

**December 24, 1981**

**Intelligence Information Cable, 'Soviet Pressure on Polish Government to Act Against the Polish Church'**

**Citation:**

"Intelligence Information Cable, 'Soviet Pressure on Polish Government to Act Against the Polish Church'", December 24, 1981, Wilson Center Digital Archive, CIA declassification, 2008 <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/165342>

**Summary:**

Report discusses how after breaking Solidarnosc resistance, the next most important part of maintaining power is to lessen the influence of the Catholic Church. The Soviets propose tactics such as smear campaigns against priests, paternity suits, and getting priests drunk.

**Credits:**

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**Original Language:**

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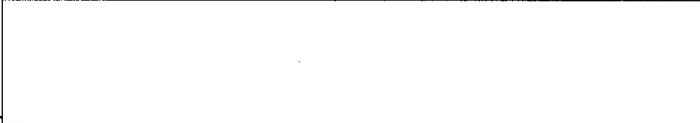
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### Intelligence Information Cable



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DIST 24 DECEMBER



COUNTRY POLAND/USSR

SUBJECT SOVIET PRESSURE ON POLISH GOVERNMENT TO ACT AGAINST THE POLISH CHURCH  
(DOI: LATE DECEMBER 1981)

SOURCE A FORMER POLISH GENERAL STAFF OFFICER WHO MADE THE FOLLOWING COMMENTS BASED ON HIS PAST EXPERIENCE AND CONTACTS.

1. WHILE THERE ARE NO POLISH PLANS PER SE TO ACT AGAINST THE CHURCH, VERY STRONG PRESSURE WAS EXERTED BY THE SOVIETS TO COMPEL THE POLES TO SEVERELY CURTAIL THE ACTIVITIES OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH. SOME SOVIET MILITARY OFFICERS HAVE ARGUED THAT THE MAIN CAUSE FOR THE CURRENT POLISH SITUATION IS THE CHURCH'S INFLUENCE IN POLAND AND THE ELECTION OF A POLISH POPE. THE SOVIETS CONDEMNED THE POLISH DECISION TO ALLOW THE POPE TO VISIT POLAND IN JUNE 1979, AND DEMANDED THAT CHURCH INFLUENCE BE RADICALLY LIMITED. ACTIONS SUBSEQUENTLY TAKEN BY THE POLISH SECURITY SERVICE AGAINST THE CHURCH INCLUDED RECORDING ALL (SIC) SERMONS BY PRIESTS, REPORTING INFORMATION ON CHURCH ACTIVITIES AND THE POLITICAL LEANINGS OF BISHOPS AND PRIESTS. MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS DAILY SITUATION REPORTS GIVEN TO TOP POLISH LEADERS, INCLUDE A SECTION ON THE CHURCH.

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RELEASE IN PART  
EXEMPTION: HR70-14  
DATE: 08-19-2008

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2. IF IT HAS NOT BEEN DONE YET, THE CURTAILMENT OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES DEMANDED BY THE SOVIETS WILL BE ACCOMPLISHED IN THE NEAR FUTURE. WITHIN THE MILITARY COUNCIL, THE LIMITATION OF THE CHURCH IS THE SECOND GOAL TO BE PURSUED AS SOON AS THE RESISTANCE OF THE WORKERS IS BROKEN. CURTAILMENT OF CHURCH ACTIVITIES WOULD INCLUDE LIMITING THE FREEDOM OF PRIESTS AND BISHOPS AND OTHER CLERGY, CANCELLING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN SCHOOLS, CANCELLING THE CONSTRUCTION OF NEW CHURCHES AND CONFINING ALL CHURCH ACTIVITIES TO EXISTING CHURCHES ONLY. PRIESTS, BISHOPS, NUNS, AND OTHER CLERICS WHO SPEAK OUT AGAINST THE REGIME WILL BE ISOLATED AND ARRESTED. AT PRESENT, EFFORTS ARE BEING MADE TO ISOLATE ONLY THOSE WHO ARE PARTICULARLY VOCAL IN CONDEMNING THE GOVERNMENT AND SUPPORTING

SOLIDARITY. LATER, MORE HARSH MEASURES WILL BE TAKEN. HIGH LEVEL SOVIET MILITARY PRESSURE ON THE POLES IN THIS REGARD INCLUDES SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR MEASURES AGAINST THE CLERGY. THESE HAVE INCLUDED GETTING PRIESTS DRUNK, PATERNITY SUITS AGAINST PRIESTS, AND A SMEAR CAMPAIGN TO COMPROMISE THE CLERGY. A TYPICAL EXAMPLE OF THE SOVIET ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE POLISH CHURCH OCCURRED LAST SUMMER, WHEN WARSAW PACT COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF V. I. KULIKOV VISITED POLAND. HE ASKED TO SEE A FILM OF THE POPE'S VISIT, THROUGHOUT WHICH HE PAILED

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ABOUT HOW UNTHINKABLE IT WAS THAT A CHURCH LEADER COULD GET SUCH A RECEPTION IN A COMMUNIST COUNTRY.

3. SOURCE COMMENT: IN ONE CONVERSATION AMONG KULIKOV POLISH LEADER WOJCIECH JARUZELSKI, AND SEVERAL OTHER GENERALS, THE HATRED FOR THE POPE AND THE DEMAND THAT THE POLES ACCEPT SOCIALISM AND REJECT GOD WAS CLEARLY EVIDENT. IT IS NOT EXCLUDED THAT THE SOVIETS WOULD TRY TO ASSASSINATE THE POPE. AT A JULY 1981 MEETING WITHIN THE GENERAL STAFF, GENERAL WLADYSLAW HERMASZEWSKI, WHO IS CLOSE TO THE SOVIETS, REPEATED THE SOVIET LINE THAT ALL THE PROBLEMS BEGAN WITH THE ELECTION OF THE POPE. HE SAID THAT AT THAT TIME THERE WERE MANY POLES WHO WOULD DO "THE SAME THING AS THE TURK," THAT IS, TRY TO ASSASSINATE THE POPE. SOURCE BELIEVES THAT THE SOVIETS OBVIOUSLY HAD A HAND IN THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT OF THE POPE AS THEY ARE THE ONLY ONES WHO WOULD BENEFIT FROM SUCH AN ACTION. THE SOVIETS HAVE STATED AND STRONGLY BELIEVE THAT SO LONG AS THERE IS A POLISH POPE, COMMUNISM WILL NOT TAKE ROOT IN POLAND.

4. THROUGHOUT THE PAST YEAR, THERE HAVE BEEN VERY STRONG PRESSURES ON JARUZELSKI TO LIMIT THE INFLUENCE OF THE CHURCH IN POLISH SOCIETY. THE POLES HAVE ARGUED THAT THE TIME IS NOT RIGHT TO DO SO AND AT PRESENT CONDITIONS ARE NOT RIPE FOR IT. THEY TRIED TO SHOW THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OF CHURCH INFLUENCE, FOR EXAMPLE,

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THE CHURCH AND CARDINAL STEFAN WYSZYNSKI, NOW DECEASED, AS BEING A  
FORCE FOR MODERATION AND FOR CALM. THE SOVIETS, HOWEVER, DISREGARD  
THIS LINE OF REASONING.

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