

MEMORANDUM

SYSTEM II
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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

December 23, 1981

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JAMES W. NANCE *Jud*

RR OK

SUBJECT: Letter to Brezhnev

The attached proposed message is the final proposal of your message to Brezhnev. If you approve, we will release the message for transmission.

APPROVE _____

DISAPPROVE _____

~~SECRET/SENSITIVE~~

J. Van Tassel, WSC 10/5/95
DD, NARA 11/20/95

3

~~TOP SECRET~~
~~SENSITIVE SPECAT~~

HIS EXCELLENCY
LEONID I. BREZHNEV
CHAIRMAN, PRESIDUM OF THE SUPREME
SOVIET OF THE UNION OF SOVIET
SOCIALIST REPUBLICS

DEAR MR. PRESIDENT :

THE RECENT EVENTS IN POLAND HAVE FILLED THE PEOPLE OF THE UNITED STATES AND ME WITH DISMAY. SINCE THE IMPOSITION OF MARTIAL LAW ON DECEMBER 13, THE MOST ELEMENTARY RIGHTS OF THE POLISH PEOPLE HAVE BEEN VIOLATED DAILY: MASSIVE ARRESTS WITHOUT ANY LEGAL PROCEDURES; INCARCERATIONS OF TRADE UNION LEADERS AND INTELLECTUALS IN OVERCROWDED JAILS AND FREEZING DETENTION CAMPS; SUSPENSION OF ALL RIGHTS OF ASSEMBLY AND ASSOCIATION; AND, LAST BUT NOT LEAST, BRUTAL ASSAULTS BY SECURITY FORCES ON CITIZENS.

THE RECENT EVENTS IN POLAND CLEARLY ARE NOT AN "INTERNAL MATTER" AND IN WRITING TO YOU, AS THE HEAD OF THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT, I AM NOT MISADDRESSING MY COMMUNICATION. YOUR COUNTRY HAS REPEATEDLY INTERVENED IN POLISH AFFAIRS DURING THE MONTHS PRECEDING THE RECENT TRAGIC EVENTS. NO CLEARER PROOF OF SUCH INTERVENTION IS NEEDED THAN THE LETTER OF JUNE 5, 1931, FROM THE CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE CPSU TO THE POLISH LEADERSHIP WHICH WARNED THE POLES THAT THE SOVIET UNION COULD NOT TOLERATE DEVELOPMENTS THERE. THERE WERE NUMEROUS OTHER COMMUNICATIONS OF THIS NATURE WHICH PLACED PRESSURE ON THE POLISH GOVERNMENT AND DEPICTED THE REFORM MOVEMENT AS A THREAT TO THE "VITAL INTERESTS" OF ALL SOCIALIST COUNTRIES. THESE COMMUNICATIONS, ACCOMPANIED BY A STEADY BARRAGE OF MEDIA ASSAULTS AS WELL AS MILITARY EXERCISES ALONG POLANDS BORDERS, WERE COUPLED WITH WARNINGS OF INTERVENTION UNLESS THE POLISH GOVERNMENT SHARPLY RESTRICTED THE LIBERTIES AND RIGHTS WHICH IT WAS GRANTING ITS CITIZENS.

ALL THESE ACTIONS REPRESENTED A CLEAR VIOLATION OF MANY INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS TO WHICH THE SOVIET UNION IS A SIGNATORY. LET ME ONLY MENTION ONE PROVISION OF THE HELSINKI FINAL ACT WHICH YOU, MR. PRESIDENT, PERSONALLY INITIALED ON BEHALF OF YOUR COUNTRY IN 1975. THERE YOU HAVE AGREED WITH OTHER COUNTRIES TO REFRAIN "FROM ANY INTERVENTION, DIRECT OR INDIRECT, INDIVIDUAL OR COLLECTIVE IN THE INTERNAL OR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS FALLING WITHIN THE DOMESTIC JURISDICTION OF ANOTHER PARTICIPATING STATE, REGARDLESS OF THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS."

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BY *Amf* 10/22/99

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OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAVE HAD MOMENTS OF ACCORD AND MOMENTS OF DISAGREEMENT BUT SINCE AFGHANISTAN NOTHING HAS SO OUTRAGED OUR PUBLIC OPINION AS THE PRESSURES AND THREATS WHICH YOUR GOVERNMENT HAS EXERTED ON POLAND TO STIFLE THE STIRRINGS OF FREEDOM.

ATTEMPTS TO SUPPRESS THE POLISH PEOPLE -- EITHER BY THE POLISH ARMY AND POLICE ACTING UNDER SOVIET PRESSURE, OR THROUGH EVEN MORE DIRECT USE OF SOVIET MILITARY FORCE -- CERTAINLY WILL NOT BRING ABOUT LONG-TERM STABILITY IN POLAND AND COULD UNLEASH A PROCESS WHICH NEITHER YOU NOR WE COULD FULLY CONTROL.

THE ONLY SENSIBLE SOLUTION IS TO ALLOW THE POLISH GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE TO BEGIN A PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION, AND TO DO SO NOW, BEFORE THE SITUATION DETERIORATES FURTHER. THIS CANNOT BE DONE IN THE PRESENT ATMOSPHERE OF POLITICAL TERROR, MASS ARRESTS AND BLOODSHED. REPRESENTATIVES OF THE SPIRITUAL, POLITICAL AND SOCIAL FORCES IN POLAND NEED TO BE PROMPTLY RELEASED FROM DETENTION AND A NEW NATIONAL DIALOGUE INITIATED. THIS IS AS ESSENTIAL TO SOLVING POLAND'S MAJOR ECONOMIC PROBLEMS AS IT IS TO HEALING ITS POLITICAL WOUNDS. IT IS THE SOLE PATH TO LONG-TERM STABILITY IN POLAND AND THEREFORE IN EUROPE AS A WHOLE.

THE SOVIET UNION CAN EITHER ACKNOWLEDGE THE NEED FOR THIS PROCESS OR CONTINUE TO PREVENT IT. THE CONSEQUENCES OF EACH OF THESE COURSES FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP SHOULD BE CLEAR.

OVER THE COURSE OF 1981 WE HAVE BEGUN TO DEVELOP A FRAME-
WORK TO GUIDE OUR RELATIONS IN THE YEARS TO COME. IN SECRETARY HAIG'S LAST MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER GROMYKO AND IN MY LAST LETTER TO YOU, WE SET FORTH A CONCRETE AGENDA FOR NEGOTIATIONS ON CRITICAL REGIONAL AND ARMS CONTROL ISSUES. IT HAS BEEN OUR HOPE AND INTENTION TO PROCEED IN 1982 TO TRY TO ACHIEVE SPECIFIC PROGRESS ON EACH ITEM ON THIS AGENDA.

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THE SOVIET UNION MUST DECIDE WHETHER WE CAN MOVE AHEAD WITH THIS AGENDA, OR WHETHER WE WILL TRAVEL A DIFFERENT PATH. THE HEAVY RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SOVIET UNION FOR THE PRESENT REPRESSION IN POLAND THREATENS TO UNDERMINE THE BASIS FOR AN IMPROVEMENT IN OUR RELATIONSHIP. WE RECOGNIZE THE INTEREST OF THE SOVIET UNION IN A STABLE POLAND. BUT A PROCESS OF RECONCILIATION AND MODERATE REFORM IN POLAND REPRESENTS NO THREAT TO THE SOVIET UNION. THE UNITED STATES CANNOT ACCEPT SUPPRESSION OF THE POLISH PEOPLES LEGITIMATE DESIRE FOR SUCH A PROCESS OF RENEWAL, PARTICULARLY WHEN IT IS IMPOSED UNDER EXTERNAL PRESSURE. SHOULD THE SOVIET UNION PERSIST IN AIDING THE COURSE OF CONTINUED SUPPRESSION IN POLAND, THE UNITED STATES WILL HAVE NO CHOICE BUT TO TAKE CONCRETE MEASURES AFFECTING THE FULL RANGE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP.

SOVIET ACTIONS IN THE DAYS AND WEEKS AHEAD WILL DETERMINE OUR DECISIONS. AS LEADERS OF TWO GREAT AND POWERFUL NATIONS, WE BEAR A MUTUAL OBLIGATION TO DEMONSTRATE WISDOM, MODERATION AND RESTRAINT. LET ME ASSURE YOU THAT I AM PREPARED TO JOIN IN THE PROCESS OF HELPING TO HEAL POLAND'S WOUNDS AND TO MEET ITS REAL NEEDS IF YOU ARE PREPARED TO RECIPROCATE. I CALL UPON YOU TO MAKE CLEAR THAT YOU UNDERSTAND THE NEED FOR NATIONAL RECONCILIATION IN POLAND. THE ALTERNATIVE IS NOT IN THE INTEREST OF ANYONE.

I HOPE TO HEAR FROM YOU IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS.

SINCERELY,

RONALD REAGAN

DRAFT LETTER TO BREZHNEV 12/22/81

Dear Mr. President:

The situation in Poland and the relationship between our two governments are now at a critical juncture.

For many months the Soviet Union has brought severe pressure to bear on the Government of Poland to suppress the desire of the Polish people for reform. It has done so in public and in private, through political, military and economic intimidation. It has made no secret of its pressure and its approval of the repression, and therefore cannot now deny that it bears great responsibility for the present course of events.

Attempts to suppress the Polish people -- either by the Polish army and police acting under Soviet pressure, or through even more direct use of Soviet military force -- certainly will not bring about long-term stability in Poland and could unleash a process which neither you nor I could fully control.

The only solution is to allow the Polish Government and people to begin a process of reconciliation, and to do so now as the situation could deteriorate further at any time. This cannot be done in the present atmosphere of political terror, mass arrests and bloodshed. Representatives of the spiritual, political and social forces in Poland must be

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597-001 * 41

BY AM 10/22/79

-2-

released from detention and a new national dialogue initiated. This is as essential to solve Poland's major economic problems as it is to heal the political wounds. It is the sole path to long-term stability in Poland and therefore in Europe.

The Soviet Union can either acknowledge the need for this process or continue to prevent it. The consequences of each of these courses for our relationship are clear.

Our general assessment has been that over the course of 1981 we had begun to develop a framework to guide our relations in the years to come. In Secretary Haig's last meeting with Foreign Minister Gromyko and in my last letter to you, we had gone beyond our framework to set forth a concrete agenda for negotiations on critical regional and arms control issues. It has been our hope and intention to proceed in 1982 to try to achieve specific progress in each area of this agenda. We have been expecting to build a better relationship and increased cooperation.

Now the Soviet Union must decide whether we can move ahead with this agenda, or whether we will travel another path. The heavy responsibility of the Soviet Union for the present repression in Poland -- which contravenes the United Nations Charter and the Helsinki Final Act -- undermines the basis for an improvement in our relationship. We have no intention of dictating a change in the relationship of political forces in Europe. We recognize the interest of the

Soviet Union in a stable Poland. But a process of reconciliation and moderate reform in Poland represents no threat to the Soviet Union.

The United States cannot acquiesce in externally and internally imposed suppression of the Polish people's legitimate desire for such a process of renewal. Should the Soviet Union pursue this course, the United States will take prompt steps affecting our relations, in both political and economic terms.

Your actions in the days ahead will determine our own decisions. As leaders of two great powerful nations, we bear a mutual obligation to demonstrate wisdom, moderation and restraint. Let me assure you that I am prepared to join in the process of helping to heal Poland's wounds and to meet its real needs if you are prepared to reciprocate. I call upon you to make clear that you understand the need for reconciliation in Poland, and to do so in the next few days.

Sincerely,

Ronald Reagan