

SESSION OF THE CPSU CC POLITBURO

10 December 1981

Presided over by Cde. L. I. BREZHNEV.

Also taking part: Cdes. Yu. V. Andropov, V. V. Grishin, A. A. Gromyko,
A. P. Kirilenko, A. Ya. Pel'she, M. A. Suslov,
D. F. Ustinov, K. U. Chernenko, P. N. Demichev,
B. N. Ponomarev, M. S. Solomentsev, I. V. Kapitonov,
V. I. Dolgikh, K. V. Rusakov.

1. On the Question of the Situation in Poland

BREZHNEV. This question is not listed on our agenda. But I think that the session of the Politburo should begin with this matter, since we have specially dispatched Cdes. Baibakov and Kulikov to Poland to meet with the Polish comrades and go over certain matters of the utmost urgency.²⁶⁸ On 8 December, Cde. Kulikov provided us with information about the discussions he held in Warsaw, and yesterday, 9 December, Cde. Baibakov communicated from Warsaw that he had held a discussion with Cde. Jaruzelski. From these meetings and subsequent discussions held by Cde. Baibakov, it is apparent that the Polish comrades hope to receive roughly 1.5 billion dollars' worth of additional supplies and materials from the USSR and other socialist countries in the first quarter of the coming year.²⁶⁹ This will include iron ore, non-ferrous metals, fertilizer, oil, tires, grain, etc.

²⁶⁸ Translator's Note: For more on Kulikov's role at this point in the crisis, see my article on "Jaruzelski, the Soviet Union, and the Imposition of Martial Law in Poland: New Light on the Mystery of December 1981," in *CWIHP Bulletin 11* (Winter 1998/99).

²⁶⁹ Translator's Note: In the leadup to martial law, economic considerations were very high on Jaruzelski's agenda. Through various channels, senior Polish officials repeatedly sought assurances from Moscow that Soviet economic aid to Poland would be forthcoming once Solidarity was crushed. Jaruzelski's talks with Soviet leaders earlier in the year certainly could have given him the impression—whether rightly or wrongly—that the two issues were linked. When Gromyko visited Warsaw in early July 1981, he told Kania and Jaruzelski that "the nature of Soviet-Polish economic, political, and other relations will depend on the way things shape up in Poland." Brezhnev used this same formulation when he spoke by phone with Kania on 21 July. (See "Information über Gespräche des Mitgliedes des Politburos des ZK der KPdSU, Ministers für Auswärtige Angelegenheiten der UdSSR, Gen. A. A. Gromyko mit der Führung der PVAP in Warschau am 3.-5. Juli 1981," Bl. 35; and "Vermerk über ein Telefongespräch des Generalsekretärs des ZK der KPdSU, Genossen Leonid Il'ic Breznev, mit dem Ersten Sekretar des ZK der PVAP, Genossen Stanislaw Kania, am 21.7.1981," Bl. 21.) The following month, Brezhnev informed Honecker that the Soviet Union had let Kania and

In making this request, as you see, the Polish comrades are assuming that shipments of goods from the USSR to Poland in 1982 will be maintained at the level of 1981. Cde. Baibakov assured his interlocutors that all their requests would be considered in Moscow.

Perhaps it would behoove us now to instruct Cdes. Tikhonov, Kirilenko, Dolgikh, Skachkov, and Arkhipov to continue studying this matter, taking account of the exchange of opinions, but without waiting for a final agreement.

And now let's hear what Cde. Baibakov has to say.

BAIBAKOV. In accordance with the Politburo's instructions, I traveled to Warsaw. I met there with all the comrades whom it was necessary for me to see about the matters specified in my instructions.

First of all I had a discussion with the deputy chairman of the Council of Ministers, Cde. Obodowski. During this discussion, the Polish comrades raised the question of economic assistance. I sent an encrypted cable back here outlining the Polish request.

It's worth noting that the list of goods included in the assistance from us to the PPR comes to 350 items worth some 1.4 billion rubles. This includes such goods as 2 million tons of grain, 25 thousand tons of meat, 625 thousand tons of iron ore, and many other goods. The requests made by the Polish comrades, combined with what we had already been thinking about giving to Poland in 1982, means that our total assistance to the Polish People's Republic will be approximately 4.4 billion rubles.²⁷⁰

The time is now approaching when Poland will have to pay for its credits from West European countries. For this, Poland will be required to pay a minimum of 2.8 million rubles'

Jaruzelski know that "our own economic situation is very strained, and . . . our willingness to help the Poles [economically] will depend on what [political and military] measures the Polish leaders take." (See "Niederschrift über das Treffen zwischen Genossen L. I. Breznev und Genossen E. Honecker am 3. August 1981 auf der Krim," Bl. 336.) The link between Soviet economic assistance and the Polish authorities' willingness to combat the "intensified anti-Soviet campaign in Poland" was also conveyed during the bilateral trade negotiations in September 1981. (See "Szyfrogram Nr. 2634/III z Moskwy," S. 2.) Jaruzelski thus had ample reason to expect that the successful imposition of martial law in Poland would be rewarded with stepped-up economic aid. To ensure that this would be the case, Jaruzelski raised the issue repeatedly in his talks with Aristov, Kulikov, and Baibakov between the 8th and 12th of December 1981. (See my translation of some of Jaruzelski's contacts with Kulikov in Issue No.11 of the *CWHP Bulletin*.) Similarly, at the PZPR Politburo meeting on 13 December, hours after martial law had been imposed, Jaruzelski told his colleagues that "I received a phone call from Cde. Brezhnev, who expressed his warm feelings toward us and said we had effectively approached the fight against counterrevolution. . . . I was assured that we could now count on economic aid, a subject I strongly emphasized during the conversation." At Jaruzelski's behest, the PZPR Politburo authorized the Polish foreign minister, Jozef Czyrek, to "draft proposals regarding the economic aid we want to receive from our allies" and to "raise the question of food aid in talks with the allies." (Quoted from "Protokol Nr. 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 13.XII.1981 r.," Ll. 8-9, 10.) Even if Soviet leaders themselves did not perceive a direct link between martial law and Soviet economic aid, they were well aware (as is evident from some of the comments below, especially those of Andropov) that Jaruzelski was firmly connecting the two.

²⁷⁰ Translator's Note: On the valuation of Soviet aid to Poland, see my annotation in Document No. 16 *supra*.

worth of hard currency. When I was told by the Polish comrades that they are requesting the amount that all this assistance comes to, I raised the question of how to establish mutual economic ties on a balanced basis. Moreover, I noted that Polish industry is not even coming close to fulfilling its plan. The coal industry, which is the country's basic means of earning hard currency, has been severely disrupted, and remedial measures have not been implemented as strikes continue. And even now, when there are no strikes, the mining of coal remains at a very low level.

Or, for example, let's say that production is going on among the peasantry, with grain, meat products, vegetables, etc. But they aren't giving any of it to the state; they're just playing a waiting game.²⁷¹ At the private markets the level of agricultural trade is sufficiently high and is being carried out at very inflated prices.

I said directly to the Polish comrades that they must adopt more decisive measures if such a situation has arisen. Perhaps they can launch something in the nature of a requisitioning of farm produce.²⁷²

If we speak, for example, about reserves of grain, then Poland this year has accumulated more than 2 million tons. The population is not going hungry. Urban dwellers ride out to the markets and buy up all the products they need. And there are ample supplies of them.

As you know, in accordance with the Politburo's decision and at the request of the Polish

²⁷¹ Translator's Note: When economic hardships intensified in the late 1970s and early 1980s, Polish farmers were reluctant to sell grain because they suspected—with good reason—that they would not be adequately compensated, and that any money they did receive would be of little use because other goods were so scarce.

²⁷² Translator's Note: The term that Baibakov uses here, *prodrazverstka* (a contraction of *prodovol'stvennaya razverstka*), refers to the policy introduced in Soviet Russia by Lenin during the period of "War Communism," which forced peasants to turn over their produce to the state. The policy led to great bloodshed, upheaval, and starvation. In Poland, compulsory deliveries of livestock and agricultural produce to the state at highly controlled prices had been in effect for private farmers from the late 1940s until the beginning of the 1970s. The requirements were abolished after Polish workers successfully demanded the repeal of food price increases in late 1970 and early 1971. During the 1980-81 crisis, however, the issue resurfaced. At the PZPR Central Committee's 2nd Plenum on 11-12 August 1981, an ultraconservative member of the PZPR Politburo, Albin Siwak, demanded that private farmers be required to deliver a large fraction of their output to the state at concessionary prices. His comments provoked heated objections from Polish deputy prime minister Janusz Obodowski. At the PZPR Central Committee's Fourth Plenum in mid-October 1981, Siwak and a few other hardline officials again broached the possibility of compelling farmers to sacrifice their output. This proposal won little support within the Central Committee and was temporarily put aside, but it was briefly revived on 13 December 1981, the first day under martial law. At a PZPR Politburo meeting that day, Jaruzelski and another Politburo member, Zofia Grzyb, spoke about "ways to ensure that peasants will bring foodstuffs to purchasing points and will turn over their goods." Although Jaruzelski claimed that "we are not seeking compulsory deliveries," he added that farmers "must sell goods to the state" and should be "warned about the consequences of a reduction in supplies." Quoted from "Protokol Nr. 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 13.XII.1981 r.," Ss. 1, 10-11. Soviet leaders, for their part, began publicly urging the Polish authorities to adopt "drastic measures" toward the peasantry. On 12 December 1981 the main CPSU newspaper denounced the "resurgence of kulak elements in rural areas [of Poland] who, at the direct behest of Solidarity, are hoarding agricultural output and refusing to sell it to the state even at prices higher than the prevailing level." The paper left no doubt that coercion would be required to prevent the "kulak elements" from "creating a situation of famine in the cities, fomenting mass discontent, and undermining popular trust in the organs of power." See "K polozheniyu v Pol'she," *Pravda* (Moscow), 12 December 1981, p. 4.

comrades, we are providing Poland with an aid shipment of 30 thousand tons of meat.²⁷³ Of these promised 30 thousand tons, 15 thousand have already been shipped abroad. It should be added that the produce, in this case meat, is being delivered in dirty, unsanitary freight cars normally used to transport iron ore, making for an unpleasant sight. When the produce is being transported to the Polish stations, blatant sabotage has been taking place. Poles have been expressing highly obscene comments about the Soviet Union and the Soviet people, they've refused to clean out the freight cars, etc. One could not even begin to keep count of all the insults that have been directed against us.²⁷⁴

Viewing the situation from the standpoint of the balance of payments, the Poles want to introduce a moratorium on the payment of their debt to Western countries. If they declare a moratorium, all Polish vessels in the waters of other states or in harbor, and all other Polish property in the countries to which Poland owes debts, will be seized. For this reason the Poles have given instructions to the captains of ships to refrain from entering ports and to stay in neutral waters.

Now I will offer several words about my discussion with Cde. Jaruzelski. He reaffirmed the request made earlier by Obodowski regarding the delivery of goods. Then in the evening I again went to Jaruzelski's office, accompanied by our ambassador and Cde. Kulikov. Also taking part in this discussion were Obodowski and the PZPR CC secretary who handles these matters. Jaruzelski was in a highly agitated state. It seemed that he had been deeply disturbed by the letter from the head of the Polish Catholic Church, Archbishop Glemp, who, as is known, promised to declare a holy war against the Polish authorities.²⁷⁵ True, Jaruzelski promptly responded that in the event of untoward activities by Solidarity, they will detain all hostile elements.

As far as the party organizations are concerned, they are ruined and inactive in the outlying regions. And with regard to the party as a whole, Jaruzelski said that in essence it no

²⁷³ Translator's Note: This figure, originally proposed by Jaruzelski, was cited by Rusakov at the 29 October 1981 meeting of the CPSU Politburo (see Document No. 20 *supra*). An agreement providing for the phased shipment of 30,000 extra tons of beef and pork to Poland by the end of the year was signed on 3 November 1981.

²⁷⁴ Translator's Note: Baibakov's observations about this matter were fully in accord with information provided by a hardline member of the PZPR Central Committee, Zdzislaw Drewniowski, who told Soviet officials "with consternation" on 28 November 1981 that "under the influence of Solidarity and the clergy, the railroad workers at Medyka station have begun systematically sabotaging the receipt and unloading of shipments from the USSR that are important for Poland. . . . The head of the Medyka station urged the workers to fix up the train cars after iron ore had been unloaded (by sweeping them and closing the lower hatches, as required by the transport equipment). But the workers refused to do this, and some of them cried out: 'Let the Soviet swines (i.e., Soviet workers) themselves take care of this matter if they need to. We don't need Soviet ore.' Earlier in the PPR there had been a wide propaganda effort in support of friendship with the Soviet nation, whereas now one can often hear the Poles use insulting terms like 'Russian bastards,' 'ignoramuses,' and 'scum' to refer to the Soviet peoples." Quoted from "Informatsiya o nekotorykh sobytiyakh v Pol'skoi Narodnoi Respublike," LI. 42-43.

²⁷⁵ Translator's Note: Archbishop Glemp met with Lech Walesa on 5 December and then, two days later, sent separate letters to Jaruzelski, Walesa, all the deputies in the Sejm, and the National Students' Union. In the letters to Jaruzelski and Walesa, the primate called for the resumption of tripartite (government-Solidarity-Church) talks. In the letters to Sejm deputies, he urged that Jaruzelski not be granted "extraordinary powers." In his letter to the National Students' Union, Glemp called for an end to the recent spate of university strikes. In all four cases, these letters had only a modest impact.

longer exists. The country is being destroyed, and the outlying regions are not receiving any sort of reinforcement, because the Central Committee and government are not giving firm and clear-cut instructions. Jaruzelski himself has been transformed into a man who is extremely neurotic and diffident about his capacity to do anything.

RUSAKOV. Cde. Baibakov has correctly described the situation regarding the Polish economy. What, then, should we be doing now? It seems to me that we should deliver to Poland the goods provided for under the economic agreements, but that these deliveries should not exceed the quantity of goods we delivered in the first quarter of last year.

BREZHNEV. And are we able to give this much now?

BAIBAKOV. Leonid Il'ich, it can be given only by drawing on state reserves or at the expense of deliveries to the internal market.

RUSAKOV. The day before yesterday they had a conference of secretaries from the provincial committees.²⁷⁶ As Cde. Aristov²⁷⁷ reported, the secretaries of the provincial committees are completely baffled by Jaruzelski's speech, which did not present a clear, straightforward line. No one knows what will happen over the next few days. There was a conversation about "Operation X." At first, they said it would be on the night of 11-12 December, and then this was changed to the night of the 12th and 13th. And now they're already saying it won't be until around the 20th. What is envisaged is that the chairman of the State Council, Jablonski, will appear on radio and television and declare the introduction of martial law.²⁷⁸ At the same time, Jaruzelski said that the law on the introduction of martial

²⁷⁶ Translator's Note: The conference of PZPR regional party secretaries on 8 December 1981 was convened to prepare them in the leadup to martial law. See "Protokol z posiedzenia Pierwszych Sekretarzy KW PZPR w dn. 8.XII.1981 r.," 8 December 1981 (Top Secret), in Archiwum Akt Nowych (AAN), Tom (T.) 2260, Dokument (Dok.) 2.

²⁷⁷ Translator's Note: Either because of a mistake by Rusakov or because of a typographical error, the Russian text gives Aristov's surname as Arestov.

²⁷⁸ Translator's Note: Actually, it was Jaruzelski who proclaimed a "state of war" (*stan wojenny*) on 13 December in an address broadcast at 6:00 a.m. See "Przemowienie gen. armii W. Jaruzelskiego," *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 14 December 1981, p. 1. The State Council had met during the night of 12-13 December to approve a decree on the imposition of martial law, which ostensibly was designed to counter "a threat to the vital interests of the state and the nation." (Quoted from "Obwieszczenie Rady Panstwa," *ibid.*, pp. 1-2.) The head of the State Council, Henryk Jablonski, told the PZPR Politburo on 13 December that securing approval of the decree had been no easy matter: "Difficulties arose because no draft of the decree on martial law had been prepared, as is the case in every country, and instead had to be worked out. All members of the State Council spoke positively about this matter. But [Ryszard] Reiff did not concur with the proposal to adopt the decree on martial law. [Stanislaw] Marszalek-Mlynczyk was against it. The decree was adopted, but there was no formal vote." Quoted from "Protokol Nr. 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 13.XII.1981 r.," S. 6. The Council's main decree, officially dated 12 December, suspended a large number of civil rights and liberties formerly guaranteed under the Polish constitution. That decree was supplemented by three other State Council resolutions on (1) Emergency Procedures for Dealing with Crimes and Misdemeanors under Martial Law, (2) Special Powers of Military Courts under Martial Law, and (3) Elimination of Prior Offenses. See "Uchwała Rady Panstwa o wprowadzeniu stanu wojennego," "Dekret o stanie wojennym," "Dekret o przekazaniu do właściwości sądów wojskowych spraw o niektóre przestępstwa oraz o zmianie ustroju sądów wojskowych i wojskowych jednostek organizacyjnych Prokuratury PRL w czasie obowiązywania stanu wojennego," "Dekret o postępowaniach szczególnych w sprawach o przestępstwa i wykroczenia w czasie obowiązywania stanu wojennego," "Powszechny akt łaski przebaczenia i puszczenia w niepamięć niektórych przestępstw i wkroczeń

law can be implemented only after it is considered by the Sejm, and the next session of the Sejm is not scheduled until 15 December.²⁷⁹ Thus, everything has become very complicated. The agenda of the Sejm has already been published, and it makes no mention of the introduction of martial law. But even if the government does intend to introduce martial law, Solidarity knows this very well and, for its part, has been preparing all necessary measures to cope with that.²⁸⁰

Jaruzelski himself says that he intends to deliver an address to the Polish nation. But in his address he won't be speaking about the party. Instead he will appeal to Polish nationalist sentiments. Jaruzelski has talked about the need to proclaim a military dictatorship, of the sort that existed under Pilsudski.²⁸¹ He indicated that the Poles will accept this more readily than something else.

As far as officials like Olszowski are concerned, they recently have begun to act more decisively; and one might add that at the session of the Politburo where the decision was made to introduce martial law and adopt more resolute measures against extremist figures in Solidarity, the vote was unanimous and no one expressed a word of opposition.²⁸² At the

popelnionych," all in *Trybuna Ludu* (Warsaw), 14 December 1981 (special issue), pp. 2, 3, 4, and 5, respectively. These four initial decrees were reinforced over the next few weeks by a large number of directives, decisions, and resolutions issued by the newly formed Military Council of National Salvation (*Wojskowa rada ocalenia narodowego*, or WRON), which Jaruzelski headed, as well as regulations issued by ministries and departments.

²⁷⁹ Translator's Note: The next session of the Polish Sejm, as Rusakov notes here, was due to be held on 15 December 1981. However, the PZPR Politburo decided on 13 December to "postpone the session of the PPR Sejm" indefinitely. The postponement was publicly announced the following day. The Politburo also decided on 13 December that the WRON should issue a decree indicating that the provisions of the pending Teachers' Charter (*Karta nauczyciela*) would be implemented on an informal basis until the Charter could be formally adopted by the Sejm. (The Charter was designed to require vetting of teachers, instructors, and professors.) To facilitate the implementation of that decree, the Politburo approved an "extended vacation for schools and institutions of higher learning from 13 December 1981 to 3 January 1982." See "Protokol Nr. 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 13.XII.1981 r.," S. 8. It turned out that the first session of the Sejm under martial law did not occur until 25-26 January 1982. On 25 January, the Sejm overwhelmingly passed a "Law on Special Legal Guidelines for Martial Law" (*Ustaw o szczególnej regulacji prawnej w okresie stanu wojennego*) which reaffirmed the four State Council decrees dated 12 December 1981 as well as all the other decrees and regulations issued after 12 December by the State Council, the WRON, and other bodies. (One member of the Sejm, Romuald Bukowski, voted against the law, and five abstained.) On 26 January, the Sejm passed the Teachers' Charter. See *Sprawozdanie stenograficzne Sejmu*, 8th Sejm, 3rd Sess., Warsaw, 25 and 26 January 1982.

²⁸⁰ Translator's Note: Rusakov's comment here reflects a widely shared view in Moscow that all the plans for martial law had been passed on to Solidarity after Ryszard Kuklinski's escape to the West. It was precisely for this reason, according to Gribkov, that "the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces had to act hurriedly to redo several components of the plans for the introduction of martial law and the implementation directives that were issued to the command staffs and troops." (See Gribkov, "Doktrina Brezhneva' i pol'skii krizis nachala 80-kh godov," p. 49.) Soviet officials tended to overestimate the extent of Solidarity's knowledge of the precise timing of Operation X.

²⁸¹ Translator's Note: Marshal Jozef Pilsudski, the legendary commander of Polish Legions in World War I, came to power in a military *coup d'etat* in May 1926. He remained in office until his death in May 1935, presiding over a regime that became increasingly authoritarian.

²⁸² Translator's Note: This reference to a "unanimous vote" by the PZPR Politburo in favor of martial law—a vote also cited by other Soviet officials below — is misleading. The lengthy meeting of the PZPR Politburo on 5 December 1981, which produced a general consensus in favor of martial law, was the final session of the Polish Politburo before martial law was imposed. Jaruzelski concluded the 5 December meeting by announcing that "at today's session of the Politburo we will not make any final decision" about the timing of martial law. ("Protokol Nr. 18 z posiedzenia Biura

same time, Jaruzelski intends to keep in close touch about this matter with his allies.²⁸³ He says that if the Polish forces are unable to cope with the resistance put up by Solidarity, the Polish comrades hope to receive assistance from other countries, up to and including the introduction of armed forces on the territory of Poland. In expressing this hope, Jaruzelski has been citing remarks by Cde. Kulikov, who supposedly said that the USSR and other socialist countries would indeed give assistance to Poland with their armed forces.²⁸⁴ However, as far as I know, Cde. Kulikov did not say this directly, but merely repeated the words voiced earlier by L. I. Brezhnev about our determination not to leave Poland in the lurch.

If we consider what is going on in the provinces, one must candidly say that the strength of the party organizations there has been completely dissipated. To a certain degree the administrative apparatus there is still functioning, but in effect all power has now been transferred to the hands of Solidarity. In his recent statements, Jaruzelski is apparently trying to pull the wool over our eyes, because his words fail to reflect a proper analysis. If the Polish comrades don't quickly get organized, prepare themselves, and resist the onslaught of Solidarity, they will have no success at all in improving the situation in Poland.

ANDROPOV. From the discussions with Jaruzelski it is clear that they have not yet

Politycznego KC PZPR 5 grudnia 1981 r.," in Wlodek, ed., *Tajne Dokumenty Biura Politycznego*, p. 568.) The question of a timetable was discussed by the Polish Council of Ministers (which Jaruzelski chaired) on 8 December, but no final decision was taken there, either. The final timetable for martial law was unanimously approved by the Polish military High Command, led by Jaruzelski, late in the evening of 9 December. The Russian word that Rusakov uses to describe the "unanimous" vote, *edinoglasno*, is stronger than another word, *edinodushno*, which also is translated as "unanimous." Rusakov's statement indicates that no abstentions or dissenting votes were cast. It should be noted, however, that most of the subsequent speakers (Andropov, Gromyko, etc.) used the word *edinodushno* when referring to the PZPR Politburo's vote, though Ustinov used *edinoglasno*.

²⁸³ Translator's Note: At the PZPR Politburo meeting on 13 December, Jaruzelski indicated that "we are keeping in close touch with the Warsaw Pact headquarters and the [USSR's] Northern Group of Forces." Quoted from "Protokol Nr. 19 z posiedzenia Biura Politycznego KC PZPR w dniu 13.XII.1981 r.," S. 3.

²⁸⁴ Translator's Note: It is not inconceivable that Kulikov did in fact say something to Jaruzelski at this point—if only inadvertently—that seemed to be a pledge of Soviet military assistance if the martial law operation collapsed. During at least one previous occasion when Kulikov was in Poland in 1981 he brought up this very matter with Jaruzelski. According to a briefing that Kulikov gave to East German military officials on 7 April 1981, he had indicated to Jaruzelski and Kania a few days earlier that "unless [the Polish authorities] used the Polish security organs and army [to impose martial law], outside support could not be expected because of the international complications that would arise." Kulikov said he "emphasized to the Polish comrades that they must first seek to resolve their problems on their own." However, he was careful to add that "if the Polish authorities tried to resolve these problems on their own and were unable to, and were then to ask [the Soviet Union] for assistance, that would be a very different situation from one in which [Soviet] troops had been deployed [to Poland] from the outset." (Quoted from "Bericht uber ein vertrauliches Gespräch mit dem Oberkommandierenden der Vereinten Streitkräfte der Teilnehmerstaaten des Warschauer Vertrages am 07.04.1981 in LEGNICA," Bl. 54.) Kulikov probably did not intend these remarks to be an ironclad pledge of a Soviet military guarantee, but he certainly may have given Jaruzelski and Kania the *impression* (whether rightly or wrongly) that they could count on Soviet military help if the martial law operation went awry. Although there is nothing in General Anoshkin's notebook (which I have translated in Issue No. 11 of the *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*) to suggest that Kulikov repeated anything of the sort in December 1981, Jaruzelski may have construed some of Kulikov's statements at that time as a reaffirmation of what Kulikov had been saying earlier in the year. A misunderstanding in a tense situation like this would hardly be unusual. (Nor is it inconceivable that Kulikov mistakenly went beyond his brief in December 1981 and gave Jaruzelski the wrong idea about Soviet policy.)

reached a firm consensus about the introduction of martial law. Despite the unanimous vote by the PZPR CC Politburo on the need to introduce martial law, we still haven't seen concrete measures on the part of the leadership. The extremists in Solidarity are attacking the Polish leadership by the throat. The Church in recent days has also clearly expressed its position, which in essence is now completely supportive of "Solidarity."

Of course in these circumstances the Polish comrades must act swiftly in launching "Operation X" and carrying it out. At the same time, Jaruzelski declares that "we will resort to 'Operation X' when Solidarity forces us to do so." This is a very disturbing sign, particularly because the latest session of the PZPR CC Politburo and the decision it adopted to introduce martial law had suggested that the Politburo was beginning to act more decisively. All the members of the Politburo expressed support for resolute action. This decision put pressure on Jaruzelski, and he is now compelled to find some way of extricating himself. Yesterday I spoke with Milewski and asked him what measures they intended and when it would be done. He replied that he simply doesn't know about "Operation X" and about the concrete timeframe in which it would be carried out. Thus, it would seem that either Jaruzelski is concealing from his comrades the plan of concrete action, or he is simply abandoning the idea of carrying out this step.

I'd now like to mention that Jaruzelski has been more than persistent in setting forth economic demands from us and has made the implementation of "Operation X" contingent on our willingness to offer economic assistance; and I would say even more than that, he is raising the question, albeit indirectly, of receiving military assistance as well.

Now, if you look at the list of goods we are providing to the Polish comrades, we can candidly say that serious doubts arise about the necessity of supplying these products. For example, what is the connection between the success of "Operation X" and the delivery of fertilizer and certain other goods? In connection with this I would say that our position, as it was formulated earlier during the previous session of the Politburo and was expressed even earlier on several occasions by Leonid Il'ich, is entirely correct, and we must not depart from it at all.²⁸⁵ In other words, we are taking a position of internationalist assistance, and we are alarmed by the situation unfolding in Poland; but as far as "Operation X" is concerned, that must entirely and unequivocally be decided by the Polish comrades themselves. Whatever they decide is what will be. We will not insist on any specific course, and we will not dissuade them from pursuing what they decide.

As far as economic assistance is concerned, it will of course be difficult for us to undertake anything of the scale and nature of what has been proposed. No doubt, something will have to give. But again I want to say that the mere posing of the question of the apportionment of goods supplied as economic assistance is an insolent way to approach things, and it is being done purely so that if we refrain from delivering something or other,

²⁸⁵ Translator's Note: The transcript of "the previous session of the [CPSU] Politburo," apparently held on 8 December (see the reference to that date in Decision No. 2 at the end of this meeting), has not yet been released.

they'll be able to lay all the blame on us.²⁸⁶ If Cde. Kulikov actually did speak about the introduction of troops, then I believe he did this incorrectly.²⁸⁷ We can't risk such a step. We do not intend to introduce troops into Poland. That is the proper position, and we must adhere to it until the end. I don't know how things will turn out in Poland, but even if Poland falls under the control of Solidarity, that's the way it will be. And if the capitalist countries pounce on the Soviet Union, and you know they have already reached agreement on a variety of economic and political sanctions, that will be very burdensome for us. We must be concerned above all with our own country and about the strengthening of the Soviet Union. That is our main line.

In general, it seems to me that our position on the situation in Poland was formulated by Leonid Il'ich in several of his speeches and in the resolutions adopted earlier. Today, a very thorough exchange of opinions has taken place during the session of the Politburo. All of this must serve as the basis of the policy we must uphold vis-a-vis Poland.

As concerns the lines of communication between the Soviet Union and the GDR that run through Poland, we of course must do something to ensure that they are safeguarded.

GROMYKO. Today we've had a very intense discussion of the situation in Poland. I think you'll agree that previously we had not discussed it so intensely.²⁸⁸ This is because we ourselves don't know at the moment what direction the events in Poland will take. The Polish leadership itself senses that power is slipping from its grasp. Kania and Jaruzelski, you know, counted on their ability to rely on the neutrals. But now there is no such opportunity, there are no longer any neutrals. The position is defined sufficiently clearly: Solidarity has proven to be a patently counterrevolutionary organization which aspires to come to power and which

²⁸⁶ Translator's Note: The comments here by Gromyko and a similar remark below by Suslov indicate that Soviet leaders were well aware of Jaruzelski's desire to extract maximum pledges of economic support from Moscow before he proceeded with the martial law operation.

²⁸⁷ Translator's Note: See annotation no. 282 *supra* about what Kulikov might or might not have said.

²⁸⁸ Translator's Note: Gromyko's comment here about a "very intense discussion," and Andropov's earlier remark about "a very thorough exchange of opinions," imply that at least some of the Politburo members had been debating the matter earlier in the day, before the formal session. The lack of any overt disagreement regarding the question of Soviet military intervention at this formal session does not necessarily mean that the apparent consensus emerged easily or spontaneously. The transcript, as Gromyko's and Andropov's comments suggest, may not tell the full story. A number of former senior members of the CPSU Politburo—Egor Ligachev, Nikolai Ryzhkov, and Vadim Medvedev, among others—have recently disclosed that Soviet leaders sometimes gathered informally before Politburo sessions to iron out their different views of highly controversial issues. See the memoirs cited in footnote 42 of my article "Poland, 1980-81: Soviet Policy During the Polish Crisis," *Cold War International History Project Bulletin*, Issue No. 5 (Spring 1995), pp. 1, 116-127. As a rule, these informal meetings (referred to as "exchanges of opinions," the phrase used here by Andropov) were not included in the final transcripts of official Politburo sessions. Hence, it is conceivable that an unrecorded preliminary meeting on 10 December 1981 featured at least some give-and-take about Soviet military options in Poland. Yet even if that is the case, it does not change the basic fact that the consensus within the Politburo by the time of the formal session on 10 December was in favor of non-intervention. (It is worth noting, however, that this non-interventionist stance was not absolute. For example, Andropov acknowledged that "we must of course do something to ensure that the lines of communication between the Soviet Union and the GDR are safeguarded." It remains an open question what the Soviet Union would have done if the martial law operation had collapsed and widespread violent turmoil had erupted in Poland. It seems difficult to believe that Soviet leaders would have stood idly by, not least because of the presence of the Northern Group of Forces in Poland.)

has openly declared its intention to seize power. The Polish leadership must decide the question: Either it relinquishes its positions by failing to adopt decisive measures, or it adopts decisive measures by introducing martial law, detaining the extremists of Solidarity, and restoring public order. There is no other alternative.

What should our position be toward the Polish events? I fully agree with what was already said here by the comrades. We can say to the Poles that we view the Polish events with understanding. There is no basis whatsoever for us to alter this measured formulation in any way. At the same time we must somehow try to dispel the notions that Jaruzelski and other leaders in Poland have about the introduction of troops. There cannot be any introduction of troops into Poland. I think we can give instructions about this to our ambassador, asking him to visit Jaruzelski and communicate this to him.²⁸⁹

Despite the sufficiently unanimous vote of the PZPR CC Politburo with regard to the introduction of martial law, Jaruzelski is now back to his vacillating position. At first he had somewhat stiffened his spine, but now, once again, he's begun to soften. Everything is still in force that was said to them previously. If in the struggle against counterrevolution and afterwards they show any sign of wavering, nothing of socialist Poland will remain. The introduction of martial law, of course, would be the best way to convey the steadfastness of the Polish leadership to the counterrevolutionaries. And if the measures they intend to carry out are indeed implemented, I think we could expect positive results.

Now, with regard to the creation of a new party, as Jaruzelski proposed, I think we must directly say to Jaruzelski that there is no need to create any sort of new party, since this would merely signal a retreat on the part of the Polish leadership and an acknowledgment that the PZPR is in fact not a militant political organization, but simply an organization that has committed mistakes.²⁹⁰ It would underscore the very weakness of the party and would play into the hands of the Solidarity extremists. Then even the population of Poland, which retains definite sympathy for the PZPR as a guiding force, would be completely disabused of such sentiments.

I believe that we must not now permit any sort of harsh instructions, which would force them to adopt one course or another. I think we have chosen the correct position here: The restoration of order in Poland is a matter for the Polish United Workers' Party, its Central Committee, and its Politburo. We already said to our Polish friends and will say again in the future that they must pursue a steadfast course without slackening in the least.

Of course, if the Poles deliver a blow to Solidarity, the West in all likelihood will not give them credits and will not offer any other kind of help. They are aware of this, and this

²⁸⁹ Translator's Note: Aristov did indeed communicate this to Jaruzelski, as is evident from Anoshkin's notebook; see my translation in CWIHP Bulletin 11 (Winter 1998/1999).

²⁹⁰ Translator's Note: If Jaruzelski's proposal to disband the PZPR and form a new Communist party had been implemented, it would have been similar to what was done in Hungary in October-November 1956, when the Hungarian Workers' Party was abolished and a new Hungarian Socialist Workers' Party was formed by Janos Kadar, whom the Soviet Union installed in power.

obviously is something that we, too, have to bear in mind.²⁹¹ For this reason, Leonid Il'ich was correct in proposing that we instruct a group of comrades to examine this question, taking account of our capabilities to extend substantial economic assistance to the PPR.

USTINOV. The situation in the PPR, of course, is very bad. The situation is worsening day by day. Among the leadership, especially in the Politburo, there is no firmness or unity. And all of this has taken its toll on the state of affairs. Only at the last session of the [Polish] Politburo was a decision unanimously approved to introduce martial law. And now all hopes are riding on Jaruzelski. How will he succeed in carrying out this decision? As yet, no one can openly speak about the actions of Jaruzelski. We just don't know. I had a conversation with Siwicki. He candidly said that even we [the Poles] don't know what the general is thinking. Thus, the man who has effectively been responsible for discharging the duties of the Polish defense minister doesn't know what will happen next and what sort of actions will be taken by the man who is Polish prime minister and defense minister.²⁹²

With regard to what Cde. Kulikov allegedly said about the introduction of troops into Poland, I can say in full responsibility that Kulikov never said this. He simply repeated what was said by us and by Leonid Il'ich that we would not leave Poland in the lurch. And he perfectly well knows that the Poles themselves requested us not to introduce troops.²⁹³

As far as our garrisons in Poland are concerned, we are fortifying them. I myself am also inclined to think that the Poles will not embark on a confrontation and only if, perhaps, Solidarity seizes them by the throat will they come forth.²⁹⁴

The problem is that the Polish leaders do not appear resolute. As was rightly said here by the comrades, we must not force them to adopt any specific decisions; we will simply carry out the policy on which we have agreed. For our part, we must be ready ourselves and must not display any sort of actions not provided for by our decisions.

SUSLOV. I believe, as is evident from the other comrades' speeches, that we all have the same view of the situation in Poland. During the whole prolonged stretch of events in Poland, we have displayed steadfastness and composure. Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev spoke about this at

²⁹¹ Translator's Note: Gromyko once again is drawing a clear link here between Soviet economic aid and the imposition of martial law in Poland.

²⁹² Translator's Note: Jaruzelski had been national defense minister since April 1968, but when he acquired many new duties as prime minister and PZPR First Secretary in 1981, he had to rely increasingly on his long-standing friend and aide, General Florian Siwicki, to handle many aspects of defense policy. Siwicki oversaw all the planning for the martial law operation, bringing together the military, political, and administrative components devised by the General Staff and the Internal Affairs Ministry. Siwicki also attended a meeting of the Warsaw Pact Council of Defense Ministers on 2-4 December 1981, a task that the minister (i.e., Jaruzelski) ordinarily would have performed. Siwicki's post as chief of the Polish General Staff would have been important anyway, but it was particularly important under these circumstances. He emerged as the second leading member (after Jaruzelski) of the Military Council for National Salvation.

²⁹³ Translator's Note: Presumably, this statement refers to a few earlier occasions in 1980-81—notably in December 1980, February 1981, and April 1981—when Kania and Jaruzelski had warned Soviet leaders that a massive intervention by Soviet troops to crush Solidarity would be "disastrous" and would "cause events to spin out of control."

²⁹⁴ Translator's Note: The antecedent for "they" in this sentence presumably is the "Soviet garrisons." If so, it is a further indication that the Soviet Union's non-interventionist stance was not absolute.

the plenum.²⁹⁵ We said this in public to our people, and our people supported the policy of the Communist Party.

We've done a great deal of work for peace, and it is now impossible for us to change our position. World public opinion will not permit us to do so. We have carried out via the UN such momentous diplomatic actions to consolidate peace. What a great effect we have had from the visit of L. I. Brezhnev to the FRG and from many other peaceful actions we have undertaken.²⁹⁶ This has enabled all peace-loving countries to understand that the Soviet Union staunchly and consistently upholds a policy of peace. That is why it is now impossible for us to change the position we have adopted vis-a-vis Poland since the very start of the Polish events. Let the Polish comrades themselves determine what actions they must pursue. It would be inappropriate for us to push them toward more decisive actions. But we will, as earlier, tell the Poles that we regard their actions with understanding.

It seems to me that Jaruzelski is displaying a certain degree of slyness. He wants to make excuses for himself by coming forth with requests to present to the Soviet Union. These requests, naturally, are beyond our physical capacity to fulfill, and Jaruzelski then says: well, look here, I turned to the Soviet Union and requested help, but didn't receive it.²⁹⁷

At the same time, the Poles say directly that they are opposed to the introduction of troops. If troops are introduced, that will be a catastrophe.²⁹⁸ I think we have reached a unanimous view here on this matter, and there can be no consideration at all of introducing troops.

As far as the provision of assistance to Poland is concerned, we have given that country more than a billion rubles. Not long ago we adopted a decision to ship 30 thousand tons of meat to Poland, of which 16 thousand tons have already been delivered. I don't know whether we'll be able to ship the full 30 thousand tons, but in any event we apparently are obliged by

²⁹⁵ Translator's Note: Suslov is referring to a CPSU Central Committee plenum held on 16 November 1981. The plenum was convened to discuss social and economic guidelines for the next five-year plan, and Brezhnev's main speech at the plenum, which was published at the time, focused on that topic. See "Plenum TsK KPSS, 16 noyabrya 1981 g.," in Vol. 14 (1980-1981) of *Kommunisticheskaya Partiya Sovetskogo Soyuza v rezolyutsiyakh i resheniyakh s"ezdov, konferentsii i plenumov TsK* (Moscow: Politizdat, 1982), pp. 519-532. In unpublished remarks after his main speech, Brezhnev spoke briefly about the situation in Poland. These comments can be found in the newly declassified plenum materials, "Plenum Tsentral'nogo Komiteta KPSS—16 noyabrya 1981 g.," 16 November 1981 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 2, Op. 3, D. 547, Ll. 85-86.

²⁹⁶ Translator's Note: Suslov is referring here to the massive campaign undertaken by the Soviet Union to prevent the deployment of NATO's Pershing-II and cruise missiles. Brezhnev's visit to West Germany in November 1981 focused largely on this issue. A top-secret plan adopted by the CPSU Secretariat in April 1980 called for "the use of long-planned ties and exchanges with the countries of Western Europe . . . to bolster the campaign against NATO's militarist designs as much as possible." See "O dopolnitelnykh meropriyatiyakh po aktivizatsii vystuplenii obshchestvennosti protiv resheniya NATO o proizvodstve i razmeshchenii novykh amerikanskikh raket v Zapadnoi Evrope: Postanovlenie Sekretariata TsK Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soyuza," 15 April 1980 (Top Secret), in TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 39, D. 1, Ll. 1-4.

²⁹⁷ Translator's Note: See the remark by Gromyko (above) at this same meeting, which makes the same point.

²⁹⁸ Translator's Note: Presumably, this again is a reference to what Kania and Jaruzelski had been telling Soviet leaders in 1980 and earlier in 1981.

this decision to give a further definite number of tons of meat as assistance.²⁹⁹

With regard to the PZPR and the creation of a new party to replace it, I believe it would be inappropriate to disband the PZPR. Those who spoke here were correct in arguing that this would be a completely unhelpful action.

GRISHIN. The situation in Poland is getting steadily worse. The line of our party toward the Polish events is entirely correct. With respect to the proposal by Jaruzelski to disband the PZPR and create a new party, one cannot agree with that. There can be no talk at all of introducing troops. We will have to look at economic questions and at what can be given to the Poles.

SUSLOV. In the press we must expose the intrigues of Solidarity and other counterrevolutionary forces.³⁰⁰

CHERNENKO. I fully agree with what the comrades have said here. It is clear that the line of our party and of the CC Politburo vis-a-vis the Polish events, as formulated in the speeches of Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev and in the decisions of the Politburo, is entirely correct and in no need of change.

I believe that today we could adopt the following decision:

1. Take under advisement the information provided by Cde. Baibakov.
2. In our relations with the PPR in the future, abide by the general political line on this matter laid down by the CPSU CC, and also abide by the instructions from the CPSU CC Politburo on 8 December 1981 and the exchange of opinions that occurred at the CC Politburo's session on 10 December 1981.
3. Instruct Cdes. Tikhonov, Kirilenko, Dolgikh, Arkhipov, and Baibakov to continue studying questions of economic assistance to Poland, taking account of the exchange of opinions at the session of the CCPolitburo.

²⁹⁹ Translator's Note: See Baibakov's comments (above) at this same meeting of the CPSU Politburo, as well as Rusakov's comments at the 29 October 1981 meeting of the Politburo (Document No. 20 *supra*).

³⁰⁰ Translator's Note: Even as Suslov spoke, a fierce campaign in the Soviet press against Solidarity was already under way. Between 8 December and 13 December 1981, the main CPSU press organ, *Pravda*, featured daily stories under the headline "On the Situation in Poland" ("*K polozheniyu v Pol'she*"), which depicted a "mortal danger" in Poland posed by "broadly coordinated subversive actions of counterrevolutionary forces." The stories alleged that "the counterrevolutionary elements in Solidarity are making preparations for the outright seizure of power" and are pursuing an "anti-socialist conspiracy to overturn the existing order in Poland." The most extreme story of all appeared on 10 December, the very day of this CPSU Politburo meeting. That story claimed that "Solidarity organizations have begun establishing 'commando units' at enterprises" to launch "a furious counterrevolutionary blow against the existing order" and to "destroy the Communists altogether." It also alleged that Solidarity's leaders were "stepping up their demagogic demands for Poland to withdraw from the Warsaw Pact and CMEA" and were seeking to "exploit the lines of communication passing through Poland's territory to put pressure on Poland's allies." This last accusation was particularly significant if one bears in mind Andropov's statement (above) about the need to "ensure that the lines of communication between the Soviet Union and the GDR are safeguarded."

BREZHNEV. How do the comrades feel about this?

EVERYONE. Cde. Chernenko has very properly formulated all the proposals, and now it is time to adopt them.

The decree is adopted.

[*Source: TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 6*]