

Document No. 54: CIA National Intelligence Daily, "USSR–Poland:  
Polish Military Attitudes"

June 20, 1981

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*This CIA appraisal discusses one of the crucial questions relating to a possible invasion of Poland: the reaction of the Polish military. Previous crises in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968 had proven the unreliability and even hostility of local armies. Kania and Jaruzelski both told Warsaw Pact Commander Kulikov that they did not trust the army in particular (see Document No. 41). Polish plans for martial law thus deliberately placed most of the responsibility for securing the country in the hands of the MSW rather than the Polish army. On another topic, relying on sources in the Polish intelligentsia, this report provides a scenario in which Polish resistance to an invasion would produce a minimum of 600,000 casualties—and allegedly many more in the calculations of Soviet intelligence. The report goes on to say that, according to sources, most senior Polish officers were offended by the June 5 CPSU CC letter (Document No. 50), which bluntly warned of outside intervention if the Polish authorities did not swiftly put their house in order. As a result, military officers attending a Polish CC meeting a few days later threw their support entirely behind both Kania and Jaruzelski.*

*At the end of this analysis are remarks about the relative lack of criticism over Poland in the Soviet press. This belied the continuing barrage of Soviet condemnation of the Poles behind the scenes, in the form of inter-party communications such as the June 5 letter and regular criticism at meetings and during telephone conversations between Polish and Soviet leaders.*

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USSR–Poland: Polish Military Attitudes

*Sources [half line excised] said on Thursday that most of the senior Polish military command is now alienated from the Soviets and fully supports the Kania–Jaruzelski team and that the Polish military is likely to resist any Soviet invasion.*

The sources, members of the intelligentsia, who reportedly have good access among Polish leaders, also said that Polish authorities have now begun to calculate the size of a possible Soviet invasion force and the number of casualties that might result from such an operation.

*Conjecture on an Invasion*

[2–3 words excised] sources believe that at least 50 Soviet and Warsaw Pact combat divisions and additional support units would be needed to invade, and the Polish leaders reportedly estimate there would be a total of 600,000 to 800,000 Polish and Soviet casualties. The authorities allegedly also believe that Soviet

intelligence services calculate the cost in lives at a much higher level. There is no other evidence that the Poles have begun to discuss a possible invasion.

We believe that some Polish troops would resist a Soviet intervention, but [2–3 words excised] sources reportedly think it is likely that larger units up to division size would fight. They explained that senior-level Polish officers were alienated from Moscow because of the letter the Soviets sent to the Polish Central Committee.<sup>31</sup> They think the military clearly indicated at last week's Central Committee plenum that it would not support any other leadership team in Poland.

Military officers who are members of the Central Committee did support Kania during last week's meeting, and party organizations within the military this week pledged support to the Jaruzelski government. Kania attended one of these meetings and pointedly thanked the "comrades in uniform" for their invaluable support for the party and its line of renewal. This support, he said, was of "great political importance."

#### *Soviet and East German Commentary*

Soviet media commentary and East German activity suggest that Moscow and its allies continue to reserve judgment on how to deal with the Polish party congress planned for next month. Comments by East German officials suggest they have no illusions about rallying opposition within Poland to the renewal process. Although the East Germans are intent on reviving their campaign of making contacts with party officials in Poland, the aim apparently is only to be kept informed on developments there.

The current lack of a sense of urgency among senior officials in East Berlin suggests that the East Germans do not anticipate a Warsaw Pact intervention before the congress. [3 lines excised]

The Soviets have reprinted notably strong criticism from other East European media of the Warsaw regime's failure to act firmly against "counter-revolutionaries," but have confined their own recent commentary to attacks upon "extremists" within Solidarity and some elements within the Polish media. Moscow has refrained from direct attacks upon the Polish leaders, and has even accorded Kania and Jaruzelski moderately favorable television coverage.

Moscow may be refraining from strong attacks in order to preserve the option of attempting sooner or later to restore a working relationship with the Polish leaders. They may also fear that a shriller media campaign would inflame anti-Soviet sentiment among the Polish population, and possibly alarm Soviet citizens as well.

A Soviet Central Committee plenum will probably be held on Monday. The Central Committee normally convenes at this time of year, and Poland is likely to be a prime topic. [2–3 words excised]

*[Source: FOIA release from the CIA, on file at the National Security Archive, "Soviet Flashpoints" collection.]*

<sup>31</sup> The CPSU CC letter of June 5, 1981. See Document No. 50.