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NORTH ATLANTIC MILITARY COMMITTEE
COMITE MILITAIRE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

09

IMMEDIATE

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6 February 1981

S U M M A R Y R E C O R D

75TH MEETING OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE IN CHIEFS OF STAFF SESSION

Held on Monday, 8 December 1980,
at NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium

PRESENT

Chairman:	Admiral R.H. Falls
Belgium:	Lieutenant General W. Gontier
Canada:	General R.M. Withers
Denmark:	General K. Jørgensen
Germany:	General J. Brandt
Greece:	General A. Gratsios
Italy:	Admiral G. Torrisi
Luxembourg:	Colonel F. Welfring
Netherlands:	General C. de Jager
Norway:	General S.L.B. Hamre
Portugal:	General J. Lemos Ferreira
Turkey:	General N. Öztorun
United Kingdom:	Admiral of the Fleet Sir Terence Lewin
United States:	General D.C. Jones

MILREPS

Belgium:	Lieutenant General Y. Dedeurwaerder
Canada:	Lieutenant General R. Gutknecht
Denmark:	Lieutenant General P.O.W. Thorsen
Germany:	Lieutenant General E.D. Bernhard
Greece:	Lieutenant General E. Papaefstathiou
Italy:	Vice Admiral G. Fantoni
Luxembourg:	Colonel P. Bergem
Netherlands:	Lieutenant General J.C. Zoutenbier
Norway:	Major General Ole Mißen
Portugal:	Lieutenant General J. Ferreira Valente
Turkey:	Vice Admiral S. Ergin
United Kingdom:	Admiral Sir Anthony Morton
United States:	General R.L. Lawson

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MAJOR NATO COMMANDERS

Supreme Allied Commander Europe:	General B.W. Rogers
Supreme Allied Commander Atlantic:	Admiral H.D. Train, II
Allied Commander in Chief Channel:	Admiral Sir James Eberle
Deputy Chairman, Military Committee:	Lieutenant General Lincoln D. Faurer
Director, International Military Staff:	Air Marshal Sir Alan Davies

ALSO PRESENT

ef, French Military Mission:	Général de Corps d'Armée P. Crousillac
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 J.D. SPOTTISWOOD
 Air Commodore, RAF
 Secretary, IMS

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PART I

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Item 1 POINTS TO BE RAISED BY THE CHAIRMAN,
MILITARY COMMITTEE (NU)

Opening the Restricted Session, the Chairman said that he would be asking Members for their views on the events taking place in Poland. He considered that it was important that the Alliance should react calmly and undramatically but in a manner which demonstrated its solidarity by taking certain prudent preparatory measures. As the situation might change very rapidly, it was necessary that he had a clear idea of Members' views in order to be able to represent them correctly at subsequent meetings with the political authorities. He proposed to start by bringing Members up to date on the meetings which had been held to discuss the matter and, after the Assistant Director, IMS, Intelligence Division had briefed them on any changes in the intelligence situation, he would invite discussion.

He recalled that SACEUR had called on both the Secretary General and the Acting Chairman of the Military Committee early in the previous week, to discuss seven proposed measures which he recommended should be taken if the Soviet Union intervened in Poland. The Council, having received an itemised list of SACEUR's proposals from the Secretary General on 2 December 1980, asked the Military Committee for its advice; a paper giving the required advice had subsequently been completed by 0930 hours on 4 December. In the meantime Ambassadors had sought advice on the proposals from their capitals thus, when he attended the Council meeting on the morning of 4 December, the Chairman had found that Ambassadors were discussing their individual Nation's reactions to SACEUR's proposals, without first having had an opportunity to consider the Military Committee's advice.

At that later meeting, Ambassadors had agreed to defer taking a decision on the disbandment of STANAVFORLANT until 10 December. By the morning of 5 December a consensus on the first three of SACEUR's proposals had been reached and SACEUR was informed. At the meeting of the Military Committee on 5 December, it had been agreed that the Chairman should inform the Secretary General that the Committee unanimously supported SACEUR's requirement for AWACS aircraft to be positioned in Europe. It had also been agreed that papers to support the recommendations to continue STANAVFORLANT in being, and to deploy AWACS aircraft should be forwarded to the Secretary General; this had since been done.

Summarising, he said that political agreement to the first three of SACEUR's proposals had been reached but there had been no response to the Military Committee's paper recommending other military measures to be taken both before and after the invasion of Poland.

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The Assistant Director, IMS, Intelligence Division then briefed the Committee.

The United Kingdom Member, referring to the Chairman's statement concerning NATO's attitude to events in Poland, said that while he agreed that NATO's response should be calm and undramatic, it must also be positive and should avoid any measure which might convey the wrong message were it to be discontinued. It was important that NATO's concern over events connected with Poland should be clearly indicated to Moscow and in his view the measures proposed by SACEUR met that requirement precisely. Regarding the STANAVFORLANT proposal, while acknowledging the problems facing Canada and the United States Members, he recommended that the forces should remain in the Eastern Atlantic at reasonably short notice, with some ships at shorter notice than others if necessary. He continued that he was in complete agreement with the AWACS proposal which would indicate quite clearly to the Warsaw Pact NATO's concern about events in Poland. He concluded by pointing out that there would in future be advantages in co-ordinating the advice of all the MNCs so that the Military Committee's advice to the DPC would contain the advice of all the NATO Military Authorities and not, as had happened in this case, the advice of one MNC only.

The Canadian Member, referring to STANAVFORLANT, agreed that its dispersal should be delayed and asked that any public statement should be credible and acknowledge the redeployments which had taken place. The Chairman said that he anticipated a decision on the dispersal of both Standing Naval Forces would be made by Ministers on 9 December. He hoped their decision would be announced through the Military Committee which could then direct the MNCs to make the appropriate press announcements.

The Turkish Member, recognising that NATO's concern about the situation in Poland necessitated certain covert measures gave his support to SACEUR's proposals which he did not consider could cause an increase in tension.

The Chairman drew attention to the need to clarify one aspect of the AWACS proposal. The DPC had understood that SACEUR's proposal for AWACS would not come into effect until there had been an intervention whereas the Military Committee, in its initial paper, had recommended that SACEUR should be allowed to request AWACS aircraft when he considered it to be appropriate.

SACEUR confirmed the Chairman's interpretation and emphasised that when he had presented his proposals to the Secretary General, he had done so without any intention of raising false hopes in Poland or being in any way provocative to the Soviet Union. He believed it appropriate to adopt measures which were low key and covert and he had not asked that the decision to implement them should be delegated to him before

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an intervention had started. He was nonetheless content to be given the authority to implement the measures prior to an intervention should that accord with the political guidance. However, he pointed out that he had not yet been advised of the nature of the signal the political authorities wished to convey. Certain measures to improve military alertness could be used to convey the appropriate signal once intentions were known.

The German Member said that he thought that the Committee had not yet identified sufficiently precisely where its concern lay over the events taking place in Poland. The present situation had created a crisis within the Warsaw Pact but not a crisis between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. Although the international situation would deteriorate following an intervention, this might not necessarily result in an increase in the threat to NATO. He considered it was necessary for the political authorities to decide on the political, economic and military measures which should be taken if intervention occurred and to ensure that the military measures decided upon should be positive in their effect thus convey the appropriate signal to the USSR. Although he did not fully accept the rationale of keeping STANAVFORLANT in the North Sea, his Authorities were prepared to endorse the decision to keep the ships at a higher state of readiness than was normal. Commenting on SACEUR's intervention, he agreed that it was for Nations to decide on the signal which should be sent and for the Military Committee to initiate suitable measures to effect this; when deciding on such measures it was important not to send false signals nor create false hope among the workers in Poland. Finally, he added that if AWACS was to be used effectively, it should be deployed early and not after intervention had taken place.

The Danish Member drew attention to the special problems which would face Denmark following an intervention in Poland. He reported that appropriate measures had been approved by his Authorities who were aware of the possible consequences including the defection of ships and aircraft. Surveillance around certain ports and waters had been increased, states of readiness within particular areas had been increased and additional food stocks had been made available for use at short notice. He described the measures to deal with refugees being taken by the Swedish Armed Forces with which the Danish Authorities were co-operating closely. He added that his Military Authorities had no objection to the proposals for AWACS and STANAVFORLANT and had recommended that SACEUR should be delegated the authority to use AWACS before an intervention took place.

The Norwegian Member said that the support which Norway had given earlier to SACEUR's proposals had been on the assumption that these would be implemented only after Russia had invaded Poland and this remained his Authorities' position; he also had some reservations about keeping STANAVFORLANT in being. Reporting on the situation along the Russian border on the Kola Peninsula, he said there had recently been a lull in

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activity which was normal at the time of year due to the weather and the long nights. He went on to record the details of a recent conversation he had had with the Ambassador of the German Democratic Republic in Oslo who had quoted the name of the Russian Ambassador several times; thus it was likely that the two had met recently. This was relevant when considering one of the most significant points which he had made that the West should be under no misunderstanding that the Russians would ever allow the situation in Poland to reach a point where they did not retain complete control; inevitably they would take measures to re-establish control if necessary.

The Italian Member agreed that SACEUR's proposals, being generally of a covert nature, should be implemented as they would convey a timely message to the Soviets before the decision on political measures to be taken had been reached.

The United States Member, referring to the German Member's statement that the crisis was within the Warsaw Pact, pointed out that this did not mean that it would not produce consequences which would affect the West and NATO in particular. The Soviet Union could not afford to have democratic unions in Eastern Europe and he believed that one of the reasons they had so far been deterred from moving into Poland was because of the serious economic consequences which would result not only in Poland, but in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. He said that if the Polish Government were unable to reverse some of the gains made by the Solidarity Union, the Soviet Union would either move in quickly or there would be an exercise involving three nations within Poland's borders. While agreeing with SACEUR that false hope among the Poles should not be created nor should their reaction be provocative, this could not be an excuse for doing nothing nor should the West remain inactive if a bloody invasion occurred. He pointed out that this did not mean taking military action against the Warsaw Pact but in the long term there would be a more dangerous threat even if in the near future many of the Warsaw Pact and Soviet Forces were committed. Although there were advantages in the Soviet Union being unable to anticipate the West's response to an intervention, he considered that it was essential that the Alliance's reaction should be unified and that it should support the MNCs. In particular some of SACEUR's proposals should be initiated immediately rather than after an invasion. Pointing out how frequently requests for AWACS had been received from elsewhere in the world, he commended the Alliance for its decision to acquire such a force.

Referring next to unilateral and bilateral measures involving host nations which he recommended should be taken, he said that the United States would be adopting certain unilateral measures which were a national responsibility, for example those related to logistics.

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Next he advocated that the most important measure for every nation was to increase its defence expenditure and observed that the United States Congress had just passed a substantially increased Defence Appropriation Bill to the President for signature. Furthermore negotiations were already in progress, both with the current and new administrations, for a supplement to that budget and the 1982 budget was expected to show an even more substantial increase, not only to improve national capabilities but to assist other countries. It was the United States' view that it had become increasingly important, due to the instability in Eastern Europe, that all nations should review their defence expenditure plans. In his judgement a 3% increase was inadequate and much more needed to be spent, particularly on infrastructure and on assistance to those Allies in need of it. He advised that it was time to act neither too cautiously nor too precipitately as this might provoke a reaction or engender false hopes. However as improving defence efforts by increasing budgets could be considered neither provocative nor liable to raise false hopes, he encouraged all Members to work with their Defence Ministers to convince governments of the need to contribute more to the Alliance.

The Netherlands Member opened his remarks by saying that his country was in agreement with the proposed measures which had recently been discussed. In his view it was important to consider the future, as the current train of events would continue after Members had left Brussels. Pointing out that the MNCs had delegated authority to take certain measures if the safety of NATO were threatened, he nonetheless agreed it had been appropriate in the circumstances to seek political guidance. He emphasised the importance of receiving clear political guidance because, although there was no difficulty in adopting covert measures, there were other measures, such as those affecting STANAVFORLANT and AWACS, which could not remain covert. He saw advantage in having the possible military measures being placed in various categories such as those which were overt, those which were covert and others which might be used to indicate NATO's intentions. In this way appropriate military measures could be selected to support the political, economic and national measures which were eventually selected.

The Belgian Member said he agreed with the proposed measures dealing with the non-dispersal of STANAVFORLANT and the deployment of AWACS, but the latter would only be effective if used before Poland was invaded. Although the crisis was an internal one within the Warsaw Pact, it could also endanger NATO countries and overt measures to improve NATO's readiness should therefore be taken before an invasion took place.

In a further statement, the United Kingdom Member said it was important to identify precisely what the Alliance's aim was, and what it was trying to achieve politically regarding Poland. In his view, the interests of the Alliance would best be served if the Soviet Union did not intervene in Poland, although

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he acknowledged there was a view, which suggested that there would be certain advantages if the Soviet Union became tied down in Poland. He nevertheless thought that the aim should be to dissuade the Soviets from intervening by adopting both political and military measures. In that way the move towards liberalisation in Poland might continue and perhaps spread not only to other Warsaw Pact countries but even to the people of the Soviet Union itself. He acknowledged that political signals were of principal importance in dissuading the Soviets from intervention, but they should be accompanied by military measures to display Alliance will in clear terms. It would be necessary to consider both types of measures, but whether covert or overt measures should be initiated was a matter for further discussion as they must be in accord with political measures that were taken.

In reply, the Chairman said that he was certain that the United Kingdom Member had expressed the aim of both the political and military authorities in NATO correctly.

He then announced that a meeting of the DPC would take place at 1130 hours to discuss Poland.

Summing up, he made the point that although there was still a certain lack of agreement between the nations' political and military authorities on the measures to be taken, agreement was increasing with the passage of time. The position adopted by the political authorities was that at present there should be no overt measures; it was for this reason that there had been difficulty in obtaining final approval for the AWACS and Standing Naval Force measures. Ambassadors were also clearly trying to avoid any public discussion concerning NATO's position. Although nations had been making their own individual efforts to dissuade the Soviet Union from intervening, what was now required from the Military Committee was advice for the DPC on whether military measures should be taken before an intervention. He thought it clear that the majority of Members were in favour of recommending that covert measures should be taken, both by nations individually and by the MNCs. Regarding STANAVFORLANT he understood there was a consensus, with Norway having some reservations, that the ships should remain in the Eastern Atlantic at a reasonable degree of notice. With regard to AWACS, he recalled that there had been agreement that it should be made available prior to an intervention taking place. Finally, in view of the general agreement of Members, the Chairman said that he intended to present the supplementary papers which had been requested to the DPC when it met shortly.

THE COMMITTEE TOOK NOTE.

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The Chairman reconvened the 75th Meeting of the Military Committee in Restricted Session at 1415 on 8 December 1980. He announced that he had received a letter from the Secretary General informing him that the North Atlantic Council had approved the first three of SACEUR's proposed measures to be taken in the event of a Soviet invasion of Poland. He said that he had also reported to the North Atlantic Council an apparent consensus in the Military Committee that some of the seven measures proposed by SACEUR should be adopted immediately and that the remainder should be left to the discretion of SACEUR to adopt as he thought appropriate in the period prior to any intervention. The Chairman asked for further advice from Members in order that a positive consensus could be established on the military advice which should be offered concerning SACEUR's measures in case this advice was required by the North Atlantic Council later that day.

The United States Member said that in his judgement, all SACEUR's proposals, except doubling the air defence readiness elements, should be adopted immediately. He considered this would be a prudent course of action which, if it became publicly known, could not be interpreted as either provocative or offensive in nature.

The Chairman, with regard to the air defence measure, said that it had been suggested that an immediate increase in the readiness of air defence forces was unnecessary since the existing readiness rules for those forces were designed to ensure an automatic reaction to an increased readiness state should the level of air threat in Central Europe increase.

The United States Member agreed that the alert state for air defence forces was more properly dependent on the action actually being taken by Warsaw Pact forces and should not necessarily be linked with the threat of an invasion in Poland.

The Chairman emphasised that in his view the Political Authorities were most unlikely to take a decision to adopt measures which were overt and said that he wished to clarify SACEUR's list of measures in terms of the measures the Military Committee ought to recommend for authorisation now and those which should be authorised after Soviet intervention. As a personal view, he felt that SACEUR should be given discretion to implement his proposed measures when he considered it necessary, but he was doubtful that the Political Authorities would be prepared to accept such a recommendation at this stage.

The United Kingdom Member agreed that the Political Authorities were unlikely to give approval to any measures which might be considered to be overt. He thought that their aim was to

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keep reaction to events in Poland at the political level and military measures were only likely to be approved when they were covert in nature. Militarily, he thought this an acceptable situation provided approval could be obtained for SACEUR to take the action he had requested before invasion and on his own initiative. Turning to the question of Christmas leave, the United Kingdom Member pointed out that if Christmas leave was restricted to any extent, such an action conveyed a clear signal to the Soviet Union. Conversely, if no action was taken to restrict Christmas leave, an equally clear signal was sent. He doubted that any decision on the matter would be taken quickly and thought that if the situation deteriorated, such a decision would be taken at governmental level.

The Chairman agreed with this view and pointed out that most of the suggested military measures requested, with the exception of AWACS and the STANAVFORLANT were covert in nature.

The German Member said that in his view it was essential to establish clearly an aim before considering military measures which might be taken and the time of their possible implementation. He asked whether it was the view of the Committee that developments in Poland might lead to an increased direct threat to NATO and thus a requirement for increased NATO readiness or whether the aim was to provide the Political Authorities with a list of possible signals which they might wish to send to the Soviet Union. He considered that it was difficult to decide precisely on what detailed military measures were necessary until a clear objective had been established.

The Chairman agreed that the present build-up of Soviet forces appeared to threaten invasion or some form of coercion in Poland and did not at present offer a direct threat to NATO. Nevertheless the situation wherein Soviet forces were at a high state of readiness was unpredictable in its consequences and thus created an indirect threat to NATO. This indirect threat could arise from the consequences of a Soviet intervention which might include large-scale defections at sea and in the air with the resultant risks from hot pursuit. In these circumstances, he thought it would be imprudent for NATO, as a military Alliance, to remain indifferent to the situation which was developing. He cautioned, however, against taking any action which would be construed as precipitating the Soviet Union into making an intervention in Poland. It was for this reason that the Political Authorities were taking great care of their consideration of the proposed military measures. In contrast, there had been no reticence on the part of Governments to give political warnings to the Soviet Union and similar warnings had also been issued by the European Economic Community. Because of this political sensitivity, he reiterated that the Political Authorities would wish to differentiate between those measures which were overt and those which were covert.

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SACEUR confirmed that the measures which he had proposed, with the exception of the deployment of AWACS and the continuance in being of the Standing Naval Force Atlantic, were all essentially covert in nature. He emphasised, however, that in the event of an invasion, he and the other MNCs urgently required political guidance on the nature of the signals which the Political Authorities intended to give to the Soviet Union. Once these intentions were known, the appropriate measures from the Alert System could be selected in order to convey precisely the signal required.

The Chairman thanked the Members for their advice which he thought provided suitable guidance for subsequent discussion at political level. In summing up, he noted that whilst the paper(1) which had been forwarded to the Political Authorities had not yet been directly addressed, indirect political guidance on certain of the measures was beginning to emerge. Immediate political guidance was however needed urgently on the continuance of STANAVFORLANT. Before adjourning to the Private Session, the Chairman re-emphasised the need for discussion on this subject to be restricted to a need-to-know basis.

THE COMMITTEE TOOK NOTE.

(1) MCM-EKD-84-80, 4 Dec 80 (NS)

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