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INTERNATIONAL SECURITY POLICY

ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20301

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DEC 21 1981

18 December 1981

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Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: MAY 25 2018

MEMORANDUM FOR THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

Saturday's NSC meeting on Poland offers an opportunity to press for some concrete action with respect to the Soviet Union that (1) we ought to take anyway and (2) will underline our concern at the events now taking place in Poland.

In a sense we now suffer the worst of both worlds: the Soviets are achieving their purpose in Poland -- crushing Solidarity -- through the use of Polish security forces without incurring the political costs that direct Soviet armed intervention would entail. I believe that we inadvertently helped to create a sense that our Polish concern of the last year has had to do only with a Soviet invasion and not with action, even quite severe action, undertaken by the Poles themselves. (The flaccid phrase "the Poles must be free to decide their own future," which was the most we could elicit from our allies, contained not a glimmer of the abhorrence with which we would view the brutal measures now being carried out.)

The fact is that the Soviets are deeply involved in the repression now going on in Poland. General Kulikov was involved in the planning; he remained in Warsaw until yesterday (when he is believed to have returned to Moscow for consultations). His staff is still coordinating action with the Polish authorities. The evidence is considerable that the Soviets insisted on the martial law and have demanded that Solidarity be destroyed.

Our central strategy should be to focus on the Soviet hand in this matter. Action by us that frustrates Jaruzelski's otherwise rapid containment of the situation and stresses Soviet involvement in what is taking place is in our interest.

It ought to be a central purpose of our policy to shift responsibility for what is now going on to the Soviets. The best way to accomplish this is to take action with respect to the Soviets that will underline the President's remarks on Thursday. It's no use talking about the Soviets, and their involvement in the Policy repression, while taking only marginal action against Poland alone. Our response to Poland will be an important test

OSD 3.3(b)(1)(6) + FOIA 5 USC § 552 (b)(3); 10 USC § 4924
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Reviewed by: [signature] 01 DEC 1987

Controlled by: [signature]
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of the Administration: a standard of action against which will be measures the rhetoric of our policies. If our response is faint-hearted we will elicit sharp criticism in congress and the press.

We ought to focus on measures that we can take unilaterally at once as well as those that can only be accomplished with the cooperation of our allies later. It's all very well to seek allied measures -- but while we try events may well pass us by leaving us with a record of inaction.

We ought to avoid action now that we will feel bound to reverse later (such as suspending the INF talks). Later may well be a long way off (if Solidarity is able to reconstitute itself), and the Solidarity leadership may well have been permanently imprisoned (or killed) -- which would turn our resumption to "normal" into a desultory betrayal.

Whatever else we may do, we ought to try to persuade the President to (1) cancel the Caterpillar and International Harvester licenses (both are being held up at the moment because of Poland) and (2) place oil and gas technology under international security controls. These actions can be accomplished with a stroke of the President's pen -- without consultation with allies, without delay. And they would not be subject to reversal later. I am confident we could prevail on the Japanese not to step in the aftermath of our cancelling these deals: it would be an act too unaccommodating even for the Japanese mercantilists.

Finally, the issue of whether to declare Polish indebtedness to the US in default will arise. The threat to do so is a potential source of great leverage with our allies (the Germans in particular) since such a declaration by us would force them to follow suit -- and they (unlike us) are substantial creditors of the Poles. If we are to forebear it ought to be on the condition that the allies join us in some stern measures (one of which should be greatly strengthened export controls through COCOM). In no case, however, should we lend additional funds to the Poles as they are now requesting.

In the attached memorandum, prepared for Wednesday's NSC, there are a couple of additional points I will not repeat here.

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Talking Points

1. We must overcome the notion that it is only Soviet direct armed intervention that concerns us.
2. The Soviets are deeply involved in the events of Poland; in the absence of Soviet pressure and assistance we believe that Solidarity and the Government might have reached a peaceful accommodation.
3. We should take measured, direct action aimed at the Soviets to underline their involvement and to indicate the seriousness with which we view the violence against some brave Poles.
4. We have available three related actions that would accomplish our purpose (although more might have to be considered if the level of violence increases or if the Soviets intervene with armed forces). A Presidential signature is all that is required and all three are things we ought to do in any case:
 - a. Cancel the Caterpillar license,
 - b. Cancel the International Harvester license,
 - c. Place all oil and gas equipment and technology under national security controls.

DECLASSIFIED IN FULL
Authority: EO 13526
Chief, Records & Declass Div, WHS
Date: MAY 25 2018

Office of the Secretary of Defense
Chief, RDD, ESD, WHIS
Date: 25 MAY 2018 Authority: EO 13526 + 5 USC § 552
Declassify: _____ Deny in Full: _____
Declassify in Part: X
Reason: 3.3(b)(1)(6) + 5 U.S.C. § 552(b)(3);
MDR: 18 -M- 0455 10 U.S.C. § 424

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