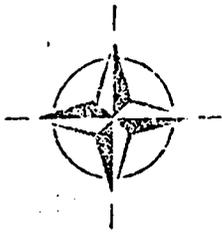


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ORGANISATION DU TRAITE DE L'ATLANTIQUE NORD

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

N A T O S E C R E T

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To : Secretary General
cc : Deputy Secretary General
ASG for Political Affairs
ASG for Defence Planning & Policy

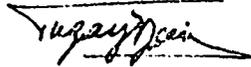
From: Executive Secretary

Summary Record of a Restricted Meeting of the
Defence Planning Committee in Ministerial Session
on 9th and 10th December, 1980

[REDACTED]

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III. THE SITUATION IN POLAND.


T. ÖZÇERİ

This document contains: 25 pages

N A T O S E C R E T

ATTENDANCE : Restricted

AGENDA : Yes

MEETING PLACE : Conference Room 1

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III. THE SITUATION IN POLAND

87. Mr. BROWN said that United States concern at the events in Poland had been intensified by the fact that there was little that could be done in concrete terms, and nothing which could be done militarily, to affect the outcome of the present troubled situation. Yet, there were certain measures which could be taken to influence the Soviets in their decision on whether or not to intervene.

88. The situation in and around Poland continued to become increasingly tense. The possibility of a Soviet intervention continued to loom large, although he did not assume that an intervention was inevitable, in spite of increasingly ominous indications. Moreover, it was because a decision on intervention might not yet have been taken, that the Allies must do all within their power to induce the Soviets to caution and the Poles to restraint.

89. He went on to say that United States intelligence sources reported that the Soviets and their close Allies had taken all necessary precautions to enable a rapid and massive move into Poland, once the political decision was taken. There had been a coordinated effort between the forces of the Warsaw Pact, which were currently at a high state of readiness and mobilization. A sophisticated command and control system to support a large military operation had already been installed, and major units had been deployed out of garrison near the Polish border of Czechoslovakia and in the western military districts of the Soviet Union. The Warsaw Pact forces were able to move at very short notice with all 31 divisions. Intelligence experts estimated that the west would probably still get 24 to 48 hours warning of an actual move. He surmised that the pretext for such an intervention would be alleged anti-Soviet activities in Poland. He had received some indications that the decision to intervene had already been taken, but he did not consider them to be conclusive. However, there were also indications of an imminent major exercise which would provide an excellent springboard for a Soviet occupation.

90. It was believed in certain quarters that such an action would be preceeded by a massive crack-down by the Polish security forces. In any event, the excuse given would be the maintenance of peace and order, and the blame for the whole problem would be apportioned to the West.

91. He believed that there was an obligation upon Ministers to inform the public and world opinion generally of Soviet intentions. Silence at this stage on the part of the Allies could be of benefit only to the Soviet Union.

92. Moreover, if the Soviets were proposing to move into Poland on an ambiguous pretext, it would be to their advantage to maintain a veil of secrecy over their plans and capabilities. Any publicity which the Allies could give to Soviet intentions would, he believed, make it more difficult for them to intervene and might well delay or deter a Soviet decision to move.

93. In the case of a Soviet invasion of Poland, he expected that there would be resistance by a considerable number of Poles and that a bloody conflict would ensue. However, the Soviets had penetrated the Polish General Staff, and he did not believe that any organised resistance within the military establishment would last very long. In any event, a Soviet move would clearly have negative consequences for East-West relations and uncertain effects on Western security.

94. If there were little or no resistance in Poland, the highly mobilized state of the Polish forces would clearly enhance their strategic position vis-a-vis the West.

95. He went on to say that if the Allies failed to speak with one voice in stressing to the Kremlin the impact of such a move, NATO would also appear divided when a conflict did arise. It should be borne in mind that the effect of such an intervention on the defence posture of the West was nil. In the case of the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia, the Soviets had perhaps nurtured legitimate concerns about possible military reactions of the West because both of those countries had Western neighbours. This was not the case with Poland. However, a response of increased readiness on the part of NATO did appear to make sense, if implemented with caution.

96. In this connection he wished to refute the suggestion that a Soviet move against Poland was justified in view of the latter's membership of the Warsaw Pact. Such a hypothesis would imply a severe abdication of national responsibilities. Indeed, the application of similar criteria to the members of the Atlantic Alliance would be clearly unacceptable. Similarly, any "invitation" to the Soviet Union to intervene in Poland would be equally unjustifiable.

97. He did not regard Poland and the threatened Soviet intervention as "an internal matter". While he recognised that it was not directly an Alliance issue, he would point out that Poland, was not yet one of the Soviet republics. Consequently, there was a need for the Alliance to respond in a variety of ways, including a review of the defence posture which went beyond the improvements already agreed. Among those measures which the Allies might consider in retaliation were:

- a review of economic relations with the Soviet Union, and a possible tightening and extension of economic sanctions already applied in the wake of Afghanistan;
- a review and possible suspension of arms control negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union with the possible exception of SALT and LRINF;
- condemnation of the Soviet Union in the CSCE for its violation of the Helsinki Final Act, and possible withdrawal of Western participants from the Conference;

- the implementation of military measures with lasting impact on the Allied defence posture, including TNF modernization and full participation in the commitment to increase national defence budgets by 3% in real terms;
- increased readiness of the type which Minister had discussed earlier.

98. The vital concern of the Allies should be to avoid a display of disunity and weakness in the West, should the Soviets intervene. Consequently, he believed that Ministers should communicate to their publics and to their parliaments their grave concern, and prepare the way for a concerted Allied reaction to a Soviet invasion of Poland, in the unhappy event of it materialising.

99. Mr. PYM wished to support Mr. Brown with regard to the proposal that world public opinion should be kept fully informed of the situation. Only the Soviet Union, he said, gained from silence. It was certainly correct that reaction to a Soviet threat must be coordinated and unified by NATO. In the event of an invasion of Poland, NATO would need to consider further measures and would need to be ready to act quickly. Therefore, it had to have a clear idea of its purpose and not purely adopt postures or activism. He said that the public would be expecting a strong reaction such as the suspension of conferences and of arms control negotiations. NATO would need to make sure that its policy was correctly presented to the public.

100. Mr. BAYULKEN said that it was natural that NATO should react in the event of a Soviet invasion of Poland. Poland could not be considered as a Soviet satellite as far as its internal affairs were concerned. Poland was a fully-fledged member of the United Nations.

101. Mr. DE GEUS said that talking about military measures would be premature at this stage. It would be better to wait and see what happened before making any decisions.

102. Mr. LAGORIO said that his government had had the opportunity to discuss the situation in Poland. His government's conclusions would be forwarded to NATO within the next few days. He felt however that the meeting of the Foreign Ministers in the North Atlantic Council would be the best forum to discuss the Polish situation further. The Defence Ministers had done their job which was to establish a precautionary series of measures. These measures were adequate to cope with the present situation. An invasion of Poland would change the relations between West and East Europe irrevocably in the political economic field. The response of NATO should be unified and more forceful than had been the case with Afghanistan. The Soviet Union should be fully aware of the price it would need to pay for an operation against Poland.

103. The GERMAN REPRESENTATIVE agreed that the Foreign Ministers were in a better position to formulate messages of warning to the Soviet Union. However, NATO would need to be careful not to intervene and to abide by the Helsinki principles because of the propaganda consequences of any infringement. He recalled that the Heads of State of the European Economic Community had issued severe warnings to Moscow. He was fully aware of the need for precautionary measures which would manifest NATO's willingness to react in the event of a Soviet intervention.

104. Mr. STOLTENBERG agreed that NATO should not give the Soviet Union the benefit of its silence. It would need to reiterate its agreement and emphasise its ability to execute any measures that it found appropriate.

105. Norway had left the Soviet Ambassador to Oslo in no doubt regarding the Norwegian position on this subject. He believed it would be useful to include a reference to Poland in the final Communiqué.

106. The BELGIAN REPRESENTATIVE supported what had been said so far. On the respective role of Foreign and Defence Ministers. The former should have the responsibility to convey NATO's position. Any duplication in this regard would be detrimental to the Alliance's credibility.

107. The CHAIRMAN noted that there was a large measure of agreement in the Defence Planning Committee with Mr. Brown's assessment of the present situation in and around Poland.