

**April 29, 1981**

**Memorandum from John Stein to the Secretaries of State and Defense and the Director of the National Security Agency, 'Soviet-Polish Positions on the Declaration of Martial Law in Poland...'**

**Citation:**

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**Summary:**

Translation outlines discussions between Soviet and Polish officials as to the preparedness of Poland to instate martial law. In addition, it recounts the meeting of the 23rd Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact in Sofia, Bulgaria and Soviet Air Operations in Poland.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

29 April 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs  
Director, National Security Agency

FROM : John H. Stein  
Acting Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : 1. Soviet-Polish Positions on the  
Declaration of Martial Law in Poland  
2. 23rd Meeting of the Military Council  
of the Combined Armed Forces of the  
Warsaw Pact in Sofia, Bulgaria  
3. Soviet Air Operations in Poland

[Redacted]

1. [Redacted] Comment: The following information is from an extremely sensitive source and, therefore, recipients should hold this report very closely.]

2. A reliable source who has excellent access in the Polish Ministry of Defense reported that on the evening of 3 April Kania and Premier Jaruzelski flew to the USSR in a special Soviet military aircraft for talks with the Soviet leadership. They returned to Warsaw on the morning of 4 April. Source is not aware of the content of these talks. However, it is believed that in addition to discussing Polish Party matters, Brezhnev was provided information on the Polish intention of introducing legislation in the Sejm

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regarding the prohibition of strikes. In addition, the talks concerned the conclusion of preparations with the assistance of Soviet consultants for the introduction of Martial Law in Poland. At this meeting the Polish leadership, because of the growth of anti-Soviet sentiment, including in the Polish Army, reportedly recommended the formal announcement of the "SOYUZ-81" exercises. On 7 April the Polish Prime Minister was informed about the decision to publish via the Polish mass media a communique on the conclusion of the "SOYUZ-81" exercises. This decision was coordinated with Brezhnev.

3. After the critique of the "SOYUZ-81" exercises, the Soviet group, including Marshal Kulikov, Commander in Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, and General of the Army Gribkov, returned by air to Warsaw in order to review the plans for the introduction of Martial Law. In the Polish General Staff a detailed study was made, without Marshal Kulikov's participation, of the entire plan for the introduction of Martial Law in the light of the current situation in the political, propaganda, diplomatic, economic, military and internal security fields. General of the Army Gribkov selected some 20 documents concerning the introduction of Martial Law and asked that they be translated into Russian and transmitted to the Soviets. The Poles complied with the Soviet request. Even though the draft planning documents on the declaration of Martial Law did not take into consideration many of the wishes of the Soviet consultants, they were accepted in principle as being positive in tone. The Soviets, however, demanded that the documentation on the declaration of Martial Law, together with the resolutions and decrees of the Council of State, should all be signed together so that they could be put into force at a moment's notice.

4. On 8 April Marshal Kulikov and General of the Army Gribkov left Poland. Remaining behind at Rembertow was a Soviet military group of unknown composition. The Combined Armed Forces staff group numbering some 47 individuals, along with the planning documentation on the implementation of Martial Law which was transmitted to the Soviet side, moved to Legnica where they are currently located.

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5. On 10 April Marshal Kulikov together with Mikhailin [redacted] Comment: This is undoubtedly a reference to Admiral V. V. Mikhaylin, Deputy Commander in Chief of the Combined Armed Forces for the Navy] returned to Poland and located in the vicinity of Swinoujscie. From this location Marshal Kulikov asked for a meeting with Jaruzelski. However, Kulikov was informed that the Prime Minister was with Kania and that a meeting could take place no sooner than the 13th of April. Jaruzelski wanted to avoid meeting with Kulikov because he knew that Kulikov would press for finalization of all the documents pertaining to the introduction of Martial Law in Poland. This was evident to Jaruzelski because of previous Soviet insistence on this matter.

6. On 11 April Jaruzelski visited the Polish General Staff to become personally acquainted with the draft plans in case it was necessary to introduce Martial Law, which he was then to present to Marshal Kulikov at the 13 April meeting. Jaruzelski was depressed by the content of the documentation on Martial Law and stated that he was not familiar with the documentation on which the Polish General Staff had been working for several months but that he felt that he finally had to familiarize himself with their content. Jaruzelski stated that in the darkest recesses of his mind he could find no place for the thought that they could introduce such a thing as Martial Law in Poland. He further stated that he did not wish to be Prime Minister when it became necessary to sign the documentation for the implementation of Martial Law. In the context of his commentary on the introduction of Martial Law he commented that he assessed Rulewski, the Solidarnosc leader from Bydgoszcz, and Bujak from the Warsaw Solidarnosc organization negatively and stated that their stand is typical of "social fascism". Jaruzelski stated that if it is necessary we should implement the intermediate option, i.e., one between mass internment of the opposition called for by the Ministry of Internal Affairs and a short and selective detention of the most extreme activists as supported by the Ministry of National Defense. Jaruzelski stated that he would shortly liquidate the ministries because these bureaucratic nests are blocking all reforms. Jaruzelski indicated that he would bring into the government and the military administration other trusted individuals. Jaruzelski will immediately begin to bring in officer cadres into the provincial defense committees. He believes that it is immediately necessary to raise the importance of the chiefs of the provincial military staffs, who in the case of introduction of the state of Martial Law will become the plenipotentiaries of the National Defense Committee in these centers of authority.

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7. On the 13th of April Jaruzelski met with Marshal Kulikov, but he rather decisively objected to signing the prepared documents on the declaration of Martial Law.

8. In the final draft of the document entitled "The Guiding Thought for Introduction in Poland of the State of Martial Law on the Grounds of State Security" all references dealing directly by name with Solidarnosc were expunged. This was not a matter of substance but rather only a cosmetic change. This document is to be signed by the deputies of the National Defense Committee Chairman for Political-Defense Affairs (Olszowski), Economic-Defense (Jagielski), the Minister of Internal Affairs, the Chief of the Polish General Staff, and the National Defense Committee secretary.

9. In drafting the documentation on the declaration of Martial Law, the matter of the utilization of the Polish Armed Forces caused the most controversy. The Polish General Staff, primarily General of Arms Florian Siwicki and Division General Jerzy Skalski, could not entertain the possibility of using the Polish Armed Forces in operations against the workers. On the other hand, the Soviets and General of Arms Molczyk viewed the Polish Armed Forces as the primary force which should deal with the "counterrevolution". The Soviets and their chief provocation agent Molczyk were the preparers of the document entitled "Decree on the Principles of Operation of the Citizens' Militia and the Armed Forces in Extraordinary Instances Connected with the Protection of State Security and Public Order During the Period when Martial Law is in Force".

10. Source believes that there is currently a greater danger of Soviet military intervention in Poland and cited the following events in support of such a conclusion: On 18 April Soviet Marshal Kulikov called General of Arms Molczyk, Polish Vice Minister of National Defense, to Moscow. On that day Marshal Kulikov conducted a briefing of a group of 60-to-80 generals and officers of the Soviet Army and representatives of the Polish Armed Forces. Marshal Kulikov assured the Polish military group that, in accordance with the request of the Polish leaders [not identified], the group of Soviet military officers was being sent to Poland to render assistance to "the Polish communists". The Soviet military group arrived in Legnica on the 24th and 25th of April. On the 27th of April, with the approval of the Polish Ministry of

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Defense, part of the Soviet group in Legnica was to visit Polish military units in order to determine the political dependability of the soldiers of the Polish Armed Forces. Under the pretext of checking on the preparations for spring-summer training, they will ask the following two questions: (1) What is the attitude of the Army toward Solidarnosc, and (2) are they prepared for the "defense of socialism"? Source was also informed by a Polish General Staff officer that another group of Soviet General Staff officers [number and composition unknown to Source] were to arrive in Rembertow.

11. Source also feels that the events that took place at the meeting of the Military Council of the Combined Armed Forces of the Warsaw Pact member states in Sofia, Bulgaria, from 21-23 April served as a further indication of Soviet preparation for military engagement/commitment in Poland.

While the Military Council proceeded with the previously agreed upon agenda, the main subject for discussion was Poland, and the military delegates of the various Warsaw Pact member countries took the Poles to task. [redacted] See FIRDB-312/00304-81, TS #818034, dated 20 March 1981, for the agenda of the 23rd Session of the Military Council.] In discussions with the Hungarian and Bulgarian delegates they referred to the changes taking place in Poland in a rather friendly manner. For example, the Bulgarians indicated that even they could use a little more order. The Hungarians stated that they hoped that we would not have to meet in Poland again because they (the Hungarians) had already experienced one tragedy in their own country as well as the subsequent psychic shock during their participation in the military occupation of Czechoslovakia. The Czechoslovaks behaved in a provocative manner during the course of the meeting of the Military Council, while the Soviets and East Germans behaved with great reserve and maintained a mentor's didactic tone of impatience. The Soviets treated Jaruzelski with scorn, calling him a pretentious intellectual.

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12. Through his contacts with leading members of the Military Council, Polish General Molczyk made the following ominous assessment of the Polish situation: "Taking things generally, there was unanimous agreement that the level or scope of the effort to prevent the sacrifice of the last few remaining elements of socialism in Poland clearly demands taking

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all the necessary steps to keep Poland within the community. Doubts were expressed whether we are able to carry out this ourselves." Immediately after the conclusion of the meeting of the Military Council on the 23rd of April General Molczyk accompanied Marshal Kulikov to Moscow and returned to Warsaw on the 25th of April.

13. The leading personalities of the Polish General Staff were very upset by the account of the meeting of the Military Council in Sofia, especially regarding the Warsaw Pact allies' estimate of the situation in Poland. The prevailing opinion among the leading personalities of the Polish General Staff is that now, with the inspiration of Moscow, the Polish military may expect "targowica" (treason). Source stated that the representative of "treason" in the Army is without doubt General Molczyk. Source believes that provocation and the pretext for Soviet intervention is easier to accomplish today than ever before. Several general officers of the Polish Armed Forces indicated to Source that they would resign in the event of Warsaw Pact invasion of Poland. Unofficial estimates indicate that in the event of Soviet aggression only uncoordinated defensive action of individual military units could take place.

14. Source stated that there is talk about the possibility of postponing the 10th Plenum of the Central Committee in order to strengthen the possibility of "targowica" (treason). It is rumored that Suslov set such conditions as well as the possibility that General Molczyk would be appointed to the post of Minister of Defense. Source does not believe that such an appointment is possible without the use of Soviet tanks.

15. On the 3rd of April the Soviets began their air war of nerves against Poland. On that day, without any previous notification, they relocated from Czechoslovakia to Poland 32 helicopters and, using ten AN-12 aircraft, airlifted unidentified cargo to Brzeg. During the following days these helicopters made flights to Torun. All this flight activity, apart from its terror tactics, created a threat in Polish air space because the Soviet pilots did not obey Polish air traffic controllers. In response to questions from the Polish Chief of the General Staff concerning this flight activity the Soviets gave different answers. For example, the Commander of the Northern Group of Soviet Forces informed General Siwicki

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that these were normal flights within the framework of exercises of their air army. On the other hand, Soviet General of the Army Gribkov stated that the flights were the result of normal troop rotation and the delivery of food supplies since it was not possible to count on food supplies from Polish sources.

16. On 8 April another 19 Soviet AN-12 aircraft landed at Brzeg, again without notification of the Polish Ministry of Defense nor the air traffic control organs of the National Air Defense Corps. On the 9th of April 14 AN-12 and four IL-76 aircraft landed in Poland. At the same time flights of helicopters continued to fly from Legnica and Brzeg to Torun. At present there are sporadic flights of transport aircraft on the USSR-Legnica, Legnica-Torun, and Minsk-Mazowiecki routes. Because of this situation the Chief of the Polish General Staff sent a telegram to General Gribkov in which he called to Gribkov's attention the fact that this state of affairs was not in accord with negotiated agreements and threatened the safety of flight activity. On the night of 9/10 April the Soviets notified the air traffic control organs of the border guards that 35 AN-12 and 12 IL-76 aircraft would arrive from Riga, Vilnius and Lvov between the hours of 3:00 and 5:00 a.m. Eleven helicopters would also fly the Brzeg-Torun route during this same period.

17. On 10 April Moscow suspended flights but did not call them off. On 25 April a fleet of 280 transport aircraft flew over Poland. This is supposedly a routine rotation of troops to East Germany. However, Source pointed out that no one can give any kind of guarantee that this action does not constitute another step in military preparations against Poland.



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