

action sheet  
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Poland V

1983



Canadian Delegation  
to NATO

Délégation du Canada  
auprès de l'OTAN

SECRET

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Brussels, April 30, 1981

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*[Handwritten notes: Sledge, 9479, PA, 3834]*

Dear Joseph,

The Australian Ambassador called on me early this week to give me an account of the results of soundings his authorities have made in the capitals of a number of key third world countries on the subject of Poland. The following provides a summary of his remarks which he asked me to relay to you and to my colleagues on the Council.

The purpose of the soundings was to probe the interest of third world countries in this subject with a view to preparing the ground for a more formal effort to enlist their support for the Western position at the United Nations in the event of Soviet intervention. Australian Embassies and High Commissions emphasized two points :

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H.E. Joseph M.A.H. Luns  
Secretary General of the  
North Atlantic Treaty Organization  
Brussels

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- (a) Soviet intervention in Poland in whatever form would involve an issue of principle no less important than the principle breached by the Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan;
- (b) the destabilising effects of intervention would have global application and no country could remain immune from the consequences.

The responses obtained so far to these soundings are as follows :

Nairobi : Kenya was concerned that an intervention might later be used as a basis for big power intervention elsewhere, especially in Africa, that it would undermine detente generally, and that it would irrevocably damage SALT and lead to a further proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Lagos : Should intervention occur Nigeria would join in public condemnation of the Soviet Union, although it would probably stop short of taking practical bilateral measures. Senior officials had discussed their concerns about Poland with the Polish, Soviet and G.D.R. Ambassadors. Although Nigeria would regard events in Poland as primarily an East-West issue, it would express opposition to any military intervention as a matter of principle.

Dar-es-Salaam : Tanzania would be likely to support international condemnation of Soviet intervention.

Port Moresby : The Chan Government had reacted strongly to Afghanistan. Its reaction would likely be no less strong in the case of Poland.

Dacca : Although they see Afghanistan in a somewhat different light because of its regional proximity and Islamic flavour, senior officials grasp the potential global consequences of Soviet intervention in Poland.

Manila : The Philippines could be expected to go along with the general tone of any Western criticism of a Soviet intervention. The Catholic link would be a factor. However, there could be little the Philippines could do in a tangible way.

Jakarta : The Indonesians were unlikely to take an active position in response to intervention beyond making anti-Soviet noises if the Soviets were to intervene.

Rangoon : Burma would vote for a U.N. resolution condemning Soviet intervention but would not issue a public statement. It would regard an invasion of Poland as just as important in principle as the invasions of Kampuchea and Afghanistan.

New Delhi : India would probably do nothing on Poland unless forced to. In February officials took a cautiously optimistic view of developments and suggested that Brezhnev's CPSU congress speech had been generally conciliatory in tone which further inclined them to the view that Soviet intervention was less likely than had seemed earlier.

Singapore : The Singapore High Commissioner in Canberra believes Singapore's response to intervention would be very hostile. Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew has apparently spoken out publicly about the Polish crisis.

Yours sincerely,

  
J.G.H. Halstead