

October 19, 1981

Brezhnev-Jaruzelski Telephone Conversation

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Brezhnev-Jaruzelski Telephone Conversation, 19 October 1981 To be returned
 Distributed to the members to the CPSU CC of the CPSU CC Politburo, (General
 Depart- members of the CPSU CC ment, 1st sector) Politburo, and CPSU CC
 No. P1942 secretaries

To
 the CPSU CC I am conveying notes from a telephone conversation with Comrade
 W. Jaruzelski on 19 October of this year. L.
 BREZHNEV 19 October 1981

Secret NOTES FROM A TELEPHONE

CONVERSATION between Comrade L. I. Brezhnev and Comrade W. Jaruzelski
 19 October 1981

The Kremlin L. I. BREZHNEV. Hello, Wojciech. W.
 JARUZELSKI. Hello, my dear, deeply esteemed Leonid Ilyich. L. I. BREZHNEV.
 Dear Wojciech, we already sent you an official greeting, but I wanted to congratulate
 you personally on your election to the post of First Secretary of the PZPR CC. It
 was appropriate of you to give your consent to such a decision. In the PZPR right now
 there is no other individual whose authority is equal to yours; this is evident from the
 results of the vote at the plenum. We understand that very difficult tasks now stand
 before you. But we are convinced that you will cope with them and will do everything
 to overcome the severe ailments afflicting your country. I think, right now, as it
 seems to me, the most important thing is for you to gather around yourself some
 reliable assistants from the ranks of committed and worthy Communists and to rally
 them, spurring the whole party into action and instilling it with the spirit of struggle.
 This, in the literal sense of the word, is the key to success. And, of course, it is
 important, without wasting time, to take the decisive measures you intend to use
 against the counterrevolution. We hope that everyone now, both in Poland and
 abroad, will sense that things in your country will move along differently. We
 wish you good health and success! W. JARUZELSKI. Thank you very much, dear
 Leonid Ilyich, for the greeting and above all for the confidence you have in me. I
 want to tell you frankly that I had some inner misgivings about accepting this post
 and agreed to do so only because I knew that you support me and that you were in
 favor of this decision. If this had not been so, I never would have agreed to it. This is
 a very burdensome and very difficult task in such a complicated situation in the
 country, in which I now find myself both as prime minister and as minister of defense.
 But I understand that this is proper and necessary if you personally believe so. L.
 I. BREZHNEV. Wojciech, we long ago believed so. We long ago spoke about this to
 our friends. W. JARUZELSKI. And for that reason I consented. I will do all I can,
 Leonid Ilyich, both as a Communist and as a soldier, to improve things and to achieve
 a turnaround in the situation in the country and in our party. I understand and fully
 agree with you that one of the crucial things right now is the selection of leadership
 both in the party and in the government. And for that reason I deferred any final
 resolution of personnel matters until the next plenum, which we will be holding within
 several days. This way, I can think carefully about these matters and consult with
 others, ending up with a comprehensive decision and not simply scattered personnel
 changes. L. I. BREZHNEV. Personnel matters are very important both at the
 center and in the outlying regions. W. JARUZELSKI. This issue will be resolved in
 the outlying regions as well. Of course this must occur in parallel with the
 strengthening of the party in the spirit of a stepped-up struggle. In the appropriate
 situation we must apply decisive actions in order to wage battle where we are
 confident of achieving success. I'm now heading over to a session of the Military
 Council of the Armed Forces at the Ministry of Defense. There I will also be putting
 forth appropriate tasks. We will broadly include the army in all spheres of the life of
 the country. Yesterday, after the plenum, I held a meeting with the first
 secretaries of the provincial committees and said that they should not take umbrage
 at the fact that we will be including people from the armed forces in the
 implementation of certain processes and will be expanding meetings between the
 officer corps and the working class in order to exert direct influence on the workers
 and shield them from the influence of "Solidarity." Of course, we are not changing
 our general direction in the sense that we are struggling to win back to our side the
 healthy forces of the nation who have gone astray and joined "Solidarity," and
 simultaneously we will be combatting the adversary and, of course, doing so in such a
 way that it will produce results. Today I am meeting with your ambassador. I will
 try to go over certain questions with him in greater detail and will be asking for your

suggestions on some questions which he, no doubt, will convey to you.¹ In keeping you informed of all the decisions we reach, we will simultaneously let you know what has motivated our decision-making in particular cases. Right now the greatest complications in our country arise from the situation at the market. In connection with this we have been experiencing many strikes and protests, some organized by "Solidarity" and others that are simply elemental. This very much complicates efforts to carry out measures that must be implemented and complicates our work, since the mood in society is indifferent. But we will be trying to do everything possible to improve the situation. This is what I wanted initially to convey to you and to keep you informed about. Once again I want to thank you very much for your kind words. L. I. BREZHNEV. I again wish you, Wojciech, the best of health and the best of success. W. JARUZELSKI. Thank you. Good-bye.¹

Translator's Note: Notes from this meeting are available in both Russian and Polish archives; see, e.g., Fond (F.) No. 5, Opis' (Op.) No. 84, Delo (D.) No. 596, Listy (Ll.) 33-35, Tsentr khraneniya sovremennoi dokumentatsii (TsKhSD).