

October 29, 1981

Session of the CPSU CC Politburo, 29 October 1981 (excerpt)

Citation:

"Session of the CPSU CC Politburo, 29 October 1981 (excerpt)", October 29, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 48, first published in CWIHP Special Working Paper 1. Original available in the National Security Archive RADD/READD Collection. <https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/112801>

Summary:

Soviet Politburo meeting discusses removing Cde. Kania due to uprisings in Poland. It also addresses shortages of oil and supplies for export and use within the Soviet Union.

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

Top Secret
Single Copy
(Working Notes)

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO
29 October 1981

Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV presiding.

Also taking part: Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, M. S. Gorbachev, A. A. Gromyko, A. P. Kirilenko, A. Ya. Pel'she, M. A. Suslov, D. F. Ustinov, K. U. Chernenko, P. N. Demichev, V. V. Kuznetsov, B. N. Ponomarev, I. V. Kapitonov, M. V. Zimyanin, K. V. Rusakov

. . . .

2. On the Results of Cde. K. V. Rusakov's Trip to the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria

BREZHNEV. It's known to all those here that at the instruction of the CPSU CC Politburo, Cde. Rusakov traveled to the GDR, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Bulgaria to inform our friends about several matters, in particular about the measures we have adopted and will be adopting in connection with the Polish events.

Cde. Rusakov completed his travel to these countries and informed the Politburo about the results of the trip in a note, which you now have.

Perhaps Konstantin Viktorovich has something to add to what he has written in the note. If so, then by all means.

RUSAKOV. I spoke with the leaders of the four fraternal states, as I was instructed by the Politburo. The negotiations concerned two matters: The first was the question of Poland.

The note describes in detail my discussions with the leaders of the fraternal countries on the Polish question. I can attest that all the leaders of the fraternal parties are in complete agreement with us on the measures we have adopted toward Poland, and also toward the situation now unfolding in Poland. In short, I can say that on this point there is complete unity of views.

During the negotiations, the leaders of the fraternal countries also raised economic questions. Chief among these was the question about reducing supplies of energy, above all oil. Although Cdes. Kadar, Husak, and Zhivkov said that this would be difficult for them, all of them reacted with understanding to our proposal and our request, and said that they will find a way to cope with the situation and go along with what we proposed. To ensure that the matter was fully clarified, I asked each of the comrades the following question: Can I report to the Politburo that you agree with the point of view I expressed? The comrades responded that, yes, I could say that.

My conversation with Cde. Honecker, though, was different. He immediately said that the GDR could not accept such a reduction in the supply of oil, that this would cause serious damage to the national economy and the GDR as a whole, that this would strike a heavy blow at the GDR's economy, and that we shouldn't proceed with it. He even declared that they simply cannot put up with it, and requested a written response from Cde. Brezhnev to two letters that they sent. Thus, the question proved to be very contentious, and it essentially was left unresolved. Cde. Honecker again

cited as evidence the fact that they were supplying us with bismuth and uranium, that they are providing upkeep for the Group of [Soviet] Forces, and that matters are especially complicated for them because the Polish People's Republic is not supplying the coal that we [East Germans] need. According to Honecker, this has led to a sharp decline in the living standards of the German population, and we [East Germans] don't know how we should explain it. They will have to reexamine all the preliminary drafts of their five-year plan.

BREZHNEV. I think we should approve the discussions that Cde. Rusakov had with Cdes. Honecker, Husak, Kadar, and Zhivkov. In our practical work in the future we should take account of the ideas expressed by the comrades about the Polish question.

As you know, we decided to reduce the supply of oil to our friends. All of them believed this would be onerous for them, and even now Cde. Honecker, for example, as you can see, is awaiting a response to the letters he sent us. The others are not awaiting a response, but deep down they naturally are hoping that we will somehow change our decision.

Perhaps it would be worthwhile at the next meeting with our friends to say, somehow, on this matter that we will be taking all measures needed to fulfill and overfulfill the plan on oil, and that we hope we will succeed. If so, we could make adjustments in the planned deliveries of energy supplies, though we should say this of course without letting them think that we are now backing away from our decision.

Obviously, Cde. Tikhonov must again closely examine this question and, if the slightest opportunity arises to alleviate matters, he should submit appropriate recommendations to the CC.

GROMYKO. With regard to Poland, I would like to say that I just had a conversation with the ambassador, Cde. Aristov. He informed me that the one-hour strike was highly instructive. At many enterprises Solidarity has essentially taken over. Even those who want to work are unable to do so, because the Solidarity extremists are preventing them from working, threatening them in all possible ways, etc.

With regard to the plenum, Cde. Aristov reported that it proceeded normally and that they chose two additional Secretaries. At the Sejm, which opens on 30 October, they will be considering limitations on strikes. What this law will consist of is still difficult to say, but in any event at least attempts are being made to limit strikes by means of the law. Cde. Jaruzelski's speech at the plenum, I'd say, wasn't bad.

BREZHNEV. I don't believe that Cde. Jaruzelski did anything constructive. It seems to me that he is not a brave enough man.

ANDROPOV. Jaruzelski essentially has done nothing new, even though a good deal of time has already elapsed. Barcikowski and Kubiak pose a big obstacle within the Politburo.

There were discussions about this and advice was given to remove Barcikowski and Kubiak from the Politburo. However, Jaruzelski effectively refused to take this measure. He explains his inaction by saying that he has no cadres available to replace these people.

There is a good deal of controversy about who will be the premier of Poland. Jaruzelski clearly is inclined to go with Olszowski and Rakowski. It's not possible, of course, for both of them to become premiers.

BREZHNEV. Schmidt even in one of the discussions blurted out that a very dangerous

situation is emerging in Poland, and that this situation might complicate and affect my visit to the FRG, which might have to be called off.

ANDROPOV. The Polish leaders are talking about military assistance from the fraternal countries. However, we need to adhere firmly to our line — that our troops will not be sent to Poland.

USTINOV. In general one might say that it would be impossible to send our troops to Poland. They, the Poles, are not ready to receive our troops. Right now in Poland a demobilization is under way of those whose terms of service have ended. The demobilized troops are sent home so that they can get their civilian clothes, and then they come back fresh and serve another two months. But at this time they are susceptible to influence from "Solidarity." Jaruzelski, as we know, has organized a number of operational groups consisting of roughly three people each. But these groups so far haven't done anything. Obviously we need a meeting with the leadership of Poland, in particular with Jaruzelski. But who should take part in the meeting is a different matter.

RUSAKOV. Tomorrow the Sejm opens, where the question will be taken up about granting the government extraordinary powers to decide a number of matters. Jaruzelski, I might add, would like to come to Moscow. In that regard, we must prepare well for it.

BREZHNEV. And who will prepare material for conversations with Jaruzelski?

RUSAKOV. I think the Commission on Poland should be instructed to prepare material for a possible discussion with Jaruzelski, if he so wishes.

BREZHNEV. Did we send to Poland the meat we decided on, and did we tell Jaruzelski about it?

RUSAKOV. We told Jaruzelski about this; he cited a figure of 30 thousand tons.

ARKHIPOV. We will be sending the meat to Poland from our state reserves.

BREZHNEV. Have there been any sorts of improvements in the receipt of meat in the union fund from the republics since I sent out my telegram?

ARKHIPOV. So far, Leonid Il'ich, there have been no improvements at all in the receipt of meat. True, not much time has passed yet. But I've spoken with all the republics and can report that everywhere measures are being taken to permit fulfillment of the planned deliveries of meat to the state. In particular, such measures have been worked out in Estonia, Belorussia, and Kazakhstan. The Ukrainians so far have not issued instructions to the provinces.

CHERNENKO. But we distributed our telegram to all the provinces in Ukraine.

ARKHIPOV. We'll have further data on Monday, and then we'll report where matters stand.

GORBACHEV. Leonid Il'ich, your telegram played a big role. Above all, the republics and provinces are all seriously considering measures to ensure that the plan is fulfilled. In any event, according to data that we have as a result of telephone conversations with the provincial committees, territorial committees, and CCs of the union-republic Communist Parties, this question is under scrutiny everywhere. On 1

January, we'll provide a report on the collection of meat.

BREZHNEV. I still think that although we gave 30 thousand tons of meat to Poland, our meat will scarcely be of help to the Poles. In any event, there is still no clear indication of what will happen with Poland in the future. Cde. Jaruzelski is not showing any sign of initiative. Perhaps we should prepare for a discussion with him.

As far as the discussions about the supply of oil are concerned, I'm especially worried about the GDR. In general I would say that the socialist countries are taking our proposal hard. Even if they don't say so directly, they are disgruntled about our decision. And some, as Cde. Rusakov indicated in his statement, are openly expressing dissatisfaction. Cde. Honecker is especially dissatisfied. He openly says that this decision is unacceptable for them, and he even is requesting a written response. What sort of decision we'll adopt about this, I simply don't know.

ANDROPOV, SUSLOV, and KIRILENKO say they must agree with what you have just said.

ARKHIPOV. We have further difficulties with fuel. The coal miners will fall short by 30 million tons of coal. How can we make up for it? The oil industry is not going to exceed its plan, which means we'll have to make up for these 30 million tons in some other way. Moreover, we're in need of 1.5 million tons of sugar and will have to buy it, and we also need 800 thousand tons of vegetable oil, which it will be impossible to do without.

As far as the response to Cde. Honecker is concerned, I think the recommendation offered by Cde. Rusakov is correct. We must emphasize that we cannot change the decision we conveyed to Cde. Honecker.

With regard to the delivery of uranium that Cde. Honecker mentioned, this uranium from the GDR does not solve any problems. It consists of only 20 percent of the total quantity of uranium we use. Cde. Honecker also neglects to take account of the fact that we are building nuclear plants for the GDR. This is a big undertaking.

RUSAKOV. I also want to say that the Poles are requesting us to preserve the level of oil and gas we supplied this year.

ARKHIPOV. We're holding negotiations with the Poles about this, and we believe we should base our economic relations with them on the principle of the balancing of plans. Of course that will lead to a significant reduction in the delivery of oil insofar as they do not supply coal and other goods to us. However, if everything is okay, we will set the deliveries at the same volume they are now.

BAIBAKOV. All the socialist countries are trying to feel us out. They're paying close attention to the GDR, watching how we act vis-a-vis the GDR. If Honecker succeeds in breaching our resolve, then they, too, will try the same. In any event no one has yet given a written response. I recently spoke with officials from the state planning agencies of all the socialist countries. All of them want to preserve the general quantity of deliveries of oil as planned for coming years. Some propose that other energy sources be substituted for oil.

* * *

A decision is adopted:

1 To approve the discussions held by Cde. K. V. Rusakov with Cdes. Honecker, Husak, Kadar, and Zhivkov.

2 To request the Politburo's Commission on Poland to prepare necessary materials for a possible discussion with Cde. Jaruzelski.

3 To instruct Cdes. Tikhonov, Rusakov, and Baibakov to give additional attention to the question of oil deliveries to these countries, taking account of the exchange of views at the session of the CC Politburo.

. . . .

###