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Record - MC-CBX-54-81 (Plenary Session)

6 January 1982

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

54TH MEETING OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE IN 1981

Held on Thursday, 17 December 1981, at 1000 hours  
in the Situation Centre, (Presentation Room),  
NATO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium

P R E S E N T

Chairman:	Admiral R.H. Falls
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 F. Papaefstathiou
Italy:	Vice Admiral G. Fantoni
Luxembourg:	Colonel P. Bergem
Netherlands:	Lieutenant General J.C. Zoutenhier
Norway:	Lieutenant Colonel R. Aaby
Portugal:	General P.A.G. Cardoso
Turkey:	Vice Admiral S. Erqin
United Kingdom:	Admiral Sir Anthony Morton
United States:	Admiral G.E.R. Kinnear, II
Deputy Chairman:	Lieutenant General Sinclair L. Melner
Director, IMS:	Lieutenant General T. Huitfeldt

A L S O P R E S E N T

French Military Mission:	Général de Division O. Le Taillandier de Gaborv
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J.D. SPOTTISWOOD  
Air Commodore, RAF  
Secrétaire, IMS

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a total of nine pages

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PART I      PLENARY SESSION

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Item 1      BRIEFING ON CURRENT INTELLIGENCE BY THE  
INTELLIGENCE DIVISION, IMS (NU)

General Alkemade, Assistant Director Intelligence Division, IMS, provided a summary of the Polish situation and a statement on the NATO Indications and Warning System.

A supplementary briefing was provided by Captain Rostgard on Soviet naval aviation ships(1).

The Italian Member expressed his appreciation to the IMS Intelligence Division for their outstanding performance. He pointed out the difficulty, citing Poland as an example, of processing and presenting clear and up to date information on events in the world on the basis of insufficient and fragmentary information.

The United Kingdom Member also complimented the IMS Intelligence Division for their work. He made the point that recent events in Poland reinforced the fact that it was possible to obtain an element of warning on readiness in terms of capability but when a high state of readiness was reached, it was much more difficult to forecast a change of intent. He said the judgement of intent was beyond the duties of the Intelligence Division. He pointed out that the military authorities in Poland had been in a state of readiness but changed their intentions with few signals and had achieved surprise.

The United States Member praised the work of the Intelligence Division, IMS for keeping the Military Committee well informed on capability and agreed with the United Kingdom Member that it was impossible to forecast intention. He said that perhaps there was a lack of appreciation for what constituted the Indications and Warning System and, if that were the case, then the IMS Intelligence Division might wish to clearly identify, in future briefings, items that deviated from Indications and Warnings.

The United Kingdom Member reminded Members of the Soviets' historical, successful use of the element of surprise and cited the Arab/Israeli War of 1973 as an example where the high state of readiness was identified but the key moment of intent missed. He said the Soviets had been in a high state of readiness as a result of the Polish situation for some time and

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(1) Issued as MILSTAM(INT)-UAG-179-81, 17 Dec 81

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it was necessary to remind people of this and of the fact that deception was a key part of their policy.

The Greek Member thanked Captain Rostgard for his briefing which had been presented as a result of his request. He stated that the briefing had given a clear indication of how a continental nation such as the Soviet Union could build a large naval force in a relatively short period.

The Italian Member pointed out that the Soviet Union had no ships permanently stationed in the Mediterranean fourteen years previously and now had approximately fifty high quality vessels in station.

The Turkish Member provided an example of the increase in Soviet submarines in the Mediterranean during the past twenty years.

The United States Member stressed that the Soviet Union was continuing with the desires of old Russia to make the transition from a continental to an international power and the information contained in the briefing gave evidence that they had reached that status.

The Chairman asked about support capability in the Pacific area for Soviet aviation ships and their aircraft and if the Soviets would maintain large anti-submarine cruisers in the Pacific fleet. The Briefer responded that some support capabilities existed in the Vladivostok area. He said the MINSK was permanently stationed in the Pacific and the LENINGRAD was the only ship to stay in the Indian Ocean for a period of time.

The United States Member offered the information that the Soviet Union had complete facilities at Vladivostok to support the MINSK and this ship had also been operating out of a Vietnam naval base built by the United States.

THE COMMITTEE TOOK NOTE.

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