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Research

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S I T U A T I O N R E P O R T

1. Polish-West German Negotiations
2. Polish-Vatican Relations

1. Polish-West German Negotiations

Political negotiations with Poland will begin in February, FRG Chancellor Willy Brandt stated in Tunis on January 9. He was briefing Tunisian Premier Bahi Ladgham on West German foreign policy, including that vis-à-vis Poland. As quoted by State Secretary Conrad Ahlers, who took part in the briefing, Brandt expressed the hope of coming to an agreement with Warsaw, but was at pains to stress that "it may take more than weeks or months." It was also assumed, the Chancellor said, that in a more distant future not only "reconciliation and understanding" (Ausgleich und Verstaendigung) but also co-operation and friendship -- "like that with France" -- could be achieved between Poland and the FRG (Sueddeutsche Zeitung, January 9).

Economic negotiations, interrupted before Christmas (cf. Polish Situation Report/100, Radio Free Europe Research, 30 December 1969), will be resumed "next week," an RFE Special from Bonn reported on January 8, while the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung of the same date reported that these talks will start "on Monday" (January 12). The FAZ also reported that -- even before Christmas -- the two sides were closer in their views on the subject of co-operation and credits (about 1,000 million DM being reportedly involved), while the Special stressed that "the sum to be made available would not exceed DM 500 million."

2. Polish-Vatican Relations

"The Vatican Annual, containing the list of dioceses for 1970, does not differ in content from the annual for 1969 and earlier years so far as the sees of Poland's western and

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northern territories are concerned," Radio Warsaw reported on January 3.

Against the background of recent developments in Polish-Vatican relations -- in particular in view of the political content of the Polish episcopate's memorandum presented to the Pope on December 15 (cf. Polish SR/98, RFER, 17 December 1969) -- Radio Warsaw's formally factual announcement could be interpreted as a complaint addressed to the Vatican and also as a reproach to the Polish Church hierarchy either for having presented the case too late or for having spoken too softly at the Vatican.

As if in answer to Radio Warsaw, an unnamed Vatican spokesman explained on January 3 that the Annuario Pontificio had not yet been published (as implied by Radio Warsaw), but had merely been presented to the Pope and "will not be ready for public release for about a month" (cf. RFE Special from Rome, January 3).

Two days later, another RFE Special (January 5) quoted "Roman sources" to the effect that "it appears likely that the Holy See is now engaged in careful re-examination of its policy regarding western Poland." Changes could not be made after the text was delivered to the printers and the Annuario Pontificio had been with them for a long time. Should there be later changes, they could be issued as errata, but more likely they would be incorporated into the 1971 edition, these sources said.

Ostensibly unconnected with this problem there appeared in the Italian Roman Catholic monthly Famiglia Cristiana an interview with Franz Cardinal Koenig, Archbishop of Vienna, in which he expressed the opinion that the Pope would still like to pay a visit to Poland if no difficulties are made by the Polish government (cf. Reuters from Rome, January 6). Cardinal Koenig has been instrumental in regularizing the relations of the Vatican with several bloc countries, but for years has not been active in Polish-Vatican relations. Hence his opinions are private, but they are not devoid of topicality. At a time when attention is focused on the Vatican's attitude to Poland, by implication the question of Poland's attitude toward the Vatican also arises. There are still problems in the Polish government's attitude toward the Church in Poland, although they have so far not been overtly expressed.

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Note: Czechoslovak Premier Oldrich Cernik's arrival and reception in Warsaw is covered in Czechoslovak SR/2, RFER, 9 January 1970.