

November 21, 1981
**CPSU CC Politburo Protocol (extract) and Text of
Oral Message from Brezhnev to Jaruzelski**

Citation:

"CPSU CC Politburo Protocol (extract) and Text of Oral Message from Brezhnev to Jaruzelski", November 21, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, TsKhSD, F. 89, Op. 42, D. 27 <https://wilson-center-digital-archive.dvincitest.com/document/110483>

Original Language:

Russian

Contents:

Translation - English

To be returned within 3 days to the
CPSU CC (General Department, 1st sector)

Proletarians of all countries, unite!

Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CENTRAL COMMITTEE
TOP SECRET
No. P37/21

To: Comrades Brezhnev, Tikhonov, Andropov, Gromykov, Suslov, Ustinov, Ponomarev, Rusakov, Arkhipov, Baibakov, Zamyatin, and Smirtyukov.

Extract from Protocol No. 37 of the session of the CPSU CC Politburo on 21 November 1981

On the reception in the USSR of a party-state delegation from the PPR and an oral message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev to Comrade W. Jaruzelski.

1. To affirm the text of an oral message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev, who instructed the Soviet ambassador in Poland to transmit it to Comrade W. Jaruzelski (see attached).
2. To acknowledge the desirability of receiving in the USSR a party-state delegation from the PPR headed by Comrade W. Jaruzelski on 14-15 December 1981.

To affirm the composition of the Soviet delegation at the talks with the Polish delegation: Comrades L. I. Brezhnev (head of the delegation), M. A. Suslov, Yu. V. Andropov, A. A. Gromyko, N. A. Tikhonov, D. F. Ustinov, K. U. Chernenko, and K. V. Rusakov.

3. By 1 December the CPSU CC Department, the USSR Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, the USSR KGB, and USSR Gosplan are to prepare all necessary materials for the talks with the Polish party-state delegations, including a draft communique for the press.

The CPSU CC Department and the USSR Foreign Ministry are to set forth recommendations concerning organizational measures connected with the reception of a Polish delegation in the USSR.

CC SECRETARY

Regarding point 21 of Prot. No. 37

Secret
WARSAW
SOVIET AMBASSADOR

Pay a visit to Comrade W. Jaruzelski and, citing your instructions, transmit to him the following oral message from Comrade L. I. Brezhnev:

"Esteemed Comrade Jaruzelski!

"We have attentively considered your proposal to visit Moscow at the head of a party-state delegation that would include the heads of the parties allied with the PZPR, and we agree with it. As far as the timeframe is concerned, the visit might take place on 14-15 December, assuming of course that this is suitable for you.

"In the meantime, because several weeks still remain before the meeting, I decided to transmit to you through Comrade Aristov some thoughts about urgent matters pertaining to the situation in Poland, which remains a cause of serious anxiety for us.

"I am revealing no secrets when I say that we greeted your election as PZPR CC First Secretary with great hopes. We were aware that earlier in the struggle against the anti-socialist forces you, as the chairman of the Council of Ministers, were inhibited by the political indecisiveness of the party leadership. Now this obstacle has been eliminated. The 4th plenum of the PZPR CC directly linked the decision to change the First Secretary with the necessity for urgent measures to salvage socialism in Poland.

"When I congratulated you over the phone, I was pleased to hear that one of the reasons you had agreed to take on the responsible post of PZPR leader at such a critical juncture was the confidence you felt we had in you. I mentioned this to my comrades, and our hope strengthened even more that in you we had finally found someone who thinks as we do and who will be an ally in one of the most trying phases of the struggle against imperialism, as is now occurring in Poland.

"You'll recall that during the phone conversation I expressed my hope that people now, both in Poland and abroad, would sense that things in your country were finally headed on a different course. We spoke then about the essential preconditions for a turnabout in the situation, and you agreed that you needed to choose reliable assistants from among the ranks of staunch and devoted Communists and to spur the whole party into motion, having instilled it with the spirit of struggle and then, without losing any time, resorting to active measures against the counterrevolution.

"It's obvious that the fundamental question now is the struggle for the hearts and minds of the masses. However, one gets the impression that a turnaround on this matter has so far not been achieved. The anti-socialist forces not only are gaining sway in many large industrial enterprises, but are also continuing to spread their influence among ever wider segments of the population. Worse yet, the leaders of 'Solidarity' and the counterrevolutionaries are still appearing before various audiences and making openly inflammatory speeches aimed at stirring up nationalist passions and directed against the PZPR and against socialism. The direct consequence of this hostile activity is the dangerous growth of anti-Sovietism in Poland.

"It seems to us that you now must mobilize the entire party in the struggle to win the hearts and minds of people by coming forth with a precise and clear program for resolving the crisis, a program that will convince everyone of its appropriateness. In other words, you must seek anew to gain the confidence of ordinary workers, as was done by the Communists during the years of the founding of popular rule. Of great importance in this effort will be regular meetings by leading officials from the PZPR aktiv with labor collectives, especially collectives at large state enterprises, which the enemy has succeeded in transforming into its bastions. This is so not just in the capital. And, of course, the struggle for the hearts and minds of the masses will not achieve the necessary results if the current party leadership is not supported by the mass media and if the adversary, as before, is given unhindered opportunity to disseminate his hostile propaganda.

"I'd now like to broach another matter. Recently in Poland a lot has been written about your meeting with Glempl and Walesa. Some call it historic and see in it the beginning of a turn away from chaos toward social tranquility. As we know, the results of the meeting were positively evaluated by the Politburo and the PPR government.¹

"We understand, of course, that by proposing at this meeting, in the form of a critical question, the creation of a 'Front of National Accord,' you are pursuing a number of tactical objectives, above all the widening of public support for the regime and the fragmentation of the top levels of 'Solidarity.' But how far can one really go with such agreements without the threat of losing control over the situation? Indeed, aren't the class enemies trying to instill the 'Front of National Accord' with political content that would bolster their idea of, at a minimum, attaining a division of power among the PZPR, 'Solidarity,' and the church, with the result that socialism would collapse. It is also clear that they are exploiting their current influence among the masses to establish a huge advantage in the upcoming elections for the national councils, thus continuing their path toward the legal seizure of power in the country.

"This, it seems to me, implies that it will be fundamentally important for the leading role of the PZPR to be greatly strengthened in the 'Front of National Accord,' as well as for the participants in the Front to recognize the PPR Constitution, socialism, and Poland's international alliances. Will these things be done in the Statutes and other documents of the Front, and more important will they be guaranteed in practice? What do you propose to do about the elections for local organs of power, bearing in mind the risk of the party's destruction?

"In this connection another urgent matter arises. During many of our discussions we have emphasized the same theme over and over: We are not opposed to agreements. But such agreements must not make concessions to the enemies of socialism. And the key thing is that the agreements must not become ends in themselves. Along with measures you take to gain support among the popular masses and the different political forces, you must also take decisive actions against the sworn enemies of the popular order. You agreed with this way of framing the question and spoke yourself about your intention of struggling for the hearts and minds of the workers while at the same time attacking the class enemy.

"But now the impression emerges that you're focusing only on the first part of this two-part formula. We know that there are still people in the leadership of your party who are still pinning all their hopes on a continuation of the bankrupt course of Kania. It would be dangerous to succumb to their entreaties. It is now absolutely clear that without a resolute struggle against the class enemy, it will be impossible to save socialism in Poland. The essential question is not whether there will be a confrontation or not, but who will begin it and by what means it will be carried out, as well as who will seize the initiative.

"I'd like to emphasize that when we speak about a confrontation, we believe it is contingent on a struggle to lure back to the side of the PZPR the workers and toiling masses who have fallen under the influence of 'Solidarity' and who now occupy a passive position and bide their time, waiting for things to sort themselves out at the top.²

"You and I, Wojciech Wladyslawovich, have both experienced war and we know that the strategy of fighting is crucially dependent on the question of time. This is directly related to the adverse situation that has now emerged in Poland. The leaders of the anti-socialist forces, who long ago were already gradually, and in some places openly, preparing for a decisive onslaught, are now seeking to time it for the moment when they will have an overwhelming advantage. In particular, they are placing great stakes on the fact that a new group of recruits will be entering the army who have

been worked on by 'Solidarity.'³ Doesn't this suggest to you that a failure to take harsh measures against the counterrevolution right away will cost you invaluable time?

"The key question is how to isolate the sworn enemies of socialism. Until that is done, nothing will change. Moreover, such an overtly counterrevolutionary organization as the 'Confederation for an Independent Poland' (KPN) is enlisting new supporters and is able to function legally. It's obvious that this has been possible because the party is in fact losing control over the judicial organs, as is evident from the whole episode with the trial of Moczulski and the other leaders of KPN.

"I want to share with you some thoughts about one further matter of great urgency. It's obvious that any actions in defense of socialism demand in the first instance a vigorous struggle for the Marxist-Leninist character of the PZPR and an increase in its combat readiness. After the 4th plenum of the PZPR CC, signs began to appear that the party organizations were springing back to life. It is important to step up this work and to prevent the local Communists from falling back into their state of passivity and hopelessness. And for this what is needed most of all is for the members of the party to be able to believe that words and deeds will no longer diverge, and that the leadership is intent on firmly and consistently implementing decisions that have been adopted.

"The strengthening of the PZPR depends also on a clear-cut line with regard to different currents of thought among its ranks. In your country some have argued that there now exist three basic directions in the party--the left, the right, and the center--and they have recommended the severance of all ties with the leftists and rightists, leaving them completely isolated by the force of the blows. This is a dangerous recommendation. Who is it, after all, that is being branded "leftists" or "hardliners"? Why, the Communists who have long been supportive of Marxist-Leninist positions, while in no way dismissing the need to rectify mistakes and distortions that have been committed. And who are the so-called rightists? These are the people who espouse revisionist views and ultimately become members of 'Solidarity.' It is clear that any sort of actions against staunch Communists would be suicide for the PZPR as a Communist party. And it is just as clear that until you get rid of the revisionists, including the ones in the party leadership who are trying to uphold the previous capitulationist line, they will weigh on you like a heavy burden.

"I believe these considerations provide the key to a solution of the mounting problems with personnel. I am convinced that by working with your comrades who are oriented toward the "leftists," and by giving them your support, you will find that it is precisely these people who provide a sound basis for the struggle to overcome the crisis.

"Esteemed Wojciech Wladyslawovich! Having raised, for your benefit, several matters that are troubling us, and having offered you my views, I naturally have left aside a number of problems that can be considered during a face-to-face meeting.⁴

L. BREZHNEV"

Confirm transmittal by telegram.

1. Translator's Note: Brezhnev presumably refers here to the PZPR Politburo.
2. Translator's Note: A page was missing at this point in the documents originally

supplied to the Polish government and published in Rzeczpospolita. Fortunately, the missing page (no. 5 in the document) was included in the copy of the document stored in the Moscow archives.

3. Translator's Note: Misgivings about the influence of Solidarity on the new group of Polish army draftees were expressed frequently in 1981 in top-secret Soviet assessments of the reliability of the Polish army. See, e.g., "O nastroeniyakh sredi soldat i ofitserov podrazdelenii Voiska Pol'skogo i VMF PNR, dislotsiruyushchikhsya na Gdan'skom poberezh'e," Cable No. 183 (Top Secret), 14 June 1981, from V. Zelenov, Soviet consul-general in Gdansk, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 611, Ll. 17-19; and also "O politicheskoi situatsii i nastroeniyakh v voevodstvakh yuzhnogo regiona PNR (Politpis'mo)," Cable No. 179 (TOP SECRET), 12 November 1981, from G. Rudov, Soviet consul-general in Krakow, to the CPSU Secretariat, in TsKhSD, F. 5, Op. 84, D. 597, Ll. 13-22.

4. Translator's Note: It is not wholly clear what Brezhnev had in mind here, but he may have been alluding to some of the preparations for martial law.