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Scoffing at invasion rumor

Russian says there are other means to Polish ends

By WILLIAM J. MITCHELL
Free Press Europe Bureau

WARSAW — Mikhail Zubkov, a ranking official at the Soviet Union's embassy here, smiled and told his two American visitors: "You gentlemen shouldn't be so nervous."

Gesturing toward the ceiling in the Soviets' monument-like embassy on Ujazdowski Avenue, Zubkov added, "We have clever people upstairs."

The conversation was about reported Soviet preparations for a possible invasion of Poland. Zubkov was suggesting that the Soviet Union could find means other than tanks to serve its aims in Poland, where the newly independent labor movement has

"You people are just stirring up trouble."

challenged communist control.

Zubkov volunteered nothing about Polish Communist Party chief Stanislaw Kania's being summoned to Moscow Friday to meet with leaders of the Soviet Union and other Warsaw Pact nations.

Asked whether there is truth to rumors of possible military action by the Soviets, Zubkov chuckled. "You ask too direct a question," he said in English. "I know

Americans are used to direct questions, but I think it's too important of a question. I am not sure enough of my English."

HOLDING A COPY of Trybuna Ludu, the Polish Communist Party newspaper, Zubkov said, "The publication of Comrade Kania's report (to the Polish party Central Committee Monday) in Pravda witnesses for the fact that our leaders approve of the estimation (of the situation in Poland) by the Polish Communist Party."

He added, "We rely on the Polish com-

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European bureau opens

The Detroit Free Press has opened its second foreign news bureau.

William J. Mitchell, for the last three years a member of the Free Press' Washington staff, has begun reporting from Europe. His first assignment is the crisis in Poland.

From a base in Vienna, Austria, Mitchell's coverage will center on central and eastern Europe.

In January 1978, the Free Press opened its first foreign bureau, in Toronto, Ontario, staffed by Jim Neubacher.

Mitchell, 32, has been a Free Press reporter for 10 years, beginning with general writing assignments and working as an assistant city editor, City-County Bureau chief and Washington correspondent.

In 1976 he was one of several Free Press staff members sharing the national Sigma Delta Chi award for reporting.

Mitchell is a Boston native and a graduate of the University of Notre Dame. He is married and has two children.





Free Press Photo by Chief Photographer TONY SPINA

Wonder fills the eyes of youngsters from St. Hedwig Recreation Center as they meet Santa Claus at the 19th annual Christmas Carnival at Cobo Hall. Besides Santa, other attractions at the carnival include more than 100 animated holiday characters, a giant spiral slide and other playground activities for the kids, daily puppet shows and, of course, Santa's Castle. Show hours are from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. every day through Sunday, Dec. 21. And the best part of all: Admission is free.

Pressure Eases For The Poles

By WILLIAM J. MITCHELL
Free Press Europe Bureau

Warsaw — Nobody invaded Poland Saturday.

That left the government and the union running things here — at least for now — with time to deal with the kinds of problems that will be around whether the Russians come or not.

Those problems include the scarcity of meat, perhaps the most vivid example of the nation's economic difficulties, and the laws governing trade unions — the groups most responsible for the changes that have stirred the country since July.

The government published the rough outlines of a new meat rationing plan Saturday. But government spokesman Jozef Bartecki said "many questions" remain about the plan because of the many objections raised by Polish consumers.

LECH WALESA, meanwhile, leader of Solidarity, the independent trade union, spent most of the day negotiating with government officials about the new labor law and briefly addressed more than 1,000 union members in an unheated hall.

A Solidarity spokesman said Saturday night that tentative agreement had been reached on the new law, and that it would be sent to the Polish Parliament for review.

At the policy meeting, Solidarity members were told not to stage unauthorized strikes.

THE RATIONING plan, scheduled to begin Feb. 1 "at the latest,"

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Russians say they're not coming

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