak or divided, Poland could expand her boundaries. When one or the other was strong and united, the tendency was for Poland to pull in her boundaries on this side and expand on the other... when both have been strong...the security of Poland has really been endangered.⁵

Poland therefore to this date, finds itself at perpetual cross roads and a battleground for the contending European and extra-European powers.

3 Arthur R. Rachwald, Poland Between the Superpowers. Security vs. Economic Recovery (Boulder, Colorado, West View, 1983), p.ix.

4 Ibid.

5 Victor L. Benes and Norman J.G. Pounds, Poland (London, Ernest Benn, 1970), p.22.

GROWING U.S. RELATIONS WITH POLAND

Oppression and uprisings were a common feature of the Polish society during 1870 to 1917. As a result, there was a significant immigration to the U.S.⁶ Apart from political reasons, this huge immigration to the United States was due to unsatisfactory economic conditions and political disturbances at home. The rapid industrialisation in the US during 1880s absorbed these immigrants as 'cheap unskilled labourers'. This accounted for the congregation of Polish populations in north-eastern and eastern states like Connecticut, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Pennsylvania, Rhode Islands, Vermont, Virginia, Delaware, Georgia, Kentucky and New Jersey where heavy industries and mining were located.⁷ In the beginning these Polish-Americans were ill treated by the immigrants of the older stocks

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- 6 Before these 'new immigrants' Poles were also among the 'old immigrants'. Poles were present among the first settlers who came to Jamestown and New Amsterdam under the auspices of the Dutch West India Company in 1633 but their participation in the American events was incidental. During the American war of Independence, two Poles - Casimir Pulaski and Thaddeusz Kosciuszko made great contributions to the American army. For a detailed discussion on Polish-Americans before 1870 see Joseph Weirczerzak, "Pre- and Proto-Ethnics: Poles in the United States Before the Immigration 'After Bread'", Polish Review (New York), vol.21, no.3, 1976, pp.1-46; Stephen D. Kertesz, The Fate of East Central Europe-Hopes and Failures of American Foreign Policy (Indiana, University of Notre Dame, 1956), pp.18-23; Carl Whitke, We Who Built America (Cleveland, Case Western Reserve University, 1967), pp.422-429.
- 7 The number of immigrants sharply rose from a mere 2,027 in 1861-1870 to 12,970 in 1880 - see Helma Znaniecki Lopata, "Polish Immigration to the United States of America", Polish Review, vol.21, no.4, 1976, p.90.

because of their poor standards of living. Even Woodrow Wilson assigned a low place to these immigrants in his work, History of the American People,

...there came multitudes of men of lowest class from the south of Italy and men of meaner sort out of Hungary and Poland where there was neither skill nor energy nor initiative of quick intelligence...⁸

But by 1930 not only the Polish Americans increased in numbers,⁹ they had improved their economic standard. They became the largest slavie immigrant group, and the third largest in the whole history of immigration.¹⁰

This strong ethnic community retained its identity while becoming Americans in all other aspects. They realised that they could not only improve their lot in the US but could also influence the US policies toward the country of their origin.¹¹ Thus arose the US interest in East-Central Europe. In 1918, after the Treaty of Versailles, along with other East European States, Poland again appeared on the map of Europe on the basis of Wilsonian fourteen points.

8 Quoted in Kertesz, n.6, pp.24-25.

9 By 1930, there were 1,269,000 Poles in America - quoted in ibid., p.6.

10 Whitke, n.6, p.422; Alina Baran, "Distribution of the Polish Origin Population in the USA", Polish-Western Affairs (Poznan, Poland), vol.17, no.1-2, 1976, pp.139-44.

11 For a detailed account of the influence of Polish American minority on the US foreign policy, see Charles Mc C. Mathias, Jr., "Ethnic Groups and Foreign Policy", Foreign Affairs (New York), Summer 1981, pp.975-1001; Stephen A. Carrett, "The Ties that Bind: Immigrant influence on US Policy toward Eastern Europe", in Ed., Abdul Aziz Said, Ethnicity and the US Foreign Policy (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.; Prentice Hall, 1973), pp.58-83.

By the end of the First World War, the US had begun to express its concern over the future of Eastern Europe. On 28 June 1918, the US State Department issued a statement demanding that the Slavs under Austrian or German rule be made independent.¹² However, the US interaction with Eastern Europe had not been as much as with Western Europe or Latin America during this period. US economic relations included export of goods for \$69 million and imports of some \$50 million from the area (considered here to include Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Albania and Rumania) in 1937. This totalled to a mere 2 per cent of the total US exports and 1.6 per cent of its total imports. Even the US diplomatic and political links with East Central Europe were marginal in the inter-war years 1919-1939.¹³ The US government did extend loans for the purpose of reconstruction of the Polish economy, amounting to \$396 millions in the region but it did not attempt to expand and solidify its influence any further.¹⁴ Even if one analyses the so-called Wilson^{ian} support for self-determination for the countries of East Central Europe one finds that it was just a realistic or practical war time strategy. At no time was the United States against the Austro-Hungarian empire. The basic motive was to separate the

12 Piotr S. Wandycz, United States and Poland (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, 1980), pp.28-40.

13 Said, n.11, pp.59-60.

14 Victor Mamatey, The United States and East Central Europe (Princeton, Princeton University, 1957), pp.45-46; also Kertesz, n.1, pp.41-47.

Austro-Hungarians from their German allies.¹⁵

The Second World War destroyed the international power structure in which European powers had played an important role. After the war, there emerged a structure which was dominated by the two Super Powers - the United States of America and the Soviet Union.

During the Second World War, the US attitude towards Poland was that of disinterest. It abstained from making any concrete commitment with regard to the future territorial and political order in Europe.¹⁶ This was clearly manifested at the Moscow Conference in October 1943. The Soviets insisted upon a 'friendly' Polish government that would accept their view of the Polish eastern boundaries. That would have meant ceding a large portion of Polish territory to the Soviet Union by altering its eastern boundaries. Although the idea of allowing the Soviet Union to push its borders eastwards into Poland and Poland's

15 Ibid., p.160. Mamatey elaborates up-on the theme and says that the fact that the US adopted the stance as a wartime strategy can be proved by Wilson's unequivocal support to Austro-Hungarian empire. Until the War, he supported the concept of the Empire in which some local autonomy would be given out to the nationalities that inhabited it. Even while declaring war against Austria-Hungary, he reaffirmed this support.

16 This conclusion was drawn by eminent US statesmen in their following works: Cordell Hull, Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, Harper, 1948); J. F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York, William Heinmann, 1947); W. D. Leahy, I was There (New York, McGraw Hill, 1950); Zbigniew Brzezinski, "US Foreign Policy in East Central Europe - A Study in Contradiction", Journal of International Affairs (New York), vol. IX, no.1, 1957, p.61.

western frontiers into Germany was opposed by the leading advisers to the U.S. President like geographer Isaiah Bowman; Adolf A. Berle, the well known economist and a close associate of President Franklin D. Roosevelt, and Phillip A. Mosley, but the State Department docilely reconciled itself to the Soviet proposition of shifting the Polish frontiers westwards.¹⁷ The US even permitted the division of Europe into spheres of influence, under which Poland along with the rest of the East European countries (Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Romania, Yugoslavia, Albania and Bulgaria) was to be an area of Soviet influence.¹⁸

Accordingly, in November 1943 at the Tehran Conference, Roosevelt and Churchill readily accepted the shifting of the Polish boundaries westwards so that the Poles could be recompensated for the territory they would forfeit to the Soviets in the East. However, Roosevelt wanted the other two powers to keep the agreement a secret in view of its possible adverse impact upon six to seven million Polish votes in the forthcoming Presidential elections in the United States.¹⁹ It was only in 1944, when the European allies and the Soviet Union were haggling

17 For a detailed discussion within the State Department on the Polish border issue, see Zbigniew Mazur, "Poland's Western Frontiers in the State Department's Concept During World War II", Polish Western Affairs (Poznan, Poland), vol.21, no.1, pp.274-296. Also see Lloyd C. Gardner, A Covenant With Power (London, Macmillan, 1984), pp.52-78.

18 See Cordell Hull, Memoirs of Cordell Hull (New York, Harper, 1948), vol.II, pp.1314,15.

19 Walter Lafeber, ed., The Origins of Cold War, 1941-47: A Historical Problem with Interpretations and Documents (New York, John Wiley, 1971), pp.40-42.

over the 'zones of influence' (or spheres of influence) that the implications of 'friendly' regimes in Eastern Europe dawned upon the State Department. In a document submitted to President Truman on 30 June 1945, the State Department instructed that the delegation at Yalta should seek the granting of East Prussia, Upper Silesia and Western part of Pomerania to Poland as recompensation.²⁰ But the US delegation did not follow these instructions and accepted the Curzon Line as the dividing line between Germany, Poland and the Soviet Union.²¹

In addition to this territorial adjustment, the Big Three also decided the form and nature of the governing machinery for Poland at Yalta. In response to the Soviet demand for a 'friendly' regime in Poland, President Truman agreed to such a government provided the Soviet Union held "free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of the universal suffrage and secret ballot".²² The Soviet Union agreed to 'recognize' the elected government but however, refused to let the West witness the elections.²³

20 Mazur, n.12, p.289.

21 Ibid.

22 US Department of State, Foreign Relations of the US: The Conferences at Yalta and Malta, 1945 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Press, 1955), pp.977-978.

23 Robert L. Messner, The End of an Alliance: James F. Byrnes, Roosevelt, Truman and the Origins of the Cold War (Chapel Hill,

In Yalta Conference the question of Poland's frontiers and the future government had been the prime cause of differences between the US and the Soviet Union. Stalin emphasized that,

...the question of Poland is not only a question of honour but also a question of security. Throughout history, Poland has been the corridor through which the enemy has passed into Russia. Twice in the last thirty years, our enemies, the Germans, have passed through this corridor...Poland is not only a question of honour but of life and death for the Soviet Union.²⁴

The West, at the same time, also perceived Poland as the "outpost" of the European civilisation that had held back in the past "the hordes of Asians ready to overrun the continent". This fear revived as a result of the fall of Germany and France during the Second World War. As the Soviet Union emerged a very strong power with ^{its} an ideology of communism, the West began to fear that if they surrendered while the Russians held sway in Poland, there would be little to hold back the tide of Communism from spilling over to Western Europe.²⁵

The US position on the Polish settlement at Yalta was highly conditioned by its possible impact upon the Polish-Americans. Truman confessed that he insisted on free elections in Poland because of its "effect on American public opinion". Therefore he even disregarded

24 Stephen E. Ambrose, Rise to Globalism (Baltimore, Penguin, 1982), p.92.

25 However, the revisionists historians of the Cold War insist that if Stalin had acceded to install the West sponsored government in Poland, the balance of power in Europe would have tilted in favour of the West. Since Stalin could not let this happen, he never accepted the western interpretation of Yalta. The West looked upon it as a breach of the agreement but Stalin had made his view very clear in the conference. See ibid., p.97.

the Soviet plea that Poland was more important to the Soviet Union as it 'just lay on its eastern flanks' and chose to make Poland a 'test case': "a symbol of the future development of our (Soviet-American) international relations".²⁶

Even during his first foreign policy meeting at the White House on 23 April 1945, after elections in Poland had taken place, President Truman advocated, along with Secretary of Navy James Forrestal and the US Ambassador to the Soviet Union Averell Harriman, a very firm policy on the issue of Poland and the flouting of the Yalta agreement by the Soviets.²⁷ And yet the American President did not take any concrete action to check the blatant violation of the Yalta agreements in Poland. At Potsdam Conference too, the President along with his British counterpart, continued the policy of maintaining the status quo in Europe.²⁸

The USSR thus became assured that despite all its talk of 'free elections' and firm policies, the US did not possess a concrete

26 Henry L. Stimson and McGeorge Bundy, On Active Service in Peace and War (New York, Hutchinson, 1948.), p.416.

27 This was in sharp contrast to the policy of caution supported by Secretary of War Henry Stimson, General Marshall and Secretary of State Stettinus; ibid.

28 Although Truman mentions in his memoirs that during the first phase of negotiations, he had tried to link the question of Polish frontiers to that of reparation. But under pressure from Soviet Union the American delegation accepted the Oder Neisse line - see Harry S. Truman, Memoirs by Harry S. Truman (New York, Harper, 1955), vol. I, pp.404-405; also James F. Byrnes, Speaking Frankly (New York, William Heinemann, 1947), pp.80-81.

programme of action. Eastern Europe as an issue was not important enough to risk the American use of force. Yalta was fulfilment of an American obligation towards the East Europeans and the Polish Americans and a part of the US wartime strategy. Another factor affecting the US policy towards Poland was the strongly held view among the policy makers that Poland was bound to have closer ties, anyway, with the USSR in a post Second World War period.

Thus, in the framework of the US policy, Poland as well as Eastern Europe 'did not go beyond general formulae'. The period 1945-1948 witnessed a steady tightening of the screws of Soviet control. Many East Europeans, receiving the US declarations at their face value, attempted to resist the imposition of communism upon them. They believed that the western powers would react strongly against the Soviet violation of the 'free election' clause in the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. Those who acted on such an assumption were liquidated.²⁹

The "Iron Curtain" descended completely over Eastern Europe (Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Albania and Yugoslavia) by 1949. Zbigniew Brzezinski, Professor at Columbia University, who became ^u ^{the} National Security Adviser to President Carter, argues that the USSR always had a dual interest in controlling Eastern Europe:

29 Kertesz, n.l, pp.245-6; a very strong view of the US passivity has been taken in the memoirs of the former US Ambassador to Poland, A. Bliss Lane, I Saw Poland Betrayed (New York, McGraw Hill, 1948).

- (a) First, it provided a defensive buffer and a strategically advanced jump off point towards West Europe;
- (b) It satisfied the ideological desire to create a stable and in the end, popularly accepted communist regimes in Eastern Europe.³⁰

Socialism in Eastern Europe had the following implications for the US and its West European allies:

- (a) A threat to western ideology of freedom and democracy;
- (b) Loss of a valuable partner in trade and financial transactions;
- (c) An area in which they could strike at the Soviet Union. The people had shown a yearning for personal freedom, especially in Poland in the past. The US could exploit this factor to its advantage;
- (d) Lastly, the implications of ^{the} events in ^{the} region upon East European ethnic minorities in the United States.³¹

Keeping all these factors in view, the US by 1948 gave up its policy of 'free but friendly' regimes in Eastern Europe and adopted a new policy. This was based on a new definition of the US objective in American-Soviet relationship. The character of these objectives was determined by the Soviet expansive aspirations in Eastern Europe as well as the West. The United States' response

30 Zbigniew Brzezinski, Alternative to Partition (New York, McGraw Hill, 1965), p.12.

31 Ed. Adam Bromke and Teresa Rakowska - Harnstone, The Communist States in Disarray, 1955-1971 (Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis, 1976), pp.10-15.

to the Soviet offensive was the policy of containment. During this period (1945-1949), the democratic regime was overthrown and a communist rule imposed on Czechoslovakia, efforts were made to gain control of governments in France and Italy and a blockade was carried out in the case of Berlin.³² The US and Western Europe sought to resist the Communist thrust in two ways - a joint western military build up in the form of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in 1949 and the strengthening of the weak western economies through the Economic Recovery Program or ^{the} Marshall Plan.³³ But the period of "containment" also witnessed the liquidation of any political opposition behind the Iron Curtain and build-up of a Communist military block called the Warsaw Treaty Organisation (WTO) in 1955 that was designed to be an answer to the

32 The term 'containment' was first coined in an article written under the pseudonym Mr. X "The Sources of Soviet Conduct", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.25, July 1947, pp.581-82. Later the then US State Department's top policy planner, George F. Kennan acknowledged that he was the author and included the article in his work, American Diplomacy, 1900-1950 (Chicago, Chicago Univ., 1950). He suggested 'a long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansive tendencies, by mounting unalterable counterforce at every point, where they (Russians) show signs of encroachment. Such a policy in a span of 10-15 years, would eventually lead to the breakup or the gradual mellowing of Soviet power.

33 For detailed analysis of these see John H. Snell, Wartime Origins of the East-West Dilemma Over Germany, (New York, Random House, 1959), pp.230-242.

Western NATO alliance, in terms of military power.³⁴ Along with Poland, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, Romania, East Germany, Hungary and Albania were the other members of the Warsaw Pact.³⁵ According to one estimate, the Warsaw Pact force strength in 1984 was as in the following table:

WARSAW PACT FORCES (1984)³⁶

Country	Army	Navy	Air Force	Total Regular Forces
Bulgaria	105,000	8,500	33,900	147,300
Czechoslovakia	148,000	--	59,250	207,250
German Democratic Republic	120,000	14,000	38,000	172,000
Hungary	84,000	--	21,000	105,000
Poland	210,000	22,000	91,250	323,250
Rumania	150,000	7,500	32,000	189,500
USSR	1,840,000	490,000	400,000	5,115,000*

*Excluding about 1,135,000 Border Guards, Internal Security Forces and Construction Troops.

- 34 For a detailed account on NATO and Warsaw Pact, see Robert S. Jordan and Werner J. Feld, Europe in the Balance (London, Faber and Faber, 1986); Robert W. Clawson and Lawrence S. Kaplan, eds., The Warsaw Pact: Political Purposes and Military Means (Wilmington DE, Scholarly Resources, 1982), pp.5-25; Robert E. Osgood, Alliances and American Foreign Policy (Baltimore, John Hopkins, 1968); Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1967).
- 35 But in 1968, following the Czechoslovak invasion, Albania withdrew from the Pact. At present, 31 Soviet divisions are constantly stationed in this strategic buffer zone. The East European countries provide about one million troops as well as military bases and other facilities to the Pact forces. Adam Bromke and Teresa Rakowska, (ed.), The Communist States in Disarray, 1965-1971 (Minneapolis, University of Minneapolis, 1976), p.10.
- 36 Europa Year Book (London, Europa Publications, 1985), p.206.

It can be seen from the table that Poland is the second strongest state in Eastern Europe after the Soviet Union and therefore very significant to the Soviet security interests.

In 1949, on the lines of the Economic Program in Western Europe, the Soviet bloc came together for economic purposes in the Council for Mutual Economic ^{Assistance} Co-operation (CMEA). Its purposes were stated to be as follows:

- to serve as a means for acceleration of their post-war reconstruction and further economic growth;
- a necessity, springing out of the economic blockade applied by the western countries against the region.³⁷

The further integration of the East European regimes with the Soviet Union was sought through treaties of friendship, cooperation and mutual assistance signed at Warsaw, Poland in 1955.

THE POLICY OF LIBERATION

The consolidation of Communist rule in Eastern Europe and setting up of a communist regime in China in October 1949, made expansion of Communism an important issue in American politics. In the Presidential campaign of 1952 the Truman Administration was accused of 'selling out' Eastern Europe to the communists. The Republicans, under the leadership of the future Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, stridently advanced a policy of 'Liberation of

37 Ibid.

the Captive Nations of Eastern Europe. With Dwight D. Eisenhower becoming the US President in 1953 this became the policy of the United States. The futility of this theory was soon demonstrated in the wake of Berlin riots. In June 1953, following Stalin's death and destalinization by Khrushchev, the East German workers rose in a direct and open rebellion against the communist regime. No help came forth even when Soviet troops intervened and the rebellion was crushed. Impassioned appeals by Chancellor Adenauer to the US to exercise pressure upon the Soviet Union aroused only a 'deep compassion' in the President who assured the Chancellor that "their cry for freedom is heard in the world".³⁸ The Geneva Conference of 1955 was a further reconfirmation of the fact that the policy of liberation, just like the US posture immediately after the Second World War, was a general policy formula and not a specific programme of action. At Geneva, the US implicitly clarified that the US priority was for securing a Soviet commitment for lessening world tensions rather than challenging its position in Eastern

38 However, a leading scholar Richard Goold-Adams argues that there were certain practical limitations behind the Eisenhower Administration's passive reaction toward the Berlin riots. The leading point was that East Germany was the keystone of the Soviet arch over Eastern Europe. Moreover, East Germany was indispensable to the Soviet Union as a manufacturing centre for the USSR as well as the rest of the bloc and its significance as a military outpost of the Soviet Union. See Richard Goold Adams, The Time of Power, A Reappraisal of John Foster Dulles (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1962), pp.102-105; also Roscoe Drummond & Goston Coblenz, Duel at the Brink--John F. Dulles' Command of the American Power (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1961), Chapter IV.

Europe.³⁹

This inference is further substantiated by the US reactions to the Hungarian and Polish revolts in 1956. Both the State Department as well as the President stated, regarding the crisis in Poland, that the East European nations be given the right to choose their form of government. The US sent food packages to Poland. No one can say that this represented a serious attempt to "roll back communism." The US action meant nothing at all and only demonstrated the wide gulf between the rhetoric and reality. In the Hungarian crisis, in 1956, where events took a tragically violent turn, no support came from the US. Neither the President nor his Secretary of State Dulles intended to give any encouragement to the rebels, on grounds that, the Hungarian affairs were beyond the US peripheries to be interferred, despite the policy of liberation and the fact that the Soviet Union had intervened to crush the popular desire for more freedom. Eisenhower merely appealed to Bulganin to withdraw troops from Hungary.⁴⁰ This was

39 Brzezinski, "US Foreign Policy in East Central Europe - A Study in Contradiction", Journal of International Affairs (New York), vol. II, no. 1, 1957, p. 66.

40 Alexander De Conde, A History of American Foreign Policy (New York, Charles Scribners, 1971), p. 786. Critics at home and abroad blamed the Eisenhower policy of 'Liberation' as responsible for provoking the Berlin riots, ^{and the} Polish and Hungarian revolts. Revisionists chiefly held this view - See Danna F. Fleming, The Cold War and Its Origins, 1917-1960 (New York, Garden City, 1961), vol. II, pp. 806-814. Controversy surrounds the role and involvement of the US in ^{the} precipitation of Hungarian crisis. Although President Eisenhower contended that the policy of liberation never urged 'any kind of armed revolt', yet Paul Y. Hammond in The Cold War and The American Foreign Policy Since 1945 (New York, Harcourt, Brace and World, 1969), pp. 91-4 asserts that despite the administration's general policy, the US was involved in Hungary through Radio Free Europe, a CIA supported private propaganda organisation operating in Eastern Europe.

in sharp contrast to the Eisenhower administration's attitude in the Middle East. In January 1957, Eisenhower sought from the Congress the authority to assist any of the Middle East nations desiring assistance against 'International Communism'. Such assistance was to include,

the employment of armed forces of the US to secure and protect the territorial integrity and political independence of nations, requesting...aid, against overt armed aggression from any nation controlled by International Communism.

This was termed as Eisenhower Doctrine and the President sent an expeditionary force to Lebanon in 1958.⁴¹ However, in Eastern Europe, despite Eisenhower's Policy of Liberation of Captive Nations of Eastern Europe, no concrete help was extended to the Hungarians which would have proven the US commitment to its enacted policy.

In this period (1953-1956), the Eisenhower administration offered an economic aid package to Poland after the workers upheaval in 1956. The purpose behind the aid was to encourage the streak of independence in Poland, which had until now been practically a Soviet colony.⁴² But the timing of the policy and the reappraisal of the US East European foreign policy was too late. It only

41 Paul Keal, Unspoken Rules and Super ^{Power} Dominance (London, Macmillan, 1983), pp.121-22.

42 For Poland's, domestic state of affairs in the period 1948-1953, see Zbigniew Brzezinski, The Soviet Bloc: Unity and Conflict (New York, Praeger, 1961), pp.118-20; Richard F. Staar, Poland 1944-1962, The Sovietization of a Captive People (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University, 1962), pp.129-33; Adam Bromke, Poland's Politics: Idealism vs. Realism (Cambridge, Harvard University, 1967), pp.67-69.

signified that the US foreign policy was inconsistent with regard to Eastern Europe and generally the one of neglecting it. The tendency was to lump all the East European States together, differentiation between states on the basis of their relationship with Moscow came only in late 1956 after the Hungarian revolt had shaken the US out of its complacency.⁴³

After the 1956 revolt in Poland, the Soviet Union allowed a degree of liberalisation to the newly installed Gomulka regime in Poland. With this change in the leadership there was also a change in the official Polish attitudes toward the United States.

THE POLICY OF PEACERUL ENGAGEMENTS IN EASTERN EUROPE

As a result of reappraisal of the policy towards Eastern Europe following the events in 1956, the futility of the old policy was realized. The US embarked upon a new policy called "peaceful engagement". This policy appeared to be more realistic as it took complex reality of the region into account. The same policy was carried on during the Kennedy Administration (1960-1963). Uptil then, the US had treated Eastern Europe as a Soviet satellite region, but the new policy aimed at establishing economic, cultural and diplomatic relations with the individual countries.

43 Andrzej Korbonski, "US Policy in Eastern Europe", Current History (Philadelphia), vol.48, no.283, March 1965, pp.129-131.

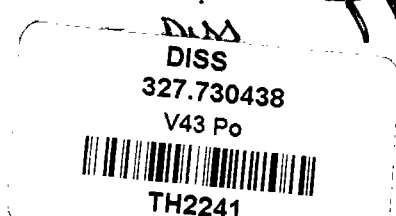
The new policy rested on three pillars: (1) a US acquiescence of the Communist presence in Eastern Europe; (2) attempt to make the East European regimes more palatable to the people; and (3) to achieve this end, promote closer contacts with each East European country.⁴⁴

Accordingly, a cultural and educational agreement was negotiated in 1958 which authorised Poland to purchase one million dollars worth of books, films, periodicals, and records. Agreements were also concluded on exchanges of students, university professors etc.⁴⁵ Poland also announced its intention to seek credit from West to alleviate its critical economic condition. Beginning from ^{the} June 1957 to May 1962, the Eisenhower and the Kennedy administrations supplied loans worth 487 million dollars to Poland when its trade was unfavourable and the deficit ran to 310 million dollars.⁴⁶ Following is the account of the US credit extensions to Poland:

44 Ibid.

45 Richard F. Staar, "Poland: The Price of Stability", Current History, March 1976, p.117; Korbonski, n.30, p.132.

46 Ibid.



US CREDITS TO POLAND, 1957-1962 (In million dollars)⁴⁷

Dates	Amount
June 7 and August 14, 1957 ..	95.00
February 15, 1958 ..	98.00
June 10, November 10, 1959 and 11 February 1960 ..	103.30
July 21, 1960 ..	130.00
December 15, 1961 ..	44.60
April 19, 1962 ..	15.20
Total ..	486.70

In addition to cheap exports credits, the Eisenhower and the Kennedy Administrations entered into aid agreements with Poland. In June 1957, without waiting for the action ^{of} ~~eg~~ the Congress, the Administration signed an agreement with Poland providing,

- (1) a 30 million dollar credit for agricultural supplies and coal mining equipment; and
- (2) a 18.9 million dollars in PL-480 commodities, repayable in zlotys.⁴⁸

In 1958-1959, despite the continued opposition in Congress, another instalment of 44 million dollars in the form

47 Ibid., p.111.

48 For a detailed decision making in the US Senate and House regarding aid to Poland, see Stephen S. Kaplan, "United States Aid to Poland, 1957-1964: Concerns, Objectives and Obstacles", Western Political Quarterly (Salt Lake City, Utah), vol.28, March 1975, pp.147-166.

of PL-480 commodities and 6 million dollars worth credits were provided to Poland. In late 1959, as the agricultural situation worsened in Poland, the United States once again committed itself to a transfer of 41.5 million dollars worth of wheat. But the largest aid agreement was signed in July 1960, whereby the US agreed to a PL-480 sale for another 130 million in commodities including one million ton of wheat, 0.5 million ton of feedgrains and over 0.2 million ton of barley. The one million ton of wheat equalled to 40 per cent of Poland's total wheat production and 100 per cent imports during the year.⁴⁹ In return Poland agreed to compensate American citizens whose properties were confiscated by the Communist regime with a total of 40 million dollars over a period of twenty years. The US also agreed to release the entire property of Polish citizens frozen during the Second World War.⁵⁰

Thus, in the period from 1957-1962, PL-480 or the "Food for Peace" program determined the US trade with Poland, ^{it} ~~and~~ became a 'decisive factor' in attaining a growing balance of trade in favour of the US, since by 1962 the US was exporting commodities almost double the value of those exported by Poland to the US. The US even extended the 'Most-Favoured-Nation' status to Poland in 1960, along with Yugoslavia, following the criteria that these regimes

49 Ibid.

50 Staar, n.32, p.118.

had exhibited a greater degree of independence from the Soviet Union than the others.⁵¹

This sudden impetus for increased trade levers to Poland sprang out of the changed policy outlook and the changes on the international scene. Not only did the US aimed to strengthen the Gomulka regime (which had wrung liberalisation from the Soviet Union with ~~the~~ public support) but also ^{to} make Poland economically independent of the Soviet Union, thereby increasing its ability to make policy shifts. Moreover, the growing Sino-Soviet discord along with ~~the~~ East-European tensions had demonstrated that the Soviet bloc was not a monolith.⁵²

On diplomatic plane also, relations between the US and Poland improved. The epitome of this relationship was marked by Vice-President Richard Nixon's visit to Warsaw in 1959. But 1960-1962 was dominated by tensions between the US and the Soviet Union in the form of Berlin Wall crisis and the Cuban missile crisis.⁵³

- 51 Janusz Kaczurba, "Polish American Economic Relations", Polish Western Affairs (Poznan, Poland), vol.20, no.1, pp.64-65; For detailed description of US Polish trade, see George F. Kennan, On Dealing With the Communist World (New York, Harper, 1964), pp.21-36.
- 52 Zbigniew Brzezinski and William E. Griffith, "Peaceful Engagement in Eastern Europe", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.39, no.4, July 1961, p.643; The Sino-Soviet factor and its impact on relations between US and Eastern Europe, see D. Zgoria, "The Sino-Soviet conflict and the West", Foreign Affairs, vol.41, no.1, October 1962, pp.180-81.
- 53 For a detailed account Berlin Wall and Cuban Crisis, see, Julius W. Pratt, A History of the US Foreign Policy (New Jersey, Prentice Hall, 1965), pp.472-476.

Since the East European regimes cast their lot with the Soviet Union, there was once again a shift in the US attitude towards Poland affecting their relations. The short period of goodwill between the two countries ended at the Polish-Romanian friendship meeting on 28 April 1961, when Gomulka attacked Kennedy's statement regarding the lack of freedom in Soviet bloc countries and declared him "deceitful" and "unfit to lecture the Polish people on freedom". Even the meeting between ^{the} Secretary of State, Dean Rusk and ^{the} Polish Foreign Minister Adam Rapacki on 10 October 1961 failed to improve relations. ⁵⁴

POLICY OF BRIDGE BUILDING

After the assassination of President Kennedy in 1963, President Lyndon B. Johnson became the new US President and initiated the policy of 'bridge building' in Eastern Europe in October 1964. The bitterness in US-Soviet relations, during the Kennedy Administration, had reflected itself in exclusion of Poland from the PL-480 ^{programme} in early 1964 ~~programme~~ resulting in a drop of Polish imports from the US to one-fourth of its former level. ⁵⁵

Trade was to serve as a 'bridge' between the US and the region. Hence, the period was characterised by growing trade relations. This had a marked effect upon the US-Polish trade as evident from the following table:

54 Staar, n.42.

55 Kaczurba, n.51, pp.64-65.

POLAND'S TRADE WITH THE U.S. (In million dollars)

Year	Imports	Exports
1964	151.9	54.2
1965	38.9	65.9
1966	58.3	82.9*
1967	61.0	91.0
1968	82.0	97.0
1969	53.0	98.0**

Sources: * Direction of Trade Statistics Yearbook, 1962-1966 (IMF, Washington D.C., 1967), p.382.

** Ibid., 1971, p.284.

The policy of bridge-building was consistent with the concept of 'peaceful engagements' followed by Eisenhower and Kennedy Administrations. But it could not be given a sincere expression due to the re-emergence of bitterness ^{between} among USA and the USSR over Czechoslovakia in 1968 and then the US involvement in the Vietnam war.

In August 1968, following a coupe, the Stalinist regime of Antonia Novotny was overthrown by Alexander Dubcek in Czechoslovakia. He launched 'repluralization of the Czechoslovak society and politics'. On the night of 20-21 August, the Warsaw Pact forces (comprising of troops from the Soviet Union, East Germany, Poland, Hungary and Bulgaria) occupied the country. Soviet Union justified this intervention on the ground that "the sovereignty of each

socialist country cannot be opposed to the interests...of the world revolutionary movement" - a view laid down in the Brezhnev Doctrine. The official US reaction was 'inclined to regard East European nations as a legitimate Soviet sphere of influence and not to engage in any improvement of relations with Soviet satellites at the expense of its relations with the Soviet Union. The administration's policy was to 'stay on the sidelines'.⁵⁶

In addition, US adherence to its former policy of abstention from any direct involvement in Eastern Europe was further substantiated by the fact that although Poland and Yugoslavia were granted massive economic aid because the two countries had exhibited greater independence from the Soviets, yet Czechoslovakia's claims, on the same basis, were ignored. Although it was clear in 1968 that the country was committed to a new liberal course, the United States did not move in to help Czechoslovakia in any way. The most important reason for this was the ongoing US involvement in the Vietnam War. The President wanted to stage a summit meeting with the ~~Russians~~ ^{Soviets} to end the war in Vietnam and the administration feared that any expression of support for the Dubcek regime might

56 Paul Keal, Unspoken Rules and Superpower Dominance (London, Macmillan, 1983), pp.126-127; For a further discussion on the US policy stand, see Lyndon B. Johnson, The Vantage Point: Perspectives of the Presidency, 1963-1969 (New York, Holt, Reinhart and Winston, 1971), pp.448-490; Henry Kissinger, The White House Years (Boston, Massachusetts, Little Brown, 1979), vol. I, pp.49-51.

antagonise the ^{Soviets} ~~Russians~~ making the summit impossible.⁵⁷ Thus, once again, Eastern Europe became an area of secondary importance in the Super Power relationship.

Moreover, the overall US policy towards Eastern Europe also suffered a setback due to US being deeply involved in the Vietnam war. The US suspected that some of the potential aid recipients like Czechoslovakia and Romania were supplying North Vietnam with weapons and other aid. Contrary to American hopes, Poland did not show any sign of moving away from the Soviet Union despite the US aid and credit. Thus, the 'bridges' did not serve the purposes for which they were built and so fell into disrepair. The region again lost its importance in the US policy.

IMPACT OF CHANGING INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENT IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

The international scene underwent a radical transformation during the late sixties and early seventies. One of the changes that set in was the multipolarisation of the world system. In the western world there were two main developments which affected the international environment. The first was that the Soviet Union gained parity with the US in the field of nuclear weapons. Second was the emergence of Japan and western Europe, which competed with the United States in economic spheres. In the Communist world,

57 Korbonski, "East Europe and the United States", Current History, vol.56, April 1969, pp.242-243.

the Sino-Soviet conflict motivated the Peoples' Republic of China to become a totally independent actor on the international scene. The sum of all these developments was a multipolar world and a loosening of alliances. This brought about a change in the relationship between the two halves of Europe. Western Europe, growing self-sufficient, realized the necessity of a United Europe. The concept was first expressed by President Charles D. Gaulle of France in 1968 after the Czech revolt. He said:

...the division into blocs...that was imposed on Europe while it was torn, is a misfortune... Indeed, that division constitutes for the peoples of our continent, a permanent encroachment on their right to independence, at a time when each one of them is capable, par excellence, of conducting its own affairs. Moreover, to distribute the nations of Europe into two camps, dominated by two rivals, is to prevent them from normally establishing between them the economic, cultural and human relations that are consistent with their nature... Finally, the political and military tension maintained between them constantly puts peace into question. There is no ideology that can justify such an artificial and dangerous situation.⁵⁸

Thus, the United States had to reformulate its policy toward Eastern Europe in this changing context.

Moreover, the aggressive policies pursued by the Soviet Union, the turmoil in the Middle East, the global scarcity of oil and the raising of prices of oil by the OPEC countries, the world-wide

58 James A. Kuhlman and Louis J. Meusomides, Changes in European Relations (Leyden, B.V., Netherlands, A.W. Sijthoff, 1976), p.177.

inflation and its repercussions upon the international monetary system made the Europeans realise the importance of being united. Apart from this, the aggressive Cold War phase was already a history and its last vestiges were wiped off by the Berlin crisis of 1962. The business community in the US also supported the opportunity for expansion of trade and markets although the State Department was still hesitant to change its policy.⁵⁹ The Soviets also showed signs of responding to the US and the West European overtures.⁶⁰ In short, the concept of 'Ostpolitik' i.e., the reconciliation with the East was enveloping the whole of Europe. The US also had to accommodate its policies to this new concept. Thus, in the period 1972-1976, the policy of 'realpolitik' was developed in the American foreign policy circles.⁶¹

THE POLICY OF REAL POLITIK

In his very first annual report to the Congress on the US foreign policy for the seventies, President Nixon assured the Soviet Union of reducing tensions in the US-Soviet relations, and, at the same time, recognize the independence of the countries of Eastern Europe. On this basis, he asserted the right to carry on

59 In his memoirs, the former Secretary of State, Henry Kissinger gives an account of the debates between the supporters, chiefly in the Economic and State Departments, and the sceptics, mostly in White House, upon the US policy in Eastern Europe in view of the new developments. Kissinger, n.56, pp.150-55.

60 For a detailed discussion of the changes in the international order, see Andrzej Korbonski, "The United States and East Europe", Current History, vol.64, no.381, May 1973, pp.193-96 and 226.

61 Richard M. Nixon, US Foreign Policy for the 1970s: A New Strategy for Peace, Report to the Congress (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1970), vol.1, pp.138-39.

normal relations with the countries of the region. But he assured the Soviet Union of the US recognition of its legitimate security interests in the region. He said,

...we are aware that the Soviet Union sees its own security as directly affected by developments in the region...It is not the intention of the United States to undermine the legitimate security interests of the Soviet Union...Our pursuit of negotiation and detente is meant to reduce the existing tensions...By the same token, the US views the countries of Eastern Europe as sovereign, not as parts of a monolith. And we can accept no doctrine that abridges their right to seek reciprocal improvement of relations with the US or others...⁶²

The US policy of seeking closer relations with the countries of Eastern Europe was vigorously pursued. After enunciation of the new policy in his report to the Congress, President Nixon visited Belgrade (1970) and Warsaw (1972). Continued American interest was evidenced by Secretary of State Roger's visits to Romania, Hungary and Yugoslavia in July 1972, soon after Nixon's visit to Poland. The after effects were also immediately evident. In Yugoslavia's case, the US resumed the sales of arms since its continued independence and role as a buffer zone protecting the Mediterranean from the Soviet interference necessitated it. Romania received economic and technical aid from the US and ^{the} West, probably due to its defiance of the Soviet Union on international issues. In Poland, US agreed to provide economic and technical assistance to

62 Ibid.

Poland keeping in view its traditional anti-Soviet, anti-Communist and pro-western feelings, the recent upheaval in 1970, and the peculiar features of its social, economic and political set-up, namely the privately owned agriculture and business, the Roman Catholic Church, the relatively free press and the political dissidence. Poland once again, in Gierek's strategy for 'great leap forward', sought economic aid from the West. The Soviet Union allowed it since Poland had long been enjoying the MFN status in the US. The Soviet Union never considered the Polish-Western ties as a threat. On the contrary, the Polish relations with the West were always viewed as a model.⁶³

Thus, in an agreement conducted during Nixon's visit to Warsaw in June 1972, it was decided that the US would allow Poland to use the official agricultural credits from the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and the Export-Import Bank (EXIM Bank) for financing its purchase of equipment. Other measures approved were liberalisation of US technological exports to Poland and navigation and fishing facilities. In 1974, at a Polish-US summit meeting, this co-operation was extended to include the coal, industry and mining. In 1977, Poland became the first country to be granted fishing rights in US 200 mile zone in which other countries were prohibited from fishing because the US wanted to preserve its

63 Arthur R. Rachwald, "Poland Between Super Powers: Three Decades of Foreign Policy". Orbis (Philadelphia, Penn), vol.20, November 1977, p.1055.

marine biological resources.⁶⁴

The commercial relations between the two countries developed rapidly during the seventies. The US became the most important trading partner of Poland, especially in view of the fact that between 1970 and 1974 the turn-over almost doubled in terms of US dollars, as can be seen from the following table.

GOODS TURNOVER BETWEEN POLAND AND THE U.S. (In million dollars, FOB)

Year	Exports from Poland	Imports to Poland	Total Turn-over
1970	092.80	058.20	151.00
1971	107.20	073.20	180.40
1972	139.20	113.60	252.80
1973	183.90	350.40	534.30
1974	266.20	395.50	661.70
1975	242.83	583.20	825.60
1976	308.70	623.80	932.50
1977	323.50	439.00	762.50

Source: Direction of Trade Statistics Year Book, 1971-77
(Washington, D.C., IMF, 1978), p.226.

The East-West relations further improved in 1975 with the signing of the Final Act of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe at Helsinki. The European powers confirmed the existing geographical boundaries of the countries of Europe as set by the Yalta agreement, recognised human rights and the

64 *Waczurba*, n.38, p.68.

right of every state to pursue independent domestic and international policies. In a bid to normalize relations with the countries of Eastern Europe, US President Gerald Ford undertook^a a tour to Romania and Yugoslavia immediately after the Helsinki Summit in 1975. In 1974, the US had even extended recognition to East Germany thereby recognising the validity of the disputed Oder-Neisse line. Most-Favoured-Nation status was now extended to Romania (July 1975) and Hungary (July 1978).

The characteristic feature of East European politics in the aftermath of Helsinki was the activation of political dissidence in Eastern Europe especially in Poland and Czechoslovakia. In Poland, workers broke into consumer riots in 1976 following which the government was forced to withdraw the price increases. A national alliance of diverse groups called the Committee for the Defense of Workers (KSS/KOR) was formed in 1976 which demanded political liberalisation, end to censorship and harassment of political activists, intellectuals and the Roman Catholic Church in Poland. In Czechoslovakia, around 400 prominent citizens signed the "Charter 77" condemning the Communist Party's violation of the civil rights of the people.

Initially, the US looked upon the Helsinki Accord as a means for avoiding the confrontation with the Soviet Union. Kissinger, in an effort to maintain the existing balance of power in Europe, even

suggested the idea of "holy alliance" or "condominium".⁶⁵

THE SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE

In December 1975, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, the State Department Counsellor, suggested that in order to stabilise the tense situation in Eastern Europe (i.e. the political dissidence), the US should seek "an evolution that makes the relationship between the East Europeans and the Soviet Union an organic one rather than an unnatural one". This could be attained by complementing the Soviet military and political presence in Eastern Europe with the US economic assistance. Trade and economics were to be the major instruments acting as new 'bridges' between East and West. But the doctrine was rejected by Eastern Europe as it would have reduced them to a 'semi-colonial status'.⁶⁶ Even the Soviets looked upon it as an attempt by the US to slowly encroach in their sphere of influence.

MORAL POLITICS: THE CARTER DOCTRINE FOR EASTERN EUROPE

Under President Jimmy Carter, the 'real politik' and Sonnenfeldt approach gave way to 'moral politics' - a commitment to the human

65 Arthur R. Rachwald, "United States Policy in Eastern Europe", Current History, vol. 74, April 1978, pp.150-53.

66 David Binder, "A Modified Soviet Bloc is Avowed at US Policy", New York Times, 6 April 1976, p.A-1; Also Piotr S. Wandycz, United States and Poland (Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University, 1980), pp.405-407.

rights provision under Helsinki. The Carter Administration wanted to end the lack of moral leadership that had come to be exercised under Nixon-Ford Administrations. Among the major themes set forth during his presidential election campaign, Carter had asserted ~~accused~~ that in pursuit of an East-West condominium, human rights crusade was to serve in the ideological warfare between the capitalism and communism. In addition, President Carter, Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski - all were skeptical about the Soviet intentions.⁶⁶ They felt that the Soviet Union was getting more aggressive. This was manifested by the Soviet intervention in Angola through the Cubans, military assistance to Ethiopia in war with Somalia, and its actions in Vietnam and the Middle East. The US image, on the other hand, they felt, was tarnished by its failure in Vietnam and the Watergate Scandal. In short, the Soviet Union had gained an edge over the US and had strategically improved its position. Carter's National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski held that the US support for human rights movement would effectively challenge communism since it was an issue which identified the US with an ideal shared by the majority of the world public opinion.⁶⁷

66 Ed. M. Glenn Abernathy, Dilys M. Hill and Phil Williams, The Carter Years (London, Frances Pinter, 1984), pp.55-57.

67 US News and World Report (Washington D.C.), 30 May 1977, p.34.

Therefore, under the auspices of the new doctrine, the US extended open support to the dissidents in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

During the seventies, the spirit of detente or co-operation was reflected even in the field of technology and joint ventures. In the period 1975 onwards, steel agreements were negotiated between West and Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Romania; textile accords with Romania, Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Bulgaria and fishing agreements with Soviet Union, East Germany and Poland.

In addition, credits were extended toward the East European countries, especially by West Germany and the USA. But with their deteriorating economies, these countries were unable to pay back the loans and credits. The level of indebtedness to the West rose to alarming degree as proved by the following table:

.../-

EASTERN EUROPE: THE HIGHEST DEBTORS (In million dollars).

Countries	Outstanding Debt		Growth in Bank Debt*			Debt service payment, 1983	Payment as percentage of exports
	1982	1975	1976-81	1976-78	1979-81		
GDR**	14.0	02.6	27.4	33.6	21.4	6.3	83
Hungary	07.0	02.2	24.5	42.8	08.6	3.5	55
Poland	26.0	03.9	26.7	44.2	12.3	7.8	94
Romania	09.9	00.9	33.5	40.6	26.8	5.5	61
USSR***	23.0	10.1	12.3	19.0	14.6	12.2	25

Notes: * Compound annual growth rates. Data of 1979-81 are exchange rate changes.
 ** Excludes debts to banks in Federal Republic of Germany
 *** Includes a residual for Eastern Europe, which is mainly CMEA banks.

Source: Time (Chicago), 10 January 1983, p.45.

Out of these, Poland's debt was the highest. It was estimated that in order to make satisfactory repayments, Poland and East Germany (GDR) would have to double their exports to the hard currency states. But with drop in their productions and other difficulties on the domestic front, especially in case of Poland (discussed in Chapter-II), it was obvious that repayment was an impossible proposition.

Thus, from the Second World War till 1980, the US has pursued six different policies towards Eastern Europe, affecting its relationship with Poland in turn. But during the entire period, the US lacked a consistent, long term policy. In the immediate post-war years, the bitterness between the two Super Powers over the division of Europe, led the US to wage a war of attrition against the World Communism. But in the seventies, the policy changed dramatically. The US accepted the reality that the Soviet power had come to stay and that it had security interest in the region that had to be recognized. Therefore, the US sought to advance close economic cooperation with these countries with a view to weaken their very close relations with the Soviet Union.⁶⁸

68 For further expansion on this theme, see Stephen Woolcock, "East-West Trade: US Policy and European Interests", World Today (London), vol.38, February 1982, pp.49-57; Huntington, "Trade Technology and Leverage: Economic Diplomacy", Foreign Policy (New York), vol.32, Fall 1978, pp.36-64.

During the Carter years, the human rights approach was employed to disengage ~~the~~ Eastern Europe further from the Soviet Union. But overall the US policy was to improve US-Soviet relations, primarily in the field of nuclear weapons. This priority overshadowed the US-East European relations.

Another vital element in the US policy in Eastern Europe is its over emphasis upon the Polish factor. At Yalta both powers fought over Poland and Germany. Even Churchill described the Polish issue as "the first of the great causes which led to the breakdown of the grand alliance". A rivalry sprang up right from the Second World War, between them over the question of Poland. But the reality was that the US could, in no way, undo the European partition. The policies of the US toward the region became dependent upon its relations with the Soviet Union. Though at times, the US sought to loosen the bond between Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, yet at other crucial times, when it could have easily done so, it chose not to contest the Soviet dominance in the region directly, as in 1956 or 1968. The overall evaluation of the US policy shows its clear preference for an evolutionary change in Eastern Europe rather than a revolutionary one. Any challenge to the Soviet Union in Eastern Europe evokes a passive response by the US. Both the powers are aware of the fact that a war in Europe would mean a nuclear war. This realisation demands a restraint on the part of the US since the Eastern Europe, from the Second World War onwards, has acted as a Soviet zone of influence just

like Western Europe acted as a US ally. Therefore, in every event, the US response has been cautious and guarded so as not to provoke the Soviets. Indirect means such as trade and economic aid have been employed to draw the region away from Soviet influence. Even the policies enacted at times hinted an active interest on the part of the US in Eastern Europe but in fact, were general policy formulae, highly conditioned by the Soviet factor. The Polish crisis in 1980-81 also demonstrated the same limitations in US policy towards the region.

Chapter Two

THE POLISH CRISIS OF 1980

Poles! If you cannot prevent your neighbours from devouring your nation, make it impossible for them to digest it.

- Jean-Jacques Rousseau¹

The politico-economic crisis in Poland in 1980-81 was indeed a continuation of upheavals that shook the country in 1953, 1968, 1970 and 1976. The Polish workers were able to win for themselves in 1980-81 the right to have "legally institutionalised trade-union status" through non-violent, sit-down strikes. They succeeded in proving by implication that the rule of the Communist Party of Poland was not rooted in popular support, by demanding not only a national referendum as to whether the government should remain in power but also by challenging the existence of the country as a communist state. Although ever since their Sovietization, the East European regimes have been a strange amalgam of communist rule and popular dissidence for divergence from this model, none of the crises faced by the bloc posed a grave global threat to communism as the Polish workers' uprising of 1980-1981. Probably, if the crisis had continued, the malaise would have gradually affected

1 Quoted in Sweryn Bialer, "Poland and the Soviet Imperium", Foreign Affairs (New York), vol.59, Fall 1981, p.522.

the rest of the Eastern Europe and perhaps even the non-Great Russian nations of the USSR. Unlike the Hungarian or the Czech revolutions, which had come from 'within the Party', the Polish uprising was distinctly a 'revolution from below'.² This was something which was a matter of even more serious concern to the Soviet Union, as it implied that communism was losing ground in Poland.

POLISH SOCIALISM: DEPARTURE FROM THE OLD MODEL

Even before 1980, Poland was far from atypical East European country.³ After the Second World War, the country's domestic and foreign policies were completely dominated by the Soviet Union. It was governed by a pro-Soviet Communist Party and pursued a Soviet line in all basic national security matters. These facts became the essential guarantees for the preservation of the status quo in Europe.

The Poles however were able to have a comparatively liberal brand of communism which was reflected in all aspects of their national life. This trend was further strengthened after the uprising in 1956. Agriculture, which in all communist countries

2 F. Stephen Larrabee, "Poland, the Permanent Crisis", Orbis (Philadelphia), vol.25, Spring 1981, p.233.

3 William E. Griffith, The Super Power Relations and the Regional Tensions (Lexington, Mass., Lexington, 1983), pp.257-64.

is usually a state-directed, cooperative venture became predominantly private in Poland from 1953 onwards. Almost 70 per cent of the total land is in the hands of individual small landholders. The Polish Catholic Church has been virtually an alternate government with a moral authority earned out of 90 per cent of country's population of 35 million being devout Catholics. Culturally, Poland is closer to Western value system than its Eastern corollary. Its long chequered history of struggle for independence and survival under oppressive foreign regimes has created among Poles a love for freedom and a deep sense of national pride. Poles have always resisted any imposition, even the 1944-45 communist takeover. It is for this reason, that Poles are allowed a more liberal system in which rallies to commemorate their past victories over the Russians are held each year, dissident organisations (that had come up as an aftermath of 'Spring In October' revolution of 1970) voice their opposition to the political authority and reach out to the masses through their publications, and press too, is comparatively ^{freer} free than in most other East European countries. Thus, in Poland we find a 'communism with a Polish face'.⁴

The Soviet Union has also displayed a high degree of tolerance in Polish events. This tolerance springs out of the strategic location and the vital resource wealth of the country. Besides,

4 Newsweek (Chicago), 1 September 1980, p.12.

Poland is surrounded by neighbours that have "stable, devout and hard core" communist regimes. Alois Mertes, a former West German envoy to Moscow is reported to have said:

...the Soviets have surrounded Poland with the iron clamps of stability in East Germany and Czechoslovakia. That is why Poland has been allowed more liberalisation.⁵

Thus, the economic patterns, the political system and the responses of the Soviet Union in an event of crisis in Poland are very different from that in any other East European country.

THE GENESIS OF THE POLISH CRISIS IN 1980-81

The basic pillars on which all Communist regimes rest are usually the leading role of the Communist Party in all aspects of individual life, state control over press, means of production and distribution and a strict Party discipline.⁶ In Poland, toward the end of the seventies, all the pillars simultaneously collapsed resulting in a crisis in the Party, in the economy, in the Polish society and the bloc. This widespread crisis was the result of the interplay of economic and political factors which had become increasingly intertwined by the end of the seventies. These can be identified as, (a) a crisis in the economy of the country; (b) a crisis of political authority; and (c) finally, the reactivation of political dissidence among political activists and intellectuals.

5 Ibid.

6 O.N. Mehrotra, "Turmoil in Poland: A Survey", Foreign Affairs Reports (New Delhi), vol.30, June 1981, pp.121-22.

1. Crisis in the Economy

By the end of 1970s, the Polish economy showed signs of total bankruptcy and a collapse of its planning and management system. The national income of Poland recorded a drop for the second consecutive year - something most unusual in a Soviet bloc country.⁷ The industrial production fell 17 per cent below that of 1979 and total production loss mounted to \$2.3 billions. The coal mining industry's output fell 10 per cent short of its normal total output.⁸ The grain harvest totalled a mere 19 million tons in 1980 against 21.3 million tons in 1978.⁹ Official statistics also indicated a shortfall in the meat production from 3.3 million tons in 1979 to 2.4 million tons in 1980. The potato harvest also hit the worst record - a fall of 40 per cent from the harvest in 1979. This increased the government's dependence upon the other countries.⁹

What went wrong with the Polish economy? One of the key causes can be traced in the critical decisions made by Edward Gierek in 1970 soon after he replaced Wladyslaw Gomulka as the Prime Minister

7 Bialer, n.1, p.524.

8 East European Economic Handbook (London, Euromonitor, 1985), p.32.

9 Ibid. For a further elaboration on the economic crisis, see Suraj Bhan, Economic Causes for the Polish Crisis, 1980-81 (dissertation, JNU, 1985); US News and World Reports (Washington D.C.), 27 October, 1980, pp.50-52; New York Times, 9 February, 1981, XII, p.34; Time (Chicago), 24 November, 1980; Strategic Survey, 1981-1982 (London), pp.56-57.

of Poland.¹⁰ The roots of Gomulka's decline lay in a strong workers' unrest brought about by a dismal economic situation and protests from within the party against the absolute authority of the central

- 10 However, leading economists argue that Polish economy had been crisis-ridden even before 1970. Writing about the crisis of 1980, Prof. Szczepanski in his confidential memorandum wrote: "The difficulties of the final years of the 70s accentuate problems which have been unsolved from the beginning of the post-war years, particularly since the 6-year plan (1950-55)..." Quoted in Zbigniew M. Fallenbuchl, "The Polish Economy at the Beginning of the 1980s", Poland 1980: An East European Economic Country Study submitted to the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress, 1 September 1980 (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980). Even Fallenbuchl supports the same argument: "It is impossible to understand the current economic developments in Poland and to comment on prospects for early 1980s without taking into consideration the existence of a vicious circle of stagnation in which the Polish economy found itself at the end of the 1960s..." ibid. If we scan a period of 25 years (from 1955-1980) the economy shows a marked tendency for cyclical ups and downs, the path of its growth being one of 'stop-go' with a strong stepping up of the rate of growth in every alternate 5-year plan. Even during the 1960s, when the Polish economy was among the most self-sufficient economies of the region, the crisis tendencies were apparent. Fallenbuchl points out that the crisis would have made itself felt in mid-1950s but was averted by the US aid under PL-480 programme and the 'second economy' of the Poles themselves. By the end of 1960s, the economy was stagnant. It was this drastic inflation of the economy that led Poland to seek loans from the West. For a further elaboration on the Polish economy before 1970s see Zbigniew M. Fallenbuchl, "The Polish Economy in the 1970s", East European Economies Post-Helsinki - A Compendium of papers submitted to the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1977), pp.816-846; Karl Baker and Cara Weber, Solidarnosc. From Military Repression to Gdansk (London, International Socialism, 1982); Fallenbuchl, "Poland in the Last Quarter of the Twentieth Century: A Panel Discussion", Slavic Review (New York), vol.34, no.4; "East-West Relations", Canadian Slavonic Papers (Montreal), vol.25, no.3, September 1983, pp.411-424.

leadership.¹¹

In order to consolidate the party reputation and credibility, Gierek launched a 'new development strategy'. It included massive import of Western technology and machinery, financed on credit, with heavy investment in the growth of Polish industry. The underlying idea was to enable the country to switch from the "extensive" to an "intensive" growth i.e., from a situation in which growth depended mainly on the increase in the quantity of inputs to such in which it would depend to a greater extent, on increases in their productivity.¹² The foreign debts incurred in the process were to be repaid by exporting the manufactured goods produced by revitalized industries.¹³

In accordance ^{with} this strategy, a massive hard currency debt was sought from the western industrialized nations including Austria,

- 11 Jan B. de Weydenthal, Poland: Communism Adrift, The Washington Papers, 1979 (Beverly Hills, Sage 1979), pp.14-15.
- 12 This has been discussed by Fallenbuchl, "The Strategy of Development and Gierek's Economic Manoeuvre", in Adam Bromke, and J.W., Strong (ed.), Gierek's Poland (New York, Praeger, 1973), pp.52-70; and Fallenbuchl, "The Polish Economy in the 1970s", in East European Economies - Post Helsinki, n.10.
- 13 Modernisation and revitalisation in the industrial sector was sought through a greater degree of decentralisation. For this purpose, large industrial units called 'WOGs' were created. They were to act as an intermediate agency between industrial plants and the economic ministries and were to assist in planning and allocation of resources. By mid-1975, there were 125 WOGs in all the leading industries - coal, iron and steel, chemicals, mechanical, light industry etc. - Nicholas B. Andrews, Poland 1980-81 (Washington, D.C., National Defence University, 1985), p.66; J.G. Zielinski, Economic Reforms in Polish Industry (London, Oxford University, 1973), also by the same author, "On Systematic Remodelling in Poland", Soviet Studies (Glasgow), vol.30, no.4, 1978, pp.547-552; P.T. Wanless, "Economic Reforms in Poland, 1973-79", Soviet Studies, vol.32, no.1, 1980, pp. 28-57

Belgium, Canada, Denmark, the Federal Republic of Germany, France, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden, Switzerland, UK and the USA. Following is the net hard currency debt extended by the industrialized West to Poland for the period 1971-1979:

POLAND'S NET HARD CURRENCY DEBT TO WEST (in million U.S. Dollars)

Year		Debt
1971	..	00,764
1972	..	01,150
1973	..	02,213
1974	..	04,120
1975	..	07,381
1976	..	10,680
1977	..	13,532
1978	..	16,972
1979	..	19,590

Source: Zbigniew M. Fallenburg, "The Polish Economy at the beginning of the 1980s", Poland 1980: An East-European Economic Country Study submitted to the Joint Economic Committee of the US Congress, 1 September 1980 (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), p.58.

Initially, the new strategy paid off. The extent and volume of Poland's trade grew with other countries, particularly with the developed countries of the West. The total trade turnover in 1974 was almost the double of the trade levels of 1970, with the growth rate of trade with the western developed countries being twice that

of the CMEA countries.¹⁴ The Polish imports chiefly consisted of food, live animals, fuels, vegetable oils, machinery, transport equipment etc., while the exports were composed of coal, meat, meat products, mineral fuels, chemicals, wood, crude fertilizers, textile yarn, hides and furskins etc.¹⁵

As a whole, the official statistical data for this 4-year period showed a clear expansion of western influence over the Polish trade in comparison to the COMECON countries.¹⁶

	COMECON		West	
	1970	1974	1970	1974
Polish Imports	66.0%	42.3%	26.0%	51.0%
Polish Exports	60.6%	53.0%	28.0%	36.2%
Total Trade	63.3%	47.0%	27.0%	44.3%

Thus, in the years, 1971-75, there was an increase in the industrial output almost by 11 per cent. The real industrial wages that had been growing at the rate of 1.8 per cent per year during the 1960s began to increase at a steady rate of 7.2 per cent annually in the years 1971-75.¹⁷ By 1973, Poland was said to have the fastest growth rate in the world.¹⁸

14 Weydenthal, n.11, p.16.

15 G.E. Treske, "Poland's Trade With Developed West: Performance and Prospects", in Poland 1980: An East European Economic Country Study, submitted to the US Congress Joint Economic Committee (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), p.8.

16 Weydenthal, n.11, pp.15-16.

17 Bialer, n.1, p.525; Adam Bromke & J. Strong (eds.), n.12.

18 Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution, Solidarity (London, Hodder and Staughton, 1985), p.16.

But after this short spell, the policy worsened the country's economic plight. Gierek's strategy failed due to certain national and international factors. Among the national factors was primarily the ~~over~~^{excess} importing of the capital equipment, exceeding the optimum level of investment,¹⁹ high grain imports in the years 1974-1976 due to bad harvests at home and inflation in prices of commodities imported. The resulting trade imbalance compelled the Poles to borrow more heavily, thereby pushing up its hard currency debts from the West.

Moreover, Gierek had opted for massive short and middle-term loans in contrast to Gormulka who had gone in for long and medium term credits and interest-free US PL-480 credit.²⁰ This increase in the size of debt created debt-service problems. To cater to this debt service, an increasing export was required which Poland failed to manipulate. As a result, debt service expanded from 27 per cent of exports in 1974 to 70 per cent in 1980.²¹ On the other hand, even the hard currency debt from the West increased to alarming proportions, as can be seen from the following data:

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- 19 Twice before (in the first half of 1950s and in early 60s) the same phenomenon had occurred and had seriously affected the economy. The government ignoring this, kept on investing more than it could afford on the industrial front. As the investment front became wider, it became impossible for the government to complete all projects that had been started - Rallenberchl, "Investment Policy for Economic Development: Some Lessons of the Communist Experience", The Canadian Journal of Economics and Political Science (Vancouver), vol.29, no.1, 1963, pp.26-39.
- 20 Ian Shapiro, "Fiscal Crisis of the Polish State. Genesis of the 1980 Strikes", Theory and Society (London), October 1981, p.475.
- 21 J.P. Zoeter, "Eastern Europe: The Growing Hard Currency Debt", in East European Economic Country Study, pp.1350-1368.

POLAND'S FOREIGN DEBT*

Country	Owed to Commercial Banks	Owed to Governments
Austria	308	1,509
Belgium	134	155
Britain	631	1,150
Canada	323	666
Denmark	53	49
Finland	16	35
France	882	1,701
Italy	338	750
Japan	706	357
Luxembourg	17	4
Netherlands	241	63
Norway	18	76
Spain	184	48
Sweden	190	251
United States	1,158	1,895
West Germany	1,919	2,137
Others**	--	4,864

Notes : * Medium and long term loans in millions of US dollars from creditor countries as of September 1, 1981.

** Includes Arab, Eastern bloc and other non-industrialized countries.

Source: Facts on File (New York), vol.42, January 22, 1982, p.33.

This indebtedness was highest among all the East European countries. It was in this context that even the US government and commercial banks found themselves involved in Poland. In 1972, ^{the} first US-Polish joint enterprise began when an agreement was signed between International Harvester (IH) and BUMAR Foreign Trade Organisation to manufacture crawler tractors in Poland.²² In terms of credit, following table shows the US share:

.../-

22 John Garland and Paul Marer, "US Multinationals in Poland: A Case Study of the International Harvester - Bumar Co-operation in Construction Machinery", in ibid., also, Zbigniew M. Fallenbuchi and Carl MacMillan, Partners in East-West Economic Relations: The Determinants of Choices (New York, Pergamon, 1980) and Paul Marer and John Montias (eds.), East European Integration and East West Trade (Bloomington, Ind., Indiana University, 1980).

POLAND: HARD CURRENCY DEBT (Millions of Dollars)

	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979
Commercial Debt of which:	0,420	0,856	1,951	3,486	6,547	09,159	10,393	13,430	15,400
- Owed to the US Banks	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	01,314	01,315	01,515
Officially Backed Debt of which:	0,718	0,708	0,845	1,057	1,467	02,324	03,574	04,414	05,090
- Owed to US EXIM Bank	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	00,138
- Owed to US CCC Progs.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.	00,655	00,774
Gross Debt	1,138	1,564	2,796	4,643	8,014	11,483	13,967	17,844	20,490
Less Commercial Asset	(374)	(414)	(583)	(523)	(633)	(803)	(435)	(872)	(900)
Net Debt	0,764	1,150	2,213	4,120	7,381	10,680	13,352	16,972	19,590

Source: G. S. Treske, "Poland's Trade With Developed West: Performance and Prospects", in Poland 1980: An East European Economic Country Study submitted to the U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), p.8.

According to estimates, 16 per cent of the total investment was poured into just one region - Gierek's party strong hold of Katowice.²³ The mismanagement was so rampant that Gierek's strategy of balancing foreign debts with increased exports of manufactured goods, especially machinery, to the West could not materialize. The quality of Polish machinery was far below the western standards.

In an effort to repay the debt through other means, the government began to export raw materials and semi-finished goods that were needed in Poland itself, were less profitable as exports and consequently worsened the shortages and the inflationary tendencies within the country.²⁴ According to Fallenbuchl another drawback of the policy was that it ignored developments in the outside world, not only in the West but also in other countries of the bloc. The other East European countries, realising the impact of Western recession on their economies, began to cut down their imports. Whereas Poland far from reducing, went ahead with increased imports. Apart from this, almost all the newly established or rapidly expanded industries were heavily capital-, material-and-energy- intensive and therefore in Polish perspectives, also highly import-intensive.²⁵ In addition, instead of improvements in quality or reduction of cost factor, the government was more eager to expand the quantity of the output.

23 Karl Baker and Lara Weber, n.10, pp.111-20.

24 All these facts of Polish economy have been highlighted in detail in Dominico Mario Nuti, "The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints", The Socialist Register (London), 1981, pp.107-09; (eds.), Hans Hermann Hohmann, Michael Vaser, and Karl C. Thalkheim, The New Economic Systems of Eastern Europe (London, C.Hurst, 1975), pp.79-104; (eds.), Adam Bromke and D. Novak, The Communist States in the Era of Detente (Oakville, Ont., Mosaic, 1978), pp.245-274.

25 Fallenbuchl, n.10, pp.2-5.
Fallenbuchl

The Polish problem was aggravated by the world economic conditions. Firstly, the energy crisis increased radically the cost of oil required for development.²⁶ Poland had to buy oil at increased prices from the Soviet Union. Secondly, recession in the West led them to forsake Polish exports. This nipped Gierek's strategy of repaying foreign debts through increased exports. Thirdly, the investment policy of the Gierek government proved unrealistic in the sense, that at times as much as 40 per cent of the Polish national income was devoted to investment, about three-quarters of this being invested in heavy and export industries while the domestic demands remained unfulfilled. This created inflation and made Poland more dependent upon increased and expensive imports. This artificial sustenance of the economy also raised the expectations of the public. Lastly, the government did not undertake any of the major reforms in planning and management that might have helped in coping with the demands arising out of increased dependence on intensive growth.²⁷ Moreover, during the second half of the seventies, Poland had several bad harvests.²⁸ But still the government continued with its policy of favouring industry over agriculture and the public sector at the expense of private. By the end of 1978, this biased policy led to an

26 Here it should be noted that energy consumption in Poland is far more than that in many other countries. According to estimates, in relation to its produced national product, Poland uses twice as much energy as Great Britain or three times that of France - Adam Zwass, "The Economic Situation in Poland in light of the Eighth Party Congress", Eastern European Economics (New York), vol.20, Fall 1981, p.11.

27 Bialer, n.1, p.525.

28 New York Times, 25 April 1981, p.3.

inflation exceeding 8 per cent indicating a total failure of the economy.²⁹

Thus, by the end of 1980, all the indicators representing the economic development showed a marked downward trend. Following is the account of Poland's economic development in the period 1971-80:

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29 Andrzej Korbonski, "Victim or Villain", in Maurice D. Simon and Roger E. Kanet (eds.), Background to Crisis: Policy and Politics in Gierek's Poland (Boulder, Colorado, West View, 1981), pp.34-67. For a further discussion of the impact of external economic developments on Polish economy, see S. McInnes, W. McGrath and P.J. Pontichnyj (eds.), The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into the 1980s (Oakville, Ont., Mosaic, 1978), pp.309-23; David M. Kemme, "Polish Economic Collapse: Contributing Factors and Economic Costs", Journal of Comparative Economics (London), vol.8, March 1984, pp.25-40.

Fundamental Indicators of Economic Development, 1971-1980

	(Percentage increase with respect to previous years at constant prices)									
	1971	1972	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978	1979	1980
1. National income produced	08.1	10.6	10.8	10.4	09.0	06.8	05.0	03.0	-2.3	-5.4
2. National income distributed	09.8	12.7	14.3	12.1	10.9	07.0	02.7	00.7	-3.4	-5.9
3. Industrial production sold	08.8	10.2	11.0	11.3	11.0	08.3	06.3	03.6	1.9	-1.2
4. Gross agricultural output	03.6	08.4	07.3	01.6	-2.1	-1.1	01.4	04.1	-1.5	-10.7
5. Exports	06.2	15.5	11.6	12.3	08.3	04.4	08.0	05.7	6.8	-4.2
6. Imports	14.0	21.8	22.8	14.9	04.4	09.6	-00.1	01.7	-0.9	-1.7
<u>Economic Effectiveness</u>										
7. Productivity of fixed capital*	01.8	03.8	03.0	01.0	-1.1	-2.6	-4.3	-5.6	-9.6	-11.0
8. Labour productivity**	06.9	08.6	09.6	08.2	08.3	07.7	05.0	03.3	-1.5	-04.0
9. Fixed capital per man	04.9	04.6	05.9	07.1	09.4	10.6	09.7	09.5	8.9	8.0
10. Difference between labour productivity growth and growth of capital per man	+2.0	+4.0	+3.1	+1.1	-1.1	-1.9	-4.7	-6.2	-10.4	-12.0
<u>Structure of % income shares</u>										
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
-Consumption	72.5	70.4	67.0	64.4	64.8	65.9	68.5	69.2	73.8	79.8
-accumulation	27.5	29.6	33.0	35.6	35.2	34.1	31.5	30.8	26.2	20.2

Notes: * income produced per unit of fixed capital. ** in the sphere of material production.

Source: Dominico Mario Nuti, "The Polish Crisis: Economic Factors and Constraints", in (ed.), Jan Drownoski, Crisis in the East European Economy. The Spread of the Polish Disease (London, Croom & Helm, 1982), p.20.

Crisis in Political Authority and Growth of Political Dissent

Parallel to Poland's economic crisis, there also came to exist a political crisis as the Party became totally divorced from the realities of the every day Polish life. After 1974, the Party moved ^{towards} greater ideological and political orthodoxy. Gierek had the ambition to make Poland second in the Warsaw Pact, after the USSR, in building a communist state. To this end, he launched a campaign to strengthen the ideological commitment of communist party members regarding Poland's ties with the Soviet Union. Towards the end of 1975, he amended the Constitution to 'reflect the socialist character of the state, to specify the leading role of the PUMP and to express Poland's eternal friendship with the USSR'.³⁰ In addition, a vague statement that 'citizens should honestly and conscientiously fulfil their duties toward their motherland' was also added.³¹ This, along with the government's faulty policy-making, gave impetus to political dissent, already present in the country since 1968.³² Widespread inefficiency,

30 Nicholas G. Andrews, n.13, pp.15-17.

31 Ibid.

32 Jan B. de Weydenthal, "Party Development in Contemporary Poland", East European Quarterly (Boulder, Co.), vol. 11, no. 3, September 1977, pp. 217; also P. Raina, Political Opposition in Poland, 1954-1977 (London, Poets and Painters, 1978).

bureaucratic stagnation as well as leadership's stifling of the right of expression and objections regarding the relationship between the Party and the working class or the State and the economy,³³ were other factors that led to dissatisfaction within the Party and among the workers, intellectuals and the Church.

After the 1976 workers' uprising, the political activists joined together to fight on behalf of the accused workers who had no resources with them to defend themselves against the state directed oppression. Thus in September 1976, a dissident organisation of the intellectuals called Committee to Defend Workers' Rights (KSS/KOR) was formed and in March 1977, another national body - 'Movement for the Defence of Human and Civil Rights' (ROPCIO) also came up.³⁴ around the same time. The basic motive of these organisations was the same: to achieve the gradual democratization of the Polish society.³⁵ The government had to submit to the demands of KSS/KOR. By the end of June 1977, all workers, who had been sentenced to jail, were released. KOR carried on

33 The first traces of opposition within the Party appeared in 1977, when leading party members like former First Secretary Edward Ochab along with others sent in an open letter addressed to Gierk criticizing his style of rule and calling for a broad public discussion on social and economic difficulties.
 Y/ Hedenthal, n.11, pp.52-56.

34 Abraham Brumberg, "The Revolt of the Workers", Dissent (New York), vol.28, no.1, pp.23; For further discussion on KSS/KOR, see Robert Zuzowski "KOR and the transformation of Polish politics in the 1970s", Politics (London), vol.21, November 1986, pp.33-5;

35 Ibid., pp.24-25, also Adam Michnik, "The New Evolutionism", Survey (London), no.100-101, Summer/Autumn, 1976, pp.52-83.

a vast campaign of appealing to the masses denouncing the behaviour of the authorities. Its success in attracting the attention of foreign journalists and media to the developments in the country also served to inform Polish people as they listened to the foreign broadcasts relayed back to Poland.

At the same time, it was also the influence of the world-wide emphasis upon human rights recognized in the Final Act of the Helsinki Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) in 1975 that encouraged the dissidents to carry on a struggle for civil and human rights. At the same time, Helsinki Final Act and its recognition by Poland also restricted the government from crushing the political dissent.³⁶

By 1977, Poland cultivated a whole 'opposition counter-culture' without a parallel in the entire Soviet bloc. The diverse intellectuals, now together under KSS/KOR, included apart from about fifteen leading Polish intellectuals, the students who had fought the regime in 1966-68, former communists and members of pre-war Polish Socialist Party (PPS) like Edward Lipinski, a Professor of Economics, former proteges of the Stalinist regime like novelist Jerzy Andrzejewski, former victims of show-trials in the Stalin and Post-Stalin eras like Antoni Pajdak and almost five veterans of the Russian war of 1920

36 Adam Bromke, "The Opposition in Poland", Problems of Communism (Washington, D.C.), vol.27, September-October 1978, pp.39-44.

and thirteen others who had resisted the Nazi occupation.³⁷ They published two uncensored literary magazines and ten uncensored journals of opinions. Their newspaper was named 'Robotnik' (The Worker) and in 1979 for the first time, dissidents expressed the demands of the workers specifically in the form of a 'Charter of Workers' Rights'. This later became the framework on which the demands of the Solidarity were laid out.³⁸

In January 1978, the 'Flying University' or the Association of Scientific Courses (TKN) was founded. 'Flying University' held unofficial seminars in private flats on all such areas of Polish life and history that were officially decreed as taboos and banished. They were addressed by dissident activists like Jacek Kuron, Edward Lipinski and Adam Michnik.³⁹

Apart from these two nationally acclaimed dissident organisations, there were also regional dissident groups like The Students For a Democratic Society, the Confederation of Independent Poland

37 Timothy Garton Ash, The Polish Revolution: Solidarnosc (London, Hodder and Soughton, 1985), pp.17-19.

38 The demands were - wages to be linked with inflation, to be well above the assessed social minimum, a 40-hour work week with an end to the weekend working for miners and workers, job-security, medical facilities, open and equal sharing of material privileges and guaranteeing of the right to strike. If we scan the Gdansk Agreement (August 1980) between the Solidarity and the regime, we would see a striking resemblance between the two charters.

39 For more details see Joseph Kay, "The Political Opposition", Survey (London), vol.24, no.4, Autumn 1979, pp.7-20.

(KPN), The Polish League for Independence (PPN), and the Free Traders' Union on the Coast. The latter was founded at Gdansk in May 1978 and had Andrzej Gwiazda, Bogdan Borusewicz and Lech Walesa as its leaders. All of these later became the leaders of the Solidarity movement also. They published their own edition of 'Robotnik' and circulated it at the factory gates and churches. The aim of these groups was also the establishment of a Polish Republic free from Soviet domination and the dictatorship of the Polish United Workers' Party.⁴⁰

Thus we find that the process of expansion of public opposition began in stages with the establishment of ^{the} Committee of Social Self-Defence (KSS/KOR) in 1976. From 1976-1979, the movement adopted an international outlook in the sense that these opposition groups and individual dissenters tried to communicate with and assist similar movements in other East European countries and there was a constant and broad flow of contacts between the Polish dissenting groups and the West.

Secondly, upto 1976, the uprisings had been unorganised manoeuvres by the workers or the students and intellectuals as separate units. After 1976 riots, we find, that the intellectuals brought all the segments together and provided them with a proper leadership and a precisely systematic programme of action. Inflow of western ideas, Carter's human rights policy and the support of Church added more

40 Ash, n.36, pp.15-20.

confidence to these dissenting groups.

Thirdly, the Administration showed a passive tolerance of the dissident opposition that was getting more active with each day. Besides the technical infeasibility of repression, the major restraining factors were the impact of detente and the Church.

It is well-established that Gierek was over-enthusiastic to promote the East-West detente to uplift the economic condition of Poland. At the altar of detente, he had to sacrifice his ambition to crush the movement towards more democratisation. By 1977, Gierek had realised the dismal state of economy while the 'Helsinki Process' was in full swing and ^{the} Carter Administration made 'linkages' between the economic and human rights components of detente. In his visit to Warsaw in 1977, President Carter praised the Polish record on human rights and the religious tolerance and in the next breath announced a further grant of \$200 million of US credit to Poland.⁴¹ This exhibited the linkage policy that the US was following. It had its necessary impact - Gierek Administration abused, harassed, dismissed and detained the activists but not for a period longer than forty-eight hours.

Challenge from the Church

Church also acted as a restraining factor on the Government's attitude. The Roman Catholic Church has been a powerful institution

41 Ibid., p.19.

and a guiding force of the nation, closely linked with the historical and political destiny for centuries.⁴² After the Sovietization, the State tried to restrict and subvert the Episcopate.⁴³ But with a division within the church (between those who were ready to support the Communist government and joined under 'Pax' and those who were not willing to accept the communist rule) in 1956, the lay Catholics and the clergy felt the need for compromise with the government. As a result from 1957 onwards Church showed readiness to negotiate and collaborate with the government.⁴⁴ But for this exception, the Church and party in socialist Poland have always been in a state of conflict due to state's hostility to religion as a value system fundamentally opposed to its own ideology. The political essence of this relationship has been often cited as "a perpetually competitive ideological force juxtaposed to the party and the state".⁴⁵

42 Hansjakob Stehle, "Church and Pope in the Polish Crisis", World Today (London), vol.38, April 1982, p.139.

43 As a part of this policy, the State cancelled the privileges of the Church and abolished Catholic schools and religious instructions. The social activities of the Church were curtailed and its property heavily taxed. Many priests were arrested and Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, the Primate was exiled to a convent - Anna Kamiska, "The Polish Pope and the Polish Catholic Church", Survey (London), vol.24, Autumn 1979, pp.204-207.

44 At this stage, even the Gomulka government gave seats to the Catholic parliamentary faction 'Znak' some seats in the Polish Parliament (Sejm).

45 Weydenthal, n.11, p.65.

The controversy between the Church and the State flared up once again with the constitutional amendment in December 1975 legitimizing the leading role of the communist party in all aspects of public life.⁴⁶ Following the 1976 riots, the Church came out openly against the government. The priests sent sermons and pastoral letters to the government against the maltreatment of workers. The Primate pointed out,

...it is the clergy's duty to defend the workers' interest against hasty and ill-considered government measures...it was painful that the workers should have to struggle for their rights against a workers' government.⁴⁷

With this, there came to exist a rapprochement between the Church and the dissidents. Catholic priests became founders of many opposition groups. During 1977, the Church leaders criticized the government's human rights' policy.⁴⁸ Initially, the government ignored the Church-dissident linkage and moved toward negotiations.⁴⁹ The Party had to withdraw its plan for educational reforms and children were allowed, if they wished, to go to the Church for their weekly

46 Although during the 1968 uprising also, Poland's leading cardinals Karl Wojtyla of Cracow and the Primate, Stefan Wysyznski - on the basis of civil and individual rights had implored the state to respect individual rights to life of dignity, the right to freedom, the right to participate in public life etc.

47 George Blazynski, Flashpoint Poland (Oxford, Pergamon, 1979), p.275.

48 For a further discussion on the role of Church, see Leszek Kolakowski and Jan Gross, "Church and Democracy in Poland: Two Views", Dissent (New York), vol.27, Summer 1980, pp.316-322.

49 The State took steps to meet some of the demands of the Catholic Church. In May 1979, after an obstruction of 20 years, the government allowed the construction of a Church in Nowa Huta and in October 1977, Gierak met Cardinal Wyzynski to confer on problems 'of the nation and the Church', Weydenthal, n.11, pp.68-70.

religious instructions. But it showed hesitation over the two major demands of the Church - more access to the state -- controlled media and acceptance of the Church as a legitimate voice in the state affairs affecting social morality and the welfare of youth.⁵⁰ This concern was voiced by Cardinal Wojtyla (later Pope John Paul-II) in his public address during Corpus Christi celebrations on 1 June, 1978:

...Being such a vast community, a community almost as great as the nation itself, we cannot be outside the law. Definition of the legal status of the Church is, at the same time, definition of our place, all our rights, everything that originates in the concept of the freedom of religion, recognized in the whole world and declared in international documents.⁵¹

The other demands included freedom of associations for Catholic youths, equal career opportunities in all professions and lifting of the state censorship.⁵² In a blatant manner, the Primate professed:

The Polish people are being told a lie. But they understand the importance of knowing the truth in spite of all the distortions and falsifications fabricated by the propaganda to which they are exposed. It is the Church that has the right to tell the individuals who wield power the truth, the bitter truth. The Church does not fight against them, but against their errors and sins, against the injustice and damage being done by them.⁵³

50 The Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 18 October 1978, p.4; J. Nowak, "The Church in Poland", Problems of Communism (Washington D. C.), vol.32, November-December 1982, pp.24-37.

51 Weydenthal, n.11, p.71.

52 Kamiska, n.43, pp.216-221.

53 Ibid., p.220.

statements of this sort, from an institution which was held in reverence by almost 30 out of 35 million people of Poland, on the one hand exhibited the Church's opposition to the government policies while on the other hand, it also drew the common man away from the administration making him conscious of ^{the} 'errors' of the government.

The finale was reached in 1979, when Cardinal Wojtyla was elected as Pope John Paul-II and he visited Poland giving sermons on the need to protect the universal right to religious liberty. He inspired self-respect, renewed faith, a sense of pride and a new consciousness among the Poles of their unity.⁵⁴

From this time onwards, the dichotomy between the 'society' and the 'power' or the 'state' became more than an intellectual concept. It engulfed the workers, the common man - in short, all the Catholic population (which is 90 per cent of Poland's total population).

Dissatisfaction Among the Farmers

In Poland, despite ~~the~~ socialism, majority of agriculture is privately owned. The government supported, however, the state-farms and co-operative farming in spite of the fact that the major produce was contributed by the private sector. In contrast to less than 1,500 state owned farms, there were almost 3,065 private farms in

54 Hansjakob Stehle, "Can the Church Point the Way", World Today, (London), vol.41, February 1985, pp.40-44.

1978.⁵⁵ During the 1950s there appeared to be some possibility of a change in policy of the government toward the private sector, and Poland became a major food exporter during the 1950s.⁵⁶

In 1974, Gierek changed his agricultural policy just as the farmers had begun to reap the fruits of the favourable policy followed during the fifties and sixties. The Party reduced investments in agriculture from 16.2 per cent in 1970 to 13.4 per cent in 1975. Over 70 per cent of the budgetary allocations were extended to the state-owned co-operative sector which held less than 25 per cent Poland's agricultural land. The share of private farms in land-use fell from 84 per cent in 1970 to 74.5 per cent in 1980, while the share of the socialized sector of agriculture rose from 16 per cent in 1970 to 26.5 percent in 1980.⁵⁷ Even the distribution of land to the private farmers by the State Land Fund for indefinite use dropped considerably. The government increased the taxes on specialised private farms. Hence, the rural population was utterly disappointed with the state.

55 William J. Newcomb, "Polish Agriculture: Policy and Performance", in Poland 1980: An East European Economic Country Study submitted to the US Joint Economic Congress Committee (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), 1 September 1980, p.11.

56 Karl Weber and Cara Baker, n.10, p.83.

57 Andrews, n.13, pp.16-17.

Thus, by 1979 on the one hand, one finds a tacit alliance between the workers, intelligentsia, the church and the farmers unprecedented in the history of Poland and unique in the Soviet bloc, and unseen even in the West, which was to later grow into a strong movement of Solidarity. On the other hand, the conditions were worsening. Even trade with the West declined to 34.6 per cent in 1979, as Poland tried to reduce its deficit with the former. Public disenchantment with government policies was increasing with each passing day. Howsoever much the Party might have tried to hide the facts from the media, everyone was aware of a sharp decline in their standards of living. Queues increased in length at meat shops as the supply failed to keep pace with the demand. The frustration was given vent in verses composed by Poles while waiting in queues for commodities at stores. One ran:

One Pole is Pope of Rome
 Another helps run Carter's show
 Some kneel in homage to Uncle Brezhnev
 The rest queue in sunshine, rain or snow.⁵⁸

Coal miners, under pressure to increase the output at all costs, were agitated at the three-shift, round the clock system which increased the casualties in accidents and left them with just one free Sunday per month. The party had lost all faith and credibility among the people. It had become known that the Party and the Government officials at national, regional and local levels were taking advantage of the relaxed moral climate. They were feathering their own nests by using

58 Richard T. Davies, "Politico-Economic Dynamics of Eastern Europe: The Polish Case", in n.55, p.7.

their positions and influence. A new class of privileged and corrupt Party officials were emerging. Gierek and Prime Minister Jarszowicz shunned any opposition to their views. Nor did they want to hear any criticism to their policies. The party structure also came under stress in later 1970s.

As the economy broke down, the shortage became all the more apparent. Working conditions in factories and mines deteriorated; medical care degenerated as the hard currency allocation for imported drugs was reduced. Alcoholism became a national disease. By 1980, one million Poles were alcoholics and 40 per cent of alcohol consumed was at their places of work.⁵⁹ Frustration mounted as these workers came to hear of uneven and unfair distribution of gains. In 1978, a group of about 100 Party and non-party intellectuals met in a discussion forum "Experience and Future Group" (DIP) and tried to reason out the overall dismal situation in the country by presenting analysis and balanced criticism of the Party policies. They issued their views as "Report on the State of the Republic". But it did not have any effect upon the authorities. The group repeated it again in 1980 and even presented suggestions for improving the conditions to avoid an explosion as in 1956 and 1970. But without any concern for the general deterioration, Gierek laid another program in February 1980 at the VIIIth Congress of the PUPP. This included a heavy cut

59 New York Times, 11 September 1980, p.1.

in the 'unnecessary' investments, efforts to balance the trade in 1980, increase in production and better use of untapped resources. Nowhere was any reference to a measure suggesting improvement in the living standards of workers was made. During the first half of 1980, the mood became highly pessimistic. Although the new Prime Minister, Edward Babiuch in his first speech to the Sejm (the Polish Parliament) accepted the necessity for reforms in areas of economic management and state administration and need to control the soaring food prices, including that of meat and sugar nothing more was done and said before 1 July 1980, when the Government announced a steep price rise on meat and meat products. Reaction was immediate in several industrial plants and the workers stopped their work demanding wage increases to cope with the corresponding increase in the prices of food stuffs. In August, the strikes began in the Lenin Shipyards, Gdansk, where the workers took the leadership all through the latter months of the uprising. This developed into a strong movement by October 1980 and invited the world attention to the Polish problem of economy and politics.

CHAPTER THREE

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THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLISH CRISIS

During the Carter Administration, the Polish crisis was in a very premature stage and thus, evoked, a "weak and disorganized" response.¹ This weak and disorganised response should not be taken as a part of the inconsistent American policy in the region, but should be viewed in the light of the various events that took place in 1978-80 on the international and the domestic levels affecting dramatically the US attitude toward the crisis in Poland.

Afghanistan Crisis

In 1978, a Communist led military coup overthrew the monarchical rule in Afghanistan. In the factional tussle that followed, the faction led by Hafizullah Amin overthrew the government of Nur Muhammad Taraki. In December 1979 Hafizullah Amin government itself was overthrown and a new Soviet-backed regime was installed under Barbarak Karmal. Along with Karmal, marched almost 85,000 Soviet troops into Afghanistan.² This meant to the US not only a threat to the security of Iran and Pakistan but also a direct threat to its own

1 Richard T. Davies, "The United States and Poland, 1980-82", The Washington Quarterly (Washington D.C.), Spring 1982, p.143.

2 Keesing's Contemporary Archives (London, Longman, 1980), pp.30229-30243.

security.³ This perception led to a shift in the American policy of continuation of the East-West detente and the policy of human rights. The Carter Administration embarked upon a new policy of containment of the Soviet power, primarily in South-West Asia. Therefore, the focus of its foreign policy shifted from the European theatre to the Asian.⁴

This policy was also in part, a response to the Iranian hostage crisis which overshadowed all other events during 1980. After the deposed Shah of Iran was permitted to undergo medical treatment in the United States, an irate mob seized the American Embassy in Tehran on 4 November 1979 and held 52 diplomats as hostages.⁵ They demanded extradition of the Shah in return for the release of the hostages.

The Afghanistan issue and the collapse of SALT-II had already given enough cause to Carter's critics to assail his failure to

3 See President Carter's statement in Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), vol.16, 14 January 1980, p.41.

4 The new policy of containment involved - (1) American commitment to stop any further Soviet advance in the South-West Asia-Persian Gulf region, buttressed by a series of Political and military steps including an increased military assistance to Pakistan. (2) a diplomatic effort to confront the Soviet power through a further play of the China card, and (3) a renewed stress on building American military power across the board - strategic force as well as the general purpose and Rapid Deployment Forces - See Foreign Affairs, ibid., pp.196-97.

5 Initially, there were 66 hostages but with the release of 14, only 52 hostages were held captive for around 444 days.

maintain a dominant world geopolitical position for the US.' These criticisms⁵ gained in intensity since 1980 was the election year in the United States. In order to save his face, Carter concentrated upon the release of Iranian hostages all through the year.⁶ Despite the Administration's declarations from time to time that the East-West relations would be kept outside the peripheries of the US-Soviet relations,⁷ it was obvious that the ^{E W} east-west detente was losing its former attraction.

Apart from South-West Asia, another region that became significant in the American foreign policy was Central America. The coup in El Salvador, the turmoil in Haiti and the explosive situation in Nicaragua forced the US to focus attention upon this region which lay in proximity to it rather than in areas which were already under the Soviet influence and away from it.

It was against this background, that 'wild-cat' strikes broke out in more than 100 industrial centres in Poland following the

6 "Hostage Crisis: Intractable to the End", President Carter 1980 (Washington D.C., Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1981), pp.21-25.

7 For example, Secretary of State stated twice in March 1980 that, "it is not in our interest, even during a period of heightened tensions, to dismantle the framework of East-West relations constructed over more than a generation". Even Brzezinski reiterated the same hope: "The Administration has been careful to preserve the framework of East-West accommodation even though in recent months it has been stripped to the bone as a result of the Soviet aggression against Afghanistan" - see "US Foreign Policy: Our Broader Strategy, Statement of Cyrus Vance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on 27 March 1980, Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C., Government Publishing Office, 1980), vol.80, May 1980, p.20 and ibid., vol.80, April 1980, p.13; "Brzezinski on Aggression and How to Cope with it", New York Times, 30 March 1980, p.1.

government announcement to raise the prices of meat by 20 per cent to 100 per cent.⁸ But the Polish government managed to negotiate 'variable pay increases' ranging between 12 per cent to 20 per cent and thus avert the crisis. The government granted some \$117 million to the strikers during the first wave of scattered strikes but declined to reduce the prices of meat again.⁹ The only major showdown occurred at Lublin where the agitated workers from a truck and railway plant blocked the railway tracks leading to the Soviet Union. But for this, the workers displayed a restraint and everyone including the Church and dissidents "maintained a low profile". Everyone was aware that "the Soviets were closely monitoring the situation".¹⁰ Unlike 1976 (when a workers' strike had compelled the government to withdraw the price rises), this time the government displayed a firm determination to carry on with the 'restructuring' of the price-index.¹¹

The July strikes did not receive any prominence in the Soviet newspapers. Even the Soviet government observed silence on the strikes. Although this silence might have sprung from the time taken to arrive at a definite strategy as to how to deal with the strikes, yet what seems more apt is that at this stage, even the

8 Newsweek (New York), 18 August 1980, p.31.

9 New York Times, 20 July 1980, I, p.8.

10 Ibid.

11 Ibid., 13 August 1980, p.A-10.

Soviets had not anticipated the 'wildcat' strikes to transform into a strong movement assuming a political role. Secondly, the deteriorating economic conditions in all the bloc countries as well as the Soviet Union itself, must have led the authorities to hide this fact from their own people. In any case, the situation at this stage did not at all invite an interference from the Soviet Union.

Strikes at Lenin Shipyard, Gdansk and the Birth of Solidarity

A major tumult engulfed Poland on 13 August 1980, when the workers laid down their tools to protest against the sacking of one of the shipyard workers.¹² The Committee for the Free Trade Union of the Coast took up the matter and even the Committee for Social Self-Defense (KSS/KOR) supported them. Soon posters made by another radical dissident organisation - Movement of Young Poland - appeared on the city walls. The 17,000 workers of the ship yard, abandoned the work and occupied the shipyards. They were joined in by workers from 17 other local factories, numerous bus drivers and factory workers from other major industrial Centres - Sopot, Gdynia, Szczecin, Elblag, Cracow and the South Silesian region which is considered to be the heart of Poland on account of its coal and iron mines.¹³

12 Labour Focus on Eastern Europe (London), vol.IV, pp.30-31.

13 Time (Chicago), 25 August 1980, p.40.

A thirteen membered Inter-Factory Committee (MKS) was formed at Gdansk on 14 August 1980 which demanded reinstatement of the three shipyard workers,¹⁴ increment in their wages in proportion to the price hike, a normal pay for all strikers for the period of strike, state assurance of no harrassment against the striking workers and their leaders and erection of a morument to commemorate the workers who had lost their lives at Gdansk during the 1970 riots.¹⁵ The government attempted a compromise with the striking workers at Gdansk by accepting all demands. But the workers stood in Solidarity - the Gdansk unit rejecting government's offer in favour of strikers all over the country. From henceforth, the strikes were to assume an organised and a well-planned course. After a meeting of delegates from twenty-one striking units, the Inter Factory Strike Committee (MKZ), formed on 16 August 1980, laid down its 'Charter of Demands'. The Church also joined hands with the strikers and the activists.

With the formulation of this Charter of Demands, the nature of the movement became clear. It demanded a greater share in the decision-making on issues affecting their 'vital interests'.

The Party High Command, at this stage, perceived its monopoly being challenged by the workers who had not risen in protest against

14 These included Anna Walentynowicz, Lech Walesa and Andrzej Gwiazda - all of whom became prominent leaders of Solidarity Organisation later on.

15 John Taylor, Five Months With Solidarity (London, Wildwood, 1981), p.27.

the economic decisions of the state but also against the political system of the country. As a first step, the government tried to harass and isolate the MKZ leadership.¹⁶ The government Commission under Deputy Prime Minister Tadeusz Pyka tried to 'divide and rule' the Tri-City Area¹⁷ which had become the seat of all turmoils. Meanwhile, on the insistence of the Politburo, the government tried to appeal to the people not to strike on the ground that the state of economy was dismal and required discipline and hardwork to overcome.

In a major television broadcast on 18 August 1980, Edward Gierek tried to control the agitation by imploring for 'reason' and 'moderation'. Admitting the 'mistakes committed in the economic policies' and a 'lack of progress in the organisation of production and the life of the community' he assured the masses to rectify them in future. At the same time, he also warned the workers against

16 Ash, n.15, pp.48-49; Norman Davies, Heart of Europe: A Short History of Poland (Oxford, Clarendon, 1984), pp.231-33; also see Michael Dobbs and Others, Poland, Solidarity and Walesa (Oxford, Pergamon, 1981), Chapter-II.

17 The Tri-City Area consisted of the three Baltic Cities: Gdansk, Sopot and Gdynia. Gdansk was an important industrial and shipbuilding centre, Gdynia a major Polish Baltic Sea-port and Sopot a tourist centre and an industrial suburb of the other two. Gdansk became the seat of Solidarity later on and the Tri-City Area held a special significance since the Baltic Sea Port workers were the main precipitators and active leaders in the movement. For further information, see New York Times, 19 August 1980, p.8; Guardian (London), 20 August 1980, p.1. Pyka, as the official negotiator announced the willingness of the government to negotiate with

resorting to,

any actions aimed at the foundation of the political and social order in Poland... Only a Socialist Poland can be free and independent state with inviolable borders. There are certain limits beyond which we must not go.¹⁸

As a next step, the government arrested the prominent dissident leaders including Jacek Kuron, Laszek Moczulski (leader of the Confederation of Independent Poland) and many of their supporters. The Soviet Union and all the other East European regimes resumed the jamming of all western broadcasts including the Voice of America, British Broadcasting Corporation and West German news agency - 'Deutsche Welle'.¹⁹

In a final attempt to threaten the strikers, there was a major reshuffle in the Central Committee, in which Prime Minister Babiuch, and two of strong Gierek supporters - Agitprop Chairman Lukaszewicz and the Central Trade Union head Szydlak were replaced by hardliners Olszowski and Tadeusz Grabski, who were known for their strong Soviet tilt. This was termed as 'Sunday Massacre'

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each industrial unit liberally if they disengaged themselves from the dissident organisations - the KSS/KOR. The Young Poland, Free Trade Union of the Coastal Workers and the like. But the scheme flopped as the workers condemned this tactic of the government. As a protest against this policy, around 253 plants came to a standstill involving over one lakh employees from 20 August 1980 onwards. Pyka had to pay for this tactic. He was replaced by Mieczyslaw Jagielski as the government negotiator.

18 Time, 1 September 1980, p.21.

19 The jamming of the western broadcasts had stopped after 1974 as a sign and product of the development of detente. See Newsweek, 1 Sept. 1980, p.10; New York Times, 21 August 1980, p.1 and ibid., p.12; The Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 1 Sept. 1980, p.30.

of 24 August 1980.²⁰

However, even this failed to yield any results and the government had to accept the demands of the workers. On 30 August 1980, Szczecin workers entered into an agreement followed by the historic 'Gdansk Agreements' that were concluded on 31 August 1980 at Gdansk.²¹ By virtue of these agreements, the government recognized the right of the workers to 'self governing trade unions as the authentic representatives of the working class'. Thus, from 31 August 1980 SOLIDARITY - the free trade union of the Polish workers was launched.²²

- 20 For details on the 'Sunday Massacre' see Facts on File (New York), 29 August 1980, p.640. The Sunday Massacre brought two vital facts of the Polish domestic politics to the foreground. Firstly, the existing rift between the moderates and the hardliners during the IV Plenum meet and secondly, it signified that Gierak, who was a moderate himself, was losing the confidence and support of Moscovite leaders who wanted a 'hard line' policy to be adopted towards the crisis.
- 21 For further details, see New York Times, 31 August 1980; Neal Acheson, The Polish August: A Self-Limiting Revolution (New York, Viking, 1982), pp.168-172; Ash, n.16, Chapter-II; Kevin Ruane, The Polish Challenge, 1980-81 (London, BBC, 1985), Chapter I and II; Nicholas Andrews, Poland 1980-81 (Washington, D.C., National Defense University, 1985), Chapter II.
- 22 SOLIDARITY comprised of 13 Inter Factory Committees (MKSS) and enjoyed a total membership ranging between 8-10 million. Formally, the organisation was launched on 17 September 1980 when the delegates met and decided over the structure and organisation of the body. Gdansk was to be the headquarters of SOLIDARITY and Lech Waleza, the 41-year old electrician from Lenin Shipyard, Gdansk was elected as the leader unanimously. The political activists like Jacek Kuron, Adam Michnik, and Lipinski were already supporting the movement. Even the Church gave its blessings to the newly founded trade union movement. For further infrastructure of SOLIDARITY see Ash, n.16, pp.65-70.

Gdansk Agreements and the Soviet Response

Although the Soviet press and the government did not comment on the Polish situation until 20 August 1980, they were not totally unaware of the developments that were taking place. As soon as on 31 July 1980, Gierek reportedly met the Soviet Premier Leonoid I. Brezhnev at Crimea, where they discussed the strikes and the possible means to curb them. Evidently right from the beginning the Soviets had wanted Gierek to adopt a 'firm policy line'. It was for this reason that the Polish government declared on 12 August, that the 'restructuring' would continue.²³ Even at the outbreak of Gdansk strikes, Gierek was in the Soviet Union. But till then the Soviets wanted the issue to be settled through means other than force.

The first reaction of the Soviets which signified that they regarded Polish situation as serious came in the form of the jamming of the western broadcast to Soviet Union and Eastern Europe in a 'defensive measure'.²⁴ Further, the Soviet media launched a propaganda campaign against "the anti-socialist forces" seeking to subvert Poland. On 27 August TASS expressed its concern that anti-social activities were pushing Poland off the socialist road'. Pravda and Izvestia too accused the leaders of the workers as "leaders of illegal trade unions and anti-socialist elements". The

23 New York Times, 13 August 1980, p.A-10.

24 Ibid., 19 August 1980, p.A-9.

East European news media followed the Soviet line and condemned the movement as anti-socialist upsurge championed by the people supported by the West.²⁵

The Soviet media accused the West of supporting and helping the dissident activities in Poland. But broadly speaking, the Soviet Union chose to stay in the background. It had not worked out a definite strategy regarding Poland. What ^tis wanted was that the Poles should come out with a Polish solution to the crisis. It was only when it found that Gierak was unable to control the crisis, that it began to back 'hardliners' in the Central Committee.

Meanwhile, the US and the West were also closely monitoring the situation in Poland "with a mixture of sympathetic concern and apprehension". But there was no official comment from the US Government. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, the Carter Administration was too cautious as it had to face the elections just after two months. Furthermore, it was preoccupied with the hostage crisis. This accounted for a delay in working out a strategy on Poland. Secondly, the US wanted to avoid anything which might encourage the Polish people to think that it would materially support them. The rebels in 1956 in Hungary had, it was alleged, drawn hope from the statements by the then US President and the State Department.

25 See, Acts on File, 1980, pp.641-643.

Thirdly, the US sincerely wanted to avoid antagonizing the Soviet Union in any way that might provoke it to intervene. The US officials did admit that majority of the East European countries were clamouring to emerge out of the shadow of the Soviet Union but the political reality decreed that "they live where they live with a big neighbour".²⁶

However, SOLIDARITY and the workers' movement was acquiring an international dimension. The first hint that the Polish question had once again become important in U.S.-Soviet relations was given by Marshal D. Shulman, State Department's Chief Expert on U.S. - Soviet relations. He said that the U.S.-Soviet relations had reached their 'lowest' point intensifying chances of a nuclear war. The greatest danger lay in Eastern Europe during 1980.²⁷

On 7 August 1980, Secretary of State Edmund Muskie who had succeeded Cyrus Vance, addressing the United Steel Workers of America in Los Angeles, said that human freedom was

...America's vision. First is the freedom of nations; second, the political freedom of people within nations; third, freedom from poverty and human misery. A narrower approach, an approach which ignores the hopes and needs of people within nations, cannot succeed. For it would ignore the political stirring of humanity, the current of human freedom that is gaining strength in the world. And when peaceful change is frustrated, violent and radical change can explode in a storm that damages

26 Quoted by Robert L. Barry, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State in New York Times, 24 August 1980, IV, p.1.

America's interests and creates opportunities for our adversaries.²⁸

The attitude of the Carter Administration however was totally different. It was determined to treat the Polish crisis as an internal matter of the Poles.

There was every possibility that the Polish issue would be exploited for partisan purposes in the election because of a large East European ethnic minority vote in the United States. The State Department spokesman, David Passage declared on 20 August 1980 that the strikes were "a matter for the Polish people and the authorities to work out". This was the general attitude of the US government. In an interview to the Boston Globe on 21 August 1980, President Carter reiterated that the Polish crisis was an internal matter of Poland and expressed his hope that there would be no "further Soviet involvement in Polish affairs".²⁹ On the following day, the US Secretary of State Edmund Muskie asserted similarly that the "internal problems" in Poland were 'for the Polish people and their authorities to resolve'. This principle of non-interference in Polish affairs remained at the heart of all major foreign policy decisions during the remaining months of the Administration. Except for the voicing of grave 'concern' over the violation of human rights arising out of the arrest of the dissidents and the violation of Helsinki Accords

28 Richard T. Davies, "United States and Poland, 1980-82", The Washington Quarterly (Washington D.C.), Spring 1982, p.145.

29 New York Times, 23 August 1980, p.6.

by the jamming of the Western broadcasts, the United States refrained from making any provocative statements that could provide the Soviets with a chance to accuse the US of interfering in the Polish affairs.³⁰

The statements made from time to time highlighted ^{one} ~~the~~ fact: that the United States had no "realistic option" for responding to the situation developing in Poland. That, Poland would meet the same fate as Hungary did in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 because of the inability of the US to take any effective step, was hinted by a US foreign policy analyst who reportedly said: "We have seen so many of these situations since World War II, and no administration has been able to do anything in the way of an effective response".³¹

The only organisation that declared its absolute support and was severely criticised by the government quarters was the American Federation of Labour and Congress of Industrial Organization (AFL-CIO).

30 Editorials on File (New York), 1980, p.964. This can also be judged from the fact that on 30 August 1980, when it was clear that the Polish government would recognize the free trade unions in Poland, the US Secretary of State Muskie with a belief that the situation was getting normal in Poland, repeated the US attitude - "Washington would refrain from any words or actions" that might complicate the matters. The statement had come after a meeting between Carter, Muskie, Brzezinski, and other senior officials at the White House, Department of State Bulletin (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), October 1980, p.32.

31 Time (Chicago), 1 September 1980, p.29; same idea has been pointed out in US News and World Reports (Washington, D.C.), 8 September, 1980, p.34.

Its President Lane Kirkland declared the organization's fraternity to the striking Polish workers and immediately after this, the President of the International Long Shoremen's Association, Thomas Gleason declared that his organisation would refuse to 'load or unload' any ships going to or coming from Poland. Both the associations initiated a move for the free-world boycott of Polish goods and an aid package of \$250,000 million.³²

This met with a strong disapproval of the American government. On 3 September 1980, in the face of the political stirring of the Polish people, Muskie warned President Kirkland against any plans to extend material assistance to SOLIDARITY whose leader, Lech Walesa, was appealing for help from abroad. Just like Dean Rusk in July 1968, Muskie reportedly informed the Soviet Ambassador to the United States Dobrynin of his warning as an evidence of the earnest intention of the US government of not being "involved in the Polish situation".³³

The major US newspapers also supported the Carter Administration in its policy of non-interference. Sentinel Star (Orlando, Fla.), in its editorial of 19 August 1980 said that in future if the Soviets decided to crush the Polish workers' demand for food and freedom, the US should ensure that the Soviets were excoriated at

32 New York Times, 28 August 1980, p.7.

33 Richard T. Davies, n.29, p.145.

every turn and further cut off from Poland.³⁴ The Detroit-Free Press (Detroit, Mich.) wrote "...at this point the United States can only be a sympathetic bystander, careful with its words and sensitive to the fact that what we do could contribute to others' bloodshed".³⁵ Even the Miami Herald (Miami, Flo.) advised that if the Americans truly wished to contribute to the Polish cause, the best thing that they could do was to "refrain from all involvement."³⁶ Poland might have appeared a very favourable place to the US for initiating a dent in the East European 'Cordon Solitaire' of the USSR but it was also aware of the political realities of the region. Poland was not as big a stake to risk an open confrontation with the USSR.

However, some of the newspapers voiced a strong opposition to the "inactive" policy response of the Carter Administration. The St. Louis Globe-Democrat (St. Louis, Mo.) condemned the government and asserted that the "US should have the guts to call world attention to the Communists' failure to line up to the Helsinki Pact".³⁷ At the Helsinki Conference in 1975, the governments of Europe (including Poland) had pledged to protect the human rights of their people. But the same were being denied to

34 Editorial on File (New York), 1980, p.968.

35 Ibid., p.970.

36 Ibid., p.972.

37 Ibid., p.968.

the Polish people. The New Republic deplored the hypocrisy of Carter's policy of human rights. Just four days after a dynamic speech by President Carter on 17 August 1980 at Madison Square Garden, New York in which he proclaimed: "As long as I am President, we will hold high the banner of human rights", But the State Department's official spokesman David Passage declared that the domestic problems in Poland were a matter for Polish people and the authorities to resolve. This clearly showed, The New Republic pointed out, the hollowness of the 'human rights banner'. It went on to assail the argument being advanced by the government that it was being cautious in not speaking out in support of the Polish strikers just like Pope John Paul-II and the Polish Church. Said The New Republic that while the latter's official silence "masked intense involvement" in the Polish crisis, that of the US only signified one thing: "its incapability in affecting the situation in Poland either publicly or privately".³⁸

Displaying further inconsistency, just nine days after Muskie's warning to the AFL-CIO against extension of material aid to Poland, on 12 September 1980, President Carter announced that he had approved the extension of \$670 million in Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) credit guarantees to the Polish government, as a

38 Editorial, "Help the Poles", The New Republic (Washington, D.C.), 30 August 1980, pp.5-7.

sign of "solidarity between the American people and the Polish people".³⁹ Addressing the 100th Anniversary dinner of the Polish National Alliance (PNA) in Chicago on 20 September, the President stated,

Poland needs food. That's why I ordered quick approval of Poland's full request of \$670 million in new credit guarantees for four million tons of American grain and other farm products. This is the largest such guarantee we have ever made.⁴⁰

The Carter Administration was trying to help the Gierek Administration economically. Co-ordinated by the Bank of America International Group, a consortium of the western banks granted a loan of \$325 millions at the end of August 1980. Another consortium of the West German Banks also proposed an aid of £650 millions to the Poles in August.⁴¹

This appeared, however, to be done under the pressure of the approaching elections. Poland did appear as an issue in the elections. In his campaign speeches, President Carter said that the US was "inspired and gratified" by the victory of the Polish workers. The Republican candidate, President Ronald Reagan, on his part, spoke about the "American model" of labour organisation favoured

39 Department of State Bulletin (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1980), October 1980, p.34.

40 Davies, n.29, p.145.

41 See, Facts on File (New York), 22 August 1980, p.642; and New York Times, 22 August 1980, p.A-3; Financial Times (London), 23 August 1980, p.16.

by the Polish workers and presented ^{the} father of Polish strike leader Lech Walesa on the podium applauding his son's "courage".⁴² This was in sharp contrast to Muskie's statement that the US would refrain from any comment or act which might complicate Poland's difficulties. But this had to be expected since the Polish American ethnic minority forms the seventh largest minority and the largest among the East-European ethnic group with nearly two million voters scattered all over the Eastern and north-eastern part of the United States. These Polish Americans were expressing 'anxiety' at events occurring in their native land. Rallies were held at Chicago, Manhattan, New York, Wheaton and many other cities of north-eastern United States. In the rally at Chicago, the Presidential aide Stephen Aiello had to assure the Polish Americans that the US would see that the crisis was resolved within the context of the human rights accord signed at Helsinki.⁴³ The President of the Roman Catholic Church Joseph Drobot had already expressed his dissatisfaction with the handling of the crisis by the State Department. Even the President of the Polish American Congress (PAC) in his letter to the President had voiced concern over the violation of human rights in Poland.⁴⁴

42 Editorial, "Poland and the West", Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 8 September 1980, p.34.

43 New York Times, 24 August 1980, p.22.

44 Ibid., 26 August 1980, p.18.

The fact remained that the United States had not evolved any plans for Poland in case of a Soviet interference. It did not see any urgency over the crisis since there was no inter agency task force formed to monitor the events in Poland as was usually done.

Fears of Soviet Intervention

Meanwhile in Poland, the focus of influence in the framework of social activities was shifting away from the Party's control and going in the hands of new groups, particularly workers' who were emerging as separate force in the Polish social, political and economic life.⁴⁵ The signing of the Gdansk Agreement, viewed as "the most significant development in Eastern Europe since the Second World War" (Milovan Djilas),⁴⁶ brought about a fundamental shift in the internal balance of power structure in Poland. The Party was totally relegated to the background, while SOLIDARITY, along with the dissident intellectuals and the Church manipulated the political scene. This was an unhappy development as far as the Soviet Union was concerned. It signified that the Communist ideology of the dictatorship of the proletariat was proving to be a fallacy. From this point, the West, particularly the United States, began to worry about the possible Soviet intervention.

45 Jan B. de Weydenthal, "Workers and Party in Poland", Problems of Communism (London), vol.39, November-December 1980, p.13.

46 Quoted in Ash, n.15, p.48.

On 6 September 1980, Edward Gierek was replaced by Stanislaw Kan' as the new head of the State.⁴⁷ Along with him other members who were opposed to Gierek's policy, were included into the Central Committee e.g. General Moczar, the former Interior Minister in the Gomulka regime. When Kan'ia took over as the First Secretary of the Communist party of Poland, he faced two major challenges - (a) the growing dominance of the Solidarity and (b) how best to strengthen the infrastructure of the Party so as to regain the lost credibility.

Yielding to SOLIDARITY would have led to a loss of credibility of the Party in the Warsaw Pact and the Soviet Union. Moreover, efforts to put aright the mess within the Party (that had come up due to conflict between 'moderate' and hard-liners' during Gierek's last days in office) would not have resolved the economic problems. Therefore, Kan'ia adopted two different approaches - internal and external. Domestically, he attempted to reconsolidate Party's lost position as 'the leading force' in the country while externally he tried to reassure the Soviets that the crisis could be resolved by the Polish Communist Party (PUWP) itself. He also set about to seek economic assistance from the Soviet Union and the Warsaw Pact countries and attempted to apply a modicum of military and political

47 This indicated that in the period to follow, government wanted to adopt a 'hard-line' policy in contrast to Gierek's who was known to be a 'moderate'. Even those included were well-known for their 'hard-line' attitudes regarding any activity driving the country away from the Socialist model. This also marked a punishment to Kan'ia for granting SOLIDARITY a free trade union status.

pressures to intimidate SOLIDARITY.

The Registration Crisis

The first test of the Kania regime took place when the SOLIDARITY appealed for registration to the Warsaw district court on 24 September 1980. The court insisted that SOLIDARITY should include a statement accepting the Polish United Workers' Party (PUWP) as 'the leading force' in the country among its statutes. Solidarity refused to include the clause on the ground that it was a 'political statement' which would have an impact upon the 'independent' working of the trade-unions.⁴⁸

Thus, although the Polish Communist Party had granted the workers the right to form free labour unions in August 1980, its intention was to retain its influence on the form of the unions in future by manipulating the registration process. This also established that the Kania government was not keen upon granting the concession that Gierk had allowed. This idea was backed by the Soviet leadership also, which had never liked the idea of 'free' trade-unions in a Socialist country.

As a protest against this stipulation, Lech Walesa, leader of the SOLIDARITY, declared a 'warning and solidarity' strike for

48 Keesing's Contemporary Archives (London), 1981, p.30717.

3 October 1980 to be followed by a day-long strike on 20 October 1980 if the negotiations did not take place.⁴⁹ The warning strike received a total support in the Baltic Sea ports, Poznan, Wroclaw, Silesia and Warsaw - the leading industrial regions of the country. Although all the four protagonists - the Polish workers, the Polish Communist Party, the Soviet leadership and the Polish Roman Catholic Church - wanted to avert a Soviet invasion, yet the workers were aware of the tremendous cost to the Soviet Union in the world opinion if it sought to crush their movement by force. This fact made them more persistent in their struggle. It was as though the workers were sending message to the authorities: "We have shown that we exist and that we will not allow ourselves to be done over".⁵⁰ The situation became critical when in its judgement, the Court amended several of the trade union statutes and also inserted the clause recognizing PUMP as the leading force. SOLIDARITY accepted the registration but protested against the amendments by appealing to the Supreme Court. Waleza reportedly proclaimed that 'registered or not, the union could and would hold its elections'.⁵¹

As the industrial life of the country remained paralysed, on 30 October the Polish leaders - Stanislaw Kania and Prime Minister

49 Besides this demand, the SOLIDARITY had other demands: increase in workers' wages by 800 zlotys by 30 October, accessibility to the mass media for the trade union and permit formation of new unions in different regions.

50 Sanford, n.49, pp.100-2.

51 New York Times, 18 October 1980, p.3; Christian Science Monitor (Boston), 14 October 1980, p.8.

Josef Pinkowski - went to Moscow to discuss the crisis that had arisen due to the registration process. The Soviet Premier Leonid I. Brezhnev expressed his confidence that "the working people of fraternal Poland will be able to resolve the acute problems facing them..." condemning the efforts of the West to 'reverse the development of People's Poland, push it off the socialist path and recarve the map of Europe'. He warned the West against any involvement in Poland. He said, "We do not encroach on somebody's land and we do not interfere in somebody's internal affairs" but that "we shall always manage to defend our rights and legitimate interests".⁵² This was a clear attack on the extension of aid by the US AFL-CIO and Longshoremens' Association in the month of September 1980. The other East European news media also accused the unions of being "copies of Unions in capitalist countries led by anti-communists with 'imperialist' encouragement and help".⁵³ The West saw in all such events the repetition of 1968 Czechoslovakian case.⁵⁴

52 Keesing's, n.50, p.30721.

53 Christian Science Monitor, 20 October 1980, p.3.

54 In Czechoslovakia in 1968, Brezhnev had first summoned First Secretary Alexander Dubcek to Moscow. The East European press had begun to denounce the 'liberalisation' as the work of the counter-revolutionary forces'. Barely three weeks later, 200,000 Warsaw Pact troops had marched into Czechoslovakia - Time (Chicago), November 10, 1980, p.19; Christian Science Monitor, 20 October 1980, p.3.

However, after his return from Moscow, Stanislaw Kania accepted the demand of the workers to begin negotiations on the unfulfilled demands from the Gdansk Agreement. It sent Deputy Premier Mieczyslaw Jagielski as the Chief government negotiator to Gdansk Shipyards on 31 October for further talks.

On 10 November, the registration crisis ended when the Supreme Court declared the amendments introduced by the district court as null and void. It accepted Solidarity's compromising proposal of including the clause on 'leading role of the PUPP' in the annex of the statutes. The strike scheduled for 12 November was therefore called off. The government granted most of the demands.⁵⁵ On 21 November further victory came in for the SOLIDARITY. The government accepted its demand of weekly hour-long broadcast on Warsaw radio, a shorter work-week and erection of a monument to commemorate the workers who died in the 1970 uprising. On 16 December 1980 outside the Lenin shipyards, Gdansk, a 140-foot high memorial was erected in memory of workers killed in the 1970 riots.⁵⁶

55 For example, in the town of Czestochowa in South Poland, the SOLIDARITY unit was demanding the removal of the governor who had declared a state of emergency. The government accepted this demand and the Governor was dismissed. In another case, on 20 November, state police had arrested two SOLIDARITY activists on charge of publishing a confidential government document relating to "Principles of Action against participants in illegal Anti-Socialist Activity". Under pressure of strikes in Warsaw, the government had to release the political prisoners. Similar incidents took place in the Silesian region also all these strikes were regional in character and the demands were also regional or local in nature. Newsweek, 8 December 1980, p.9, US News and World Reports, 8 December 1980, p.24.

56 Keesing's, n.50, p.30721.

Despite easing of the tension that had been building, strikes broke out from 20 November onwards after the arrest of the two SOLIDARITY activists. This resulted in closing down of almost 30 coal mines in the Silesian region, the textile factories of Lodz and the railway transport in Warsaw and Gdansk. Another dispute had come up between the SOLIDARITY and the government on the distribution of \$6.3 million in pay rises.⁵⁷

Strikes were affecting the economy and the 'socialist' nature of Poland. The tension was building up within the Warsaw Pact and the West. In November, after the transport strike, TASS issued a severe warning: "the threat of a general transport strike...could affect Poland's national and defence interests".⁵⁸ This was an indication that the Soviet Union had begun to take serious note of the events in Poland. It could see that the strikes posed an ideological challenge to the socialist system. This was expected as the Polish United Workers (Communist) Party was rapidly disintegrating. An estimated 7,00,000 communists - almost one-quarter of party's total membership - had already joined SOLIDARITY. Even the official Polish trade-union announced the disbanding of its district committees and central committee. More ominous from the Soviet viewpoint was the spontaneous birth of new local organisations within the Polish

57 The workers alleged that it was being allocated on a formula struck with the older, party-controlled union - See Time, 8 December 1980, p.14, Newsweek, 18 December 1980, p.9.

58 Ibid.

Communist Party itself. These new party groups had begun to demand for free elections of the party officials rejecting the sacred Soviet tenet of 'democratic centralisation' i.e., rigid discipline from top to bottom.⁵⁹ However, it was the new railroad strike that prompted the Soviet warning. A similar warning was issued in July when the Lublin workers had blockaded the Lublin railroad junction in eastern Poland and had halted the rail link between Moscow and its western neighbours. This becomes significant since it implied that the Soviets were extremely sensitive to any threat to communications through Poland to East Germany. Soviet Union dreads the alienation of East Germany or the unification of the two Germanies since this would make Germany strong once again and pose a threat to the Soviet Union.

It was at this juncture, that the Soviet Union launched a campaign against the 'anti-Socialist' elements interested in maintaining the tension. There was an increase in 'bilateral' contacts and unusually high-level meetings between the heads of the states, the foreign ministers and the defence ministers of the Central European states. Since the strikes in July 1980, in addition to talks with Edward Giersek and Stanislaw Kania from time to time, Premier Brezhnev also held a number of meetings with the

59 See "An Anxious NATO Watches for Poland's Last Straw", Christian Science Monitor, 15 December 1980, p.3; for details on this theme see Dobbs and others, n.16, Chapters II and III, Andrews, n.21, Chapter IV.

First Secretaries from Hungary, Czechoslovakia, Rumania and East Germany.⁶⁰

From 15-17 October, the Defence Ministers of the Warsaw Pact countries met at Prague, Yugoslavia to discuss the Polish crisis.⁶¹ This was followed by a meeting of Foreign ministers at Warsaw, Poland. Although the basic aim of this meeting was to carry out the preliminary discussions for the Madrid Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe that was to begin in November, it also considered 'the increase in international tensions' due to "activization of imperialist power politics" by the West. In this meeting, Polish First Secretary Kania assured the Warsaw Pact of Poland's allegiance to the camp.⁶² However, to assist Poland in coping with its sinking economy, the USSR extended a hard currency credit to Poland in December which comprised of \$1.1 billion and assured it of increased trade and aid in future.⁶³ In addition, it had already made a commitment for additional food and industrial supplies totalling to \$690 millions.⁶⁴

60 For details see Keesing's, n.50, pp.30720,30728.

61 Ibid.

62 Ibid.

63 For discussions on the economic and trade aspect of Soviet relationship with Poland during the crisis period, see Robert K. Evanson and James M. Lutz, "Soviet Economic Responses to Crises in Eastern Europe", Orbis (Phil.), vol.27, Spring 1983, pp.59-82.

64 New York Times, 12 September 1980, p.1.

INCREASED MILITARY ACTIVITIES OF THE WARSAW PACT AND THE US RESPONSE

As early as the beginning of November 1980, the Western experts had begun to predict the possibility of a Soviet military intervention in Poland. These fears were confirmed when the Warsaw Pact troops began to mass on and near the Polish borders. Unofficial reports confirmed that the USSR had recalled its reserved troops in the Carpathian region which lay in the immediate South-East of Poland. This region had also been a site of Warsaw Pact Manoeuvres before the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. The Soviet Union disposed off with the usual half-yearly rotation of the 'one-quarter of all Soviet conscripts' until the end of the year.⁶⁶ Soviets troops near the Polish border were reportedly raised from alert level '2' to alert level '6' the highest level of military preparedness. The 19 Soviet divisions in East Germany were reported to be at full strength.⁶⁵ The US intelligence services also recorded a higher concentration of divisions in Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Rumania in a similar state of alert. There was also a massive increase in the air traffic between Soviet Union and Poland along with the communication exercises.⁶⁶

According to reports, in a secret meeting of all the Warsaw Pact countries at Prague, a Warsaw Pact strategy was chalked

65 Christian Science Monitor, 8 December 1980, p.3; International Herald Tribune (Hong Kong), 5 December 1980, p.1.

66 US News & World Reports, 8 December 1980, p.32; also Newsweek 8 December 1980, p.8.

out. The intervention became a possibility due to the fact that the Soviet Union had tried all the tactics to bring the defiant satellite under control, including negotiations, compromising (as can be witnessed from Kania's attitude after his talks with Brezhnev in October when the registration crisis was continuing), intimidation through arrests of political activists etc. The only way left was to apply a military pressure to curb the increasing boldness and militancy of SOLIDARITY in pursuing 'demands for liberalisation'.

The total troop deployment around Poland during this time was estimated at thirty divisions comprising of 3,000,000 men. Out of these, two were stationed at Legnica in South-Eastern Poland, nineteen in East Germany, four in Hungary, five in Czechoslovakia, eleven divisions in Carpathian Soviet Union, another twelve in Byelorussia that was adjacent to Poland and ten in the Soviet Baltic region.⁶⁷

The US East European experts even outlined the probable Soviet military strategy to be adopted in Poland:

...the two Soviet divisions stationed in Poland would quickly try to secure strategic points, notably major airports, so that the infantry and light artillery could be flown in as reinforcements. At the same time, tank forces and motorized infantry would move across

67 New York Times, 29 November 1980, p.6.

the borders from the Soviet Union and East Germany. Soldiers from the satellites would be used sparingly, in case anti-Soviet feeling flared up through the Eastern bloc.⁶⁸

In response to all these heightened activities, the US also upgraded its intelligence surveillance activities on Poland. Along with other western powers, it warned the USSR about the adverse effects of a Soviet invasion on detente and the East-West relations. The outgoing US President Jimmy Carter and the incoming Republican President Ronald Reagan expressed their deep concern over the events in Poland. On 4 December, Jody Powell, the US presidential spokesman warned that 'it would be a serious mistake for any nation to underestimate the will and determination of the USA because its government was in a period of transition'.⁶⁹ However Carter's National Security Adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski expressed his belief that the chances of a Soviet armed intervention in Poland were minimal and a major crisis on national and global levels could be easily averted if all parties displayed greater 'restraint, moderation and cooperation'.⁷⁰

US Consults NATO

Tremors of the crisis in Poland were also felt in the US-led North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO). In a response very different

68 Keesing's, n.50, p.30722.

69 IDSA News Review for Soviet Union and Eastern Europe (New Delhi), November 1980, p.780.

70 The Hindustan Times (New Delhi), 6 December 1980, p.1.

from that in the Afghanistan crisis, the US and the West were resolved to let the Soviet Union know in advance that its military indulgence in Poland would end detente.

In the Second GSCE meeting at Madrid on 11 November 1980, the European Council expressed 'its sympathy to Poland' and pledged to follow the principles of the Helsinki Final Act and the UN charter in observing the right to develop and choose its own political, social and economic system of each country in context of Poland and also to help Poland as far as their resources permitted.⁷¹

In the 'background of growing uncertainty and tension in the international relations', the NATO foreign ministerial meeting (1-2 December 1980) opened at Brussels, Belgium. The US White House had already made clear on 7 December 1980 that "preparations for a possible Soviet intervention in Poland appeared to have been completed". Secretary of State Edmund Muskie declared on 2 December,

We will not interfere in Poland and neither should others. But Poland's people and Poland's leaders can be assured, as they face the formidable tasks that lie ahead that our own people and government will want to offer them both our sympathetic understanding and where this is feasible and proper, our assistance.⁷²

71 Keesing's, n.50, p.30725.

72 Department of State Bulletin, December 1980, p.2.

In the NATO meeting of 9 December 1980 at Brussels, Admiral Robert Falls, Chairman of the NATO Military Committee reported that the Soviet 'Category-C' divisions had been raised to the levels of 'Category-A' divisions which meant that even the 'Category-C' was now fully equipped.⁷³ As a result, it was decided that the Standing Naval Force Atlantic (Stanaforlant) comprising of 5 naval ships would remain in a state of preparedness even through the Christmas time. The US declared on 4 December its decision to provide four AWACS (Airborne Early Warning and Control System) aircrafts to West Germany to react immediately to a crucial situation in Poland.⁷⁴

Poland reacted to these NATO activities for the first time on 4 December 1980 when Josef Klaska, the Central Committee member for media affairs in the Polish United Workers (Communist) Party accused the western powers of deliberately attempting to create an impression that the Soviets were preparing to intervene while the Warsaw Pact was merely preparing for its annual military exercises - "Soyuz-81".⁷⁵

73 Keesing's, n. 50, p.30722.

74 Department of State Bulletin, January 1981, p.5.

75 Keesing's, n. 50.

US Links Polish Issue to the Arms Control Talks

On 29 November, the Soviet news agency Tass, carried out Czech press comparisons of the Polish situation with the Czechoslovakia in 1968. On 2 December 1980, the Soviet Union announced the closure of the Polish-East German border 19 strip to the Westerners.

At this point, the Carter Administration chose to link the Polish issue to the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT-II). Senator Charles Percy (Rep. Ill.), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, in his meeting with the Soviet Premier Brezhnev on 7 December 1980 cautioned him against a Soviet invasion of Poland. He made it clear that, "the use of troops would change the face of the globe. It would call forth an armaments build-up, the likes of which we have not seen since World War-II".⁷⁶ Insisting that 'linkage' was 'a fact of political life', Percy warned the Soviets that an invasion of Poland would mean 'an end to any major agreements between both the Super Powers in future'.⁷⁷

However, in the 5 December Warsaw Pact meeting, the leaders decided against any military action in Poland, giving Stanislaw Kania more time to tackle the situation. On 10 December the Polish-German frontier strip was re-opened. Still, the West was not convinced.

76 Time, 8 December 1980, p.15.

77 Newsweek, 15 December 1980, p.13.

All through the rest of December, Moscow kept on assuring the Poles of their right to turn to their 'fraternal allies' in time of need. The political exchanges between Moscow and Warsaw were frequent. In late December, Stefan Czyrek, the Foreign Minister of Poland, visited Moscow and discussed "the attempts by imperialist and other reactionary circles to undertake subversive action against socialist Poland" with Brezhnev. Polish Deputy Premier Jagielski also visited Moscow at almost the same time to extract further economic assistance.

The US House of Representatives' Intelligence Oversight Committee Report concluded on the basis of available evidence that the chances of a Soviet invasion of Poland were still very high.⁷⁸

However, the US response at this stage contained a strong element of 'deja vu'.⁷⁹ Although there were no military options yet the US support of human rights was stronger in ^{the} Polish case in 1980, than it had been in Czechoslovakian case in 1968.' But this was to be expected from Carter's policy of human rights. On a minute speculation, we find that this protest against the human rights violation in Poland was just an action to prove that the Administration still defended the human rights policy.

78 New York Times, 29 December 1980, p.A-3.

79 Jiri Valenta, "The Explosive Soviet Periphery", Foreign Policy (New York), vol.51, Summer 1983, p.93.

There are indications at the same time that the US was formulating a strategy and a policy for Poland to face the situation unlike the state of helplessness that had resulted at the time of Hungarian and the Czechoslovakian crises. As early as October 1980, Carter administration officials drew up a list of sanctions to be imposed on Moscow if the Soviets invaded. These included severing of diplomatic ties, economic and political punitive measures. When the Soviets massed the Warsaw Pact troops in November-December 1980 and an invasion appeared imminent, President Carter pledged a U.S. economic assistance and stated that although the US did not desire to exploit the crisis to benefit the US, in case of invasion it would see that there are 'most negative consequences for the Soviet relationship with the US. He sent a direct letter to Premier Brezhnev emphasizing that in case of a Soviet military action, America would transfer advanced weapon systems and technology to China.

The Carter Administration also mounted a worldwide campaign to attract world public opinion on Poland, disseminating the Warsaw Pact troop deployment as widely as possible. In his memoirs, the then National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski reveals that on Carter's insistence, he personally consulted Pope John Paul-II, who was constantly in touch with Pope John Paul-II, who was constantly in touch with the SOLIDARITY leaders.⁸⁰ As a result of this US upgradation of its

80 Zbigniew Brzezinski, Power and Principle, Memoirs of the National Security Adviser, 1977-1981 (New York, Farrar Strauss Giroux, 1983), p.

intelligence media that the Soviets found it difficult to present a strategic surprise which had contributed to the success of their mission in Hungary (1956), Czechoslovakia (1968) and Afghanistan (1979). In this context, it might seem plausible that the Carter Administration contributed to the Soviet uncertainties regarding decisions about Warsaw Pact action in Poland. This pre-emptive strategy, at one hand, helped in deterring the use of military option in Poland (if it had existed in Moscow's strategy) while on the other hand, it also pacified the situation in Poland itself by constantly informing the SOLIDARITY leaders and the radicals regarding the chances of an invasion. It also sought to set limitations on the Polish government in two ways - (a) by the threat to end the detente and embark upon a renewed arms race; and (b) by the threat to mobilise the western bankers against Poland regarding any rescheduling of its debts. These threats were insufficient in view of the Soviet stakes in Poland which could have led to the disintegration of the whole Eastern Bloc and posed a challenge to the authority of the party at home.

If a failure to bring about a concrete and truly peaceful resolution of the crisis is seen as a failure of the Carter's foreign policy, it should also be kept in mind that after the crisis began, Carter was in office only for a short period and he was also involved in issues on domestic (e.g., the Presidential elections) and international (like Iranian hostage crisis) levels. A lame duck Administration could not have been expected to make a more committed foreign policy response.

CHAPTER FOUR

Chapter Four

REAGAN ADMINISTRATION AND THE POLISH CRISIS

In his last few months as the President of the United States, Jimmy Carter had tried to contain the crisis in Poland through economic means and by issuing stern warnings in consultation with NATO allies. The Carter Administration officials and many eminent scholars claimed that it was this American promptness in focussing the world attention on Poland that averted a Soviet intervention.¹ Yet when the Reagan Administration took over in January 1981, political and economic conditions were still charged with tension in Poland.

The inability of the Polish regime presented a serious threat to the Soviet interests. The Stanislaw Kania government had so far been unable to stop the growth or curtail the activities of free independent Solidarity organisation. Despite the 'Christmas Truce' called upon by the Solidarity leader Lech Walesa which had given hopes for cooperation and the construction

1 For instance, Jiri Valenta, an authority on East Europe stresses this fact and asserts that due to the US alertness, the USSR could not maintain the secrecy of its military build-up around Poland as it had done in Czechoslovakia in 1968 and in Afghanistan in 1979. Also see, Jiri Valenta, "Soviet Options in Poland", Survival (London), vol.23, March/April 1981, pp.57-58, and Jiri Valenta, "The Explosive Soviet Periphery", Foreign Policy (New York), vol.51, Summer 1981, p.94.

of economy from both the sides, the New Year was marked by sharply deteriorating industrial relations, dissatisfaction among the private farmers on the question of the registration of Rural Solidarity and the academic milieu of the country. At the same time, the First Secretary Stanislaw Kania faced a fierce opposition from within the Party on his policy of "gradual, limited reforms" to encounter the crisis. However, the Party had come to realize that if it wanted to continue with the support of the bloc countries and avert an armed intervention in Poland, it had to re-assert and exercise its control over the Solidarity as the leading force in the country. The first half of 1981 was, therefore, marked by the efforts of the Party to consolidate and assert its supremacy over the rest of the forces while the Solidarity (which till now had shown itself to be the strongest force) began to lose its former unity of purpose and leadership. The second half marked the complete re-emergence of the Party as 'the leading force' and the imposition of martial law in Poland to crush the 'anti-socialist' elements. The beginning of the year was characterized by the worker-state friction on the issue of free Saturdays, the unrest among the farmers on the issue of the legislation of the Rural Solidarity and the students' unrest.

The Issue of Free Saturdays

The demand for a 40 hour, five-day work week had been among the initial demands of the workers made under the Gdansk Agreements

of September, 1980. Although the government had not conceded this right, it had assured the workers of implementing it in 1981.² When the regime refused to implement this, Solidarity called upon the workers throughout the country to participate in a nation-wide boycott on Saturday, 10 January 1981.³ Walesa had received full support for his decision from Pope John Paul-II when he visited the Pope at the Vatican. After the breakdown of negotiations further on 19 and 21 January, Solidarity declared a general strike scheduled for 23 January, compelling the government once again to save its face by compromising upon an average 42-hour week and three Saturdays free in a month for the rest of 1981. It even granted Solidarity one-hour duration television program per week.⁴

The Issue of Rural Solidarity

Even before the industrial Solidarity arose in protest, the private land-owners (totalling between 2.5 million to 3.0 million) were the first to break the temporary peace established by the

- 2 In demanding this, Solidarity cited the Jastrzebi Agreements which according to them, especially laid down the government commitment to all Saturdays and Sunday 'free from work' from 1 January 1981. But the government asserted that the agreement applied only to the miners in the Silesian region. See Jan B. de Weydenthal, Bruce D. Porter and Kevin Devlin, The Polish Drama: 1980-1981 (Lexington, Mass., Lexington 1983), Chapter-II; Nicholas G. Andrews, Solidarity, 1980-82 (Washington, D.C., National Defence University, 1985), Chapter-III.
- 3 This decision was taken after the negotiations between the Union leader Lech Walesa and the Polish Deputy Premier Josef Pinkowski failed to yield any results.
- 4 Keesing's Contemporary Archives, 1981, p.30796, New York Times, 1 February 1981, p.A-1; Time (Chicago), 9 February 1981, p.30 and also Newsweek (New York), 3 February 1981, p.23.

Christmas truce of December 1980. The fundamental demand of these private farmers was the official recognition of the Rural Solidarity as an independent trade union just like the industrial Solidarity. In case of a denial, they threatened to withhold their crops from the state owned stores.⁵ This ultimatum held a great significance since the privately owned farms accounted for the three-quarters of the agricultural production. After the establishment of the industrial Solidarity this also set up its own trade union.⁶ Out of sixty-nine demands, the prominent ones were for a fairer allocation of resources and grants, impartial and free elections to self-governing organisations at the local levels, measures against corrupt state officials, freedom of religious beliefs, greater share to farmers in the government decision making procedures at all levels, reforms in the price structure of purchase and the availability of credits, equipment and other supplies at par with the public sector.⁷

5 US News and World Reports (Washington, D.C.), 23 February 1981, p.9.

6 Here it is worth noting that the bulk of private farmers in Poland had been clamouring to this end since late 1970s. Rural Solidarity developed out of three peasant self-defence committees in Lublin, Rzeszow and Grojec. In 1981, two other peasant organisations - Peasants' Solidarity from north-eastern Poland and the Trade Union of the Individual Farmers from Warsaw merged themselves with the Rural Solidarity. Support also came from farmers in the South and South-East. Thus, we find that in 1981, Rural Solidarity movement had become national in character. For further details, see John Taylor, Five Months With Solidarity (London, Wilwood, 1981), pp.57-59.

7 Timothy Carton Ash, The Polish Revolution (London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1985), pp.110-134 and also Andrews, n.2, pp.105-106.

Along with industrial Solidarity, the Rural Solidarity had also applied to the Warsaw Court for registration but it was denied to them on ^{the} ground that since the private farmers were not under state employment, they were not entitled to an independent trade union status. But the Rural Solidarity chose to function as an independent trade union and even announced an All India Founding Congress for 14 March 1981.

The movement gained momentum in December 1980 when the Supreme Court postponed its scheduled hearing upon the issue and the peasants got the impression that the government was reluctant to recognize private agriculture as a part of the Polish economic structure although it contributed maximum to country's agricultural produce.⁸

As 1981 began, the private farmers adopted a policy of 'sit-ins' - a group of them occupying the municipal offices in

8 This belief had its roots in two things - first the workers were aware of the fact that in ideological terms, the recognition of private sector and the ownership of land were contradictory to socialism. So they were totally convinced that the regime would hinder their movement. Second, the First Secretary Kania had the reputation of being an 'orthodox' Socialist and had in the past many times condemned the private peasantry as a 'political reactionary group' representing the last vestiges of the capitalist mode of structure and therefore, to be discouraged from flourishing. Moreover, the government was antagonist towards Rural Solidarity due to the historical resistance provided by the peasants' Party against the imposition of a communist rule in Poland in the immediate post-World War period. Ibid., pp.102-110.

Ustrzyki Dolne in South-Eastern Poland just 10 kms., away from the Soviet Union.⁹ In Rzeszow, some 350 farmers occupied the Central Trade Union offices and demanded that the government negotiators approach them in this commune. Thus, Rzeszow became the headquarters of Rural Solidarity just like Gdansk was the seat of the industrial Solidarity. They had even come to acquire the support of the church and the industrial Solidarity.¹⁰

Ultimately, the government gave in to the farmers' demand for face to face negotiations at Rzeszow and Ustrzyki Dolne and on 18 and 21 February 1981, concluded agreements at both the places. These agreements accepted the inviolability of the property of the private farmers, equal treatment to the private and public agricultural sectors and to invest more extensively in the agricultural programmes in future. With this agreement, the 'sit-ins' ended and Walesa described the recognition of the private property and free market trade as "the greatest success we have achieved so far".¹¹

9 New York Times, 7 January 1981, p.A12.

10 In his meetings with the Deputy Premier Josef Pinkowski on the work week issues, Walesa had raised the issue of the independent farmers' trade union. Solidarity's full support to the Rural Solidarity can be proved from the fact that all its regional chapters staged token strikes on behalf of the Rural Solidarity. As far as Church's role is concerned, on 24 January 1981, on behalf of Pope John Paul-II, Bishop of Przemysl said that the Rural Solidarity was justified in its demand for recognition as a major constituent of the economic system and proclaimed, "You have the right to own your land and to form your own trade unions" -- See Keesing's Archives, 1981, p.30796, and Ash, n.6, p.127.

11 Keesing's, n.4, p.30796; Time, 16 February 1981, p.43.

The Student Unrest

While the other two issues were still in the mid-air, another faction of the Polish society rose against the regime. The students at the major universities in Poland began to pressurize the government for a union of their own, free from any external (i.e. Party) control. They set up students' organisations and held lectures by prominent dissident leaders termed as 'flying universities' on subjects that were banned by the regime. On 21 January 1981, almost 10,000 students occupied the University at Lodz, in South-Eastern Poland. They presented a list of 50 demands to the Minister for Higher Education, Science and Technology.¹² The major demands were removal of some of the courses on Marxism - Leninism, less emphasis upon Russian language instructions and reduction in the period of conscription.¹³ Other demands were political in nature insisting upon action against officials responsible for the suppression of workers and students in December 1970 and June 1976 riots, a new law on censorship, independent of judiciary, end to all curbs on travelling abroad and publication of all cultural agreements of Poland with other countries.¹⁴

The unrest spread and students in other universities staged 'sit-ins' in sympathy for the students at Lodz University. By

12 Keesing's, n.4, p.30797.

13 Ibid.

14 Andrews, n.2, p.108.

16 February, some twenty higher educational establishments were well under the grip of student protests.¹⁴ The government ended the strikes by concluding an extensive agreement with the students in which it allowed the students a greater autonomy in running of the universities, changes in their syllabi and reducing the duration of conscription period. However, the agreement had clauses affirming "the leading role" of the Communist Party" in its annex.¹⁵ Another rule was that a strike would be considered legitimate only if it had 50 per cent support.¹⁵

Meanwhile, the industrial climate worsened following work stoppage by 2,00,000 industrial workers from 120 enterprises in the Bielsko-Biala region. In another south-eastern city of Jelenia Gora, around 3,00,000 workers from 450 industrial units threatened the authorities with a general regional strike on 9 February 1981. The government compromised even on such issues as removal of Governors. However, the strikes in these two industrial centres highlight important changes in the movement, the most important being that the regional and the provincial causes were superceding the national issues. Furthermore, the workers had started using strikes as the means to achieve their demands very frequently.

15 . Keesing's, n.4, p.30796.

Meanwhile, the new Administration in the United States was carefully examining the situation.' The Polish case was no longer a domestic or an internal matter. Gradually, the whole society was rising against the regime that was backed by the Soviet Union. The United States could not just stand by and watch the repression of a movement for democracy. Within days of taking over by the Reagan Administration, Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., in a letter to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Andrei Gromyko on 16 January warned against a Soviet interference in Polish affairs.¹⁶ This prompted Gromyko to reply on 28 January that the situation in Poland could not be "a subject of discussion between third countries including the USSR and the USA".¹⁷ But Gromyko was wrong in this assertion. Poland was the very essence of the East-West relations. It raised fundamental questions regarding the nature and implications of the European detente - whether the Soviet Union was ready to permit the peaceful political evolution in Eastern Europe to which the US had been looking forward to since the sixties or would it insist on some form of Brezhnev Doctrine.

At this point, the Reagan Administration was split into two groups over the US policy options in Poland. A section of the US leadership favoured ending all economic assistance to Poland as it was Soviet Union's 'burden'. It argued that American aid could only help relieve the Soviet responsibility and culpability for

16 Haig's letter was not made public and considered to be a personal letter whereas Gromyko's letter was released for the press on 28 January 1981. See New York Times, 2 February 1981, p.1.

17 Ibid.

the failure of the Communist system in Poland. Others felt that Poland was drifting towards a disaster and badly needed the western economic assistance. If the Polish economy continued to deteriorate while the political set-up was unable to respond, the Soviets would be compelled to take over. The US economic assistance could be useful in averting such a catastrophe. It would not only strengthen the Solidarity movement but also help the US foreign policy to attain its objectives in the region.¹⁸

In a press conference on 28 June at Washington, D.C., Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., insisted that,

the provision of either credit or cash or economic assistance to Poland today is not the answer to the problem. The problem involves internal reform within the Polish state and it is up to the Polish government and the Polish authorities to work out.¹⁹

William J. Dyess, the White House spokesman while supporting the position taken by Haig, Jr., reiterated American sympathy for Poland and stressed that the US was actively considering steps to help Poland. Dyess said:

Notwithstanding the underlying need for economic reforms essential to the long term solution of Poland's problems we feel, as Secretary of State said on 28 January, a very important, sensitive

18 See William G. Hyland, "US Soviet Relations: The Long Road Back", Current (Washington, D.C.), pp.56-57.

19 Time (Chicago), 9 February 1981, p.31; New York Times, 11 February 1981, p.A-1.

sympathy for the people of Poland and their current plight and we are considering what future steps should be taken.²⁰

But despite this apparent hard policy line espoused by Haig, the US was not as indifferent or passive as it suggested. An inter-departmental group was set up in the beginning of February to study the problems of the Polish economy and its strategic implications for the US.²¹ Meanwhile, the Polish government through its ambassador Ramould Spasowski urged the Reagan Administration to reconsider Poland's request for a loan of \$3 billion, which it had asked for during Carter's last days as the President. The Carter Administration had deferred the decision on this request. The ambassador argued that the loan would help the moderate elements (under the leadership of Stanislaw Kania) in the Politburo to tackle the situation through economic means. This loan was to be in addition to the short term loans already sanctioned by Great Britain, West Germany and France.²²

20 New York Times, 11 February 1981, p.10.

21 This Committee laid down its report on 30 October 1981 under the title Poland: Its Renewal and a U.S. Strategy: A Report (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1981).

22 For further details of the aid see Facts on File (New York) vol.41, 12 February 1981, p.842. The West German government committed itself to \$152 million in credits while Great Britain agreed to a short-term aid of \$30 million including \$15 million loan for the purchase of the Common Market food products - IDSA News Review (New Delhi), January-February 1981, p.965.

THE BYDGOSZCZ INCIDENT, THE SPLIT IN THE COMMUNIST PARTY AND THE
SOLIDARITY LEADERSHIP IN POLAND

The Polish domestic situation was becoming highly unstable. The local, particularist and the discontented forces were pushing both the regime and Solidarity leaderships towards confrontation. In a major Politburo reshuffle, on 10 February, General Wojciech Jaruzelski was appointed as the new Deputy Premier of Poland in place of Josef Pinkowski. His first move was to call in the Polish Parliament (the Sejm) for a 90-day moratorium on strikes and all socio-economic demands that were responsible for them. Even Lech Walesa, the Solidarity leader accepted this. He said, "we have got a reasonable government, we cannot go on striking".²³

In the United States, the news of General Jaruzelski's appointment was very cautiously dealt with and the Administration termed it as an "internal matter of the Poles". The State Department and the White House were still trying to grasp the motive behind Jaruzelski's appointment. While some saw in it an increased influence of the armed forces in public affairs, others proclaimed on the basis of Jaruzelski's past attitude that he would use moderate means to defuse the crisis, although with a show of 'firmness'.²⁴ But at this stage, the State Department found the

23 The Economist (London), 21-27 March 1981, p.66.

24 New York Times, 11 February 1981, p.A-1.

prospects of a Soviet military intervention 'neither imminent nor inevitable nor justifiable'.²⁵ The National Security Council discussed the developments in Poland on 12 February 1981. It reemphasized the genuine desire of the US to a policy of 'strict non-intervention' in case of Poland.

But at the same time the United States had also begun to co-ordinate with its West European allies on a set of contingency plans in the event of a Soviet military move into Poland.²⁶ In addition to the National Security Council meeting, President Reagan and Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig held discussions with the Italian Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo on the possible course of action including a trade boycott and the withdrawal of ambassadors from Poland if the USSR intervened in Poland.²⁷

Meanwhile, instead of getting better, the relationship between the authorities and the striking masses was getting worse. This reached its climax in a violent clash at Bydgoszcz on 19 March. The Polish militia attacked the local Solidarity Council members who were discussing farmers' demands in the local assembly chambers. Firstly, the barring of the farmers (who had been invited to express their views) from speaking and secondly,

25 Ibid., 13 February 1981, p.A5.

26 Keesing's, 1981, p.30799; New York Times, 11 February 1981, p.A5 and ibid., p.A-10.

27 New York Times, 13 February 1981, p.A5.

using force upon the Solidarity members so that three of them were seriously injured provoked the workers throughout the country into issuing strike alerts.²⁸ Even Cardinal Wyzynski, during a holy mass broadcast from Radio Warsaw on 22 March, rebuked the government by stating that "they are supposed to serve the Society and respect the people's right to social freedom".²⁹

Bydgoszcz was the first violent confrontation between the Solidarity and the authorities. Despite Walesa's appeal for maintaining calm, more than 500,000 workers in Bydgoszcz, Torun, Grudziadz and Wloclawek went on a 2-hour strike. The National Solidarity Commission ordered an end to all talks with the authorities and called for strikes demanding dismissal of guilty officials at Bydgoszcz and extension of a legal status to Rural Solidarity. The workers decided a 4-hour warning strike on 27 March to be followed by a general strike on 31 March if the issues remained unresolved. But the strikes were averted after the government arrived at a joint declaration with the Solidarity. The Church played the role of the mediator in these negotiations.³⁰

28 Facts on File (Washington, D.C.), vol.41, 27 March 1981, p.135, Guardian (London), 19 February 1981, p.8.

29 Ibid.

30 The Joint Declaration condemned the use of force by the militia and assured to investigate the incident. Apart from this, it also agreed to accelerate the process of formulating trades' union draft law and to prepare suggestions for greater freedom of expression to be put before the Sejm (the Polish Parliament) -- See Andrews, n.2, p.126.

Although the strikes were averted, sharp discords arose in the Solidarity. Walesa's leadership was strongly assailed by those who felt that he had given in too easily to the government. The strength of the opposition is proved from the fact that only 22 out of 41 members of the Committee voted in favour of calling off the strike on 31 March.³¹ Karol Modzclewski, who had been among the founding fathers of Solidarity accused that Walesa was "like a monarch surrounded by his favourite advisers who treat the National Commission like a parliament without any power".³²

The internal chaos in Poland became crucial when the Soviet Union declared a further extension of the Warsaw Pact manoeuvres which had begun on 18 March. They were called 'Soyuz-81' (Unity-81). The military exercises included almost 25,000 troops and staged a mock-landing on the Baltic Coast and marches through villages on the northern borders. They were featured on the Polish television network. The West looked upon it as a means used by the Soviet Union to pressurise the Solidarity and Party which were in a state of disorder. President Reagan described the situation in Poland as 'very serious' due to the Bydgoszcz

31 Editorial - International Herald Tribune (Hong Kong), 21 April 1981. Some even went to the extent of suspecting 'links' between government and Solidarity leaders. They felt Walesa was acting in a most undemocratic manner, compromising with the government even though their demands were not met with. See New Statesman (London), 14 August 1981, p.10.

32 International Herald Tribune (Hong Kong), 2 April 1981, p.1.

incident, the strikes and the Warsaw Pact manoeuvre and set forth the new administration's approach to the US relations with Poland,

We would like to make clear to all concerned our view that any external intervention in Poland, or any measures aimed at suppressing the Polish people would necessarily cause concern to all those concerned in the peaceful development of Poland and could have a grave effect on the whole cause of East-West relations. At the same time, we would emphasize our continuing readiness to assist Poland in its present economic and financial troubles for as long as the Polish people and the authorities (to) seek through a peaceful process of negotiation, the resolution of their current problems.³³

The statement was made after the President convened a National Security Council meeting on 26 March in which the Polish danger in light of the extended Soyuz-81 manoeuvres was discussed. On 27 March, the US Senate by a vote of 96-0 approved a resolution stating that the US could not be indifferent to the outside interference. Secretary of Defence Casper Weinberger informed the Senate that all the major European allies of the US agree with the Reagan Administration that a Soviet military intervention would prompt 'concerted' efforts by Western powers in retaliation.³⁴

From 1-5 April, the First Deputy Prime Minister of Poland, Miecyslaw Jagielski visited the US as part of his trip to the western industrialized countries to negotiate for extending more

33 Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), vol.81, April 1981, p.17.

34 See, New York Times, 28 March 1981, p.5.

financial help to Poles to meet their economic crisis.' In the meeting held at the White House with the US Vice-President George Bush, Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., Secretary of Treasury Donald T. Regan and Secretary of Commerce Malcolm Baldrige, a broad-range discussion took place on the US-Polish relations.' Bush pointed that the US valued its 'constructive relations' with Poland and desired 'to develop those relations further on the basis of mutual respect and reciprocity'. He assured the Polish leader that the US would pursue a policy of non-intervention in Poland's internal affairs provided 'others do the same'.³⁵

Following Jagielski's visit, the US government authorized the sale of \$71 million worth surplus butter and powdered milk to Poland at concessional rates. It was further allowed to buy these commodities in zlotys.³⁶ However, some of the eminent scholars like Richard T. Davies felt that the Administration had made a blunder in not specifying as to how these Zlotys were to be spent.³⁷ This would have effectively conditioned Poland to make a proper use of the US economic assistance.' But here

35 Department of State Bulletin, vol.31, May 1981, p.41.

36 Congressional Quarterly Almanac (Washington D.C., Congressional Quarterly Inc., 1981), Ninety-Seventh Congress, First Session, 1981, p.178.

37 Richard T. Davies, "The United States and Poland, 1980-1982", The Washington Quarterly (Washington, D.C.), Spring 1982, p.147.

Davies is biased in his argument. The US Administration did attach two conditions that could have had an impressive impact upon the political decision-making of the Polish government. They were - (a) the Soviets should assume a larger share of the Polish economic burden; and (b) the Poles should reform their 'mismanaged' economy.³⁸ As the Polish economy was in a state of total collapse, the US financial assistance was too meagre to set things in order. The Polish government had to invest this money in the sectors that demanded financing immediately rather than going by the conditions set by other countries. Therefore, one may conclude that at this stage, Poland needed economic help from all quarters to bail out its economy without any political conditions attached to it. It was in Polish as well as in American interests that Poland should first overcome its economic mess.

On 5 April, President Reagan added a new dimension to the US foreign policy response. In a letter to Soviet Premier Leonid I. Brezhnev, Reagan warned that not only any Soviet intervention in Poland would 'totally disrupt the possibility of negotiations to limit the arms race but might also lead the US to consider an increased sales of arms to China³⁹ and an immediate end to the

38 See, Newsweek, 13 April 1981, p.39.

39 It should be worth noting in this context that the US had already chosen to promote 'China Card' in the aftermath of the Afghanistan crisis. President Jimmy Carter had embarked on this policy of increased trade, diplomatic and strategic relations with China.

European detente.⁴⁰ Even the US Secretary of Defence, Casper Weinberger, in the NATO defense ministers' meeting at Brussels on 8 April confirmed that the President was serious about these. Characterizing the manoeuvres as "intimidating and coercive" tantamounting to a possible invasion by "osmosis" (meaning a gradual increase in the level of influence of its permanent military staff in Poland), he justified ^{the} above-mentioned US measures. However, Senator Robert C. Byrd (D., W. Vr) pointed out the irrationality of Administration's decision to sell arms to China simply as a retaliatory measure if the Soviet Union intervened militarily in Poland.⁴¹

Until March and early April, therefore we find that although the NATO allies agreed with the US that the Soviet military intervention would demand a strong and unified western response, there was no consensus as to what form of action should be taken if the Soviet Union chose a move less explicit than the intervention. In the mid-April, Soviets began ^{to} make feints regarding direct military intervention. The American analysis concluded that the Soviets refrained from it due to two reasons. Firstly, Moscow was uncertain as to how the Polish Army would respond and secondly, it would have affected the "peace movement" in Western Europe which

40 New York Times, 6 April 1981, p.10.

41 Ibid., and also ibid., 12 April 1981, p.19 and 30 April, 1981, p.31 and ibid., 18 June 1981, p.1.

Americans believed, Brezhnev had embarked upon draw a wedge between the US and its allies.

By the end of April, the US had already decided tentatively the punitive measures against Poland and the USSR in an event of intervention. Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., pointed out clearly that the the Administration would impose a ban on all US trade with the Soviet Union and reimpose the grain embargo.⁴² On 24 April, President Reagan had declared the lifting up of the grain embargo to the Soviet Union which had been imposed in the aftermath of the Afghanistan crisis in January 1980.⁴³ The grain embargo was considered to be an effective punitive measure since it constituted the major part of the US-USSR trade. Even the public opinion reflected in the polls conducted by the New York Times and CBS jointly found that 60 per cent of the US public wanted the government to severe diplomatic and the economic relations with the Soviet Union if its forces entered Poland.⁴⁴

42 New York Times, 26 April 1981, p.1. However the White House Press Secretary Larry Speakes emphasized that a total trade embargo against the Soviet Union was 'one of many options President Reagan could choose and not the only one as Haig's statement suggested - New York Times, 28 April 1981, p.1.

43 Facts on File (Washington D.C.), vol.41, 1 May 1981, p.290. This decision to lift the grain embargo, approve on above mentioned grain sales agreement and deferring negotiations on a new long-term agreement became controversial within the Administration, the Congress and the general public. Split on the decision to end the embargo was apparent in the answers given by Department of State to the written questions posed by Congressman Lee Hamilton. Congressional Record (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1981), Nines, Seventh Congress, First Session, 18 May 1981, pp.E-2390-E 2391. Nines -

44 New York Times, 28 April 1981, p.1.

By the end of April, the United States along with fourteen other creditor governments unconditionally agreed to reschedule the Polish official debts standing at \$2.6 billion in 1981. The US share in both the principal and the interest amounted to approximately \$40 million.⁴⁵ In a major policy statement on 10 June 1981, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs, Lawrence S. Eagleburger said regarding this initiative:

In taking these steps, we have emphasized to the Polish authorities that we expect the Polish government and people to make meaningful efforts to revigorate the Polish economy and to restore Poland's credit worthiness.⁴⁶

After Bydgoszcz incident and the Warsaw Pact manoeuvres, Solidarity also decided to act very cautiously pursuing a policy of negotiations in place of strikes. On the initiative of the government, it decided abstention from strikes for a period of two months during which the joint Solidarity and government working groups were to work together upon economic, censorship and law and order issues. But this short spell of truce was broken just after the death of Cardinal Wyznski who had been the restraining factor and an effective mediator between the two rival forces during the past. There was a spate of strikes on grounds that the government had failed to take adequate measures against

45 The Polish debt figures have been given in Chapter-II, page 11 of the dissertation. See also Davies, n.49, p.147.

46 Department of State Bulletin, vol.81, July 81, July 81, p.34.

guilty officials in Bydgoszcz incident. The Communist Party members also criticised the Solidarity leaders in public. The matters became worse with the Soviet Politburo dispatching letters warning the leadership and the Solidarity in Poland. On 5 June, the Soviet leadership in a letter advised Warsaw to "mobilize all healthy forces in the society to resist the class enemy and to combat the counter-revolution". It reiterated its pledge not to 'abandon a fraternal country in distress'.

The US considered the letter as a Soviet attempt to influence the Polish decision-making and on 9 June, the US deplored this action in a strong language, It said:

the threatening tone...amounts in our view to interference in the internal affairs of Poland. Such interference is inconsistent with the requirements of the Final Helsinki Act and of accepted international behaviour with regard to relations among sovereign states.⁴⁷

The Helsinki Declarations signed in 1975 by thirty-five countries including the USA, and the USSR, contained provisions regarding permanence of the European borders and adherence to a policy of non-interference by the member states. In this context, Secretary of State, Haig also expressed concerns regarding the deteriorating situation in Poland due to threats from the Soviet Union.⁴⁸

47 Department of State Bulletin, vol.61, July 1981, p.28.

48 New York Times, 13 June 1981, p.4.

In a startling response to the recent developments, President Reagan commented on 17 June that communism was 'a sad bizarre chapter' in human history and that the events in Poland represented the beginning of the end of Soviet domination in Eastern Europe. This end was substantiated not only by the situation in Poland or its rift with China but also the worsening conditions in the Soviet Union itself manifested in its economic decline and the rise of dissidence. The critics of the Reagan Administration viewed this remark and President's decisions to supply arms to China as to have 'deepened the chill in Soviet-American relations' and may have reduced the prospects for deterring Soviet military intervention in Poland.⁴⁹ Although after objections from the prominent Senate members and the members of the academic community, both the President and Secretary of State had tried to cushion the impact of the China arms' sale issue as "normal part" of the "process of improving our relations" but the top level officials in the Reagan Administration acknowledged the related Soviet sensitivity to a growing US-Chinese relationship in spheres of military and intelligence.⁵⁰ An editorial in The New York Times on 23 June criticised Reagan's rash and impulsive outburst which signified "a powerful failure of imagination -- and a critical flaw in his approach to the world".⁴ It highlighted that both the

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

issues were strongly related to the USSR and an oversight of this factor could never let the Administration "design a safe relationship with Moscow".⁵¹

The Reagan Administration was, thus, adopting measures mutually contradictory. On the one hand, it showed desire to revert to "business as usual" with the Soviet Union by lifting grains embargo. On the other, it was building up tensions by statements on arms sales to China and an attack on world communism. Moreover, ending the grain embargo could have very well impressed upon the Soviets that Poland did not figure prominently in the eyes of the American policy makers. The profits from the grain sales were more important to the US than a final settlement of the Polish issue.

In July, the Administration took another major policy decision regarding Poland. It agreed to provide 355 million in new credits for the purchase of food grains for poultry. It even attempted to ensure that a part of these would be supplied to private farmers but the Polish leaders refused to accept this. The US continued with the supplies.

This American help did little to end the protests that were taking place in Poland due to scarcity of food supplies in a number of cities and towns, especially Warsaw, Kutno and Lodz.

51 Editorial, New York Times, 23 June 1986, p.26.

This had resulted from a sharp decline of the Polish economy.

This was confirmed by the government on 19 July in its IXth Extraordinary Congress.⁵² Dominico Mario Nuti, the leading economist, noted that,

...the main causes of the 1981 collapse are the combination of Poland's extra-ordinary import dependence on the West - from distilled water for car batteries to steel cans for food processing - and the loss of short term credit facilities (of the order of \$2 billion) on which Poland had been relying for essential imports, following the suspension...of debt repayments and the pending negotiations for debt rescheduling. Other contributory factors have been the continued disintegration of central planning and administration, the paralysis of decision-making at all levels; the political stalemate that blocks even obvious emergency measures.⁵³

This was despite the economic assistance from the West and the Soviet Union.⁵⁴

52 Presenting the report, Jaruzelski had informed that the national income would fall by 15 per cent in 1981 and hard-currency debts would rise by \$300 million. The supply of goods to the domestic markets had dropped by 10 per cent resulting in inflation leading to hoarding of goods in markets. The Central Committee's Planning Minister, Zbigniew Mądej reported a drop of 30 per cent and 18 per cent in country's cement and coal production. In 1981, the Zloty (Polish currency) had lost its value since the exchange value shot up to ten times to normal for a dollar (normally 34 zlotys make up a dollar). Among the items on ration were meat, dairy products, sugar and flour, prices shot up for cigarettes and other commodities. For details on the IXth Extraordinary Congress and the report on Poland's declining economy, see Keesing's, n.33, pp.31109-31110.

53 Dominico Mario Nuti, Socialist Register (London), 1981, p.127.

54 The Soviet assistance was estimated 15 \$3 billion out of which \$700 million was in hard currency and \$2 billion in soft currency CMEA countries. The Soviet Union also entered into an agreement with Poland to supply 13 million

Probably, one of the most significant of the strikes in July-August was the strike by employees of LOT (Polish) airlines for four hours over their right to choose their new director. It was the first time in Eastern Europe that an airline had closed down crippling a 'key Soviet-bloc transportation artery'. This was further intensified by the dockers' strike on the Baltic coast and printers' strikes in all the major cities.⁵⁵

A Pravda article on 4 August warned the party of a "deepening of negative and dangerous developments" in Poland. The Soviet news agency TASS also accused the Solidarity for transferring 'discontent from factories to the streets'. The Czech official newspaper Rudo Pravo described the strikes as

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tons of crude oil and 2.9 million tons of other petroleum products. The declining economic situation during 1981 was also discussed in the US Committee on Foreign Relations, Poland: Its Renewal and a U.S. Strategy, A Report, October 30, 1981 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1981). In its dependence on the industrialized West, Poland sought a further loan of \$1.2 million in the first week of July for the purchase of food and raw materials. Western governments formally agreed to reschedule the Polish debts for 1981 including the European banks. But the US refused any further extension of loans on ground that Poland was not a member of the IMF so that no check or guarantee could be placed over how the money was being used and what were the reforms needed or a responsible institution to regulate the enforcement of the required measures, Newsweek, 13 July, 1981, p.28.

55 For details on 'hunger marches' and transportation strikes, see Time, 17 August 1981, pp.7-8; ibid., 14 September 1981, pp.14-15; Newsweek, 20 July 1981, p.21.

'political confrontations' engineered by Solidarity to develop itself into a political party. Even Rakowski, the Polish deputy premier accused ^{Sol} Solidarity of contaminating the national atmosphere by organizing 'anti-government and anti-party' actions and its leaders, namely, Gwiazda, Walesa and Kuron engaged in 'liquidation of the regime and deepening the economic crisis'.⁵⁶

A major turn in the Polish domestic politics that led to the imposition of martial law in Poland was the Solidarity Congress and the decisions adopted in its sessions.

THE SOLIDARITY CONGRESS (5-10 SEPTEMBER AND 27 SEPTEMBER - 7 OCTOBER, 1981).

In the first among two of its sessions, the major dilemma of the Solidarity leaders was whether to behave as a typical trade union or attempt as Polish citizens and set out to set things right in their nation. Solidarity had changed in its form - from a mere trade union it had evolved into a politically motivated citizens' movement. Even the tactics had changed from the factory sit-ins to street demonstrations.

Besides stating its chief objectives, they raised the issue of granting the right to vote, "...the voters should have the right

56 Keesing's, n.33, pp.31213-14.

to freely choose whom they want for their representatives.' From the outset of the session, the members had begun to raise voices for being given seats in the Sejm (the Polish Parliament).⁵⁷

But what made the first session of the Congress highly controversial was the message that was proposed in the midst of the plenary debate and addressed to workers all over Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. It said: "We support those among you who have decided to follow the difficult struggle for a free trade union movement. We have firm hope that our representatives will be able to meet each other".⁵⁸

The Polish Foreign Ministry deplored this statement as 'a blow against Poland's national interests' and accused Solidarity of neglecting 'the balance of forces and the system of alliances'. The statement was also said to be a "demonstrative interference in the internal affairs of the other socialist states". TASS blamed the radicals in the Solidarity who had turned the organisation into an 'anti-socialist and anti-Soviet bacchanalia'.⁵⁹ Even the East European news agencies condemned this "provocative demonstration

57 For details, see New Statesman (London), 11 September 1981, p.3; Nation (New York), 17 October 1981, pp.368-69; Time, 28 September 1981, pp.8-9.

58 Andrews, n.2, p.187.

59 Ibid.

of counter-revolution, and lack of responsibility on part of extremist forces".⁶⁰ In its harshest note of warning, the Soviet Union declared to the Polish leaders that an "unbridled" campaign of "rabid propaganda" had been allowed by them to "dangerous limits" with impunity and that "radical steps" should be taken to curb this anti-Soviet propaganda.⁶¹

The Solidarity's statement was indeed provocative and provided the Soviet Union and the East European regimes with an additional argument to support their criticism. Even the Western governments took a critical stand towards this since this implied a radical revolutionary change in Eastern Europe which the West never desired. It also wanted to exhibit that it was, in no way, promoting the Solidarity. However, the western reaction outlined the depth of the Western commitment to Yalta regarding Eastern Europe.

As immediate consequences of the first session, two characteristic developments took place in Poland and the Warsaw Pact. The first was the replacement of Stanislaw Kania as the First Secretary with Deputy Premier General Wojciech Jaruzelski on 18 September 1981 after the Polish Politburo declared its commitment to "defend socialism as the individual of Poland is defended and for that defense the state will use whatever measures the situation

60 Ibid.

61 Time, 28 September 1981, p.8.

will require".⁶² Solidarity now refused to be intimidated. The government also gave up negotiations as a tool for bringing about peace as it felt that Solidarity had abandoned the concept of partnership and co-operation with the government which, it proclaimed was 'buried solemnly at the Gdansk Congress where they spoke of us as enemies'.⁶³

The second feature was the beginning again of the Soviet force manoeuvres. Named 'Zapad-81' (West-81) they included a total of 100,000 troops, hundreds of tanks, planes and fleet of 80 warships, including two carriers - reportedly the biggest landing ships in the Soviet navy. The US analysts confirmed that the readiness of the troops was so high that it would not be difficult for them to overcome the Polish army. As was obvious, it was another Soviet move to put pressure upon Poland to set things at home in order. Besides, the Soviet leadership sent a letter to the Polish Politburo threatening it to cut off the supply of raw materials to Poland.

During the second part of the Congress (26 September-5 October) several events took place that were enough to upset the Polish government. Edward Lipinski, the head of the dissident organisation KSS/KOR announced the dissolution of their organisation on the

62 Andrews, n.2, p.199.

63 Time, 12 October 1981, p.8.

ground that Solidarity was carrying on the struggle that they had begun.' Walesa was re-elected as the Chairman of the Solidarity National Co-ordinating Committee with 55.2 per cent votes cast in his favour. The introduction of the programme of the Solidarity, included several passages that revealed that the movement was all set to assume the political dimensions which included restoring 'justice, democracy, truth, legality, human dignity, freedom of conviction and the repair of the Republic.'⁶⁴

In addition, in the second session, Solidarity also questioned Poland's alliance with the USSR and its membership of the Communist bloc.⁶⁵ It demanded that public be handed over the control on all major 'anti-crisis' decisions. To gain public faith in such decisions, prestigious people from all walks of life should be appointed rather than the party 'nomenklatura'.

64 Andrews, n.2, p.209; for further such controversial arguments presented by the Solidarity members see Adrian Karalycky, "Solidarity takes another long step", New Republic (Washington, D.C.), vol.185, 30 September 1981, p.11. Zbigniew Bujak one of the leaders of the Solidarity asserted that the Solidarity would no longer agree to any clause such as the one accepting the leading role of the Communist Party. See also, The Nation (New York), vol.233, 5 September 1981, p.174. Bujak in his interview portrayed the total dissatisfaction of the workers with the PUPW which controlled every area of life in the country but was itself not subject to any form of control.

65 Time, n.76, p.8.

All these decisions were made despite Solidarity's awareness of the ongoing Zapad-81 manoeuvres of the Soviet Union. It went to the extent of taunting that the Polish working class, in the form of Solidarity, wanted to realize the socialist slogan of "workers of the world, unite!" in its truest sense.⁶⁶

From now onwards, a direct and open confrontation came to exist between Solidarity and the regime. As the former held its second session in defiance of the government warnings against it, militia troops began to take charge of Warsaw and other cities to stop 'hooliganism' and the 'anti-Soviet' excesses.

On 13 October, workers at forty plants in the Central Polish district of Piotrkow Trybunalski went on strike. This time government acted tough and allowed the police to teargas the crowds in Katowice and Wroclaw.⁶⁷ In addition, it imposed a ban on holding assembly in public places. This was banned for the first time since the beginning of the Solidarity movement. From 20 October onwards, military troops took over the administration of the 2,000 villages and towns as Solidarity declared its intentions to call an hour-long token strike on 23 October. The authorities claimed that the troops had been installed to ensure an easy supply of food and transportation facility during the strike.⁶⁸ However, Solidarity

66 Andrews, n.2, p.304.

67 See US News and World Reports (Washington D.C.), 2 Nov 1981, p.34.

68 New Statesman (London), 25 December 1981, p.3.

called off the strike. But on 28 October, the workers once again staged strikes against the warning that authorities might be forced to outlaw strikes and take other 'far reaching decisions'. Even Walesa appealed to the strikers not to repeat the strikes since they were immobilizing the plants, the transportation facilities and all other channels vital for the promotion of national interests.⁶⁹

The West watched the Polish events with apprehension. The Solidarity Congress, replacement of Kania with Jaruzelski and the Soviet military manoeuvres spelled a risk of intervention by the Soviet Union. But the leading US Kremlinologists contended that howsoever much the Soviet Union might detest the Solidarity, military intervention was still a remote possibility because the first top-level 'face-to-face' talks between the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko and the US Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., were scheduled to begin in the end of September at New York, the first ever talk since Reagan took the charge. Moreover, they asserted that any such Soviet action would have antagonised the European public opinion which at that time protesting against the deployment of the Cruise and Pershing-II missiles and in favour of the Soviet Union. The Soviets seemed to be more in favour of a Polish solution to the problem rather than from Moscow.⁷⁰

69 IDSA News Review (New Delhi), November 1981, p.694.

70 New York Times, 19 September 1981, p.5.

Towards the end of October, the US Administration once again made food aid available to Poland.⁷¹ The first stock of this included 2,565 tons of dry milk, 684 tons of frozen turkeys and 113 tons of baby food on humanitarian considerations. In addition, Poland's debts were also rescheduled. The Western creditor nations rescheduled around 95 per cent of the principal which required Poland to come up with just \$850 million. The aid factor presented a baffling situation for the United States. It received mixed signals - those imploring the US to extend the aid and those insisting not to offer any further help. In November, Walesa himself sent word that the United States should not do anything until mid-winter.

Meanwhile in the United States, the Senate Foreign Affairs Committee presented its report on the US relations with Poland in the past and the interests that should guide the US in the present crisis. It emphasized upon a "differentiated" approach (which has been adopted since the sixties) but clearly laid down that Poland would figure in "political, trade, and human contact" relationship with the US depending upon the latter's relationship with the Soviet Union. However, in view of the ever present Soviet threat and pressures on the country since September 1981, it was difficult for "the Western governments to concentrate on the hard work of developing a policy strategy for the future".⁷¹

71 See US Committee on Foreign Relations Reports, n.67, pp.7-10.

In the field of finance, the report observed that the US and the other allied nations would carefully weigh any further economic aid to Poland on account of its budgetary pressures. The Administration felt that the Soviet Union was not helping Poland to a degree "consummate with their fundamental security stake in Poland's stability" although it was "too sensitive a part of the Kremlin's security network and the Soviets are too suspicious that the West's real objective is to cut Poland altogether out of the Socialist community".

But if we analyse the Polish situation, the grounds on which the Committee advised the Administration to withhold further aid to Poland were not too weighty. A strong lobby within the State Department was of the view that the commercial banks as well as the government should not further involve themselves financially in Poland since there were no hopes of repayment in future.⁷² It was entirely hypocritical to have asserted that the US could not help Poland to a greater degree due to its budgetary constraints. The other argument that the Soviet Union would not tolerate any interference and therefore the US should not provoke the former also is untenable. Contrary to its declarations, the US was adopting an entirely different approach. It was neither the fear of provocation to the Soviets nor that "it isn't our business to

72 Asserted in Abraham Brumberg, "Solidarity's Dilemma",
 The New Republic (Washington, D.C.), 25 November 1931,
 p.21.

help a communist government" sort of an approach, since the very government had decided to help the Soviets by removing the grain sales embargo. What really mattered was that Poland was not at all significant in the US foreign policy. The US was too committed to the Yalta declaration (that pushed Poland into the Soviet sphere of influence) rather than to help "a people who have already shown that they will not tolerate any more repression and were fighting for greater democracy".⁷³

The appointment of General Jaruzelski was looked upon in the US as a sign that the hardliners had ultimately won over the moderates and that the Party and the Union were in for a headlong collision.

Meanwhile, the domestic situation was deteriorating in Poland. On 4 November, the Church in its attempt to act as mediator, brought the leaders of the PUPP and the Solidarity together to discuss and arrive at a possible solution of the crisis. In a resolution passed on 5 November Solidarity called for the suspension of all strike activities until January. But the local chapters ignored the resolution. In November and early December, the unrest spread to Poland's universities, coal miners, the cadets from the fire-fighting academy and the transport.⁷⁴

73 Ibid.

74 For further details, see ISDA News Review, November 1981, pp.694-95; ibid., December 1981, pp.769-70; US News and World Reports, 2 December 1981, pp.38-39.

The final spurning of any moderate approach came on 11 December when in a 2-day meeting, the National Co-ordinating Commission of Solidarity, including its leader Walesa expressed impatience with the regime. Under the circumstances, there appeared to be no other alternative save a confrontation. It decided upon further strike if the Sejm (the Polish Parliament) passed a bill giving the government the right to ban strikes and other emergency powers, called upon the police to form their own unions and demanded elections to all representative institutions before 31 May 1982. The next day it declared 17 December to be the day for the commencement of strike.⁷⁵ It was decided that if the government did not accept these demands by the end of December 1981, Solidarity would hold a national referendum on 15 February 1982 on the following four issues:

- 1) Are you in favour of a vote of confidence in General Jaruzelski?
- 2) Are you in favour of establishing a provincial government and holding free elections?
- 3) Are you in favour of providing military guarantees to the Soviet Union?
- 4) Can the PUPP be the instrument of such guarantees in the name of Polish Society?

Apart from these, it also called for democratic and 'free' elections for the Sejm (the Polish national Parliament) by mid-1982.⁷⁶

75 Andrews, n.2, pp.252-55.

76 Ibid.

By 12 December 1981, the Solidarity had thus totally abandoned its moderate approach. It was fed up with compromising with the government. In their eyes, the entire political set-up had collapsed and presented them with an opportunity to seize the power to channelize it in the interests of the people.

Military Clampdown in Poland

In the night of 12-13 December, General Jaruzelski, declared martial law in Poland that was approved by the Council of State. A Military Council of National Salvation consisting of 21 military officers was established to direct and implement the martial law measures. Under martial law, all major Solidarity leaders, former KSS/KOR activists, regional and local leaders, student leaders, the Rural Solidarity leaders and the intellectual activists - almost 6000 in strength were arrested. Termed as 'Operation Whitewash', the martial law measures included cutting of Poland's contact with the other countries, curtailment of the freedom of movement, association and publication. All the organisations including the free trade unions were suspended and radio, television, industries and Solidarity offices were taken over by the military.⁷⁷ In his address to the nation on 13 December, Jaruzelski justified the martial law on grounds that the workers unrest was leading

77 New York Times Magazine (New York), 22 August 1982, p.32; See Abraham Brumberg, "Poland: Operation Whitewash", The New Republic, 4 January 1981, pp.9-12; also Andrews, n.2, p.255.

to chaos, poverty and setbacks to its national security interests. By opting for referendum, and elections to the Sejm, Solidarity had begun a struggle towards a "complete partition of the Socialist Polish State" from the bloc which obviously could not have been acceptable either to the Polish government or the Soviet Union.⁷⁸

US SANCTIONS

Following Soviet Marshals Suslov and Kulikov's visit to Warsaw, the introduction of a bill to grant the right to call an emergency, the recurring Soviet threats and manoeuvres and the gradually increasing influence of the military in the Polish public affairs, the US had some inkling that Jaruzelski would take a radical step but the sudden imposition of martial law came as a surprise.

At the time of the clampdown, Haig was in Brussels at a NATO meeting, Allen on "administrative leave", Weibergⁿ and David Jones out of Washington, Edward Meese on a trip and President Reagan himself was at Camp David. This left Vice-President Bush, James Baker, Mike Deaver and James "Bud" Nance as the senior advisers present to take decisions.

In view of the crisis, the Secretary of State, Alexander M. Haig, Jr., who was scheduled to leave for a 7-day trip to Turkey,

78 Ibid.

Israel, Pakistan, India, Egypt and Morocco, cancelled his trip and got back to States. On 15 December the Reagan administration suspended economic assistance to Poland inclusive of \$100 million worth of food and feed grains which Reagan had declared on 11 December in response to the military crackdown.⁷⁸ Haig, however, hinted that the government would continue with the shipment of \$15 million in food and humanitarian aid already on route to Poland through the non-official agencies like CARE, Red Cross Relief Services and other private charities. He also asserted that the US would use whatever diplomatic and economic influence it could muster to prevent the Polish crackdown from becoming permanent. The decision was applauded by some members of the Congress including the Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Charles H. Percy (R. Ill.) under whom the study was conducted on Poland in October 1981.⁷⁹ Senator Percy said that "US cannot turn its back on people who are hungry in the dead of the winter". He even said that the Polish government had "over-reacted" and called military rule an "excessive step".⁷⁹

Howsoever undesirable the imposition of martial law was, it was indeed a Polish solution.⁸⁰ It therefore no longer contributed toward an American-Soviet confrontation. The US decided not to alter the schedule of the Geneva talks with the Soviet Union on

79 New York Times, 15 December 1981, p.1.

the issue of theatre nuclear weapons. The White House Communication Director David Bergen said 'we are trying not to speculate on what's going to happen but to be very cautious about our statements'.⁸⁰

Haig and Weinberger returned promptly to Washington. Vice-President George Bush and Haig met in the White House to assess the developments in Poland and consult other western allies. With them were Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger, Deputy Secretary of State William P. Clarke, the White House Chief of Staff James A. Baker III, Deputy Chief of Staff Michael K. Deaver and the acting National Security Adviser Admiral James W. Nance. Secretary of State argued that the initial U.S. response should be relatively low key until what was actually happening in Poland became clear and until the Europeans could be goaded into following the US policy line. Weinberger, supported by Bush and Casey supported a vigorous denunciation of the Soviet Union, accompanied by as much concrete action as could be possible. The resultant US measures in the form of economic sanctions, formally imposed on 23 December, were a mixture of both the streams of thought.⁸¹ Solidarity movement was being suppressed with full knowledge of the Soviet Union.⁸² He expressed American determination not to accept the new status quo in Poland, although it might want to avoid the 'extreme'.

80 Ibid.

81 Ibid.

82 New York Times, 18 December 1981, p.1.

The State Department seriously took up the question of sanctions or available options to curb the Polish and the Soviet governments. The use of military force to counter any drastic action by the Polish authorities had already been rejected by the Western allies and the US itself appeared to rely increasingly on diplomatic and economic means.⁸³

In a statement, on 17 December the former President Jimmy Carter accused the Reagan Administration of a "one-sided attitude of belligerence toward the Soviet Union" and voiced deep concern over what he called "radical changes" in the American foreign policy.¹ President Carter had vigorously championed the human rights policy which was being violated in Poland. He felt that the Reagan Administration was undermining the pattern of relationship he had established with the Soviet Union.¹ In a speech to the Council on Foreign Relations at the Metropolitan Museum of Art at Washington D.C., on 18 December, he accused Reagan of deviating from treaties to restrain the strategic weapons by undermining the Camp David Accords in the Middle East and threatening the Soviet Union with supply of arms to China.² He felt that the Soviet Union, was definitely involved in the Polish military decision to restrain the Solidarity Movement of which the US should take a 'very firm stance' by warning the Polish leaders of no economic support in future if the freedom won by Solidarity

were not restored. If the Soviet Union became more involved, US should impose a grain embargo of a permanent nature so as to show the other power of the determined stand that US has in issues of such nature.⁸⁴

Meanwhile on 19 December 1981, President Reagan met the AFL-CIO President Lane Kirkland and the major Polish American leaders - Cardinal Kori, Archbishop of Philadelphia, Joseph Drobot of Chicago, President of the Roman Catholic Union, Aloysius Mazewski, President of the Polish American congress and Helen Zielinski, President of Polish women's alliance from Chicago. Kori emphasized in his talks with the President that whatever be done, the US must not give the people of Poland, "who are the victims in this situation, the impression that they are being abandoned and that the only people interested in helping them are those of the Communist World".⁸⁵

US action team within the State Department on Polish crisis was set up on 19 December 1981. It was named "Special Situations Group" instead of the Crisis Management Team, since the latter name would have created expectations that since Poland was a crisis, the Administration would respond in a vigorous dramatic manner.⁸⁶ The team was headed by John D. Scanclou, the Deputy

84 New York Times, 18 December 1981, p.7.

85 Ibid., 22 December 1981, p.1.

86 Laurence I. Barrett, Gambling With History (Garden City, New York, Double Day, 1983), p.296.

Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs. It consisted of about a dozen of experts on Poland. The purpose of the team was "to stay on top of every break in the situation".

In a major policy move on 22 December, the President conferred with the National Security Council on the issue of imposing sanctions against Poland and the USSR if the martial law was not lifted soon. Assistant Secretary of State Lawrence S. Eagleburger flew to a number of West European capitals and ambassadors of Japan, Australia and New Zealand were invited to the State Department. This was to arrive at a consensus on humanitarian food and supply under the non-governmental agencies but to cut back sharply on the trade and financial concessions to Warsaw and the USSR if there were no hints of lifting up the martial law and the release of Lech Walesa.⁸⁷

US Imposition of Financial and Trade Sanctions Against Poland
and the Soviet Union

In the Christmas address to the nation from the White House on 23 December 1981, to Poland President Ronald Reagan said,

87 Ibid., 22 December 1986, p.1.

They (Poles) have been betrayed by their own government. The men who rule them, and their totalitarian allies fear the very freedom that the Polish people cherish. They have answered the strivings of liberty with brute force...⁸⁸

The President charged the Soviet involvement in the imposition of martial law in Poland. According to him this was substantiated by Soviet Marshal Viktor Kutikov's and other senior Red Army officers' presence in the country while the upheavals were going on. He declared that since a big majority of Poland's entire population was a part of Solidarity and fighting for values like freedom and human respect, the US cannot and will not conduct "business as usual" with the perpetrators and those who aid them".⁸⁹ The President announced the following measures against the Polish government -

- We have halted the renewal of the Export-Import Bank's line of export credit insurance to the Polish government.
- We will suspend Polish civil aviation privileges in the United States.
- We are suspending the right of Poland's fishing fleet to operate in American waters;
- And we are proposing to our allies the further restriction of high technology exports to Poland.⁹⁰

88 Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), vol.81, February 1982, p.2.

89 Ibid.

90 Department of State Bulletin (Washington), vol.81, February 1982, p.3.

These measures, the President insisted, were not "directed against the Polish people". "They are a warning to the government of Poland that free men cannot and will not stand idly by in the face of brutal repression".⁹¹

Meanwhile Reagan conveyed his indignation privately to Brezhnev in a personal communication. He insisted that the USSR should withdraw its pressure upon the Polish government or risk serious damages to the Soviet-American relationship. In his reply the Soviet Premier bluntly stated that the US should abstain from fermenting trouble in the socialist countries. Poland was dealing with its problems in its own way and had USSR's blessings for it. Thus, on 29 December 1981, the President declared in a statement that "the Soviet Union bears a heavy and direct responsibility for the repression in Poland" and that even despite the warnings by the US "the repression in Poland continues, and President Brezhnev has responded in a manner which makes it clear the Soviet Union does not understand the seriousness of our concern and its obligations under both the Helsinki Final Act and the UN Charter". He declared the following punitive measures against the Soviet Union:

91 Ibid.

- All Aeroflot service to the United States will be suspended.
- The Soviet Purchasing Commission is being closed.
- The issuance of renewal of licenses for the export to the USSR of electronic equipment, computers, and other high-technology materials is being suspended.
- Negotiations on a new long-term grains agreement are being postponed.
- Negotiations on a new US-Soviet maritime agreement are being suspended, and a new regime of post-access controls will be put into effect for all Soviet ships when the current agreement expires on December 31.
- Licenses will be required for export to the Soviet Union for an expanded list of oil and gas equipment. Issuances of such licenses will be suspended. This includes pipelayers.
- The US-Soviet exchange agreements coming up for the renewal in near future, including the agreements on energy and science and technology, will not be renewed. There will be a complete review of all other US-Soviet exchange agreements.⁹²

While the US decided to take these steps against the Soviet Union, the President desired a continuation of 'constructive and mutually beneficial relationship with the Soviet Union'. However these were to be dependent on Soviet actions and the events in Poland in the days to come.⁹³

92 Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), vol.81, February 1982, p.8.

93 Ibid.

These economic sanctions were generally supported in the United States. However, the American Federation for Labour and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO) pressed for even more far-reaching measures. The eminent, Sovietologist, and former US ambassador to Soviet Union George F. Kennan also criticised the 'hasty' decision of the Administration suggesting that it should have waited "until more of the returns are in". He said that the US had opened too early all its cards. He also called the sanctions marked by "extreme vagueness about what the Soviet regime was expected to do to bring about their (sanctions) removal" and were negative "in so far as they have heightened the tensions and ill-feelings between the two governments, which seems to be very unfortunate at this highly delicate, dangerous time".⁹⁵ In a couple of articles in the New York Times, Henry Kissinger also criticised "the emptiness of the western reaction to Poland". He viewed with alarm, the internal division between what he termed "a new isolationism" (followed by the US) and "traditional Atlanticism". He warned that the Administration must "master these issues and design a coherent policy".⁹⁶ Even Aleksander Surlov, representative of the Polish dissident organisation KSS/KOR in the West, accused that the US policy lacked decisiveness. He suggested,

94 New York Times, 4 January 1982, p.4.

95 George F. Kennan, "The Polish Crisis-II: As Kremlin Sees it", New York Times, 6 January, 1982, p.19.

96 See New York Times, 17 January 1982, IV, p.23.

The West must also demonstrate its determination - unfortunately lacking so far - to provide massive economic aid to Poland. But this aid should be subject to clear conditions: no aid, even no rescheduling of debts, unless all the people detained are released and martial law is lifted.⁹⁷

Even Kennan suggested a "mini-Marshall Plan" to be enacted for Poland by the US and other countries to overcome the economic disaster it was facing.

DIFFERENCES WITH THE ALLIES ON SANCTIONS

On the issues of sanctions, there appeared a rift between the US and its European allies of the NATO alliance. The West European countries agreed that the Soviets supported the Polish elite in their decision and were, to a great extent, directly responsible for it. However, they did not see much purpose in reprisals against Poland if it had been victimized by the Soviets or in actions against the Soviet Union if the United States planned to continue with the grain sales to Moscow in future. They were ready to take only limited steps against the Poles and preferred to keep other measures in reserve as a way of deterring the Soviet military intervention in Poland.⁹⁸

Detente had given a new dimension to the intra-European relationship. The Europeans found increased trade prospects, and

97 New York Times, 7 January 1982, p. A27.

98 Washington Post, 17 December 1981, p.1 and 21; also Leonard Downie, Jr., 's article, Washington Post, 25 December 1981, p. A30; New York Times, 31 December 1981, p.1.

renewed contacts with their neighbours of East Central Europe as beneficial in every way. It relieved them of the psychological pressures that the Soviet military power and diplomacy had had since 1945. It also removed, to a great extent, the fear of the recurrence of another war in Europe. Therefore, even at the time when martial law was declared in Poland, Haig could not develop a consensus among the western allies to take a rigid stance against the Soviet Union and Poland.⁹⁹ The West Europeans mainly opposed the American idea of sanctions against the USSR.

The major difference centred around the US decision to stop the export of technical equipment used for oil and gas production and distribution including the issuing of the export licences to the American pipelaying firms. This was a direct blow to the Siberian Gas Pipeline Project which was a joint venture between the Soviet Union and Western Europe. The oil shortage of 1973 and a steep increase in the costs of oil by the OPEC countries, had made the industrialised West European countries to realize that they should overcome their dependence for petroleum requirements upon the Gulf countries. They had vast reserves in the North Sea, the Baltic Sea and the Siberian region of the Soviet Union which lay untapped due to the limitations imposed by geo-political and economic realities of the region. e.g., the oil potential in the North Sea regions was largely controlled by Norway who could not

99 Alexander M. Haig, Caveat (London, Weidenfield and Nicolson, 1984).

undertake an expensive venture. In Siberia, extensive oil and gas potential existed and the Soviet Union was prepared to let the Europeans make use of 1.37 trillion cubic feet of gas per year for a period of 25 years,¹⁰⁰ under certain conditions. But it was agreed that the Europeans would meet the expenditure of constructing the pipeline, which was estimated at \$15 billion. The pipeline was to be 3,300 miles long stretching from the Siberian corner of the Soviet Union along the Arctic Circle to the Western frontiers of Czechoslovakia with supplementary lines to the individual states. This project was estimated to satisfy 5 per cent of the total West European oil and 20 per cent to 30 per cent of its gas requirements.

The Reagan Administration considered the project as a "Soviet Trojan horse offered to an unsuspecting Western Europe",¹⁰¹ and believed that the West Europeans were in danger of becoming dependent upon Soviet gas and the Soviet orders for industrial equipment. Therefore, as Haig, Jr. wrote in his memoirs, in the National Security Council and the Cabinet meetings, the leaders discussed other available alternative sources of energy supplies to Western Europe. But they could not arrive at any conclusion. The only available assistance that the US could have extended towards

100 Ibid., p.252. For further details, see Keesing's, vol.28, 30 April, 1982, pp.31458-31459.

101 US Congress Joint Economic Committee, East West Commercial Policy: A Congressional Dialogue with the Reagan Administration 16 February 1982 (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982), Introduction, p.x.

Western Europe, as Haig suggests, lay in vast American coal reserves but it would have required a very high degree of port modernization facility. It was an expensive suggestion and had no chance of being approved by the Senate or even the White House which was so adamant on cutting down the federal budget that it even reduced the defence expenditure by \$30 billion.¹⁰²

By suspension of licenses, the US was banning the equipment already under contract by the American and other pipelaying firms in the States. On the insistence of Haig, Donald Regan, Baldrige and Brock, the President decided to give time to this measure and sent the Under Secretary of State James L. Buckley to Europe to discuss such an action with the allied governments. But Haig failed to convince the President. In his memoirs, Caveat, Haig very explicitly writes about the shattering effects of the American decision on the unity of the alliance. There was a high current of discontent running in Western Europe regarding President's decision on the pipeline and the Polish debts question. President Reagan had failed to tackle both the issues in a satisfactory manner, as Prime Minister Mrs. Margaret Thatcher pointed out:

...any such action (i.e. putting Poland in default) would likely put other East European countries in default with consequences for the Germans and the rest of the Western banking system that could not

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102 Haig, n.112, p.248.

be calculated. The cost of breaking the trust on which western banking was based would be far greater to the West than to the Soviet Union. The US must understand that the continental Europeans profoundly believed that they mooted the pipeline and would desert the US on this issue rather than abandon it...It affronted the Europeans to be asked to make enormous sacrifices while the United States made none.¹⁰³

By the 'sacrifices' the Europeans interpreted several other losses they would have to bear more than the United States.

These included:

- the suspension of Aeroflot flights to the USA would have not meant any loss for the US since no US airlines flew into the USSR and the Soviets could not retaliate against the US in any way.
- the total industrial turnovers from US to the Soviet Union were also meagre amounting to a mere \$300 million. This was even less than the total contract value held only in part by a British firm, John Brown Ltd., which came to around \$400 millions. Similar situations applied to other firms from France, Germany, Belgium etc.
- the major area where the US could have been hit was kept away from the peripheries of the sanctions - i.e., the grain sales embargo. The US did not mention suspension of the wheat shipments to the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁴

Apart from the Natural Gas Pipeline issue, another bone of contention between the US and the West was the US grain sales embargo. The US wanted Japanese and West European allies

103 Ibid., see pp.254-256, also New York Times, 3 January 1981, IV, p.2; and Leonard Silk's article, "European Interests in furthering the Trade with Soviet Union as a Factor in the European Division Over Sanctions", The New York Times, 5 January 1981, IV, p.2.

104 William Saffire's article, "Western Allies Back Out of the Sanctions", The New York Times, 3 January 1981, IV, p.9; also Haig, n.55, pp.256.

to withhold their co-operation with the Soviet Union in the Siberian Gas Pipe line and yet, its own grain sales accounting to over 70 per cent of the US exports to the Soviet Union remain unaffected by the 1981 sanctions and during February 1982, the US producers had sold about 1,000,000 tonnes of the US grain to the Soviet Union. This meant that the US, while not considering the interests of allies, was zealously safeguarding its own. Although Haig desperately attempted to convince the allies on the question of default and the imposition of grain embargo, it was evident that though,

...Britain and other members of the alliance wanted desperately to follow an American lead on Poland in a policy that would protect the Polish people and discomfit the Soviets and the regime in Warsaw. But it was too much to ask that they punish their own economies and their own interests in support of policies that would inflict no noticeable wound on Moscow's interests.¹⁰⁵

Moreover, there was a suspicion among the Western allies regarding the US objectives. As Walter Lacqueur suggests, they feared that the US wanted to enlarge in the long-run, its trade relations with the Soviet bloc since, a self-sufficient Soviet Union was more likely to follow a moderate policy rather than the one that held a deep sense of political and economic insecurities. This was further proved by the US decision not to totally

105 Ibid., no.55, p.256.

cut off the grain supplies to the Soviet Union.¹⁰⁶ But one can argue that even a prolonged ban on long-term grains agreements could have a definite impact. The Soviets, under deteriorating economy could have been compelled to act the way Americans wanted. However, a full grain embargo would have been even more effective, although it must have cost the US farmers a lot.

Indeed, the imposition of martial law in Poland brought relief to the Western bankers since this would lead to an improvement in the work habits leading to a raised production and more money to pay back their debts to the West. But in the imposition of trade restrictions majority of the public opinion in the US was with the leadership, in deep contrast to the lukewarm reactions from the western business circles. They felt that the real national interest of the US lay in assertion of its leadership in the world, and expressing its disapproval of the maltreatment of Solidarity and workers.¹⁰⁷

In a very logical stream of thought, the US Administration also decided to delink the issue of limitation of theatre nuclear weapons to the crisis in Poland. The US felt and knew that if they dwelt a lot upon the Polish crisis' linkage to arms control issue,

106 Walter Lacquer, America, Europe and the Soviet Union, Selected Essays (London, Transaction Books, 1983), p.121.

107 See editorial in New York Times, 31 December 1981, p.22 and also in The Nation, no.63.

any possibility of progress in the latter field would be lost. It was argued that the political and the nuclear issues should be kept separate because,

both leaders believe that these INF talks constitute a very special category of East-West relations, and as such they must be dealt with outside the context of what we would refer to as normal East-West relationships because there are fundamental advantages to the West as well as the East in the continuation of a dialogue seeking control of nuclear armaments".¹⁰⁸

This was right for two reasons. Firstly discontent was already brewing up in the western world regarding the sanctions. If the US had linked the INF talks with the Polish question, the dissatisfaction of the West European allies would have increased much more since the question of the theater nuclear force negotiations concerned them directly. Secondly, the decision primarily served American national interests. The United States, too, had a huge stake in arms control. It was probably due to this, that even though President Reagan had enough reasons to call off the talks, he did not do so. Thus, we find that the post-martial law US foreign policy had a clear sense of direction since a definite action had been taken for which the US had been prepared over a long time.

The Polish issue and the tension caused by it permeated the international environment for the whole of 1982. The

108 Quoted by Alexander M. Haig in a news conference on 6 January 1982, in Department of State Bulletin (Washington, D.C.), February 1982, p.14.

"long, dark shadow" cast by the crisis was evident throughout the talks between the US Secretary of State Alexander M. Haig, Jr., and the Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko at Geneva on 26 January. These talks were held despite former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's disapproval in the New York Times. He argued that the US should refrain from any high level dialogue until Poland was under Soviet oppression. The US declared 30 January as the "Solidarity with Poland Day"¹⁰⁹ which was marked by demonstrations in various cities in the US and abroad. Special programmes like "Let Poland be Poland" were screened in NATO countries and included addresses by President Reagan, Prime Minister Mrs. Thatcher, German Chancellor Schmidt, French President Mitterrand, Japanese Premier Suzuki, Canadian Prime Minister Mr. Pierre Trudeau and many other prominent political personalities.

Towards the end of January, the Reagan Administration found itself once again divided upon the question of declaring a general default by Poland since the country had failed in early 1982 to repay the arrears of principal and interest on the loans owed to the US Banks. However, President Reagan declared on 1 February 1982 that the US government would reimburse \$71,300,000 owed to nine US banks by Poland in order to avoid forcing it into default and thus,

109 Department of State Bulletin, vol.82, February 1982, p.17.

risking an extraordinary strain upon the international monetary system.¹¹⁰ This came after the submission of two reports reviewing the financial and economic situation of Poland by the Department of State, Department of Treasury and the Senate Appropriations Committee on 27 January 1982 and 9 February 1982.¹¹¹ This declaration of default was overwhelmingly supported by the Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger and the AFL-CIO on ^{the} ground that such a declaration would force the West European NATO allies to adopt effective sanctions against Poland and the USSR.

The US efforts at gaining the allied support for the sanctions dominated the rest of the 1982.¹ Following the NATO Council meet at Brussels U.K. and Japan enforced restrictions against Poland and the USSR. But while West Germany agreed on imposing sanctions, it along with France refused to accept the US appeals for enforcing punitive measures against the Soviet Union. The US used all its patience to bring around the allies, especially France, to see its point of view.² The US Under Secretary of State for Security Assistance, James Buckley undertook a tour of West European countries in mid-March.³

110 Keasing's, vol.28, 30 April 1982, p.31462.

111 For details on the Polish debt and financial position see these - US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Poland: Financial and Economic Situation, 27 January 1982 (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982) and US Sub-Committee on Foreign Operations of the Senate Appropriations Committee Report, Polish Debt, 23 February 1982 (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982). Also Department of State Bulletin, vol.'82, March 1982, pp.49-52; and ibid., April 1982, pp.61-62.

Meanwhile in the Madrid session of ^{the} Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), held from 9 February-12 March, 1982, Polish issue severely hampered the proceedings.¹¹² The Polish and the Soviet delegations declined to discuss the imposition of martial law in Poland. Heading the US delegation, Alexander M. Haig charged that since the Polish regime and the Soviet Union had adopted "a path inimical to security and co-operation in Europe" it was totally impossible to carry on "business as usual".¹¹³

As the military regime in Poland continued with its repressive policies and the NATO allies unflinching in their attitude, on 18 June, President Reagan, William C. Clarke and Weinberger overrode the objections of the State, Treasury and the Commerce Departments on the Siberian pipeline issue and decided that not only would the US continue its obstruction of the pipeline project but also increase it. It declared that the foreign subsidiaries of American firms and the foreign owned companies would be penalized if they complied their contracts concerning equipment for the pipeline.¹¹⁴ Here the Reagan Administration had invoked the principle of "extraterritoriality". Although it damaged the US business firms, yet the President chose to implement it as "a matter of great principle

112 Madrid CSCE Review Meeting, Helsinki Agreement Negotiations, Phase IV Interim Report, 9 February-12 March 1982 (Washington D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982).

113 Ibid.

114 New York Times, 20 June 1982, p.A1.

is at stake" that affected the US credibility with its NATO allies and the Soviet Union.

This decision showed that at long last Reagan was taking a firm stand although in legal terms, it was difficult to support it. Lawrence Eagleburger even warned during the session that such a decision would only lead the West to defy the US. But Weinberger disagreed on ^{the} ground that Great Britain would certainly support the US since the latter had strongly supported it in the Falklands war. Reagan, obviously was influenced by Weinberger's line of thought. However, he ^{was} proved wrong as the later developments revealed. The US was left alone once again while Great Britain sided with West Germany, France and Italy in not cancelling their heavy equipment contracts.¹¹⁵

Thus, it was becoming obvious to the US that Reagan's "great principle" did not enjoy much support among West European allies. It was clear that the pipeline project would continue and that the Americans were not able to exercise much influence upon it. At the same time, the Soviet Union was being benefitted by the friction among the allies. Therefore, Schultz along with Regan, Baldrige and Brock worked upon minimizing the commercial penalties that were to be imposed on foreign companies if they honoured their contracts related to gas pipeline equipment.

115 Keesing's, vol.28, 17 December 1982, p.31854; also Laurence I. Barrett, n.86, pp.299-300.

Schultz also succeeded in mellowing William Clark's hard-line position on the issue since the European attitude had established strongly that in order to gain their support on the issue of sanctions, the U.S. would have to develop a new understanding with them and also accept the pipeline project. Meanwhile there had been a change in government in West Germany where Schmidt was no more heading the government, and France with President Mitterrand became the pivotal figure on this issue. One of his advisers on international economic relations, Jacques Attale was considered in the US to be hostile to the American interests, since he had several times in the past frustrated the American purposes. By late October, Schultz's efforts were paying off. He worked out main features of an agreement with the West Europeans, Japanese and the Canadians. The most important point being the postponement on any new deals relating to energy supplies with the Soviet Union pending the completion of the study upon the alternative means of meeting the need for imported gas or oil. Reagan Administration wanted to make a prompt announcement to this effect since it would have a marked impact upon the forthcoming congressional elections (due in November). It would not have only influenced the ethnic communities but also boost all such companies that had lost their contracts. But President, Mitterrand objected to this and the agreement remained a mere understanding.

In September, a bill was introduced in the US House of Representatives seeking the lifting of the economic sanctions against the Soviet Union. On the key vote of 206-203 the bill was rejected.¹¹⁶ But on 13 November, President Reagan himself lifted sanctions on export of gas and oil technology to the Soviet Union since he said that they had served the purpose of demonstrating US concern over the Soviet pressure on Poland and also in view of the agreement being reached with the West European allies.

However, as a strong reaction against the abolition of Solidarity by the Polish Sejm, President Ronald Reagan suspended Poland's "most-favoured nation" (MFN) trading status on 3 October 1982.¹¹⁷ This meant increased duties upon the US exports to Poland and imports from it. Duties on some of the items rose by as much as 1000 per cent. The bill was formally signed by President on 27 October and was in accordance to the Trade Act of January 1975. To justify his suspension of the trading status, Reagan declared that Poland had failed since 1978 to

116 Congressional Quarterly Almanac (Washington, D.C., Government Printing Office, 1982), pp.163-166.

117 Poland had become a contracting party to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade in 1947, enjoyed the MFN status with the US till 1957 and then again from 1960 onwards. Other communist countries enjoying the status are Yugoslavia, Romania, Hungary and China although the status of the last three is subject to annual review.

meet its obligations under the GATT to increase the total import values from the GATT member nations by 7 per cent per year.¹¹⁸

With a view to soften the French standpoint, Clark conducted a secret trip to Paris on 27 October. The French President declared the US guilty of "a kind of hegemony and violation of others' sovereignty". He assured of the co-operation only if Reagan yielded. Hence, the issue again remained in limbo for sometime.

In November there were certain changes in Poland and the Soviet Union which led President Reagan to lift some of the sanctions. On 8 November there was a change in Soviet leadership due to Brezhnev's death and in Poland, the government released Solidarity leader Lech Walesa.

The US once again attempted to reach an agreement upon the unified response on the issue of sanctions.¹ Although UK, West Germany, Italy and Japan responded with no objections but President Mitterrand declared on 12 November 1982 that France was "not a party to the agreement" announced that day in Washington.¹¹⁹

On 18 December 1982, the Polish Sejm suspended the state of martial law imposed on 13 December 1981. But it did not bring about any improvement in Poland's strained relations with the

118 Keesing's, vol.29, February 1983, p.31965; also Congressional Quarterly Almanac, n.116, p.163.

119 New York Times, 13 November 1982, p.1.

West since they felt, first, that the martial law was not totally lifted, second, the Solidarity activists were still under detention and, finally that the Polish government had not advanced in the direction of holding negotiations with the former free trade union or the Church representatives whom the West considered to be true representatives of the Poles. Consequently, they retained the sanctions.

In Poland, despite its abolition, the Solidarity continued to operate at an underground level through the "Provisional Coordinating Committee" (TKK) which was formed shortly after the imposition of Martial Law. In October 1983, Lech Walesa was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace for his "contribution, made with considerable personal sacrifice to ensure the workers' rights to establish their own organisations".¹²⁰ In June 1984, the Sejm declared amnesty of around 630 political prisoners including former leaders of KOR and Solidarity. The government also agreed to hold negotiations with the church.

Economically, the situation in Poland was gradually improving. The government figures for the first half of 1984 despite the sanctions showed an increase in the industrial output by 4.8 per cent and productivity by 5.2 per cent in comparison to the first half of 1983. The trade surplus rose \$805,000,000 as against \$753,000,000 in 1983. Although the hard currency debt was rising, in 1983

¹²⁰ Keesing's, n.118, December 1983, p.32596.

Poland paid off \$2,200 million and signed an agreement with its commercial bank creditors for rescheduling of credits worth \$1,600 million falling due between 1984-1987.¹²¹

Following the declaration of the amnesty and the satisfactory steps taken by the Polish government to end the tension in Poland, President Reagan declared the removal of sanctions, restoring the landing rights for LOT (the Polish airline) and approved the resumption of scientific and cultural exchanges between the two countries. He also ended the US opposition to Poland's application to rejoin the IMF, provided that all the political prisoners were released. However, Larry Speakes, the White House official spokesman, held that the remaining sanctions including the withholding of the MFN status would continue until the Polish government made "significant movement towards national reconciliation".¹²² The last easing out of the sanctions and the re-extension of MFN status to Poland came only in March 1987.

Thus, the crisis in Poland led into a crisis in the NATO alliance and a failure of the United States as its leader to muster a unified response. However, it clearly revealed the Reagan Administration's intentions to commence a strong war against the Soviet Union which was termed by the eminent scholars as the

121 Ibid.

122 Ibid., vol.30, December 1984, pp.33294-95.

New Cold War. In accordance to this, Reagan followed the principle of obstructing anything that might improve the economic difficulties that the Soviet Union was facing, and thereby, force it "to bear the consequences of its own priorities" i.e. the track of aggressive adventurism and strong military build-up which the Reaganauts believed the USSR had adopted since 1979.

CONCLUSION

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The crisis in Poland between August 1980 and December 1983 will probably be remembered as the most important since the end of the Second World War. The developments described in the preceding chapter^s not only threatened the carefully built structure of a socialist state in the Soviet sphere of influence but also threw the world into turmoil by materialising the possibility of direct Soviet intervention. The initial success of Solidarity in extracting concessions out of the Communist regime brought acclaim of the non-communist world to the leadership. While the world applauded, it did not bother to think that the Soviet Union could not allow these developments to go to a point where it would endanger the system over which it presided. The movement therefore had to stay within the given parameters of reality. But the success of the movement and its principle instrument, in particular, the strikes, led Polish industrial workers and peasants to the false belief that this instrument cannot fail. They forgot the limits. The leadership was probably a little more realistic. Therefore, it resisted the pressures from below but eventually succumbed. The Polish government, in no position to make more concessions, clamped down emergency. The worst and decisive failure of the movement came, when the Polish armed forces solidly stood behind the government. Those who had believed to see the spectacle of the brave Polish army, the second largest

in the Eastern bloc, fighting the advancing Soviet army bitterly and violently, were disappointed. Their fond dreams vanished in the glaring light of reality. The Polish crisis ended without any overt Soviet intervention. This, however, is not to deny that the Polish authority acted only after the Soviet had approved of their action.

Could the outcome have been different had Solidarity exercised restraint and waited for some more time after gaining initial success? The answer to this question will remain in the realm of speculation. George F. Kennan, the former US Ambassador to the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia, wrote soon after the imposition of military rule in Poland,

Had Solidarity been willing to pause as recently as a month or two ago - to rest for a while on its laurels and to give time for Moscow to satisfy itself that freedom in Poland did not mean the immediate collapse of the heavens - it would already have had to its credit, a historic achievement in the way of national self-liberation. But this, of course, is not the road that Solidarity, or at least part of Solidarity, took.¹

Other eminent Sovietologists also felt that had Solidarity acted more prudently and not questioned the Soviet military presence, something akin to Finlandisation could have resulted. But Solidarity went on to challenge the system and invited the crackdown.

1 Quoted in Walter Lacquer, America, Europe and the Soviet Union Selected Essays (New Brunswick, N.J., Transaction, 1983), p.114.

However, it would remain a moot question whether a communist state could grant more concessions than the Polish state had already done and still remain a communist state. It would have been difficult for the communists inside Poland, and outside - in the entire eastern bloc - to have permitted this. For, this would have signalled the end of the system. Whichever way one may look at the crisis in Poland, none can deny its importance.

The Solidarity movement gained in strength against the deepening economic crisis. The western contribution to the crisis was substantial. It was based on the belief that Poland could be bailed out of its economic troubles by advancing loans and expansion of its exports. But the Polish government as well as its foreign creditors forgot to ask the question - how was Poland going to repay its loans and interest thereon? And to whom was it going to export and what? After a while, Poland found itself in worsening economic situation, out of which there was no way out. The Western governments could only relieve the situation but could not remedy it. The economic crisis led to the political crisis which assumed international importance in the context of East-West relations.

Four years of Carter Administration fall in two distinct periods. In the first two years, the Administration vigorously sought to promote detente in the East-West relations. But the Soviet actions in Africa convinced many within the Administration that behind the facade of detente, the Soviets were primarily interested in probing softer areas in the Third World and expanding its area of influence.

Out of this growing suspicion was born the idea of linkage i.e. linking arms reduction agreement with "responsible" Soviet behaviour in the Third World. The debate within the Administration between the advocates of soft and hard policy options towards the Soviet Union was, however, suspended by the fall of Shah, advent of Ayatollah Khomeini's regime and the hostage crisis in the first half of 1979. The hostage crisis engaged the attention of the Administration almost to the point of exclusion of other issues. The "invasion" of Afghanistan in December 1979 finally put an end to the policy of detente. Instead, policy of putting pressure on the Soviet army in Afghanistan became the governing principle of the Carter Administration. The US policy towards the Polish crisis should be viewed against the background of these developments.

The Carter Administration failed to evolve any clear response to the crisis. For amelioration of the economic difficulties, it was willing and did provide economic assistance. But the crisis was no longer economic, it had assumed political dimension. The US had no policy option of directly intervening in the situation. What it did was to issue statements supporting the movement. It categorically decided that the Soviet military intervention would be unacceptable to the United States. But it did not spell out what measures it would take when and if the Soviets militarily intervened. Could the response be stronger than in the case of Afghanistan? In the end, it could only claim that it was able to prevent the Soviet intervention by focussing the attention of the world on Poland.

Reagan rode to the White House on the crest of a wave of rising popular anger and frustration in not being able to assert its power and authority in the international affairs. Nothing could have demonstrated the limitation of power than the Iranian hostage crisis. The Reagan Administration wanted its West European allies in imposing economic punishment on the Soviet Union by annulling the construction of gas pipeline into West European countries. It found the West European allies reluctant to oblige. The Reagan Administration had undermined its own credibility by repealing the grains embargo imposed by President Carter in the wake of Soviet invasion of Afghanistan on the ground that it hurt the American farmer in the Midwest much more than it did the Soviet Union. Now it was asking the West European countries to make sacrifices for pressurising the Soviet Union. In fact, like the Carter Administration, the Reagan Administration could not threaten the Soviet Union that its intervention in Poland would adversely affect East-West relations.

The intervention did not take place because it was not necessary. The Polish military itself was able to control the situation. The imposition of military rule was an internal matter. The US responded by imposing the economic sanctions which could not be very effective.

However, it remains doubtful whether the US could have done anything concrete in case of a Soviet intervention. The harsh reality is that the Super Powers have their vested interests in maintaining

the status quo in Europe. Therefore, each may enjoy the rumbles of discontentment within the other's empire, neither is willing to face the effects that an upheaval might have on its own alliance system. Solidarity challenged the Soviet empire directly and the European status quo indirectly. Therefore, the US chose to be discreet in its responses so as not to encourage any such idea that the US was interested in detaching the country from the bloc. The armed forces that keeps the Warsaw Pact together also provides the rationale for NATO. If the US and the West were to encourage the demise of the Warsaw Pact, even the NATO alliance would have forfeited the justification to continue.

Thus, we find that the US was in no position to help the movement in Poland. Poland is in the Soviet sphere of influence. The latter would not permit the movement to undermine the basic features of a communist state. Nor would it have treated lightly the collapse of the empire, particularly on its frontiers. The US, aware of this fact, was not ready to go to war with the Soviet Union over Poland. However in the end, the US was not required to consider the option as the crisis was resolved internally.

But the problem that remained unanswered for the Americans even after the Polish crisis was the one laid out in the Sonnenfeldt memo: how to nurture greater political freedom in Eastern Europe in a way that will not disrupt the political balance in Europe in a revolutionary manner and at the same time seem palatable and acceptable to the

Soviet Union. In 1975, the United States could not achieve any resolution to this problem. In 1982 also, the United States failed to contribute to the development of a more "organic" relationship between the Soviet Union and its East European satellites that did not rest on fear, or force or intimidation.



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