

DECLASSIFIED - PUBLIC DISCLOSURE / DÉCLASSIFIÉ - MISE EN LECTURE PUBLIQUE

ORGANISATION DU TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD
NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION
N A T O S E C R E T

Reg. PA

1861

1110 - BRUXELLES 5th December 1980

REF: PR(80) 70

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To : Secretary General
c.c. : Deputy Secretary General
ASG, Political Affairs
From : Executive Secretary

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Summary Record of a Private Meeting of the Council on
2nd December, 1980 at 15h30

I. IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLIANCE DEFENCE OF THE SITUATION
IN POLAND

(Handwritten signature)
T. OZÇERI

This document consists of : 5 pages

N A T O S E C R E T

ATTENDANCE

:

Ambassadors + 1

plus

Deputy Secretary General
ASG, Political Affairs
Directeur du Cabinet
Executive Secretary

plus

Acting Chairman, Military Ctee
General Schmidbauer

AGENDA

:

No

MEETING PLACE

:

Secretary General's
Conference Room

I. IMPLICATIONS FOR ALLIANCE DEFENCE OF THE SITUATION IN POLAND

The CHAIRMAN informed the Council that SACEUR General Rogers had called on him before the present meeting and gave him an assessment on the build-up of Soviet Military forces around Poland. Together with factors cited by SACEUR, the Chairman believed that the following developments were of ominous portent :

- The withdrawal of the East German Ambassador from Warsaw ;
- Reports to the effect that leaves in the East German armed forces had been cancelled and that the readiness of Soviet forces in the Western Military Districts were raised to the highest alert level (i.e. level 6) ;
- Reported border closures between East Germany and Poland ;
- Roumanian Foreign Minister's journey to Moscow.

2. According to General Rogers, 33 Soviet divisions around Poland were ready to initiate operations, reservists were being called up and the necessary command, control and communications facilities were brought to an optimum level in the Soviet Western Military Districts. It was believed that in the event of a Soviet invasion, Polish armed forces supported by the population would fight the Soviet forces. In this connection, it was interesting to note that in anticipation of Soviet operations Poland had ceased issuing weather forecasts. The Poles had intimated that they could fight the Soviet forces for 14 days, which the Chairman personally considered too optimistic.

3. SACEUR had also told the Chairman that he was in need of political guidance, especially on what possible political, diplomatic, economic and other measures would be taken by Allied countries in the event of a Soviet invasion of Poland. SACEUR believed that it would be dangerous for the future as an implicit precedent if the Alliance were not to react by increasing the readiness of NATO forces in the face of the Soviet forces' build-up in areas facing the Central Region of ACE, although it was known at the present time that the reason for that build-up was the situation in Poland. General Rogers was aware that he had the authority to declare the State of Military Vigilance under the NATO Alert System, but was of the opinion that Military Vigilance included a considerable number of measures, which if implemented before a Soviet invasion of Poland could give the Soviets pretexts for accusing NATO of siding with Poland. He had therefore concluded that Military Vigilance should be declared only after a possible invasion of Poland by Soviet forces.

4. Furthermore, SACEUR proposed that the following actions might be taken after such an invasion :

- a. Activation of SHAPE War Headquarters with skeleton manning on a 24 hour basis to maintain a watch on developments ;
- b. Asking Major Subordinate Commanders (MSC) to man their respective situation centers on a 24 hour basis ;
- c. Review of contingency plans and full testing of ACE communications ;
- d. Asking MSCs to take covert action short of formal State of Military Vigilance to ensure that ACE forces are brought fully up to a peacetime state of operational readiness ; and
- e. Depending on the air threat situation, to consider increasing the readiness of ACE air defence forces by doubling the aircraft on standby to 4 planes per squadron and by doubling the number of surface-to-air missile sites ready for use within 20 minutes.

5. The CHAIRMAN further informed the Council that SACEUR requested nations :

- a. to make available to Major NATO Command and NATO Headquarters the maximum possible amount of intelligence on the situation in and around Poland ; and
- b. to consider requesting from the US the deployment to ACE of AWACS aircraft to assist in intelligence collection and provide an additional command and control facility ; this should be done under the guise of an exercise.

6. The CHAIRMAN believed that Allied governments should start determining what the initial reaction of NATO would have to be if the Soviet invasion were to take place. SACEUR informed him that he did not expect the Soviets to move into Poland before 15th December at which date it was considered that the weather and ground conditions would be suitable for armoured operations.

7. The CHAIRMAN and the UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE observed that other considerations which applied to that date also were :

- the termination of NATO Ministerial meetings ;
- Mr. Brezhnev's return from his visit to India, and
- the anniversary (16th December) of the 1970 riots in Poland.

8. The CHAIRMAN thought that the Council should endeavour to formulate a common position, to the extent possible before 4th December, on a public reaction for the contingency of an invasion taking place.

9. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE said that it would be appropriate and necessary for the Military Committee to assess the situation in Poland on a continuous basis and provide the Council with advice as a background for the latter's decisions.

10. The ACTING CHAIRMAN of the MILITARY COMMITTEE informed the Council that the Military Committee had held an extensive exchange of views that afternoon on possible military measures which could be taken to maintain and strengthen the deterrent and defensive capabilities of Allied forces in ACE in view of the Soviet build-up in areas adjacent to the Central Region and that in view of the wishes expressed at an earlier meeting of the Council, no formal documents were being submitted to it owing to the sensitive nature of measures under consideration.

11. The COUNCIL then had a discussion on whether or not the dispersal of the STANAVFORLANT should be postponed beyond 3rd December and agreed that STANAVFORLANT should not be dispersed on that date and that it should maintain its present formation temporarily until such time as the Council would take a supplementary decision on dispersal or a further mission. The postponement of dispersal had to be carried out as covertly as possible, on which some delegations had doubts as to whether it could be done without attracting the attention of the public.

12. The CHAIRMAN requested member delegations to forward SACEUR's proposals to their capitals and endeavour to obtain instructions in preparation for further consultations and discussion in the immediate future.