

SUPREME HEADQUARTERS NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION  
GRAND QUARTIER GENERAL DES FORCES ALLIÉES EN EUROPE  
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25

Strategic Dept 16 Dec 80

1202.2/SHPLC/S361/80

Col. Sharpe/kr/4574

TO: Chairman, Military Committee  
North Atlantic Treaty Organisation  
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SUBJECT: Further Actions Proposed by SACEUR Regarding Soviet Intervention in Poland (NR)

REFERENCE: SHAPE Letter 0030/SHCGGS/79/80, dated 5 Dec 80

1. (NS) Reference listed 7 non-provocative covert actions, which should be taken in the light of the current and potential situation in Poland, under the two headings of "Actions Within ACE" and "Requests to Nations". Subsequently on 9/10 December the majority of these actions were approved by ministers and, where appropriate, have now been implemented.

2. (NS) In seeking to identify further appropriate actions for recommendation to the Defence Planning Committee, I have assessed that in the event of the Soviets invading, the deployment of forces with limited capabilities publicly set up to demonstrate NATO solidarity and determination, obviously commends itself. The actions concerned, though clearly of a more visible nature than any taken so far, continue to make clear that NATO has no intention of intervening militarily in Warsaw Pact territory, but nevertheless is determined and able to defend the sovereignty and territorial integrity of member states.

3. (NS) These proposed further measures while relating to the event of an invasion, require certain preparatory actions in order to ensure that if so ordered, implementation is completed with minimum of delay. The measures themselves are discussed in succeeding paragraphs with a list of those preparatory actions, which I consider should be taken now, attached as Annex A to this letter.

4. (NS) ACE MOBILE FORCE (AIR). The deployment of the AMF has always been considered as a clear deterrent signal to be used early in a period of crisis. Whilst there is little to be gained by use of the AMF (L) in the Polish situation, deployment of all or part of AMF(A) would be particularly appropriate in Denmark (area N2), assuming this country's agreement. The force is normally at 72 hours notice to deploy but this, in conjunction with an actual deployment time of 48 hours, does not provide sufficiently speedy response in the event of a Soviet invasion of Poland. The entire force comprises light attack, reconnaissance, fighter bomber attack, all weather fighter and dual capable aircraft but I consider that an initial deployment of only the all weather fighter and light attack/reconnaissance aircraft is called for. A reduction in notice for these specific aircraft would markedly increase our preparedness.

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Downgraded to  
IA W SHAPE, 3050/SHGS/91, 7 NOV 91  
By Dr. Gregory Pedlow  
Date 23 Feb 2011  
Historical Office, OCOFS, SHAPE

PLANS BRANCH  
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DOCUMENT

THIS DOCUMENT CONSISTS OF 3 PAGES

LIST OF EFFECTIVE PAGES

Letter 1 and 2  
Annex 1

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5. (NS) RECONNAISSANCE UNITS. Preparation for an effective and quick land force response in the Central Region to an invasion of Poland would best be achieved by the use of the reconnaissance battalions of the Corps. Their deployment to the vicinity of the Inner German Border would provide a clear signal of NATO's preparedness and determination to resist any form of direct attack against its territory whilst at the same time, because of the limited and mainly defensive nature of the force, could not be misunderstood as an aggressive action by the Soviet Union. Such units could be drawn from virtually all the nations contributing to the ground defence of the Central Region. Normally these units are part of Covering Forces whose peacetime readiness to deploy is 48 hours. A reduction in notice for these units would enable them to react quickly either in the event of an invasion of Poland or if the situation should develop into one which poses a direct threat to the Alliance.

6. (NS) STANAVFORLANT. The force is currently in being and in ports at 47 hours notice to sail. If it disbands in the face of a possible Soviet invasion of Poland, this would provide entirely the wrong signal from NATO. I have consulted SACLANT on the alternatives of decreasing the force's notice or at the very least keeping it in being. We are both convinced of the need for the latter and will keep a reduction in notice under constant review.

7. (NS) STANAVFORCHAN. At present the force is exercising in the Southern North Sea about 36 hours steaming from the Baltic. It is due under current orders to disperse to its home ports for leave on 18th December. I consider that as in the case of STANAVFORLANT the force should subsequently remain in being and at 47 hours notice to sail. I have consulted CINCHAN who is in agreement.

8. (NS) NAVOCFORMED. I have considered calling for the use of NAVOCFORMED which is at its normal notice of 48 hours for activation. However, I take the view that although this would enable nations of the Southern Region to play their part in demonstrating NATO solidarity, there is insufficient justification in the present circumstances for this action. Activation would be reviewed in the event of an actual invasion of Poland.

9. (NS) Finally, I emphasise that we cannot discount the possibility of a more direct threat to the Alliance developing either through intent or by Soviet miscalculation. Thus, these further actions I am recommending now are, in my view, the very minimum we should take to improve our readiness and at the same time signal clearly our resolve without providing the Soviet Union with any possibility of misunderstanding our intentions. However, in confining ourselves to these very limited and restrained actions we are taking a calculated risk. I may well be left with no alternative but to order rather more positive and direct measures subsequently at short notice should a direct threat develop.

FOR THE SUPREME ALLIED COMMANDER, EUROPE:

1 Annex  
A - Actions Within ACE and in  
Consultation with Other MNCs

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ANNEX A

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ACTIONS WITHIN ACE

1. (NS) ACE MOBILE FORCE (AIR). Order a reduction in notice to deploy from 72 hours to 24 hours for selected force contributions for DENMARK (Area N2) as follows:
  - a. Squadron (10 x CF-5 light attack/recce aircraft) CA.
  - b. Squadron (8 x F15 all weather fighter aircraft) US.
2. (NS) RECONNAISSANCE BATTALIONS. Order CINCENT to review the use of reconnaissance battalions/regiments within the Central Region with a view to reducing their notice to deploy to 24 hours.

ACTIONS IN CONSULTATION WITH OTHER MNCs

3. (NS) STANAVFORLANT. To order force to continue to remain in being and at 47 hours notice to sail.
4. (NS) STANAVFORCHAN. To order force to remain in being and at 47 hours notice to sail with effect from its arrival in home ports on 18th December.

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