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UNITED STATES PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE
ON THE
NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL

Brussels

REG. P.A.
ACTION SLIP
No 16277/81

December 22, 1981

NATO SECRET

P. A. Sub - Registry
File No 17.10.81 (Poland)

Dear Joseph:

Secretary Haig has asked that the enclosed letter on Poland be delivered to you. I understand that he is writing Allied Foreign Ministers in a similar vein.

Very sincerely yours,

Tap

W. Tapley Bennett, Jr.
Ambassador

His Excellency
Joseph M.A.H. Luns,
Secretary General,
North Atlantic Treaty Organization,
Brussels.

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NATO SECRET

December 22, 1981

Dear Joseph:

The fast moving Polish situation requires continuing close consultation among concerned friends and allies. I therefore want to share with you our views of recent developments.

The Polish Government is saying that the Martial Law regime was established by Polish nationalists in order to avoid Soviet intervention. Whatever truth there is to this -- and there may be some -- it is largely irrelevant.

The Martial Law regime will not resolve Poland's massive problems. Whether it succeeds or fails in restoring order and chastening the worker's movement, the Polish economy will remain a shambles. Economic deterioration is thus likely whatever happens, and could well trigger further violence and disorder. The threat of Soviet intervention, therefore, is probably as real under Martial Law as it was before.

We believe our common objective must be to deter Soviet intervention and restore the reform process, both of which are interrelated. If economic breakdown and Soviet intervention are to be avoided, there must be restoration of reform and a process of true negotiation among Poles. In the long run that is the only way Poland's problem can be managed; in the short term it is also probably the key to deterring violence and Soviet intervention.

The ultimate intentions of the Martial Law regime are unclear, despite assurances that the clock will not

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be turned back to July 1980. Internment of most of Solidarity's top leadership and of many other political activists is not a promising sign, if for no other reason than that it leaves the regime with no responsible negotiating partners. By dampening resistance the regime may have made it impossible to move out of the crisis by negotiating with leaders who could deliver on agreements made.

We must be careful to avoid on the one hand appearing to acquiesce in repression of Solidarity and in wiping out 18 months of reform and on the other doing anything which could be portrayed after the fact as a provocative incitement which led to breakdown, violence and Soviet intervention.

Thus, the wise approach for now is to insist publicly and privately that the only realistic solution to Poland's problems lies in restoration of a genuine process of negotiation and reconciliation. We must make clear our opposition to the abridgment of civil and human liberties, while stressing that our approach is the only practical solution, since without restoration of a political dialogue the Poles cannot solve the problems facing them. We must also make it clear to the leaders of the military regime that our willingness to cooperate in several areas will depend on moderation and receptivity to internal dialogue.

Two other points need to be emphasized. First, the role of the church. We understand that the Polish Church will call from the pulpit for lifting of Martial Law, the immediate release of the internees, and resumption of dialogue and democratization. If such an appeal is made, it will warrant the support of all of us. It could offer a basis for compromise; in any case it will mean additional pressure on the Martial Law regime.

Finally, you will have seen President Reagan's statement of December 17th. It is a strong statement fully consistent with our belief that it is necessary to maintain steady pressure on the Polish regime to bring it to the realization that there will be substantial costs in terms of Polish relations with the U.S. if the regime continues to follow its immoderate

policy. Equally however we want it to be clear that we are prepared to continue to cooperate with Poland if the policy of reform can be revitalized. I hope this approach is in line with your own thinking and will receive your support in the difficult days ahead.

Sincerely,

(Signed)
Alexander M. Haig

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