



Martial law protest marks 30th anniversary

On December 13th, several hundred people gathered outside the home of General Jaruzelski at midnight in commemoration of the imposition of martial law 30 years ago.

As protesters chanted 'Nuremberg for communists' and 'Honour and glory to heroes', Jaruzelski, the man who called for the security forces to imprison and crush the Solidarity trade union leadership on 13 December 1981, was in hospital where he is having chemotherapy.

During the demonstration organized by the Social

Committee of Remembrance for Victims of Martial Law, names of the over 90 victims of martial law were read out.

One of those imprisoned by the communists complained that General Jaruzelski has gone unpunished for crimes against the Polish nation and claimed former communist officials had virtual "impunity before the law" in present day Poland, which still lacks "elementary mechanisms of justice".

As the demonstrators gathered for what has become an annual vigil outside General

Jaruzelski's home, President Bronislaw Komorowski, himself a Solidarity veteran and First Lady Anna lit a candle of remembrance to those who died in the protests that followed the imposition of the crackdown.

Earlier a concert was given in Konstytucji Square by bands popular during the early 1980s. The event passed off peacefully, police informed.

A number of events marked the 30th anniversary, culminating in a march led by Jaroslaw Kaczynski, chairman of the Law and Justice opposition party.



Mixed reactions to Jaruzelski martial law apology

Politicians have expressed mixed reactions to the latest apology by former communist leader Gen. Jaruzelski over the introduction of martial law thirty years ago.

"I am sorry to everyone who met with some form of injustice or harm. I say this once again," the 87-year-old general expressed in a statement. Some 10,000 were interned and approximately 100 killed by security forces,

delivering a blow to the emerging Solidarity movement under the leadership of Lech Walesa.

Although Jaruzelski, recently diagnosed with cancer, reiterated his claim that the action was "a lesser evil" that prevented a Moscow-led invasion, today's politicians in Poland, many of whom are veterans of Solidarity, have voiced reservations.

The conservative Law and Justice (PiS) party was forthright in its criticism. The Democratic Left Alliance (SLD), a party that was partly formed from the ranks of former communists, was more sympathetic to the general.

The Polish Peasants' Party (PSL) praised the general for making the apology, adding that it was up to historians to evaluate the general's decision in December 1981.

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Poland supports French and German position on finance crisis

The government spokesman has said that the proposals to tackle the finance crisis in the eurozone are broadly in line with the position of Poland's Civic Platform-led coalition.

"Many of the proposals presented by both leaders, coincide with what has been said by Prime Minister Tusk and [Foreign Minister] Minister Sikorski," spokesman Pawel Gras said.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and President Nicholas Sarkozy said that

they were both in favour of changing the EU's treaties so that if any of the 17 eurozone members exceeded spending limits they would be subject to harsher penalties.

"Our wish is to go on a forced march toward re-establishing confidence in the eurozone," French President Nicolas Sarkozy said.

Sarkozy said France and Germany would prefer that the treaty be agreed by all 27 members of the European Union, but an agreement that only covers the eurozone and anyone else "who wants

to join us" would also be up for debate.

The Polish government spokesman has said that the EU must move quickly to restore confidence in the eurozone otherwise all EU members will suffer.

"Europe is in crisis, the situation requires emergency action," Pawel Gras said.

The government says it still aims to join the eurozone but only a time which is beneficial to Poland.

US thanks Poland for help In Libya

US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has thanked Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski for Poland's humanitarian assistance in Libya.

During a meeting of NATO foreign ministers in Brussels, Wednesday, Sikorski and Clinton discussed preparations for the NATO summit

in Chicago in May 2012, a statement by the Foreign Ministry says.

The disputed elections in Russia were also discussed as well as issues connected with Ukraine, Belarus and Afghanistan.

During the second day of the summit,

NATO foreign ministers discussed missile defence co-op with Russia, as well as operations in Afghanistan.

There was also a meeting of the NATO-Russian Council with the participation of the head of the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs Sergey Lavrov.

Two million Poles struggling with debts

Two million people in Poland are struggling to pay off their debts.

Research by Big Info Monitor, the only economic data office in Poland that has access to the banking databases of the country's Credit Information Bureau (BIK) and the Polish Bank Association found that the average debtor is male, and between the ages of 30 and 39. He is most typically from the Mazovia and Silesia regions, and has a debt of 16,500 zloty (3692 euro).

However, the research shows that the number of debtors has ceased

the number of debtors has ceased to rise as fast as it has done over previous years, with some 450,000 people removed from the lists in the last nine months.

As many as sixty percent of those in debt owe less than 5000 zloty (1119 euro).

Statistics reveal that the most debt-ridden Pole is a resident of the Mazovia province who owes over 95 million zloty (21 million euro).

The ten largest debtors owe a combined sum of 280 million zloty (62.6 million euro).

In spite of the sharp rise in the number of debtors over previous years, an economist from BIK, told the Polish Press Agency that the banks - and thus the wider economy - are not at risk, because they have created "special reserves" to deal with significant debts.



Finance minister presents 'difficult' 2012 budget draft

Finance Minister Jacek Rostowski told the parliament that the preparation of Poland's 2012 draft budget has been "especially difficult" because of the eurozone finance crisis.

Minister Jacek Rostowski's presentation was followed by a six-hour parliamentary debate on the draft budget for next year.

"On the one hand we have a strong Polish economy that is increasingly driven by rapidly growing investment," he said. However, he stressed that on the other hand, the EU financial crisis had become acute, which has resulted in three different estimates for GDP growth being included in the budget draft.

"In September, when we sent the first draft of this budget to parliament, who could have predicted the turmoil surrounding the proposed Greek referendum or the fall of the governments in Greece or Italy? If it were not for external threats, the [Polish] economy would only accelerate in 2012," he said.

Owing to the EU crisis, Rostowski said that the government had chosen a middle of the road version of the budget for the coming year.

The draft budget has been created under the assumption that Poland's GDP will grow by 2.5

percent.

The budget deficit will not exceed 35 billion zloty (7.6 billion euro), and the public finance sector deficit will not exceed 3 percent.

Meanwhile, state expenditure should not go above a maximum of 328.8 billion zloty (72 billion euros), with revenues forecast at 293.8 billion zloty (64.3 billion euro).



Sultan of Brunei buys fleet of Polish Black Hawks

The Sultan of Brunei has signed a contract for 12 Black Hawk helicopters, due to be made at the PZL Mielec factory in south-east Poland.

PZL Mielec, Poland's largest aerospace manufacturer, is currently a branch of US-based Sikorsky Aircraft, itself a part of American multinational conglomerate United

Technologies Corporation.

The Polish FM has hailed the contract as "a positive impulse to the development of co-op between Poland, the US and Brunei."

A statement from the ministry noted that it had been "supportive of efforts to conclude the contract through Minister Radosław Sikorski's personal commitment as

well as through diplomatic support of the Polish Embassy in Malaysia."

The deal also takes in a Black Hawk flight simulator, which will be dispatched in advance so that pilots can begin their training.

PZL Mielec was purchased by Sikorsky Aircraft in March 2007. The brand itself was retained as part of the contract.



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Poland will adopt Euro when it 'best suits our interests'

As Poland prepared for a critical EU summit in Brussels on 8-9 December, MEP Jacek Saryusz-Wolski has affirmed that Poland will join the single currency when it is "most beneficial" for the country.

In an interview with Polish Radio, Saryusz-Wolski said that "it is a little too early to talk about dates today."

The centre-right Civic Platform MEP noted that the current "economic climate is unpredictable at the moment," adding that "we need to be healthy and ready, and likewise the Union needs to be healthy and ready."

Meanwhile, Saryusz-Wolski outlined crucial priority reforms that he claims are needed to combat the current economic crisis within the EU.

In line with German Chancellor Angela Merkel's aims, he affirmed the necessity to change the EU treaty regarding the size of loans that member states can take among themselves, so that "no one goes into debt at the expense of somebody else."

Saryusz-Wolski described such prospective changes as "very useful," citing that no country would be able to loan over 60 percent of the GDP, likewise the budget deficit should not be higher than 3 percent of the GDP.

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Oil company declared Poland's strongest brand

The state-backed PKN Orlen oil company has been declared Poland's strongest brand in the 7th edition of an annual prize by a national newspaper.

The title is awarded by the *Rzeczpospolita* daily, based on financial data combined with research gleaned from surveys investigating consumer opinions.

It is the fifth time that the company has won the overall prize. PKN Orlen is the largest fuel retailer in Poland, and one of the biggest oil companies in Europe.

In the individual categories, chocolate stalwart E. Wedel

won out in the sector for sweets and ice cream, while Tyskie was declared the strongest brand in the sphere of alcoholic drinks.

Fashion firm Reserved topped the rankings in the clothing and footwear category, and internet portal allegro.pl triumphed in the general commerce section. The winner in the telecommunications category was mobile phone operator Plus.



ZLOTY EXCHANGE MID-RATES /1st-15th Dec 2011/

| | | |
|------------|-------------|---------------|
| USD | 3,50 | +0,25% |
| EUR | 4,54 | -0.35% |
| CHF | 3,71 | +0,19% |
| GBP | 5,42 | -0,08% |