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FM WARSAW 241505Z FEB 82

TO IMMEDIATE FCO

TELNO 302 OF 24TH FEBRUARY 1982

AND TO IMMEDIATE BONN

INFO PRIORITY: WASHINGTON, PARIS, MOSCOW AND UKDEL NATO

MIPT

VISIT OF HERBERT WEHNER

1. THIS WAS THE FIRST VISIT TO POLAND SINCE THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW BY A MAJOR WESTERN POLITICAL PERSONALITY. WEHNER'S POLISH HOSTS, WHO REPRESENTED A NUMBER OF VARIATIONS ON THE STANDARD OFFICIAL THEME, DEVOTED MUCH TIME AND ATTENTION TO HIM. IT COMES AT A TIME WHEN MOST OF OUR OWN SOURCES OF INFORMATION IN WARSAW HAVE DRIED UP AND JUST BEFORE A SERIES OF MEETINGS WHICH COULD PRODUCE SOME INDICATIONS OF THE WAY POLAND WILL BE HEADING IN THE NEXT FEW MONTHS.

2. NOT EVERYTHING THAT NEGWER PASSED ON CAN NECESSARILY BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE. THE POLES WILL HAVE CO-ORDINATED THEIR TACTICS AMONGST THEMSELVES TO MAKE BEST POSSIBLE PRESENTATION OF LOCAL DEVELOPMENTS AND FUTURE MOVES. WEHNER'S OWN PRECONCEPTIONS (AND NEGWER'S TOO) WILL HAVE PERSUADED THEM TO PUT A FAVOURABLE GLOSS ON HIS DISCUSSIONS. NEVERTHELESS THIS WAS AN INTERESTING AND IMPORTANT VISIT WHICH REVEALED FOLLOWING NEW OR SIGNIFICANT POINTS :-

(A) IT SUGGESTS THAT MORE IS GOING ON BY WAY OF CHURCH/STATE DISCUSSIONS BEHIND THE SCENES THAN WE THOUGHT. THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR WAS QUICK TO POINT OUT THAT MICEWSKI DID NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT THE MAIN BODY OF CHURCH THOUGHT BUT HIS AND DABROWSKI'S COMMENTS SUGGEST NO SLACKENING OF EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE CHURCH.

(B) IF THE INFORMATION ABOUT WALESA'S UNCONDITIONAL WILLINGNESS TO TALK TO THE AUTHORITIES AND THE CHURCH IS CORRECT, THIS WOULD SEEM TO OPEN UP A BETTER POSSIBILITY FOR FUTURE DIALOGUE. THE GOVERNMENT IS PINNING GREAT HOPE BY ITS TRADE UNION GUIDELINES (MY TEL NO 293) WHICH COULD PROVIDE THE AGENDA FOR SUCH TALKS.

(C) WHILE WE CAN EXPECT SOME MORE MINOR RELAXATIONS OF MARTIAL LAW RESTRICTIONS AND PROBABLY A FURTHER RELEASE OF DETAINEES, THERE WILL BE NO BREAK-THROUGH BY THE END OF THE MONTH, NOR ANY MAJOR CONCESSIONS.

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(D) THE WEST'S DECISION NOT TO PROVIDE NEW CREDIT AND TO DELAY 1982 RESCHEDULING NEGOTIATIONS IS BITING HARD. MICEWSKI'S COMMENTS ON DRASTIC FOOD SHORTAGES, JARUZELSKI'S DISCLOSURE OF THE OFFER OF FURTHER HELP FROM THE SOVIET UNION AND THE UNANIMOUS COMPLAINTS OF WEHNER'S INTERLOCUTORS ABOUT SANCTIONS CONFIRM ACCELERATING ECONOMIC DECLINE.

(E) THE POLES' CONTINUOUS WEDGE-DRIVING TACTICS WILL BE REINFORCED BY THIS VISIT.

3. WEHNER IS EXPECTED TO GIVE DETAILS OF HIS VISIT IN BONN AFTER BRIEFING THE CHANCELLOR. NEGWER GAVE AS HIS PERSONAL OPINION (PLEASE PROTECT THAT SCHMIDT'S OWN VIEWS WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE VERY DISSIMILAR FROM WEHNER'S. THE POLES CANNOT BE DISPLEASED BY THE APPARENT RESULTS OF THIS VISIT.

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