

**April 2, 1981**

**Memorandum from John McMahon to the Secretaries  
of State and Defense and Director of the National  
Security Agency, 'Soviet Reaction to Polish  
Proposals Regarding the Declaration of Martial Law'**

**Citation:**

"Memorandum from John McMahon to the Secretaries of State and Defense and Director of the National Security Agency, 'Soviet Reaction to Polish Proposals Regarding the Declaration of Martial Law'", April 2, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CIA declassification, 2008

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**Summary:**

Translated memorandum discusses how Ministry of Defense documents concerning martial law were translated and presented to Brezhnev. The document later explains the parameters set up by Brezhnev and Polish officials under which martial must be set up and executed.

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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

WASHINGTON, D.C. 20505

2 April 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR: The Secretary of State  
The Secretary of Defense  
Assistant to the President for  
National Security Affairs  
Director, National Security Agency

FROM : John N. McMahon  
Deputy Director for Operations

SUBJECT : Soviet Reaction to Polish Proposals Regarding  
the Declaration of Martial Law

1. [ ] Comment: The following information is from an extremely sensitive source and, therefore, recipients should hold this report very closely.]

2. A reliable source who has excellent access in the Polish Ministry of Defense reported that Polish documents dealing with the introduction of the state of Martial Law were translated into Russian by the Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Premier Jaruzelski was to have presented these documents during his meeting with Brezhnev. [ ]  
Comment: This apparently is a reference to a meeting which took place in Moscow on 4 March between Polish and Soviet leaders. Among the Soviets in attendance were Brezhnev, Andropov, Suslov, Tikhonov and Ustinov. The Polish delegation included Kania, Jaruzelski, Wojtaszek and Zabinski.]

3. On the 28th of March, with the agreement of Kania and Jaruzelski, approximately 30 leading functionaries of the KGB, the Soviet Ministry of Defense and GOSPLAN arrived in Warsaw to act as consultants on Martial Law. This group was led by

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-2-

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Marshal Kulikov, Commander in Chief of the Combined Armed Forces, and Army General Tsvigun, First Deputy Minister of the KGB. After familiarizing themselves with the Polish plans for the declaration of Martial Law, the Soviets determined these plans unsatisfactory and presented their own proposals regarding this matter. According to the Soviets' assessment, the introduction of a state of Martial Law is dictated by the necessity to defend socialism. The following are some of the specific proposals the Soviets put forward regarding the introduction of Martial Law:

- The introduction of Martial Law should be accompanied by a suspension of the Constitution with the total power being transferred to the hands of the military. In the provinces the authority should be in the hands of the garrison commanders and in areas where there are no garrisons the authority should be in the hands of appointed commanders of the Polish Armed Forces.
- The executors of Martial Law should be the Army, the security forces, and the active elements of the Party during the duration of Martial Law.
- During the period of preparation for the introduction of Martial Law, the Poles should concentrate their efforts on unmasking counter-revolutionary elements in Solidarnosc, including the identification of leaders and elements which are extreme, determination of where they reside, determination of the location of underground radios and printing presses, and the introduction of agent networks into hostile organizations.
- Fourteen hours before the introduction of Martial Law the Poles should complete the detention of hostile elements, start investigations and establish emergency courts.

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- 3 -

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- In order to stifle counter-revolution and strikes the Poles should use the security forces together with the Polish Armed Forces.
- Soviet advisors should be introduced into the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, into the military district commands and into branches of the Polish Armed Forces.

4. The leadership of the Polish Ministry of Defense rejected generally all of the above Soviet proposals. Under Soviet pressure only the form of certain Martial Law planning documents were revised. The Polish leadership led by Jaruzelski and Kania and in the Polish Armed Forces by General Siwicki, Chief of the General Staff, have no intention of introducing a state of Martial Law. Source stated that during their visit on the 28th of March, the Soviets appealed to the Generals [not identified] in the Polish General Staff and in the Army to revolt.

5. After the completion of the Plenum of the Central Committee of the Polish Party on the 29th of March, the Soviets concluded that the Party had assumed a social democratic stance and that the authority in Poland had already passed to the Solidarnosc in Gdansk.

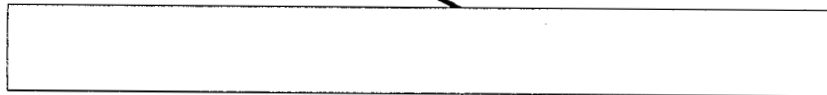
6. On the 31st of March all of the Soviet military group moved to their communications regiment in Rembertow with the exception of Marshal Kulikov who remained in the villa at Belwederska and Suliewicza streets where he conferred with Kania on the 31st.

7. The Headquarters of the Front and armies of the Polish Armed Forces remained in the field in the vicinities of their permanent stations. Within the framework of operational camouflage the Polish General Staff has deployed five dummy command posts with communications centers.

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- 4 -

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8. Six thousand reservists of the Polish Armed Forces have been released from active duty and in the near future 50,000 troops of the Polish Armed Forces of the oldest conscript class will be discharged.

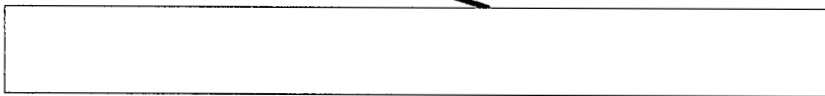


*JN*  
John N. McMahon

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- 5 -

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