

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

17 September 1981

Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. M. S. Gorbachev, V. V. Grishin, M. A. Suslov,  
N. A. Tikhonov, D. F. Ustinov, P. N. Demichev,  
B. N. Ponomarev, M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov,  
V. I. Dolgikh, M. V. Zimyanin, K. V. Rusakov

....

8. Telegram from the Soviet Ambassador in Berlin on 15 September 1981  
(Special No. 598)

BREZHNEV. After my telephone conversation with Cde. Kania on 11 September 1981, which we arranged at the previous session of the Politburo, I sent information about it to our ambassadors so that they could inform Cdes. Honecker, Kadar, Zhivkov, and Husak.<sup>1</sup>

The ambassadors performed this task and reported the results. The leaders of the fraternal parties fully and entirely agreed with what was said to Cde. Kania during the phone conversation, and they believe that Cde. Kania is displaying unacceptable liberalism and that we must apply strong pressure on him.<sup>2</sup>

In a discussion with Cde. Abrasimov which, as you know, was described in a

---

<sup>1</sup> Translator's Note: For a transcript of Brezhnev's side of this phone conversation, which was distributed to the leaders of the East German, Hungarian, Czechoslovak, and Bulgarian Communist parties, see Transcript of Brezhnev's Phone Conversation with Kania, 15 September 1981. The phone call occurred two days before the KOK unanimously endorsed the plans for martial law at Jaruzelski's behest.

<sup>2</sup> Translator's Note: The East European leaders themselves conveyed this message directly to Kania. Even Janos Kadar, who had generally taken a less extreme position than his East German, Czechoslovak, and Bulgarian counterparts had, sent a pointed letter to the PZPR Central Committee on 17 September expressing alarm about the Polish leadership's failure to rebuff "the counterrevolutionary forces in Poland who are acting against the Polish working class and the vital national interests of the Polish people, and who are seeking to weaken our friendly relations, our multilateral cooperation, and our alliance system. Their continued activity will have a profound influence on the security of the entire commonwealth of socialist states. It is in our vital national interest, and the vital national interests of all European states, that Poland not become a flashpoint for international tension." These last remarks alluded to the possibility of joint military action. See "A Lengyel Egyesult Munkaspart Kozponti Vezetosege," No. 434 (Top Secret), from Janos Kadar, 17 September 1981, in Magyar Orszagos Leveltar, 288, F. 11/4400, o.e.

telegram, Cde. Honecker put forth the following proposal: to have the leaders of the fraternal parties assemble in Moscow and invite Cde. Kania, and then say to him that he has agreed to step down and that the proposed successor to him as PZPR CC First Secretary is Cde. Olszowski.<sup>3</sup>

In connection with this I would like to recommend what our stance should be. Of course, it is difficult for us at the moment to arrive at a simple decision on this matter. We don't yet know the opinion of the other comrades, the leaders of the other socialist countries. We need to think carefully about all of this.

Perhaps we should instruct the USSR Foreign Ministry, the Ministry of Defense, and the CC Department to examine the questions laid out in the telegram and, taking account of the exchange of opinions in the Politburo, to prepare and submit appropriate recommendations to the CC.

If there are no objections, then perhaps we'll adopt this motion.

The members of the Politburo and candidate members of the Politburo say that Leonid Il'ich's proposal is absolutely correct and should be adopted, except that the KGB should be included among the agencies instructed to examine these questions.

The proposal is adopted.

[*Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 47*]

---

<sup>3</sup> Translator's Note: Pyotr Abrasimov, the Soviet ambassador in East Germany, met with Honecker on 15 September 1981. Honecker recounted the discussion later that day at a session of the SED Politburo; see "Protokoll Nr. 21/81 der Sitzung des Politburos des ZK der SED vom 15. September 1981," 15 September 1981 (Top Secret), in SAPMDB, ZPA, J IV 2/2-1910, Bl. 1-2.