

March 30, 1981

**Memorandum from John McMahon to the Secretaries
of State and Defense and Director of the National
Security Agency, '[Redacted] Report'**

Citation:

"Memorandum from John McMahon to the Secretaries of State and Defense and Director of the National Security Agency, '[Redacted] Report'", March 30, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CIA declassification, 2008
<https://digitalarchive.umd.edu/document/165284>

Summary:

Translated document discusses possible military and Soviet intervention to deal with political unrest in the wake of implementing martial law.

Credits:

This document was made possible with support from MacArthur Foundation

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Original Scan

RELEASE IN PART
EXEMPTION: HR70-14
DATE: 08-18-2008

~~TOP SECRET~~

9 PP

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

30 March 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
Director, National Security Agency

FROM : John N. McMahon
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : Comments on the Military Aspects of the
Current Crisis in Poland

1. [] Comment: We have just acquired intelligence on the Warsaw Pact CPX exercise "SOYUZ-81" and on an Extraordinary Session of the Military Council of the Polish Ministry of Defense relative to the current crisis in Poland from a reliable source with excellent access within the Polish Ministry of Defense. Source previously provided information on these subjects in FIRDB-312/00838-81, TS #818081, dated 17 March 1981 and in FIRDB-312/00679-81, TS #818061, dated 27 February 1981. This information is extremely source sensitive and, therefore, recipients should hold this report very closely.]

2. On 27 March 1981 Source took a sounding of the opinions of leading personalities [not identified] of the Polish General Staff on the subject of the possibility of Soviet intervention in Poland. According to their evaluation (to which Source personally subscribes), despite much ongoing powerful political and military pressure by the Soviet leadership and concrete preparations in the direction of military intervention--the probability of Soviet intervention at this time is considered less than at the beginning of December 1980. The decisive factor here is the unified, unequivocal and hard-line position of the West as well as the defensive and determined preparation for such an eventuality on the part of the Polish population, especially of the working industrial class.

FIRDB-312/00985-81

TS #818093

Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~THIS DOCUMENT MAY NOT BE REPRODUCED.~~

HR70-14

~~TOP SECRET~~

-2-

FIRDB-312/00985-81

3. Source pointed out that, of course, one cannot underestimate facts which can ultimately operate against the Polish nation and its struggle for freedom. Source cited the following as the most important negative factors:

a. Despite earlier agreements (a prepared press release on the conclusion of the Warsaw Pact CPX exercise "SOYUZ-81", which was previously agreed upon by the Polish and Soviet leadership and signed by the Polish Chief of Staff Siwicki and Soviet General of the Army Gribkov, Chief of Staff of the Combined Armed Forces), the "SOYUZ-81" exercise has been extended without designating a specific date for its conclusion because of the situation in Poland.

b. The Headquarters of the directing staff of "SOYUZ-81" was moved to Legnica. The groups of the Soviet Army, including Polish Army officers, stationed there were isolated from information published by the Polish mass media, including Polish TV, PUWP and Polish Army Press. Allied groups [presumably Soviet, East German and Czech], excluding Polish Armed Forces, participated in separate national briefings and information sessions. The Front Headquarters is still deployed in the area of Benjaminow (Bialobrzeig near Warsaw) and is exercising control over the troops comprising the composition of the Front. There are some attempts by Marshal Kulikov to interfere in Front matters by bypassing the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces.

c. The Chief of the Main Operations Directorate of the Soviet General Staff made a quick visit to Marshal Kulikov, Commander in Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, at Legnica. He held a four-hour, person-to-person conference with Kulikov after which he immediately departed Legnica by aircraft. Source believed that this meeting took place on 24 March.

d. By extending "SOYUZ-81" the Soviet leadership can--independently of creating conditions for eventual introduction of Warsaw Pact forces on Polish territory

TS #818093
Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 3 -

FIRDB-312/00985-81

under this pretext--have in mind the creation of a central center over Polish Armed Forces independent of the Polish General Staff, in particular in creating a basis for a command of the Polish Armed Forces Front for Vice Minister of Defense General Molczyk.

e. Under the pretext of "SOYUZ-81" a [Soviet] request was made to assign a large group of Soviet officers to the central command post of the National Air Defense troops.

f. On 27 March Kulikov and Gribkov arrived in Warsaw to hold talks with the leadership of the Polish Ministry of Defense. The talks began at 1700 hours and the Polish side planned on covering the following subjects:

- A report on the general situation in Poland by General Siwicki.
- Briefing by General Tadeusz Tuczapski, Vice Minister of Defense and Chief Inspector of the Office of the Inspector of Territorial Defense, on the subject of preparations of the Government for declaring Martial Law.
- Briefing by Tadeusz Tuczapski on the subject of the operations plan for the armed forces in the event Martial Law is declared.
- Briefing by the Ministry of Internal Affairs on the operations plan of the militia and security forces.

The meeting held on the request of the Soviet side is viewed very unfavorably by the leadership of the Polish Ministry of Defense. The subject matter was not selected as much in consideration of its currency (since the declaration of Martial Law in the present situation is considered unrealistic) but as an intent to calm down the Soviet side.

TS #818093
Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 4 -

FIRDB-312/00985-81

g. The matter of a large squadron of Soviet ships visiting Gdynia has been revived. However, there is no final agreement of the Polish leadership on this matter.

4. On the 26th of March 1981 an Extraordinary Session of the Military Council of the Polish Ministry of Defense was held. It was devoted to a discussion of the current situation and an outlining of tasks for the armed forces. Because of the importance of the problems discussed, especially Jaruzelski's remarks with reference to the plans of the Government, Source provided the following information on this subject which General Jerzy Skalski, a member of the Military Council of the Ministry of Defense, forwarded to the chiefs of institutions of the General Staff:

a. Item One: General Jozef Baryla, Chief of the Political Administration of the Polish Armed Forces, discussed the course of the talks of the Government Commission with Solidarnosc, and the development of events in Bydgoszcz based on the report of the First Secretary of the Provincial Committee Henryk Bednarski. Commenting on the report, he said that:

- The calling out of the Law and Order Forces was legal;
- The action of the citizens militia and security service in the Hall of the Deliberations was proper;
- It is not possible to determine who administered the beatings outside of the building because it was dark. The report of Minister of Justice Jerzy Bafia on the matter of events in Bydgoszcz was very voluminous, muddled and unintelligible. Since the report could be very troublesome to the Government, that is why Jaruzelski completely rejected it. Subsequently Minister Baryla presented a five-point program of action for the immediate future:
 - (1) Utilize in party-political work in the Polish Armed Forces new proof (which will be publicized) humiliating Rulewski and the extremists of Solidarnosc.

~~TOP SECRET~~

TS #818093

Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

- 5 -

FIRDB-312/00985-81

- (2) Stimulate the pride of the officer cadre by stating that the armed forces are the only power and support of the state.
- (3) Immunize troops against outside influence, including members of the family, since, at this time, the dividing lines are apparent in almost every home; seal the barracks; during the strike maintain the momentum of work and service.
- (4) Follow all orders, show sympathy for the problems of daily life and for interpersonal relations, avoid conflicts--particularly in confrontation with the public.
- (5) [Omitted in the original.]

b. Item Two: General Florian Siwicki, Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, took up the matter of prolonging "SOYUZ-81" and provided information regarding the steps planned to be taken by the Polish Armed Forces:

(1) General Siwicki stated that the formal pretext for the prolongation of the "SOYUZ-81" exercise was certain problems which, in the opinion of the Combined Command, deserved to be rerun. The actual cause was the worsening situation in Poland, including a real threat to socialism.

(2) Within the framework of constant combat readiness, the Polish Armed Forces are ready to accept any assignment, including:

- Operational units are being recalled from all work performed for the national economy and for the military itself;
- Starting on 1 April 1981, railroad and highway troops of the National Territorial Defense will no longer be assigned to new projects;

TS #818093
Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~

-6-

FIRDB-312/00985-81

- Military units are being readied for taking over protection of military and civilian installations;
- A system was organized for current acquisition of weapons from industry and of ammunition, explosives and other military equipment;
- Constant operational alerts are being maintained completely apart from the ongoing exercises;
- Number of foot and vehicular patrols are being increased in the garrisons;
- Commanders of garrisons and of the internal military service [WSWZ] are to assist provincial authorities;
- Permission was given (upon a decision of military district and branches of the Armed Forces commanders) to begin issuing weapons to the cadre;
- Passes and leaves are virtually cancelled;
- Armed Forces operational plans are being brought up to date and reviewed;
- Conditions are being maintained for operation on the external front.

c. The third point was initiated upon the arrival of General Jaruzelski, which occurred directly after his meeting with Cardinal Wyszynski;

-- "Jaruzelski stated that the situation is dangerous. The Government opts for a political solution and negotiations and in this framework wishes to preserve the capability of independent action. We trust the working class and its class instinct, and for this reason do not see the need for solutions by force."

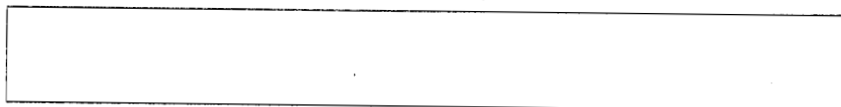
-- The present activity of Solidarnosc is part of its self-defense. They do not feel particularly strong. Our intention is to draw part of the activists and the

~~TOP SECRET~~

TS #818093

Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~



-7-

FIRDB-312/00985-81

majority of the members to our side. Our nation is historically and traditionally sensitive to violence and force. The present situation would not have arisen had there been no beating. This can be traced to historical conditioning in past partitions, war, occupation, the years 1956, 1970 and 1976. In Poland anyone who uses force will always be condemned.

-- After the election of the new Premier things were going well; things were being stabilized. Then came the greatest agitation originating with the extremists who began to worry about losing their influence. The objectives of Solidarnosc became more and more aggressive and the Government is unable to give in!

-- The talks with Cardinal Wyszynski were very useful. A full unity of views was achieved in regard to evaluation of KSS-KOR [Committee of Civil Self-Defense--Committee of Defense of the Workers]. The church is interested in the prevention of a national tragedy. The church is for patient negotiation.

-- We are not fighting Solidarnosc as such, but only those who lead it toward the brink. Our attitude to Solidarnosc is and will be positive. In conclusion, Jaruzelski asserted that there is need for good cooperation with our allies and a close collaboration with the citizens militia and the security service.


for John N. McMahon

TS #818093
Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~

~~TOP SECRET~~



- 8 -

FIRDB-312/00985-81

Distribution:

- The Secretary of State
- The Secretary of Defense
- Director of Central Intelligence
- Director of Intelligence and Research
Department of State
- Director, Defense Intelligence Agency
- Director, National Security Agency
- Deputy Director of Central Intelligence
- Director, National Foreign Assessment Center

TS #818093
Copy # 7

~~TOP SECRET~~