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The Polish People's Republic and the INF Talks

The question of armaments limitation and reduction attracted great interest in Polish society and within the government in Warsaw. This interest was rooted in Polish experiences, and especially memories of World War II. In the eyes of many Poles the war had left them not only with enormous material damage, but with hecatombs of dead Polish citizens, the annihilation of the intelligentsia, and the destruction of a huge amount of cultural heritage. It also brought the loss of Polish independence—even though from a formal point of view Poland had been restored as a sovereign country. A natural reaction to these experiences was a particularly strong fear of war. Not only this. The armaments race had an effect on education and propaganda activities, which used the war and social memory as a tool to lend legitimization to the leadership and as means of creating “enemy” images. A will to start up a new war was attributed to the West (i. e. NATO) while the East (i. e. the Warsaw Pact) was seen as striving for peace.

Awareness of the constant menace connected with the possibility of war was present in the East as well as in the West.¹ The main object of this chapter is to show the official Polish reaction to the disarmament talks that took place in the 1980s, especially to the talks on the reduction of Intermediate Nuclear Forces (INF). This is examined in the context of the Polish domestic situation, Poland's place in international relations and the tradition of Communist Poland's diplomacy.

1. Poland in the 1980s

How much did Poland have room for maneuver? This question is crucial for an evaluation of the country's reaction to developments in East–West relations during the 1980s. The Communist Polish authorities certainly tried to realize their aims in their relations with the Soviet Union, with Soviet bloc countries, and with countries outside the bloc. In general, Soviet bloc countries had very limited space to themselves in the field of foreign policy. This was especially so with regard to superpower relations; and nuclear armament was a question reserved to the superpowers. During the 1980s, Polish room for maneuver was limited even further after martial law was introduced by the First Secretary of the Polish United Workers Party (PUWP), General Wojciech Jaruzelski, on 13 December,

1 See Sven S. Holtmark, Vojtech Mastny, and Andreas Wenger (eds.), *War Plans and alliances in the Cold War. Threat perceptions in the East and West*, New York 2006, passim.

1981. Poland was politically isolated; the level of political interaction between Poland and the West was lowered even more; and in the case of the United States, even ambassadors were withdrawn on both sides. Polish leaders were not, therefore, invited to other countries, and for several years after 1981 no high ranking foreign leader visited Poland.² As, very slowly, the domestic situation started to become more stable, Polish activities focused on rebuilding political relations as a necessary precondition for the economic talks that were needed. First talks with the Foreign Ministers of Greece and Italy took place in late 1984. In December 1985 General Wojciech Jaruzelski met French President François Mitterrand in Paris, but he was made to enter the Elysée Palace by a side door and not through the main entrance.

One of the Western preconditions for a return to more regular political contacts was the release of political prisoners. The amnesty announced by the Polish authorities in September 1986 opened up possibilities for more interaction with Western governments. The main priority in Poland's activity, however, was the question of the country's debt and its restructuring. The poor economic situation overshadowed all the activities of the government at that time. Its incapacity to manage the economy and to improve the standard of living was the main reason for the lack of legitimacy it had in the eyes of the people. Further reasons for popular mistrust were the leadership's dependence on Moscow and the crackdown on *Solidarność* it had made in 1981. Moreover, relations with the Soviet Union and with the Soviet bloc countries were proving difficult. The Polish crisis was perceived as one of the dilemmas the whole bloc was having to contend with, worsening the perception of it in the West and "demoralizing" the societies within it.

In the mid-1980s, the PUPW still constituted the core of the political system in Poland, although two other official political parties were allowed, at least formally. Nevertheless, the center of power shifted to other institutions such as the army and the special services controlled by the Ministry of Interior. The Party's First Secretary, Wojciech Jaruzelski, was successful in removing his strongest opponents from political life.³ Predominant political factors at that time were the need for a rearrangement of the Communist system, undermined by strikes and rejected by the majority of society, and also for economic reforms. This is why a restructuring of the Communist system started earlier in Poland than in other Eastern bloc countries.

The nature of the changes in Poland differed from those in the Soviet Union. First of all, the government was aware of its lack of legitimacy and was interested

2 Andrzej Skrzypek, *Dyplomatyczne dzieje PRL w latach 1956–1989*, Warsaw 2010, pp. 377 ff. See also Andrzej Paczkowski, *Dyplomacja czasów kryzysu (1980–1989)*, in: Wojciech Matercki and Waldemar Michowicz (eds.), *Historia Dyplomacji Polskiej*, vol. 6, Warsaw 2010, pp. 853 ff.

3 Andrzej Paczkowski, *Dowódca czy przywódca? Wojciech Jaruzelski w latach 1981–1989*, in: Konrad Rokicki and Robert Spałek (eds.), *Władza w PRL. Ludzie i mechanizmy*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 259–289.

in broadening the “social basis” it could rely on. From 1982 on, many consultative bodies were set up, often with the participation of established journalists and professors.⁴ The old Front of National Unity (*Front Jedności Narodu*), which had been active since 1957, was replaced in 1985 by the Patriotic Movement of National Revival (*Patriotyczny Ruch Odrodzenia Narodowego*). Several changes were introduced into the Polish constitution, including the establishment of the Tribunal of State (which was to become the Tribunal for high-ranking state officials) and the Constitutional Tribunal. This does not mean that those institutions had real power, especially in matters of vital importance for the Party and the government—but they were meant to show the “democratization” of the Communist system, especially to foreign observers.

The need to reform the economy and to provide people with everyday necessities was predominant.⁵ Economic matters were especially important for the younger generation who knew more about the West and, because of this, the authority of both the Party and the government was at a very low level among the youthful.⁶ After the termination of martial law in Poland on July 22, 1983 many attempts were made to attract people of non-Communist views, among them intellectuals and some of those affiliated with the Catholic church. It was hoped to draw them into the Party. But it was especially young people the leadership tried to woo. Communist youth organizations (and student organizations too) tried to entice young people with free (or nearly-free) holidays, opportunities to earn extra money, chances to participate in student exchanges with Western countries, and courses where they could learn languages. Some foreign foundations (including the West German Friedrich Ebert Foundation) let the Polish authorities choose who should receive scholarships, while others, especially in the United States, denied them this right. The young people who were given such opportunities to boost their careers in exchange for loyalty to the PUPW were nicknamed “Jaruzelski’s janissaries” by people hostile to the government. Many of them continued their political careers successfully after 1989 and the transition that occurred in Poland.

The change of leadership in the Soviet Union in 1985 opened a new chapter in the history of the Eastern bloc.⁷ When the new Soviet leaders informed

4 For instance: Rada Społeczno Gospodarcza przy Sejmie (the Social-Economic Council to Parliament), Konsultacyjna Rada Gospodarcza przy Prezesie Rady Ministrów (the Consultative Economic Council by the Prime Minister), Rada Konsultacyjna (a Consultative Council to W. Jaruzelski as the head of the Council of State).

5 Wojciech Morawski, *Pełzająca katastrofa. Gospodarka polska w latach osiemdziesiątych*, in: *W przededniu wielkiej zmiany. Polska 1988 roku*, Gdańsk 2009, pp. 27–43.

6 Leszek Biernacki, *Nie można zdezerterować—młodzieżowy bunt w 1988 roku*, in: *W przededniu*, pp. 79–97. For public opinion polls see Barbara Badora, Lena Kolarska-Bobinska, and Krzysztof Kosela (eds.), *Spółczesność i władza lat osiemdziesiątych w badaniach CBOS*, Warsaw 1994, pp. 267–268.

7 See for instance Archie Brown, *The Gorbachev Factor*, Oxford 1996; Vladislav M. Zubok, *A Failed Empire. The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*, Chapel Hill 2007.

Warsaw Pact Party leaders about their aims, the Polish Communists adopted a “wait-and-see” approach. Then, as the new General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev strengthened his position and it became clear that change in the Soviet Union would continue, his policy of reform gained support in the PUWP. His international activities and his attempts to stop the arms race were especially welcomed. All efforts to lower the danger of war were strongly welcomed and received the people’s sympathy and support. In the Polish official press, Gorbachev’s policies were presented as ones aimed at relaxing East–West tensions rather than ones that might bring significant domestic reforms.⁸

2. Polish “Peace and Disarmament Initiatives”

Although the policies of the Soviet bloc countries were subject to what was called “coordination,” every country tried to promote its own goals. In the Polish case, the most obvious of these independent efforts were made in response to the “German question.” Bilateral Polish–West German issues included establishing diplomatic relations, recognition of the Oder-Neisse line as a permanent border, and international matters such as possible German reunification and West German access to modern arms, especially nuclear weapons.⁹ After the changes following the Polish October of 1956, the new leadership’s attempts to conduct a more independent foreign policy were most visible in policy towards Moscow and Bonn.¹⁰

In 1957 Poland started to promote its first disarmament plan, which was named after Adam Rapacki, at that time the Minister of Foreign Affairs. He proposed the creation of a nuclear-free zone, initially comprising four countries: Poland, Czechoslovakia, the FRG, and the GDR. It has been much debated whether this was a Polish or a Soviet plan.¹¹ The origins are somewhat obscure,

8 Wojciech Multan, *Nowe radzieckie inicjatywy rozbrojeniowe*, in: *Nowe Drogi*, 1/452 (1987), pp. 10–16. *Nowe Drogi* (New Ways) were, according to information given in them, “a theoretical and political organ of the Central Committee of the PUWP”.

9 Wanda Jarząbek, *Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa wobec polityki wschodniej Republiki Federalnej Niemiec w latach 1966–1976. Wymiar dwustronny i międzynarodowy*, Warsaw 2011, pp. 16 ff.

10 Wanda Jarząbek, *W sprawach niemieckich nasz głos musi mieć swą wagę. Problem niemiecki w polskiej polityce zagranicznej od października 1956 r. do rozpoczęcia tzw. drugiego kryzysu berlińskiego w listopadzie 1958 r.*, in: *Dzieje Najnowsze*, 33/2 (2001), p. 104. Andrzej Korzon, *Kłopotliwy Satelita. Stosunki polsko-sowieckie 1947–1957*, in: Andrzej Korzon (ed.), *Rola i miejsce Polski w Europie 1914–1957*, Warsaw 1994, p. 161.

11 The Rapacki Plan has been studied by many historians. See e.g. Teresa Łoś–Nowak (ed.), *Plan Rapackiego a bezpieczeństwo europejskie*, Wrocław 1991, *passim*. As a Polish initiative, the plan has been discussed by Piotr Stefan Wandycz, Adam Rapacki, and the search for European Security; Gordon A. Craig and Francis L. Lowenheim (eds.), *The Diplomats 1939–1979*, Princeton 1994, pp. 298–312. The Americans and British, as well as the FRG, were strongly critical of this idea e.g. in James R. Ozinga, *The Rapacki Plan. The 1957*

but Rapacki's plan was certainly compatible with trends in international politics, with some of the Soviet announcements that were being made, and with Polish political goals. It was a kind of "two-in-one" proposal—linking nicely both with the Polish government's German policy and with the disarmament initiatives presented by Western politicians and the Soviets during the first *détente* in the Cold War that followed Stalin's death and subsequent changes within the Soviet Union. It is also possible that, by making this proposal, the Polish leadership hoped to avoid the detection of nuclear weapons on Polish territory, which was starting to be a real problem. Poland was in danger of possible attacks that would aim to destroy the places where nuclear weapons were based. The Poles fretted over the political aspects; the military details were discussed in depth with the Soviets.

During the 1960s, a new version of the old Rapacki Plan was unveiled—now renamed after the first Secretary of the Communist Party, Władysław Gomułka. In the second half of the decade, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs worked on plans for a pan-European conference, which eventually became the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). In the original Polish plans, the security questions to be raised included disarmament measures; but due to superpower priorities at that time these were excluded from the CSCE agenda.¹² Later, armament and disarmament questions were indeed discussed in the CSCE process. In the late 1970s, Poland started to be involved in talks to realize the idea of the disarmament conference, and in Madrid in 1981, it proposed a mandate for a Stockholm conference on confidence-building measures. During the Vienna CSCE follow-up conference on December 8, 1986, Poland proposed broadening the Vienna mandate to include CBMs and disarmament talks.¹³ During the Vienna meeting disarmament talks also took place between NATO and the Warsaw Pact, and this was followed with much interest in Poland.¹⁴

Proposal to Denuclearize Central Europe and an Analysis of Its Rejection, London 1989. See also David Tal, *From the Open Skies Proposal of 1955 to the Norstad Plan of 1960. A Plan Too Far*, in: *Journal of Cold War Studies*, 10/4 (2008), pp. 80 f. Even in the Soviet block it was not fully supported, see Ernst Laboor, *Der Rapacki-Plan und die DDR. Die Entspannungsvision des polnischen Außenministers und die deutschlandpolitischen Ambitionen der SED-Führung in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren*, Berlin 2003. See also Milan Hronicek, *Reakcja Czechosłowacji na Plan Rapackiego w latach 1957–1958*, in: Petr Blažek, Paweł Jaworski, and Łukasz Kamiński (eds.), *Między przymusową przyjaźnią a solidarnością. Cześć-Polacy-Słowacy 1938/39–1945–1989*, Vol. 2, Warsaw 2009, pp. 185 f.

12 Wanda Jarząbek, *Hope and Reality. Poland and the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, 1964–1989*, in: *Cold War International History Project Working Paper*, Vol. 56, Washington 2008, pp. 16–27. See also Wanda Jarząbek, *Polska wobec Konferencji Bezpieczeństwa i Współpracy w Europie. Plany i rzeczywistość, 1966–1975*, Warsaw 2008, pp. 43–75.

13 Archiwum Ministerstwa Spraw Zagranicznych (Archive of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs further AMSZ), *Notatka o polskich propozycjach zgłoszonych na spotkaniu wiedeńskim KBWE*, March 13, 1987, DSiP 26/93, w. 11.

14 AMSZ, *Notatka informacyjna*, April 4, 1987, DSiP 26/93, w. 11.

For internal propaganda purposes, the country's leadership also tried to organize events showing how involved they were in the disarmament talks. They wanted to project a picture of Polish leaders being active in the crucial processes of changing international relations. In 1986, a "Congress of Intellectuals for the Defense of the Peaceful Future of the World" was organized in Warsaw. This Congress was announced as an event inaugurating the UN International Year of Peace. Although many scholars and peace activists refused to come to Warsaw, and although it could not be compared with the 1948 Congress in Poland in terms of famous personalities attending, it was regarded as a success.¹⁵

Probably because of the common interest in disarmament and the will to be more active in international talks, Polish Communists began working on a new peace initiative, this time named the Jaruzelski Plan. It was announced in Poland on May 8, 1987 (the eve of "Victory Day" in the Communist bloc). The idea was also presented to the other Warsaw Pact members then working on their own disarmament concepts. Jaruzelski discussed his plan during the meeting of the Warsaw Pact's Political Consultative Committee (PCC) in Berlin on May, 28–29, 1987.¹⁶ After the formal announcement of the Jaruzelski Plan Polish and Soviet experts met to discuss details of the memorandum the Polish Foreign Office wanted to send to other countries.¹⁷ The Jaruzelski plan dealt with conventional and nuclear arms (launched from aircrafts, missiles, nuclear artillery and nuclear mines). It also discussed the question of confidence-building measures and reviewed the steps needed for inspections to control the disarmament steps. The Soviets supported Poland's intention to introduce elements of the plan into the Vienna 23 talks—the preparatory talks of the sixteen NATO and seven Warsaw Pact countries which would propose a mandate for negotiations on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE). The plan was also officially presented during the CSCE follow-up conference in Vienna on July 17, 1987.

15 Archiwum Instytutu Pamięci Narodowej (Archive of the Institute for National Remembrance, further AIPN), Ocena przebiegu Kongresu Intelktualistów w Obronie Pokojowej Przyszłości Świata, January 16–19, 1986, BU 1589/1303. The World Congress of Intellectuals for the Defense of Peace took place from August, 25 to 28, 1948 in Wrocław. The propaganda aim of the Congress was to convince public opinion that Communist countries were supporters of peace, and the West, especially the U.S. as the only owners of atomic weapons at that time, a menace to peace. Numerous Western intellectuals, such as Pablo Picasso, Julian Huxley, Paul Éluard, Bertolt Brecht, and Graham Greene, took part in the Congress. The Organizing Committee included Irène and Frédéric Joliot-Curie and Le Corbusier. The organizers (mainly Poles and French) referred to the tradition of the International Congress of Writers in Defense of Culture, which took place in 1935 in Paris. Professor A. J. P. Taylor, a historian from Oxford, supported only by a few other intellectuals, protested against the accusations of fascism made against the U.S. and the West.

16 AIPN, Wystąpienie I Sekretarza KC PZPR, przewodniczącego Rady Państwa PRL, tow. W. Jaruzelskiego na naradzie Doradczego Komitetu Politycznego UW, May 28, 1987, BU 02958/563.

17 AMSZ, Notatka informacyjna o polsko-radzieckich konsultacjach nt. planu zmniejszenia zbrojeń i zwiększania zaufania w Europie, June 23, 1987, DIE 52/90, w.1.

In the second half of the 1980s, many publications were issued describing post-war Poland's activity in the field of disarmament, its search for denuclearization and its engagement in devising security-building measures.¹⁸ This was probably seen as one element of Polish policy that could gain support from Polish society and at the same time enable the leadership to keep up with ongoing change in East-West relations. Some initiatives—beginning with the Rapacki Plan—were always treated as a kind of Polish 'brand'. For Poland, it is also important to take the economic benefit of ending the armament race into consideration. Armaments were expensive, and due to the sharing of obligations of Soviet bloc members, every state had to participate in purchasing equipment from the Soviet Union and manufacturing whatever Warsaw Pact plans demanded. The export of products from the national military industry was not free. Warsaw had to ask Moscow what and to whom these items could be sold.

3. Polish Reactions to the INF Talks

In October 1980 the Preliminary Talks on Intermediate-Range Nuclear Forces began in Geneva. The formal talks between the U. S. and the Soviet Union started on November 30, 1981. The INF talks were observed by Polish diplomats, who often took their information from press releases. That Poles had this role does not mean that the Polish authorities were much involved. It should be stressed that disarmament talks about nuclear weapons were in the exclusive domain of the superpowers. As the Soviet Union was the undisputed leader of the Soviet bloc, it was obvious that other Warsaw Pact countries could never participate in the decision-making process. However, the countries were informed about the talks through multilateral and bilateral exchanges within the alliance. Information was often given at the last moment, shortly before the Soviet leaders gave a public statement. As bilateral contacts were also used to transmit information, the scope of information divulged differed among the Soviet satellite states.

When the talks started, the Polish Communists were confronted with domestic problems: the strikes of summer 1980. These ended with the legalization of *Solidarność*, the first independent, non-Communist trade union movement within the Warsaw Pact. Recognition of this force prevented more rapid developments, but it did not calm the situation. The conflict between the Party (in other words, the government) and *Solidarność* was sharpening. The introduction of martial law in December 1981 resulted in massive criticism of the Communist

18 See e.g. Teresa Łoś-Nowak, *Problem rozbrojenia w polskiej polityce zagranicznej*, Warsaw 1985. See also Wojciech Multan, *Porozumienia rozbrojeniowe po II wojnie światowej*, Warsaw 1985; Wojciech Multan, *Rozbrojenie w Polskiej polityce zagranicznej*, Warsaw 1987; Adam Daniel Rotfeld, *New Confidence- and Security-Building Measures (CSBMs)*. A Polish view, Warsaw 1987; Adam Daniel Rotfeld, *The CSCE and the European Security System*, Warsaw 1988. Many articles were published in "Spawy Międzynarodowe", a magazine issued by the Polish Institute for International Affairs (PISM).

government and contributed to its political isolation. However, many Western leaders were appeased by the fact that the Soviets did not intervene in Poland directly. During the first phase of the INF talks up to 1983, therefore, the attention of the Polish leadership was consumed by the domestic crisis.

When negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union restarted in March 1985, Poland was informed about the talks mostly through the familiar channels existing within the Warsaw Pact. I do not know of any cases in which the Soviets provided any deep or detailed information about the INF talks. It could be that minutes of conversation do not exist, given the habitual reluctance of Soviet Foreign Policy-makers to pass on information. Shortly after the talks were renewed, during the meeting of the Committee of Foreign Ministers that took place on March 19–20, 1986 in Warsaw, Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze informed the Warsaw Pact member-states of the difference in interests between the USSR and the U.S. in the agenda of the Geneva disarmament talks. He stated that the United States and the Western countries were not willing to engage in talks about the whole nuclear arsenal (all types of nuclear weapons), but wanted to limit negotiation to intermediate-range missiles. They refused to discuss other topics, especially the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).¹⁹ According to Shevardnadze, Moscow was being very flexible in the Geneva talks, and any contrary opinions stated in the media should be regarded as Western propaganda. The final conclusion of Shevardnadze's statement was that a further U.S.–Soviet summit would only be possible if the U.S. changed its stance on to the agenda.

This information was a mix of true facts and false. It typified how situations were standardly presented during Warsaw Pact meetings. Usually the Soviet announcements were merely noted, and provoked no deep discussion or even opposition from the other leaders. During this particular meeting it was only Romania's Foreign Minister Ilie Văduva who advanced any ideas. In his view, the INF talks should not be limited to Europe and arms reductions and should also cover conventional weapons.²⁰

A few months later, during the Political Consultative Committee meeting in Budapest (June 10–11, 1986) Gorbachev informed Warsaw Pact leaders that the U.S. was planning to revoke the implementation of the (never ratified) SALT II Treaty and that the Soviet Union was considering limiting talks to the types of weapons included in SALT II. He also disclosed that the USSR was interested

19 AMSZ, Notatka informacyjna o warszawskim posiedzeniu Komitetu Ministrów Spraw Zagranicznych państw-stron Układu Warszawskiego, March 23, 1986, D.ZSRR 33/89, w.1. For records of the meeting see also Anna Locher (ed.), Records of the Warsaw Pact Committee of the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, 1976–1990, Parallel History Project on Cooperative Security (PHP), <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/colltopicf105.html?lng=en&id=16543&navinfo=15699>.

20 For Văduva's speech (in Czech) see <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/colltopicce6e.html?lng=en&id=20506&navinfo=15699>.

in establishing an international system of collaboration on atomic energy and space research. Referring to the SDI project, he asked his Eastern bloc allies to strengthen their activity against the "militarization of space."²¹ In East Berlin a group was established to study the possibilities of freezing (and in the longer run reducing) the military spending of the Warsaw Pact members. In future this group was to work on the reduction of the Warsaw Pact's forces.

At the end of 1986, the Polish government assessed the Geneva disarmament talks as an unsuccessful effort. In a summary of Polish foreign policy prepared for discussion at the PUWP Politburo meeting on January 6, 1987, the first point presented was an analysis of US–Soviet relations. The lack of progress in this area was presented as a consequence of American policy. Washington was accused of breaking the Reykjavik agreements. The White House's refusal to talk about all types of nuclear weapons and the continued deployment of intermediate-range missiles in Europe were criticized especially.²²

At the end of January 1987, a conference of the Secretaries for International Affairs and Ideology of the Communist parties took place in Warsaw. Disarmament became part of the discussion.²³ During a meeting with the delegates, Jaruzelski discussed both conventional armaments and the allegedly non-existent balance of power between East and West. Referring to his talks in Japan and Italy, he emphasized that Western governments presented a false picture of the situation and insisted that they gave false data on the quantities and military effectiveness of the Warsaw Pact's armed resources. He instanced tanks, where the Warsaw Pact countries had numerical dominance; yet, Jaruzelski argued, on this example, that NATO tanks were more advanced from a technological point of view.²⁴

During the INF talks, rumors began to circulate about a possible change in the Soviet stance.²⁵ They turned out to be true. Moscow's position with regard to SDI changed in February 1987.²⁶ Since the diplomatic talks proved that the Amer-

21 For records of the Budapest PCC meeting see Vojtech Mastny, Christian Nuenlist, Anna Locher, and Douglas Selvage (eds.), *Records of the Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee, 1955–1990*, <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic1fe4.html?lng=en&id=17111&navinfo=14465>.

22 Archiwum Akt Nowych (Archive of Modern Documents, henceforth AAN), *Bilans polityki zagranicznej PRL w 1986 r.*, December 1986, WZ 973/682.

23 AAN, KC PZPR, *Notatka dot. przebiegu narady sekretarza KC bratnich partii krajów socjalistycznych ds. międzynarodowych i ideologicznych*, Warsaw January 22–23, 1987, WZ 973/416.

24 AAN, KC PZPR, *Informacja o spotkaniu I sekretarza KC PZPR W. Jaruzelskiego z sekretarzami KC uczestniczącymi w naradzie w Warszawie w dniach January 23–24, 1987*. WZ 973/416.

25 AAN, KC PZPR, *Notatka dot. przebiegu narady sekretarza KC bratnich partii krajów socjalistycznych ds. międzynarodowych i ideologicznych*, Warsaw January 22–23, 1987, WZ 973/416.

26 See also the essay by Tom Blanton and Svetlana Savranskaya in this volume.

ican side was not prepared to sign a treaty covering a broader range of nuclear weapons, Moscow withdrew from the hard line it had taken during the three Geneva disarmament talks. About two weeks after Gorbachev's announcement on February 27, 1987 and shortly after the U. S. had placed a new proposal on the table (March 4), the ambassadors of the Warsaw Pact countries were invited to the Soviet Foreign Ministry. There they met with Yuli Vorontsov and Vadim Loginov, the former Deputy Foreign Minister and head of the Soviet START delegation in Geneva.²⁷ They were updated on the state of the talks and informed about a phone conversation between Vorontsov and his American counterpart Max Kampelman. According to the information passed on by the Soviets, Kampelman had asked the Soviets what their attitude was to the "zero option" in Europe and Asia, and the Soviet answer had remained negative. Vorontsov had indicated that some aspects of the American proposal were not acceptable to the Soviet side, for instance an idea it included of allowing the mechanical/technical downgrading of the INF missiles to change their range. The Soviets had also said that the reduction of short-range missiles, which the Americans now wanted to include in the INF talks, should be discussed separately. Vorontsov had admitted that it would be difficult to include factories in the control mechanism, a point the Soviet side had studied. He and Kampelman had also discussed the lack of any Soviet draft for a treaty on the table, which meant that the American draft would have to be taken as the starting point for further negotiations in Geneva. According to Vorontsov this was because Moscow wanted to finish the talks quickly—in about four months. Vorontsov had also explained that U. S. Foreign Secretary Shultz was scheduling a visit to Moscow in April. The results of that visit would be passed on to Polish and other allied diplomats there, details concerning possible numbers of missiles to be liquidated.²⁸

The Polish side observed the reactions of Western countries to this new phase of the INF talks closely. They noticed that Gorbachev's proposal (especially the way it renounced coupling of INF and SDI) was regularly treated as a proof of his weakness as a Soviet leader and evidence of there being a difficult situation in the USSR.²⁹ According to Polish diplomats, in Great Britain opinions prevailed that INF, SNF and chemical weapon talks should be carried on simultaneously; this lay behind London's reservations regarding the U. S.–USSR negotiations.³⁰ The FRG attitude to armament and disarmament also attracted much interest in Warsaw. According to the reports from Polish diplomats, the SPD and the Greens were especially keen on the disarmament talks, and the Poles noticed how they criticized the Kohl government. In the German governmental coalition, the FDP was perceived as more interested in active FRG participation in disarmament

27 AMSZ, depesza z Moskwy, March 3, 1987, DIE 52/90, w. 1.

28 AMSZ, depesza z Moskwy, April 16, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

29 AMSZ, depesza do Moskwy, March 12, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

30 AMSZ, depesza do Moskwy, March 14, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.; see the contribution by Oliver Barton to this volume.

talks than were the CDU and CSU.³¹ Governmental policy was assessed as simple reaction to world trends rather than any systematic line arising from convictions or inner deliberations. When, on August 26, 1987, Chancellor Kohl announced a possible waiver of Pershing IA missiles, Polish observers therefore evaluated it as a purely tactical move. The announcement came just before elections in some West German federal states and was seen as a kind of “maneuver to avoid accusations of slackening US–USSR INF talks.”³²

As previously mentioned, members of the Polish authorities had hardly any opportunity to lead high-level talks. But they did talk over questions of disarmament with foreign governments. The INF negotiations became a subject of discussion when Jaruzelski held talks with the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, Jean-Bernard Raimond, when he visited Poland in April 1987. Answering Jaruzelski's accusations that Paris was not interested in quick results and was slowing the INF talks down, Raimond stressed that France supported the idea of balanced, well-adjusted disarmament and stated that the liquidation of the intermediate-range missiles and the denuclearization of Europe should be accompanied by reductions in conventional arms and chemical weapons as well.³³

Topics connected with the international situation and disarmament talks were also discussed during Wojciech Jaruzelski's visit to Moscow in April 1987. However, the agenda of these bilateral meetings was dominated by Polish domestic issues, such as the complicated economic situation, the activities of the opposition in Poland, and the role there of the Catholic church.³⁴ Nevertheless, Jaruzelski did offer an update on the the development of his plan. This plan proposed a gradual reduction of nuclear weapons and was to finish with establishing a nuclear-free zone. It also included a gradual reduction of conventional weapons, so as to leave only defense weapons in Central Europe and effect a change in military doctrine, while putting security measures in place aimed at avoiding sudden attacks.³⁵ Gorbachev answered that the Soviet Union supported the Polish initiatives, and that details were to be worked out in bilateral talks between experts.

The INF talks took more time than Moscow anticipated. In May 1987, during the PCC meeting in East Berlin, Gorbachev reported that the U.S. and Soviet Union were close to an agreement, but that there were obstacles on the side of

31 AMSZ, depesza do Moskwy, information obtained from the Polish Embassy in Cologne, June 5, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16. For the West German response to an INF Treaty see the essays by Philipp Gassert and Tim Geiger in this volume.

32 AMSZ, depesza do Moskwy, August 29, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

33 AIPN, Notatka informacyjna z wizyty ministra SZ Francji J.B. Raimond'a w Polsce, April 10–11, 1987, BU 0449/1, t.2. For the French position see also the essay by Christian Wenkel in this volume.

34 AAN, KC PZPR, Tezy do rozmów W. Jaruzelskiego z M. Gorbaczowem, April 1987, WZ 973/447.

35 Zapis rozmowy sekretarza generalnego KC KPZR M. Gorbaczowa z I sekretarzem KC PZPR gen. W. Jaruzelskim, April 21, 1987, in: Antoni Dudek (ed.), *Zmierzch dyktatury*, Vol. 1, Warsaw 2009, p. 122.

France, the FRG, and Great Britain.³⁶ This difficulty also came up in Polish conversations with Western diplomats, especially French and British ones.³⁷ Poland was also deeply interested in the reduction of conventional armaments, which started to be a topic in new international talks within the CSCE framework that followed the successful Conference on Confidence- and Security-Building Measures and Disarmament in Europe (CDE) held in Stockholm from 1984 to 1986.³⁸ According to Polish observers, all the difficulties in speeding up preparatory talks on conventional armaments and the reluctant stance of some smaller NATO countries to these talks arose through fear of Soviet conventional supremacy. Western Europe was correctly perceived as fearing INF reductions because its countries would thereby lose the U.S. nuclear umbrella.³⁹ The Poles thought that Western countries found reductions of SRINF and SNF missiles more difficult to accept because they were afraid of the possibility of being powerless in case of local European conflicts.⁴⁰ Polish diplomats also took note of voices against limiting INF talks to Europe.⁴¹ They tried to gather information about Western public opinion and analyzed reactions in newspaper articles, media coverage, and scientific conferences.⁴² Poland was also interested in restarting the work of the United Nations Disarmament Committee.⁴³

Polish interest in a change in the military doctrine espoused by the Warsaw Pact military doctrine in addition to disarmament can also be attributed to a concern to limit military expenses. Among Warsaw Pact members, the Polish army was the second largest after the Soviet Union's. The cost of maintaining its manpower and equipment was a considerable burden on the Polish budget. According to the bloc's "share of duties," Poland was to develop tank production plus accompanying units and equipment suitable for amphibious landing operations. A change of the military doctrine to a defensive one would help to lighten this burden.

As the INF talks were coming to an end, the Polish side intensified its work on the details of the Jaruzelski plan, and tried to obtain support for its ideas from Moscow—and also from the West. In November 1987, Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh informed the Poles that some points from the Jaruzelski plan could be attached to the European disarmament talks.⁴⁴ This

36 For the PCC meeting in East Berlin on May 28/29 see Mastny et al. (eds.), *Warsaw Pact Political Consultative Committee*, <http://www.php.isn.ethz.ch/lory1.ethz.ch/collections/colltopic01ce.html?lng=en&id=17112&navinfo=14465>.

37 AMSZ, *depesza do Moskwy*, June 20, 1987, July 1, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

38 AMSZ, *depesza z Moskwy*, June 19, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

39 AMSZ, *depesza do Moskwy*, July 8, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

40 AMSZ, *depesza do Moskwy*, March 14, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

41 AMSZ, *depesza do Moskwy*, May 26, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

42 AMSZ, *dispatches from different countries*, DIE 2/90, w. 1.

43 AMSZ, *depesza do Moskwy*, September 22, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

44 AMSZ, *depesza z Moskwy*, November 17, 1987, DIE 2/90, w. 1.

was what the Poles wanted. But they also expected that the Polish origin of these ideas should be noticed.

After the signing of the INF Treaty in Washington on December 8, 1987, the Soviet satellite countries were told how the Soviet leadership assessed its results. This happened on December 15–16, 1987 in Warsaw during a meeting of the Multilateral Group on Reciprocal Information—a new body created within the Warsaw Pact the previous year.⁴⁵ The narratives of the Soviet side aimed at underlining a success that was “bigger than expected,” since the agreement included new generations of weapons and created modern control and verification mechanisms. The Treaty was presented as the first step towards liquidating all nuclear arms. It was also presented as the result of a positive change in Soviet–American relations and as a starting point for further talks. According to the Soviets, INF should also have an impact on the behavior of European countries, especially the NATO countries, and the small European countries (Benelux, Denmark, Norway) would become more interested in conventional disarmament talks. But as to the reactions of the big European countries, the Soviets anticipated effects unfavorable for Moscow—the beginning of a new arms race in the field of marine or conventional armaments, and the speeding up of European integration as an answer to the Washington–Moscow dialogue.⁴⁶ The Soviets assumed that, because Washington would try to keep close relations with Western Europe, it might freeze the talks on chemical weapons reductions for a certain period of time in the Geneva UN Conference on disarmament.

The Poles tried to assess the impact of the INF Treaty on Poland's place in international relations. An evaluation of the results of the Washington Treaty was prepared in the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is an interesting document. It attempted to calculate the global and regional effects of the agreement and its impact on Polish security. Several points were presented as positive results in the field of security. The first was a reduction of the danger of a nuclear attack on Polish territory through the liquidation of the part of NATO's nuclear arsenal that could have been used for this purpose. Another positive was a significant limitation in the possibility of sudden and precise nuclear attack by NATO. The remaining nuclear arsenal would leave more time for reaction in the case of a crisis. It was assessed that from a military point of view the missiles to be destroyed were highly accurate and demanded only a very short time to reach their targets: so, due to their liquidation, the stage of ultimate escalation of a conventional conflict in Europe into a nuclear one would be eliminated. A positive effect was also seen in the promise that the FRG would waive its Pershing IA missiles—a move said to serve the principle of non-dissemination of nuclear weapons.⁴⁷ It

45 AMSZ, Notatka informacyjna o piątym posiedzeniu grupy wzajemnej informacji bieżącej, December 19, 1987, D. ZSRR 17/91, w. 1.

46 Ibid.

47 AMSZ, Notatka informacyjna o implikacjach dla Polski Układu ZSRR-USA ws. likwidacji ich rakiet nuklearnych średniego i krótszego zasięgu, December 12, 1987, DIE 2/90, w. 1.

was also expected that the Treaty would contribute to improving the atmosphere in Europe, and that this could result in greater scope for small- and medium-sized countries to operate. For Poland it could mean enhanced possibilities of reaching a “negotiation stadium” for the Jaruzelski Plan, since this plan discussed areas of disarmament whose importance would grow after the INF Treaty. It was also noticed that NATO states were starting to discuss replacing the ground-launched INF missiles that would be abolished by the Treaty with weapons launched by other means, such as bombers or submarines.

The impact on Polish security was not perceived as unambiguously positive. Once intermediate-range missiles were liquidated it would be more difficult for both sides to attack the remoter targets in Europe. It was therefore assessed “that the security of the Soviet Union will grow to a greater extent than the security of Poland, as in the case of nuclear missiles stationed in Europe, Soviet territory would be difficult to reach.”⁴⁸ In the case of conventional or nuclear war, it might even come about that Polish territory could be the main theater of war. It was noted that putting Polish territory in the center of an eventual war made Poland’s situation dependent on planned changes in NATO strategy. NATO might indeed compensate for its lost intermediate-range missiles by deploying air- or sea-launched missiles or by introducing a new self-maneuvering missile, and this was treated as an option. However, the high cost of production made this rather improbable. A modernization of NATO’s conventional weapons was described as more likely especially as NATO members believed that the Warsaw Pact countries were superior in these types of weapon. One possible consequence of the INF Treaty envisaged was closer military integration of Western Europe independently of the U.S., on whose nuclear umbrella the European countries had hitherto relied.⁴⁹ It was also mentioned that NATO’s decisions at Montebello⁵⁰ made the development and modernization of conventional arms possible. This could mean that a new arms race in the field of modern conventional weapons would be forced on the Eastern bloc countries from outside.

All in all, however, the INF Treaty was described as beneficial to Poland. Further disarmament talks were welcomed, especially talks on the reduction of conventional arms, which were now seen as the most dangerous for Polish security. As for nuclear weapons, Poland should push for the inclusion of all types of armaments remaining in Europe (and its close neighborhood) in further

48 Ibid.

49 Ibid.

50 NATO’s Nuclear Planning Group had decided at its meeting on October 27/28, 1983 to abandon 1,400 nuclear warheads within the next 5 or 6 years, but also to modernize the alliance’s aging weaponry (nuclear and conventional). For the communiqué see <https://www.nato.int/docu/comm/49-95/c831028a.htm>. For the meeting in the report of West Germany’s Foreign Ministry see *Akten zur Auswärtigen Politik der Bundesrepublik Deutschland (AAPD)* 1983, ed. by Tim Geiger, Matthias Peter, and Mechthild Lindemann, Munich 2014, Doc. 321, and *AAPD* 1985, ed. by Michael Ploetz, Mechthild Lindemann, and Christoph Johannes Franzen, Munich 2016, Doc. 126.

disarmament talks. In the new situation, the Jaruzelski Plan should concentrate on conventional weapons, methods of verifying and the question of preventing a sudden attack. It was also recommended that more efforts be made to promote a NATO–Warsaw Pact dialogue on military doctrines. Thus, together with West Germany, Poland became one of the driving forces for the seminars on military doctrines that were held in Vienna in January and February 1990. For the first time ever, these seminars gathered together the military leadership of both antagonistic military alliances.⁵¹

As one of the consequences of the INF Treaty, it was anticipated that there would be an increasing role for both German states in the issues. It was also expected that some elements of the Polish initiative would be developed by the German states and presented as their own, the Genscher initiative of June 1987 advocating a comprehensive concept of arms control and disarmament being cited as an example. Intensified dialogue with both German states on disarmament questions was advised. Such a dialogue did already exist, but was limited by the fact that the two Germanies belonged to different military alliances. During one of the talks, the plenipotentiary of the FRG government for disarmament questions, Josef Holik, had informed the Polish side, that after the signing of the INF Treaty, Western Europe would be careful to keep the process of reduction under control so as not to weaken Europe. He had also informed the Polish side that Genscher's concept concerning disarmament—of both nuclear and conventional weapons—was in some points similar to Jaruzelski's ideas.⁵² This could be treated as a good starting point for further contacts on European security.

4. Conclusion

Poland was not directly involved in the INF talks. As a country and a military power it was integrated into the Soviet bloc, and this meant, among other things, that it had little room for maneuver and limited possibilities of influencing Moscow's policy. Non-nuclear countries did not have much influence on nuclear armaments issues in the second half of the 1980s. Nuclear weapons were stationed in Soviet bases on Polish territory, but anything to do with them was totally outside Warsaw's remit of competence. Their employment, however, could have a tremendous and devastating effect on the country and on Polish citizens. The government at that time was very much under the influence of the military and had to be keenly aware of what might happen to Polish territory in a case of nuclear or conventional war. Accordingly, as this essay has demonstrated, the INF talks were of particular interest to the Polish authorities. Despite this, there

51 For the Vienna Seminar on military doctrines see the account of West German participant Dieter Wellershoff, *First successful step in CSBM negotiations—the military doctrine seminar*, in: *NATO Review*, No. 2 (April 1990), p. 10.

52 AMSZ, *depesza do Moskwy*, December 17, 1987, DD 38/89, w. 16.

is little evidence to show the exact way of thinking the government had at the time. The press also presented events in a routine way, without revealing different points of view.

In the birth of the INF Treaty itself, it would be difficult to speak of a Polish impact on the talks, or of any Polish input. Such discussions were kept out of the reach of Poland and the other Soviet satellite states. But we *can* say that the INF talks and a general common interest in disarmament resulted in governmental work on Polish proposals. These included the Jaruzelski Plan and propositions for talks on conventional arms reduction. The INF Treaty enhanced the détente process and diminished the direct danger of a war with the potential to destroy Poland—even if, proportionally, the scrapping NATO’s INF arsenal reduced the danger of such destruction more for the USSR than for Poland.

The significance of the INF Treaty, however, was not limited to the 1980s. Even after the transition that started in 1989 it remained important from the Polish perspective. The Poles became increasingly concerned when the INF Treaty regime started to break down, with new Russian medium- and short-range missiles like the Iskander missiles deployed close to the Polish border, in the Kaliningrad region. The relaxation of tensions in East–West relations served Polish interests as such, and not just the interests of the Communist government, which tried to rebuild contacts with Western countries and gain support for economic reforms. In periods of East–West relaxation, the level of domestic freedom usually improved too. The lowering level of East–West confrontation could be a good sign for Polish society as it looked to establish (or remove) ties to the West. The INF Treaty was the first step in real disarmament and can also be regarded as a milestone facilitating other talks about the political order in Europe—and indeed, the world. Changes in that order, especially the enlargement of NATO in 1999 and of the European Union in 2004, have brought many benefits to Poland and Polish society.