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ORGANISATION DU TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

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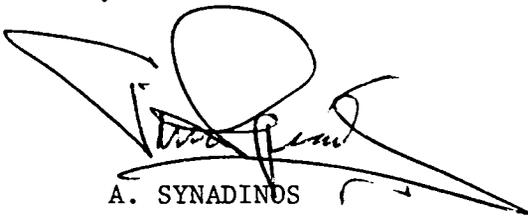
To : Secretary General

cc: Deputy Secretary General
ASG, Political Affairs

From : Acting Deputy Executive Secretary

Summary Record of a Restricted Meeting of the Council held
on Wednesday, 16th December, 1981 at 4.00 pm

THE SITUATION IN POLAND ✓


A. SYNADINOS

cc: Archives

This document consists of: 11 pages

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N A T O S E C R E T

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ATTENDANCE

Restricted

AGENDA

No

MEETING PLACE

Room 1

N A T O S E C R E T

-2-

THE SITUATION IN POLAND

1. The CHAIRMAN recalled that at a previous meeting it had been suggested that the Council might review the document issued on 4th February by the United States Delegation on the possible policy responses to use of force by the Polish Government against the Polish people. He felt that this document represented a realistic appraisal of the present situation and contained a number of measures, some of which had already been taken, but which might usefully be discussed in the Senior Political Committee under Council guidance.

2. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that he wanted to make it clear that he was not proposing that the Council should undertake another contingency planning exercise. Because of the extreme sensitivity of the subject and the delicacy of the situation in Poland, he also wished to stress the need for full confidentiality of the Council's discussions to avoid public speculation. He was also fully alive to the need to avoid any actions or statements which could become part of the problem, either by making matters worse in Poland or furnishing a pretext or incentive for the Soviets to intervene.

3. His Authorities had welcomed the US initiative of tabling some ideas on what was conventionally known as the "grey area" scenario. The present situation, he felt, corresponded in many respects to the "grey area" scenario. There had already been a widespread abuse of human rights in Poland in the form of several thousand arrests of individuals who were clearly not guilty of any criminal act. In addition for the first time, there had been rumours of the application of physical force to break-up strikes with the possibility of bloodshed.

4. In the circumstances, he believed there would be some merit in examining collectively those considerations which various Allies believed ought to be borne in mind in responding to developments in Poland. This might take the form of a review of the rationale for measures already taken and an outline of what these were, ie. a pooling of information on what had already been done, and discussion of factors which Allies considered should be borne in mind in dealing with future developments.

5. Factors which, at present and in the absence of bloodshed, his Authorities had thought to be germane to Allied response had been the following:

- (a) It had been consistent Alliance policy to insist that the Poles be left alone to solve their own problems. While intending to discourage Soviet intervention, the Alliance should equally apply the principle of non-intervention, which means that, from the public position at least, Allied Governments must not only insist that the Soviet Union refrain from lending direct support to elements in Poland, but also refrain from supporting other elements. From this he drew the conclusion that Allies could continue to warn the USSR against intervening but that they cannot themselves openly take up for example Solidarity's cause. They might however, be critical of the Polish Government's abuse of human rights. That would correspond to long-standing Alliance policy.
- (b) But non-intervention did not mean indifference, and Allied action could take the form of maintaining an intensive dialogue with Polish Authorities to encourage them to relax their controls on Solidarity and to release those arrested.

- (c) They should also be especially careful in how they used the economic leverage, to guard against the possibility that the threatened or actual withdrawal of economic assistance could induce instability which would make the use of force or Soviet military intervention more likely.

6. In keeping with the above, his Government had publicly reaffirmed the principle of non-intervention, had privately expressed its concerns to the Polish Government, and had decided that for the time being it would continue to fulfill its existing commitments in the area of economic assistance.

7. In practice, this meant that it would not interrupt Canadian grain shipments made possible by some \$300 million in food credit extended to Poland in 1981, and it would not withdraw the \$500 million in food credits which the Government had recently announced would be available to enable Poland to import further quantities of Canadian grain next year. In addition, the Government had not withdrawn the special supplementary fishing allocation granted Poland earlier to allow it to augment its catch in Canadian waters.

8. With regard to refugees, his Government had reaffirmed that there would be no change in the special Canadian provisions designed to ease the Polish refugee situation, namely the relaxation of normal Canadian immigration criteria and permission for Polish self-exiles without Canadian relatives to remain in Canada for up to a year pending the outcome of events in Poland. So far almost 4,500 Poles had been allowed entry to Canada under these provisions.

9. In this respect, he would welcome information from other Allied Governments on the nature of their own responses in these fields to date, in particular clarification from the US colleague of the reported suspension of the US Government's good shipments to Poland and whether all existing contracts would be fulfilled. He would also be interested to learn more about Allies' intentions in respect of the treatment of Polish refugees.

10. He went on to say that looking at how to react to a further deterioration of the situation in Poland involving the shedding of blood, the American "grey area" paper had identified the following factors which might be borne in mind in preparing the Western response:

- (a) the nature and extent of the force employed by the authorities
- (b) whether the use of force had been accompanied by other measures which had heightened the prospects for continuation of the reforms
- (c) the political make-up of the Polish leadership, and
- (d) the degree of Soviet involvement, whether overt or covert.

11. His Authorities continued to be attracted, by the utility of such a set of considerations, though the first two seemed by far the most important. They also had some suggestions for elaborating on these.

12. In considering the nature and extent of the force employed by the Authorities they believed extenuating circumstances should also be taken account of including:

- (a) the degree of provocation by Solidarity supporters
- (b) whether the use of force had been confined to specific instances or was indiscriminate, and
- (c) whether an effort had been made to respect legal procedures.

13. The importance of the existence of accompanying measures which heightened the prospects for continuation of the reforms could not be over-estimated.

14. The third consideration, that of the political make-up of the Polish leadership, would be rather less important under present circumstances.

15. And the fourth consideration, that of the degree of Soviet involvement, while intellectually interesting would, he feared, in practice be extremely difficult to identify or prove sufficiently to be reliable.

16. In addition to the four considerations in the American paper, he believed that a fifth - the circumstances in which the present action had been taken should be taken into account. He pointed out that the American paper had been circulated in February, the Polish Government had still been sufficiently in control of events that a resort to force to impose its will could still have been considered discretionary in character. That was not the case at present. Whatever one might believe about the involvement of the Soviet Union or Polish hardliners in Jaruzelski's decision, it appeared incontrovertible that he had acted out of apprehension that events were about to get totally out of control, and that he had to do something (indeed almost anything) to stave off disaster. Abdication in favour of Solidarity under these circumstances would not be a realistic alternative, given Poland's geopolitical location and the certainty of a Soviet intervention in such an eventuality.

17. He did not conclude from this that Allied Governments should cheer Jaruzelski's harsh measures for what they were - and they should avoid any actions which could push Poland closer to chaos and Soviet intervention. At the same time, they should obviously seek to hold Jaruzelski to his professed willingness to return to a policy of dialogue and agreement, and not to turn back the clock to the pre-August 1980 régime.

18. In light of the foregoing, his Government believed there was a place for some or all of the kinds of responses outlined in the US paper, which he would list under the four categories of:

- (a) public statements (these had already been made, but there would be occasions for more)
- (b) diplomatic démarches (the same situation applied here)
- (c) management of economic aid, and
- (d) possible action in multilateral forums.

19. He would welcome the views of other delegations, and suggested that these matters might usefully be examined further if necessary in the Senior Political Committee.

20. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE said that his Delegation would circulate a compilation of actions taken so far by his Government, in the hope that it would facilitate cooperation among Allied Governments. As regards the paper referred to by the Chairman, he felt that it was too early to take decisions on measures to be taken in view of the uncertainty of the present situation and that it was essential to maintain flexibility of approach. He did not see the need for the Council to prepare a new NATO Contingency Paper.

21. His Government had sought clarification from the Polish Government on the extent and duration of the present action. It had expressed its concern that the Martial Law entailed violations to the human rights to which it attached great importance. It had warned the Polish Government that the use of force would affect bilateral relations and that the United States' economic support had to be suspended for the time being. However, private aid would continue. It had also expressed to the Soviet Union its grave concern and its hope that the principle of non-intervention would be strictly applied.

22. As regards the Madrid Conference, he expressed the wish that Allied Governments coordinate their action until the scheduled recess. His Government was of the opinion that an agreement would be unappropriate in the present circumstances, that the last NNA proposal was only a basis for negotiation and that Allied delegations should be prepared to return to Madrid in January or February. Then the NNA proposal could, with certain improvements, offer a possible solution.

23. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE said that the latest intelligence did not indicate that preparation of a deployment of Soviet forces was taking place, although the state of alert of those inside Poland continued to increase. Polish forces had an intense activity, especially in troubled areas.

24. Turning to the US document, he pointed out that any Alliance reaction should be closely tailored to the situation in Poland. As long as it was not clear, the western side should keep restraint and do nothing which might precipitate a Soviet intervention.

25. As regards economic assistance, he felt that a high degree of flexibility should be kept and that any pressure in this delicate area might easily become counter-productive and appear as an interference in internal affairs. Should the situation deteriorate to almost civil war it was not likely that such an action could have an effect on Polish leadership. In summary, he recommended that the situation should be followed closely and carefully.

26. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that having re-read the US paper of 4th February, he wished once more to pay tribute to what had been a very foresighted initiative covering rather closely, and with much nuance, precisely the present situation in Poland. When discussing the spectrum of possible Western reactions to Polish suppressive measures his Authorities thought that the following considerations should, in particular, be borne in mind.

27. The first and overriding Allied objective should be to avoid a Soviet military intervention in Poland. Such an intervention should be avoided in the interest of the Poles themselves as well as in the interest of a peaceful development in Europe and in East/West relations generally.

28. From General Jaruzelski's point of view, the imposition of the State of Emergency might have appeared as the only alternative to political and economic chaos and/or to a direct Soviet intervention. Only in light of further developments should it be possible to judge whether these aims had been broader and less respectable, for instance, as some had suggested, to crush Solidarity as a political force in Poland. For the moment he should be given the benefit of the doubt.

29. The Alliance's assessment, he felt should also keep in mind that Poland was a Communist country and a member of the Warsaw Pact, with the limitations which these hard facts imposed on the prospects for an evolution in a democratic direction. Consequently, when deciding on Western reactions, it would be fallacious to base them on any wishful thinking or hope that Poland might in the short-term have any prospects for developing towards a pluralistic democracy of the Western type. What might be hoped for and stimulated was a gradual and peaceful evolution towards a more liberal and democratic society. In the present situation Allied objective should be to try to see it that the prospects for such an evolution were not crushed.

30. What had been called an "internal solution" might, as indicated in the US paper, take different forms, and Allied reactions would have to be adjusted accordingly. Here he agreed very much with the flexible approach in the US paper. On the other hand he was of the opinion that until a little more about the way in which the State of Emergency was being applied be known, and what plans if any, the Polish Authorities might have for resuming the dialogue with Solidarity and reform forces, it would be very difficult to say whether the present situation was as described in 2nd aliena on page 2 of the US paper. ('It was possible to imagine a situation in which the measured application of force accompanied by a renewed expression of commitment to the post-August reforms could contribute to the stability in which those reforms and the economic life of the nation might best prosper').

31. He agreed that, so far, Allied countries had implemented most of the preliminary measures enumerated in the US paper. If and to what extent and with what timing economic measures should be applied would have to be considered very carefully. Here he agreed very much with what the Canadian and Danish Representatives had just said.

32. For the moment his Government was inclined to let the humanitarian aid continue in accordance with the practice which had been followed so far. In fact it had decided to allocate a further 13 million Nok. to humanitarian aid to Poland, in addition to 4 million Nok. allocated earlier. There were also six Norwegian private organizations which were giving humanitarian aid to Poland, with financial support from the Government. The truck transport of food stuffs and medical articles continued as normal. There were no difficulties at the receiving end. In spite of the fact that the Polish Authorities did not any longer permit Solidarity or Farmers' Solidarity to act as recipients of the aid, there seemed to be full coordination between those organizations and the Catholic Church organizations which were handling the reception and the distribution of the aid.

33. As to refugees his Government had made it clear that Norway would receive the refugees which might ask for asylum.

34. For the rest, his Authorities were inclined to advise that for the time being Allied reactions should be limited to deploring the State of Emergency, the arrests and use of force, to warning against foreign intervention, and to continuing to stress that the Polish people should be left to solve their problems themselves and to decide themselves on their own future.

35. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said that Mr. Genscher had received the Polish Charge d'Affaires in Bonn and had expressed the hope that it would be possible for Poland, in accordance with statements made by Jaruzelski and Czyrek, to solve its internal problems without outside intervention and use of force. He had added that the Federal Government, which was following developments with great concern and sympathy, was expecting that the reforms would be pursued. This statement reflected his Government's opinion that at this juncture the best way to exert influence on the Polish Government was to take its words at their face value. He noted that other Allied Governments had more or less taken the same line, especially in practical matters, such as the continuation of the humanitarian aid. It was not possible, he felt, to ignore the deep concern in the Public Opinion on humanitarian and political aspects of the situation in Poland.

36. As regards the Madrid Conference, he agreed that it was very unlikely that the work could be completed before Christmas and that it would be a mistake to tie decisions to be taken there with developments in Poland.

37. As for the United States paper, he pointed out that most of the considerations contained therein had already been taken into account. It would not be worth it, he felt, to review a scenario which was only one of the numerous possibilities. The Council should continue to follow the situation and be informed of national approaches.

38. In Poland, it was clear that the Martial Law was more and more visible and felt by an increasing number of people and organizations. He could not see how Jaruzelski would be able to reach his objectives and to resume a reforms policy. The Church remained critical and Walesa refused to cooperate. His success would depend on when and how he would be able to convince a large part of the population that he only aimed at saving the country and not at suppressing liberties and reforms.

39. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE said that the latest reports he had received from Poland were that the situation was stable and that the militarisation of government machinery at all levels was increasing all over the country. Active resistance seemed to have ceased and passive resistance had started.

40. As for the United States paper, he supported what had been said by the German Representative. He had doubts about the need of re-discussing it, especially since any special study entailed greater risks of leaks. The Council should continue to follow the situation and to consult; and any report which might have to be produced, should be part of its normal watching brief.

41. His Government's attitude towards the Polish Government was very much along the lines of the Federal Government's policy. Jaruzelski should be encouraged to pursue reforms and to solve internal problems without bloodshed.

42. As for economic assistance, his Government was not under the obligation of taking decisions in the weeks to come. However, the food aid already in the pipe-line would be forwarded and Christmas gifts would go ahead, as planned.

43. Le REPRESENTANT du LUXEMBOURG fait savoir que l'Ambassadeur de Pologne à Bruxelles a demandé à être reçu par l'Ambassadeur Wurth. Il a reconnu que seule l'histoire pourra dire si la décision du Général Jaruzelski était la bonne. Il a fait état d'une certaine normalisation de la situation. Quant à

l'attitude soviétique, il a dit que ses autorités ne s'attendaient pas à une intervention. Il a souligné combien son gouvernement redoutait une interruption de l'aide occidentale et une attitude plus restrictive vis à vis de l'octroi de crédits. Varsovie attend de l'OTAN et des Dix une attitude positive et aussi une certaine compréhension des réalités, notamment du fait que le syndicat Solidarité était allé trop loin. Un accord semble toujours possible avec Walesa qui est modéré et réaliste, face à des éléments extrémistes dont l'éviction permettra de poursuivre les progrès et l'acquis ne sera pas remis en cause.

44. Le Représentant du Luxembourg ajoute que sa position est identique à celle des Représentants de l'Allemagne et du Royaume Uni pour ce qui concerne le document des Etats Unis.

45. Le REPRESENTANT de la FRANCE rappelle les dernières prises de position par le Premier Ministre, Pierre Mauroy, ainsi que par le Président de la République. Celui-ci, à l'issue de Conseil des Ministres, a notamment déclaré ce qui suit:

"Ayant constaté que les libertés syndicales et d'expression, depuis peu acquises en Pologne, ont été remises en cause, qu'un régime d'exception a été instauré, que de nombreuses personnes ont été arrêtées, ou sont d'une façon ou d'une autre empêchées d'exercer leurs activités et responsabilités pourtant reconnues par la loi, le gouvernement français doit marquer sa réprobation d'un tel état de choses."

46. Les renseignements en provenance de l'Ambassade de France à Varsovie, qui viennent de lui être communiqués, confirment que les grèves avec occupation se poursuivent, notamment à Gdansk et à Gdynia, que l'armée intervient avec des chars et des hélicoptères et que dans l'avenir seuls les éléments qui n'ont rien à perdre auront sans doute tendance à résister à cette pression croissante.

47. Le REPRESENTANT de l'ITALIE constate que les événements de Pologne se déroulent selon un scénario d'emploi de la force qui est celui préfiguré avec clairvoyance dans le document américain du 4 février dernier. Il ne peut que souscrire aux suggestions qui y sont contenues étant entendu que les gouvernements alliés sauront sauvegarder la flexibilité nécessaire, notamment dans leur jugement concernant le retour au processus de renouveau polonais dans son ensemble. A ce stade, il ne peut que constater que la force est employée en Pologne, mais n'a pas d'éléments suffisants pour juger de l'extension de cette mesure, de ses conséquences et de ses finalités.

48. En attendant de pouvoir mieux évaluer le sens et les perspectives du recours à la force dans ce pays, la position de ses Autorités peut se resumer comme suit:

- Il va de soit que l'Italie demeure fermement attachée au principe de la non-ingérence dans les affaires internes de la Pologne. D'autre part, aucun événement d'une importance décisive dans la vie de tout Pays européen ne peut laisser les autres indifférents. Son pays a été toujours profondément conscient de cette interdépendance et c'est justement cette conscience qui l'a déterminé à prendre sa part de l'effort économique et financier pour aider le Gouvernement polonais à faire face aux nécessités les plus urgentes liées au processus de renouveau national.

- Dans ce même esprit, l'Italie ne peut rester insensible à l'évolution d'une crise qui se déroule dans la violation des libertés fondamentales du peuple polonais. Son gouvernement respecte profondément la souveraineté de la Pologne, et exige qu'elle soit respectée par tous, mais cela ne peut l'empêcher de constater que la méthode politique dans la solution des différends nationaux, méthode à laquelle les Autorité polonaises ont bien de fois confirmé leur intention de se tenir, n'a pas été suivie. Par conséquent, et tout en respectant la souveraineté polonaise, il entend garder la plus grande marge de flexibilité dans la poursuite de ses rapports de collaboration avec, et d'aide aux Autorités polonaises à la lumière du déroulement des événements dans ce pays.

- Il n'est pas question, bien entendu, de l'aide alimentaire qui est destinée au peuple polonais, mais plutôt des aspects de collaboration avec la Pologne (et notamment de l'aide financière et économique) dont le Gouvernement de Varsovie est directement bénéficiaire.

49. Il lui semble que la poursuite de cette collaboration et, en général le contenu des relations avec le régime polonais, ne puisse pas faire abstraction de la vérification, concrète et ponctuelle, de son intention de sauvegarder les acquis du renouveau national. Cette intention, au delà des mesures, que pour sa part l'Italie ne peut que condamner, constitue dans l'état actuel des choses le seul aspect positif de l'attitude du régime. C'est un élément, qu'on ne peut ignorer; non plus que le fait que, jusqu'à ici du moins, la force employée en Pologne est une force polonaise. Mais on ne peut non plus ignorer l'émotion de l'opinion publique italienne toute entière et les sentiments d'inquiétude et de reprobation pour ce qui c'est passé et se passe en Pologne, exprimés par toutes les forces politiques en Italie sans exception aucune.

50. Il serait prêt à participer à une mise à jour du document des Etats Unis, soit au sein du Conseil, soit au sein du Comité politique au niveau élève. Ses autorités sont en effet arrivées à la conclusion qu'une prise de position des Quinze serait nécessaire. Elles sont bien entendu d'accord pour garder aux échanges de vues concernant la situation présente un caractère strictement confidentiel.

51. Le REPRESENTANT de la BELGIQUE insiste sur les difficultés croissantes de transmission que rencontrent les pays qui, comme la Belgique ne disposent pas de moyens de communication directs avec leurs ambassades à Varsovie. S'il se confirmait qu'un brouillage est systématiquement maintenu par les autorités polonaises pour empêcher ces communications, il faudrait que les Occidentaux s'élèvent contre cette violation de la Convention de Vienne. En raison par ailleurs, de la présence sur le territoire polonais de nombreux ressortissants belges, son gouvernement serait intéressé par un échange d'information concernant le sort des étrangers en Pologne.

52. Sur le plan de l'aide alimentaire, il souhaiterait avoir des précisions sur les réactions des pays limitrophes de la Pologne. L'Allemagne de l'Est par exemple semble avoir arrêté des convois en provenance des pays occidentaux.

53. En général si son gouvernement est d'accord pour conserver une attitude discrète (low key), il ne voudrait pas qu'elle puisse être interprétée comme un signe d'indifférence, ce que serait contraire au sentiment populaire dans les pays de l'Alliance.

54. Le REPRESENTANT du PORTUGAL rappelle que son gouvernement a fait le Dimanche 13 Décembre une déclaration qui va dans le sens de celles des autres gouvernements alliés. Le lundi 14 le Conseil des Ministres a été entièrement consacré à la Pologne et la Commission mixte Polono-Portugaise a été ajournée sine die. Il donne son accord à tout ce qui a été dit à propos du document des Etats Unis.

55. Le PRESIDENT constate, en conclusion de cet échange de vues, que les gouvernements alliés sont d'accord pour n'envisager aucune mesure, du moins dans les circonstances présentes, et pour continuer de se consulter et de suivre l'évolution des évènements. Si nécessaire, le Conseil pourrait charger le SPC de réexaminer le divers scénarios déjà élaborés à propos de la crise polonaise.