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NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL MEETING

DATE, TIME December 22, 1981, 2:30 p.m.,
AND PLACE: The Cabinet Room

SUBJECT: Poland

PARTICIPANTS:

The President

The Vice President

State

Secretary Alexander M. Haig, Jr.
Deputy Secretary William P. Clark
Under Secretary Walter J. Stoessel

Treasury

Secretary Donald T. Regan

Defense

Secretary Caspar W. Weinberger
Deputy Secretary Frank C. Carlucci

Agriculture

Secretary John R. Block

Commerce

Secretary Malcolm H. Baldrige

OMB

Mr. William Schneider, Jr.

CIA

Mr. William J. Casey

USUN

Ambassador Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

USTR

Ambassador William E. Brock

JCS

Admiral Thomas B. Hayward
Lt General Paul F. Gorman

White House

Mr. Edwin Meese III
Mr. James A. Baker III
Mr. Michael K. Deaver
Admiral James W. Nance
Admiral John H. Poindexter

NSC

Dr. Norman A. Bailey
Dr. Allen J. Lenz
Dr. Richard E. Pipes

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The President. They tell me that cars in California are already displaying "Solidarity" stickers.

The President then departed for 15 minutes.

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Review December 22, 1987

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Nance. Mr. President, with your permission, I will run down quickly a list of decisions made at our previous meeting.

The President. All right.

Nance. Briefly reviewed the discussions in the meeting that day between President Reagan and Ambassador Spasowski of Poland. (The exchange is recorded in some detail in file #8107302.)

Casey. I haven't much new to report today. The Soviet plan seems to be working. There are reports of pockets of resistance. The rest of the country is acquiescing. In the coal mines -- in some factories. We have a report that many Soviet KGB officers are involved in the operation.

Nance. Secretary Haig, will you explain events and the options facing us?

Haig. Yesterday I said we would need to discuss why the church has softened its line. We now have a report from Ambassador Meehan on his conversations with Archbishop Glemp. The church is under pressure from the government. Government representatives told the church last week that the message scheduled to be read last Sunday was too tough. When bloodshed began, the Archbishop felt it necessary to go for moderation.

Walesa is alive and apparently vigorous. But he does not want to negotiate with a Soviet agent (Jaruzelski). Walesa is a card for playing in the future. He is a protege of Cardinal Wyszynski. They don't dare kill him at this time.

We have no indication from the authorities of a willingness to negotiate either with Solidarity or the church.

The Army's role is still fairly subdued. They are using special security forces.

We have a Swedish report that the Soviets and the Czechs intend to intervene on December 26, but no verification of it.

The strikes continue in the Silesian coal fields. Thirteen thousand coal miners are holed up in a coal mine. The government apparently intends to starve them out.

The Western bankers in Zurich this morning took a hard line. They refused the Polish request to loan \$350 million to the Poles for interest payments and they also refused to begin discussion of rescheduling of Poland's 1982 debt payments.

I had a call last night from Irv Brown of the AFL/CIO. He feels that resistance in Poland is strong and will be growing. He says "Don't be influenced by the banks" (don't bail out the Poles). European bankers believe that they will be compensated either from the foreign hard currency accounts in Poland or by the USSR.

The Brandt statement of yesterday on behalf of Socialist International was a disaster. A rebuttal press statement is being formulated.

The Brezhnev interview with Marvin Kalb skirted Poland, but it was held on December 4, prior to recent events, so it is of little significance to this issue.

Larry Eagleburger called me twice this morning. He reports the Italians are vigorous, staunch and supportive of actions to be taken. Colombo is good!

But in Bonn, Genscher is opposed to initiatives now, since the Soviets have not intervened. He agreed to discuss economic sanctions, however, and to consider imposing them before they (the Soviets) intervene.

There is vigor lacking, however.

Hormats, in his discussions, sees a spectre of softness and opposition to action at this time. The reactions range from the Brits to the French (most vigorous), with the Germans softest.

These papers (referring to the handout provided for the meeting) that we have put together present steps that we can consider and provide pros and cons of each step and some assessment.

The first paper outlines actions that can be taken against Poland.

The second paper lists measures against the Soviets.

One of the themes throughout the assessment, Mr. President -- and all those that we have discussed are included in the paper -- is a strong emphasis on the Soviet steps on Allied unity. As of today, on economic sanctions -- and on some political actions -- Europe would break with us.

The President. Well, Al, it seems to me on this we make up our minds on what is right to do. We say to the Soviets tomorrow, right, we will proceed with actions, without spelling them out -- actions that will isolate them politically and economically. We reduce political contact; we do all we can to persuade our Allies to come along, unless and until martial rule is ended in Poland and they return to an antebellum state. We have to deal with our own labor movement. They are shutting off shipments to Poland, though church shipments are still going.

Haig. Yes they are still going. Last shipment was one week ago.

The President. I don't know whether Red Cross aid is going or not.

The Vice President. Cardinal Krol mentioned they were getting receipts for the food deliveries.

The President. For that handled via their own distribution?

Haig. Another thing I would like to call to your attention, Mr. President. It is vitally important that whatever we do, we do officially to Brezhnev and Jaruzelski so that they are on notice. They should be offered an alternative. We should include a deadline by which we expect a response. Now, if we want to get out a list of actions we are taking tomorrow night before we have a response to our threats, we risk losing the Europeans before we even get started.

You can lay out the human rights considerations tomorrow night. That keeps us flexible. Keeps our options open with no public threats.

You can highlight that you hold the Soviets responsible, but it is too soon for threats unless you want to break with our Allies.

The President. The thing that bothers me -- the constant question is -- that we continue to deplore, but isn't there anything we can do in practice? Those "chicken littles" in Europe, will they still be "chicken littles" if we lead and ask them to follow our lead?

Haig. The answer, Mr. President is "yes and no." They are not the most courageous people (European leaders), but they have more at stake than we do. They are closer to Poland than we are.

The President. I know.

Haig. We ought to be careful (with our demands) until we decide we want a break with them over this matter (if that is what it comes to).

The President. If they (the Polish government) don't cancel martial law, can we yet do these things?

Haig. We will be in for a long, torturous period with the continuation of martial law and negotiations (between Solidarity and the Polish Government) going on. It is difficult for us to kick over the traces now -- to go all out -- and then to be accused of triggering what will probably happen anyway (a Soviet intervention into Poland).

Weinberger. Concerning our Allies and the stakes we have in this matter, we have over half a million people in Europe. It is comfortable for the Europeans to do nothing. If you take the lead and give a strong speech, they will be in an uncomfortable (moral) position and they may be dragged along with our actions.

We should be taking stronger action than just wringing our hands. That (wringing our hands) is what the Soviets want. They (the Polish government) can begin meaningless negotiations with Solidarity that will please Europe. We should have a list of nine things we can do. Each is, in itself, a pin prick, but they cause anguish and pain. They evidence our seriousness. They influence public and industrial labor movements. It is morally right to take a stand -- a position of leadership.

It is easy to delay, to do nothing. If we delay, we will allow them to crush the movement in Poland. We won't push them (the Soviets) into intervening in Poland. (They will do it if it suits their needs.) As Ambassador Spasowski has said, they will march in for their own reasons, not because of what we do.

I hope your speech is along the lines of your statement yesterday.

Haig. We agreed on a tough speech, but not on measures. We are not debating whether to do tough things -- the timing is the issue.

Weinberger. The longer we wait, the more the situation solidifies. Tomorrow night you should mention measures, not handwringing. These papers are an eloquent plea for doing nothing. We should be considerably bolder. There is a difference here between our recommendations.

The President. Ambassador Spasowski, in his talk with me this morning, asked that I make a call for a lighted candle in every window on Christmas night.

Haig. That's not the kind of act that Secretary Weinberger is saying we should take.

Meese. It seems to me the candle is important, but we need something else. The things on the list, as far as Poland, are the very minimum that we can do. We should debate about what we want to put the heat on the Soviets.

Kirkpatrick. In thinking about dealing with our Allies and if we take significant actions they will break with us as Al says. I would like to remind you that they do that frequently. Five of them went against us on a Mexican resolution on El Salvador, counter to our interests. The French Foreign Minister lead the effort. All except Britain went along. Britain abstained. On the Abu Ein issue France abstained. They break with us frequently. They don't worry that much about breaking with us.

Haig. I recommend we stop philosophizing and go down the list one by one.

First, Poland -- what is the speech to cover?

Then the USSR -- what actions now? what later?

Roman I is actions already approved. We are suspending consideration of the \$740 million Polish request for grain. You could state that in your message.

Weinberger. We should emphasize there was no assurance that such assistance would go to the people.

The President. We could say we'll go ahead in food if allowed to monitor that it goes to the people.

Haig. The next item is the pipeline. I(c) is the letter to Jaruzelski, you already read it. I(d) is already done, but this should not be raised in the speech.

The President. All of that is included in the item about food.

Haig. You have sent a letter to Jaruzelski.

Weinberger. What is its general theme?

(A detailed discussion of the letters to Jaruzelski and Brezhnev followed.)

Haig. You can say in your message that you have sent a letter to Jaruzelski.

The President. (Reads to himself the draft of the letter to Jaruzelski.) This seems to have the right tone.

Haig. (Continuing down the list of actions against Poland). We have suspended ExIm credits.

Regan. That is not significant enough to put in your speech.

Meese. We should say we are suspending all financial aid.

Baker. I suggest we go through the list. Decide what you want to do on each item.

Haig. Mr. President, we decided yesterday we should not invoke the exceptional circumstances clause. The unions might disagree with us on this one.

The President. Will it affect the people?

Haig. This one will affect the banks. They took a strong position this morning in not backing off (on lending more money to the Poles to pay interest on their debt.)

The President. (Continuing down the list.) We can withhold fishing rights, suspend consideration of IMF for Poland, and suspend their aviation rights in the U.S.

Regan. I want to add a footnote on the item in the paper concerning the IMF. The paper is somewhat incorrect. The U.S. does not have an effective veto. We have only 20 percent of the total votes.

Weinberger. But if we don't try, we are giving them hard currency.

The President. Then we can oppose consideration by the IMF of Poland's application.

The acts on Poland. At that point (in the speech after listing actions against Poland) we say who is responsible -- the USSR and Brezhnev. Now we go down and see what we have here (actions against the USSR).

I like the line "seek to isolate the USSR economically." That may take a lot away from them.

And I would think -- that Marshall Plan thing -- then to say, if this is done, we will cooperate. This should come near the end.

I oppose withdrawing from the INF negotiations. That would help them (the Soviets). We are trying in INF negotiations to get them to give up missiles.

I am looking down the list here. I think to consider Helsinki null and void would hit them hard.

Haig. Europe will go bonkers if we do that.

The President. Why pretend we have an agreement if they violate it constantly?

Haig. You should warn the Soviets if you are going to do this. You will get their attention if you do so.

Casey. We cannot terminate right away . . .

Block. I think Al's actions are pretty well thought out. Our Allies may not come along with us, but they are closer to Poland. But I believe they may well come along if we consult with them.

Deaver. I suggest we go from the top of the page down.

Haig. That's what I want to do.

The UN Resolution. We have talked about it. It would get us a kick in the teeth.

Kirkpatrick. We must bear in mind that on January 1, the Soviet Union assumes the Presidency of the Security Council. It is a very unfortunate change. It will be more difficult for us to do anything. Also, Poland becomes a member of the Security Council on January 1.

Haig. I recommend we hold up on this until we look at the rest of the list.

Kirkpatrick. I recommend that if we are going to do it, we do so before December 31.

Weinberger. Isn't there an advantage in doing it -- in taking a strong moral position?

Kirkpatrick. There is a good chance the resolution would not do very well, but there is something to be said for doing it anyway.

Haig. I suggest we look at the other items first.

The most important thing, Mr. President, is what actions you take with China.

The President. But we can't do it in a speech.

Haig. No, but we are talking with the Chinese. We might encourage possible Chinese pressure on Vietnam or Laos, for example. It is important for the Soviets to know -- if the Chinese are receptive -- that we are working with the Chinese. It will drive the Soviets out of their gourds!

Weinberger. The price of doing that is Taiwan. There should be nothing in the speech about this.

Haig. Number three is the tough economic issues, including a total economic embargo.

Weinberger. But we don't have to do it all. We can cut the exports of oil and gas equipment; cut their maritime access; there are two licenses, Caterpillar and International Harvester, that can be revoked; we can refuse to engage in long-term grain agreement discussions. We can do much, short of a total embargo.

The President. I could go -- in the sense of what we are telling the Soviets, not in the speech -- with the idea that the total embargo is the price of intervention. They have already intervened. Let them guess what we are doing next.

Brock. Before we leave item C, if we start down this road -- even cautiously -- we will not hurt the Soviets much unless our Allies join us. My concern is how we posture on this.

The President. I know, but if we really believe this is the last chance of a lifetime, that this is a revolution started against this "damned force," we should let our Allies know they, too, will pay a price if they don't go along; that we have long memories.

Haig. I thought we agreed yesterday we should take strong actions, sweeping ones, not incremental. I thought you approved that yesterday. Did I misread the consensus? My problem is the timing in a speech tomorrow will bring the spectre of the terror of WW III on Christmas Eve.

Weinberger. But when is the right time to warn of WW III?

Haig. You've gone incremental. I don't think we want to list (for example) the pipelayers in the speech.

The President. I'm not talking of the speech, but what we will do. Some of those items I will raise in the speech.

For example, we will deliver food provided it reaches the people. We will suspend ExIm insurance. We will suspend IMF. We will suspend their fishing rights. Then we can move on to the Soviets as being really responsible, then say what we are willing to do.

What can we put in a speech to mention Helsinki? O.K., maybe not in a speech. Maybe we call on our Allies to review the Helsinki agreement.

The Vice President. The speech is important, but we should allow diplomacy to work, but I don't like sending a letter to Brezhnev and Jaruzelski and reading it in the paper. I think we should do three things: First, set the paper's moral tone. Second, tell Jaruzelski what steps we are taking. Third, communicate to Brezhnev we concur. This is not a weak position. It is a responsible position. We should give them a chance to work their way out if they want to. You should get your speech out soon. Set the tone, say what you have done, but stop short of details. If they don't respond, you can act.

The President. We can tell the people we have outlined specifics and that unless and until . . .

The Vice President. Or you can say you have made a series of representations. Not detailing them is the way to do it.

Haig. I agree. Another thing to think about. This letter will likely get public and private rebuttals. We will be accused of intervening in the situation. You may then proceed rapidly.

The President. It's like the Air Force Plan that was formulated for use in Vietnam. The Air Force had 63 aerial targets, which they wanted to eliminate one by one. But they wouldn't let them do it. It would probably have saved 50,000 lives if we had done it.

If he (Brezhnev) answers with that crud about (our) intervening in Poland's internal affairs -- bang, bang, we'll take steps. First, their trade reps on the way home; then how many of those are needed before he gets the point?

Haig. I believe that will be the outcome. Depending on whether we use an incremental or a full court press -- there will be a kickback from Europe. The British and the French will be with us. We may be able to isolate the Germans.

The President. What do you mean, full court press?

Haig. In the letter, there should be no specifics.

The President. Both in the speech and in the other, I like to term it -- it could lead to the economic and political isolation of the USSR.

Haig. From the U.S.!

Weinberger. The letters should be mailed before the speech. We would be willing to submit a draft.

Nance. We have two drafts of the speech, Mr. President. We can put these options on a list. You can check off which you want to adopt.

Weinberger. The question now is how and what we should put in the letter.

Haig. Then we have political options. We can reduce political contacts.

Meese. We could detail categorically.

Haig. No, I wouldn't even do that. We could use the phrase, "would have a profound effect."

Baldrige. That would be enough. That preserves our flexibility.

Weinberger. We have to say more than "profound effect."

Haig. You mean like "you can't have the pipelayers?"

Weinberger. We must be more specific.

Baldrige. We are talking on the whole range of economic and political measures.

Weinberger. At this point we need drafts. We need something more specific to focus on.

Nance. Mr. President, we will provide you drafts and check lists of the various actions that can be taken.

The President. What is the speech time?

Answer. 9:00 p.m.

Block. Let's remember, we are trying to achieve a rollback for the Polish people. We don't want Soviet tanks coming in and blood to flow.

Deaver We need a summary on what we have decided.

Meese. We will take all the sanctions on this sheet except the Papal visit.

The letter to Brezhnev will indicate that specific steps will be taken unless he responds to our concerns.

Let me summarize what has been decided:

- o The speech tomorrow night will indicate that letters have been sent to Brezhnev and Jaruzelski.
- o It will list specific steps to be taken against the Polish government.
- o If there is no Soviet response, we will select actions from a list without deciding which actions now.

The President. The letter must be definite enough without details. The speech must be definite enough to erase the press accusations that we are doing nothing but talking.

Meese. What about the UN?

Haig. I am not opposed to that option. But I believe it will backfire on us.

Meese. Mr. President, this organization bleeds frequently on the human rights issue. Should we not go to them?

Haig. If we do, you should put in it in your speech (that you are doing so.)

Deaver. Some time tomorrow we should have a redraft of the speech.

Haig. We are not making a determination on anti-Soviet measures.

Baker. Again, concerning what we have decided, we are going to do paragraph (d)?

The President. All of those things that if the Soviets do not reply, which of these do we start goosing them with?

The Vice President. Concerning the UN, the Soviets will ask for some proof of our allegations of Soviet involvement. We will have to produce some sort of proof. What is our evidence? How much can we declassify to make our point?

Casey. ?????

The Vice President. Jeane will need some of that stuff for her use next week.

Kirkpatrick. If we want a meeting on December 26, we will have to request it this afternoon.

Haig. I want to be able to tell our Allies first.

Kirkpatrick. We do it all the time (at the UN). We always consult with them on a regular basis. We could cite the situation in Poland (in our UN resolution) as a threat to peace without mentioning the USSR.

Haig. We can't not mention the USSR.

Haig. Since we are not going to win anyway, we might as well lose going at the Soviets.

Meese. We should produce the information provided to Eagleburger, at a minimum.

The meeting ended at 4:00 p.m.