

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Restricted Meeting with Aleksander
Kwasniewski, President of Poland (U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Daniel Fried, Senior Director for Central
and Eastern European Affairs, NSC Staff
(notetaker)

President Kwasniewski
Jerzy Kozminski, Ambassador to the U.S.

DATE, TIME July 10, 1997 at 3:20-3:35 p.m.
AND PLACE: Radziwill Palace, Warsaw

President Kwasniewski: (In English) I do have some items to raise. Modernization of our military is a long-term project which will take at least 10-15 years and require considerable resources. We are organizing ourselves to provide these resources in our budget, but I hope you can think about credits from the United States -- long-term loans really, to be paid back -- to support this. Some of the items we require, such as new fighter planes, will be expensive and we want to cooperate with U.S. companies. Over the next ten years, we estimate the costs of joining NATO will be about \$2 billion; we will provide this ourselves, of course. But in addition, Poland will have to modernize its military, whether or not it is in NATO, and this will require additional funds. We are interested in cooperation with your firms, such as Lockheed, and have in mind a program that could support this. (C)

The President: We will get back to you on this. We want to be helpful and it is important that the costs of joining NATO and military modernization not be too burdensome on economies. The important thing is to keep the economy going. When the economy is doing well, people are more apt to be outward looking as well as better off. (C)

President Kwasniewski: That is our thinking, too; we need to be careful as we move ahead. We will need about \$3 billion over the next fifteen years for our military to cover the costs of joining

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Reason: 1.5 (b)

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NATO. This is realistic. It means about \$200 million per year and we can get this sum through our parliament; it will not damage our economy and there is enough support for joining NATO that we can do this. But the extra costs of major equipment -- fighter aircraft for example -- may require long-term loans. (C)

The President: I think we can help. (C)

Mr. Fried: Of course, we must be careful not to create the impression that Poland is incapable of assuming the responsibilities of NATO membership. (C)

The President: Sure, though I think Dan could arrange for loans of a few hundred million dollars. You could do that, couldn't you? (C)

Mr. Fried: I'll see what our options are. (C)

President Kwasniewski: The Polish Army is a real military; while it has shortcomings, it is larger than the Spanish Army and enjoys good morale and support from society. It will be a good partner for NATO. (C)

The President: Let me mention Colonel Kuklinski. I want to thank you for your efforts to resolve this case. It is difficult but important and I think we are on the right track. (C)

President Kwasniewski: It is indeed a difficult case but I am determined to find a solution. I have discussed this with Zbigniew Brzezinski and Ambassador Rey. Of course, the issue is legal and not political; the responsibility is not with the President but with the Military Prosecutor. But I believe that finally the case against Col. Kuklinski will be dismissed. The issue really is timing and the credibility of the legal decision. This must be credible and based on sound legal judgments, not just an order. The military prosecutors are working in a complicated and difficult context. This will take some weeks to resolve but I am ready to do what is necessary. It is difficult but difficulties come with the job. (C)

Another difficulty that comes with my job is the issue of Polish-Jewish relations. (U)

The President: This is a huge issue, but your efforts can pay off. (U)

President Kwasniewski: There are extremists in the Jewish community and in Poland that make the job more difficult. The matter of crosses at Auschwitz is not easy; Poland is a Catholic country and although most of the victims at Auschwitz were Jews,

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many Catholics were also murdered there. It is really not easy to remove crosses in a Catholic country, but we have made progress recently and there will be an agreement to remove the crosses. (C)

On Kuklinski, I believe a solution will be found within 2-3 weeks. (C)

-- End of Conversation --

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