



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

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

Summary Record of a Private Meeting of the Council on
Thursday, 4th December 1980 at 11.45 a.m.
and at 3.45 p.m.

I. THE SITUATION IN POLAND

T. Özçeri
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This document consists of : pages

N A T O S E C R E T

ATTENDANCE : Ambassadors + 1
plus
Deputy Secretary General
(p.m. only)
ASG. Political Affairs
(a.m. only)
Directeur du Cabinet
Executive Secretary
Assistant Directeur du Cabinet
Head, Minute Writers
plus
Deputy Chairman, Mil. Ctee

AGENDA : No

MEETING PLACE : Secretary General's
Conference Room

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I. THE SITUATION IN POLAND
(a.m. meeting)

1. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE said that he had received additional intelligence information which confirmed that the Soviet Union had increased its capabilities to intervene in Poland. Extensive exercise activity in Czechoslovakia and East Germany had also been reported. His authorities had therefore prepared a contingency paper on action which might be taken before and after a Soviet intervention, should it occur. He asked his colleagues to submit this document to their authorities, taking due care of its very sensitive nature.

2. He went on to say that there should be an agreed public line about Poland among member countries of the Alliance. The relevant paragraph in the present draft communique seemed quite acceptable to his authorities, it being understood that it should be the only public statement by the Alliance at this stage. Additional national statements and press conferences after the Ministerial Session should draw on this agreed line. Nothing should be said that would provide a pretext to the Soviet Union to pretend that there had been NATO interference.

3. He could agree to SACEUR's request for pre-delegated authority to take certain military measures after a possible Soviet intervention provided that the list was not considered exclusive and did not prevent NATO to take further measures. He could also accept the proposed arrangements for STANAVFORLANT and STANAVFORCHAN. No publicity should be given to these measures.

4. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that his Government was prepared to go along with the measures proposed by SACEUR. However he had some problems regarding the temporary suspension of STANAVFORLANT's dispersal.

5. The ITALIAN REPRESENTATIVE stated that his government was also prepared to accept SACEUR's proposal, provided it would be put into effect only if a Soviet intervention in Poland had occurred.

6. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE said that his Authorities would study the United States' contingency proposals for which he was grateful. They had also prepared an evaluation of possible steps to be taken. As for SACEUR's requests, they agreed to contribute to all measures concerning gathering, evaluation and distribution of intelligence information. They had some reservations on pre-delegation of authority to implement some of SACEUR's post-intervention measures, such as 4 and 5. His authorities also favoured requesting the deployment of AWACS aircraft in order to assist in intelligence collection, provided that it was not announced as a further measure or a new command. This measure could be taken under the disguise of an exercise, as proposed by SACEUR. As for STANAVFORLANT and STANAVFORCHAN, he did not see any advantage in delaying their dispersal.

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7. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE said that most of the remarks he had intended to make were in line with the United States' contingency proposals.

8. His authorities who had also formulated certain proposals held the view that as long as there was no certainty of a Soviet invasion in Poland, NATO countries should avoid any activity which could be used by Soviet propoganda and might be counter-productive in Western public opinion.

9. He agreed that multilateral and other declarations would be useful in emphazising that a Soviet invasion of Poland would cause grave damage to the whole process of detente and affect the CSCE process including the Madrid Conference. It would also affect negotiations on arms control, particularly those related to Europe. Positions to be taken by Allied countries should be based on preserving the solidarity and the unity of the Alliance and it was of paramount importance that every thing which would be said should also be implemented.

10. Turning to SACEUR's suggestions, which he felt were quite modest and well balanced, he could agree to them provided they would be taken as much as possible in a covert way and only after the event had taken place. It should be remembered that certain measures in later stages of the state of Military Vigilance would not lend themselves to covert implementation because of their nature. Also Measure (5) should not interfere with normal arrangements for alert and crisis management and its implementation would need a very strong military case, since the measure included the restrictive statement of "depending on the air threat situation".

11. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE pointed out that SACEUR's proposed measures should only be envisaged in relation with the need for responding to the increased state of readiness on the Warsaw Pact side. They represented a necessary military response rather than a political gesture. He would therefore wish to have the Military Committee's advice on and endorsement of SACEUR's recommendations. He would also welcome the Military Committee's intelligence assessment of the present situation.

12. The CHAIRMAN of the MILITARY COMMITTEE said that the situation did not seem to have changed fundamentally; but the capability of Warsaw Pact armed forces to intervene and to react had undoubtedly been increased. However there was no indication that they had any intention of attacking NATO, although their present state of readiness was of considerable concern to NMA's.

13. He went on to say that the Military Committee endorsed SACEUR's proposed measures. Its position on the present situation had been summarised in a report which he had circulated to Permanent Representatives (1). He wished to draw their attention

(1) MCM-EKD-84-80 dated 4th December, 1980

to the following paragraph:

"It is assumed that NATO as a defensive alliance would not intervene in the internal affairs of a WP nation or nations. In these circumstances the aims of NATO's response to any Soviet or collective WP threat or actual military action against Poland should be:

- (a) To demonstrate that NATO is aware of and concerned about such a situation.
- (b) To improve NATO readiness in response to any increase in WP capability for military action against the Alliance.
- (c) To prevent the Soviet leadership assuming that NATO would be content to tolerate a position of military disadvantage as a consequence of a Soviet build-up on some future occasion - ostensibly for the purpose of coercing a satellite state."

14. In summary he felt that the Soviet forces had a significant and improved capability for invading Poland. If this capability was only directed at Poland, the security of the West might be considered to have been strengthened since a number of Warsaw Pact's divisions would be stuck in Poland. However, these forces could also be posed as a threat to NATO if they intended to do so.

15. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE said that the Military Committee's report would be of great help and that such reports constituted the formal basis on which decisions could be taken by the Council/DPC. His Authorities could agree to pre-delegate authority to SACEUR for measures (1), (2) and (3). As regards measure (4), pre-delegated authority was agreed on the understanding that NATO Commanders would be instructed not to take any overt measures such as recall of personnel on leave. At this stage his authorities were not prepared to authorise any overt action. Measure (5) was also acceptable, provided that it was implemented in the spirit and not the letter of the measure, since the doubling of air defence aircraft and SAM missiles would not be possible in every case.

16. As for STANAVFORLANT, his Authorities were of the opinion that the force should be immediately dispersed to European home ports but kept in a high state of readiness.

17. The NETHERLANDS REPRESENTATIVE supported the United Kingdom Representative's statement on overt action and stated that even though they had pre-delegated authority to SACEUR, his Authorities would wish to be consulted on measures to be taken at every stage.

18. The CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE said that he had a slight reservation on the language used in Paragraph 14(e) of Enclosure 1 to MCM-EXD-84-80 where the requesting of AWACS aircraft was left to the judgement of SACEUR. He believed that it should be subject to Council's decision. He made a plea for a final decision on the question of STANAVFORLANT. SACLANT had pointed out that the presence of Canadian and American ships in Portsmouth would not be a covert action. Furthermore he felt that the question of how to use the Force should be discussed in the Military Committee.

19. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the main mission of the Force was surveillance. He also did not believe that the entry into Portsmouth harbour of ships from STANAVFORLANT would constitute a highly noticeable event.

20. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE expressed the view that if the force was kept in being, the leaves of the crew would have to be cancelled, which would be an overt action and his Authorities were against any overt measures at the present time.

21. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE said that he could accept the pre-delegated authority that SACEUR had asked for. The earlier decision taken on STANAVFORLANT was also acceptable to his Authorities but a further mission would have to be designed for the force. He felt that the United States Contingency paper would have to be studied carefully. He agreed that the military situation should be watched constantly and he was prepared to pass any information which could be collected in Denmark. In his view, the assessment of the political situation after the Plenum of the Central Committee was most important. He thought that even if Kania had succeeded in keeping a middle course, Kremlin had lost some of its supporters in the process and Moscow might not take kindly to this situation. Furthermore, the reactions of the more rigid elements in the Polish Communist Party were still to be feared. It was also reported by Copenhagen radio that the Soviet Union had decided to give substantial economic aid to Poland, which indicated encouragement on the part of Kremlin to the Polish leadership.

22. Le REPRESENTANT DE LA BELGIQUE fait savoir que son gouvernement accepte les cinq propositions de SACEUR. Le déploiement avions AWACS et le maintien de STANAVFORLANT seraient acceptables à condition que les autorités militaires de l'OTAN jugent ces mesures nécessaires du point de vue militaire. Sur le plan politique, il voudrait avoir l'opinion de ses collègues sur le voyage que le Ministre des Affaires Etrangères M. Nothomb est sur le point d'entreprendre à Varsovie. Ce voyage est-il opportun dans les circonstances présentes ?

Le PRESIDENT fait observer que dans la mesure où la présence en Pologne d'un ministre occidental ne peut qu'embarrasser le Parti et l'Union Soviétique, cette visite est très opportune.

23. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE agreed that a political assessment of the situation was of great importance. His authorities were of the opinion that after the Polish Communist Party's Central Committee meeting, the Soviet Union would continue to seek a political solution and would avoid a military intervention, even if its armed forces were ready to intervene. They also believed that a decision to intervene was not yet taken by the Soviets. However it was not excluded that in order to put more pressure of the Poles, the Soviet divisions in Poland might be reinforced under the guides of an exercise. Should the situation in Poland deteriorate, the Soviets would probably seek to have Polish forces intervene initially and go into Poland in the following phase. Therefore Allied Countries should continue their warnings to the Soviet Union, if possible in a coordinated way.

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24. After a Soviet military intervention immediate protests should be made. The United Nations should be seized of the problem and consultations should take place within the Alliance, possibly at ministerial level, in order to decide on political and military actions. He could not commit his authorities as regards the way to handle CSCE and Arms Control negotiations. Decisions would have to be taken at the time in the light of circumstances. On the economic side, drastic measures should be taken and the economic cooperation should be reduced.

25. Turning to an evaluation of the military situation in the event of an intervention, he expressed the view that initially it would neither be directed at nor lead to an increased danger for the Alliance, even if complications might occur such as flow of refugees and difficulties on access routes to Berlin.

26. He felt that the recent reinforcements of the Warsaw Pact's armed forces in Europe should be constantly assessed and SACEUR's measures reconsidered if necessary. As for SACEUR's requests for pre-delegated authority ; his Authorities could accept Measures (1), (2) and (3) but would reserve their position on measures (4) and (5). In this connection it had to be remembered that military measures on the part of the Alliance would not deter the Soviets from invading Poland and that only political gestures could have effect. Furthermore, in the event of the implementation of SACEUR's measures, there should be clear command instructions and implementation should be uniform.

27. Le REPRESENTANT DU LUXEMBOURG déclare que son gouvernement se ralliera à toute mesure qui serait acceptable pour ses alliés. Il lui soumettra les propositions diffusées par le Représentant des Etats-Unis, afin qu'il les étudie.

27 bis. The CANADIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that he had not yet received instructions from his authorities on SACEUR's requests. They had asked for additional explanation on the rationale of the proposed measures. The Military Committee's report would be very useful in this respect. He was grateful to the United States for their contingency proposals which would be of great help in focussing on what should be the next step. He supported the Danish Representative's remarks on the importance of the political assessment. According to the Canadian Embassy in Moscow, the Soviet leaders, even if the international circumstances and opinion were unfavourable to them, would not be deterred from taking action in Poland when what they perceived as their limit of tolerance had been reached.

28. The TURKISH REPRESENTATIVE could only give a preliminary reaction. His position was the same as Luxembourg. Turkey could accept those measures acceptable to other members of the Alliance. He was of the opinion that no military measure would prevent an invasion of Poland and that only political signals, possibly supported by some military measures of heightened vigilance could be effective.

29. Le REPRESENTANT DE LA FRANCE déclare qu'il a accueilli avec intérêt et satisfaction les propositions des États-Unis ; la liste des mesures qu'il contient sera une excellente base de discussion pour les Ministres.

30. In conclusion, the CHAIRMAN noted that a near consensus had been reached on SACEUR's proposals. He would inform SACEUR that measures (1), (2) and (3) were generally accepted. He expressed the hope that a consensus could be reached quickly on measures (4) and (5).

(P.M. MEETING)

31. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE at whose request the meeting was convened, said that his Defence Minister was extremely concerned about the decision taken on 2nd December temporarily to suspend the dispersal of STANAVFORLANT. He was of the opinion that any further postponement of the dispersal would soon become an overt matter, therefore he was not prepared to consider any further suspension and wished the dispersal to go ahead.

32. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE said that he had an identical position for the same reasons.

33. The DANISH REPRESENTATIVE stated that he had received no guidelines from his Authorities but that he could see some justification in the United Kingdom's position, since a clear further mission was not determined for STANAVFORLANT.

34. The NORWEGIAN REPRESENTATIVE asked the views of the NATO Military Authorities on how long it would take to reassemble the force after dispersal. The CHAIRMAN of the MILITARY COMMITTEE replied that the ships would probably go to routine maintenance and would have to reorganise in order to be able to go to sea again. Christmas leave would also cause further disorganisation. If the Canadian and American ships returned to their home ports, they could not be replaced until January. He went on to say that asked for advice, the Military Committee had stressed the need to have the ships available for surveillance purposes.

35. The UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE pointed out that the temporary suspension had been decided by consensus and that a consensus was needed to reverse this decision. Since the ships were not gathered in a single port, he did not feel that maintaining STANAVFORLANT would be spectacular, whereas the dispersal would be interpreted as a permissive signal by the Soviets. He asked whether the Military Committee was of the opinion that the surveillance should be maintained.

36. The CHAIRMAN OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE replied that he would rather say that the surveillance capability should be maintained.

37. The UNITED KINGDOM REPRESENTATIVE recalled that the temporary suspension had been agreed only for a short period up to the 10th December. In view of the arguments expressed he was prepared to stand by this commitment it being understood that the force would be dispersed on that date unless a unanimous decision to the contrary was reached. As foreseen, the American and Canadian ships might proceed to Portsmouth. If necessary, the matter could be discussed at the Ministerial Session of the Defence Planning Committee.