

April 5, 1982

**Intelligence Information Cable, 'The Polish National
Defense Committee'**

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Summary:

Report outlines the various components of the National Defense Committee (KOK) including its Secretariat, leadership, and possible consequences.

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REPORT CLASS

COUNTRY Poland

SUBJECT The Polish National Defense Committee
(DOI: 1981)

SOURCE A former Polish General Staff officer who made the following comments based on his considerable past experience and contacts. He has reported reliably in the past.

1. The National Defense Committee (Komitet Obrony Kraju--KOK) is established by law as the highest level body in Poland for decision-making and direction of national security affairs. It is established by law as an organ of the Council of Ministers. The Polish premier (the head of the Council of Ministers) is always (ex-officio) the chairman of the KOK. The chairman has three deputies: a Deputy Chairman for Armed Forces and National Defense Planning, a Deputy Chairman for Defense Political Matters, and a Deputy Chairman for Defense Economic Matters. The Minister of National Defense is ex-officio the first of these three deputy chairmen; the Secretary of the party central committee for ideological matters (the incumbent is Stefan Olszowski) is ex-officio the second; and the Chairman of the Planning Commission of the Council of Ministers is ex-officio the third. Other members of the KOK include the heads of key cabinet ministries (always including the Minister of Internal Affairs) and the Chief of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces. The Chief Inspector for National Territorial

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Defense (who is also a vice-minister of defense in the Ministry of National Defense, currently General Tadeusz Tuczapski) is ex-officio the Secretary of the KOK.

2. The working organ of the KOK is its Secretariat, numbering 30-35 people, currently headed by General Mieczyslaw Debicki. The Secretariat, which has its own office away from the Ministry of National Defense, plans all meetings, prepares all minutes, and prepares and disseminates all decisions of the KOK. The hub of the Secretariat is a legal element, headed by Colonel (fnu) Malicki, a lawyer with a staff of 6-7 lawyers.

3. Some initiative in KOK matters is taken by the Secretariat, but the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces plays the main role in the affairs of the KOK. The General Staff initiates, plans, and supervises all national defense matters in Poland. All other organs represented in the KOK are there only to add prestige, and give the body its "collegial" character. They add legitimacy to the proceedings and are responsible for seeing that KOK resolutions are carried out. Virtually all resolutions of the KOK are formulated in the General Staff, with the exception of marginal matters that could be presented by other members.

4. The first secretary of the Polish United Workers Party is not a member of the KOK, and the party has no official role in it. This arrangement puts Poland out of step with the Communist system as established in other Pact countries, including the Soviet Union, and the Poles have for a number of years been considering ways to correct it to make the party first secretary the chairman of the KOK. One plan was to tie the appointment to a related structural change that has been under consideration for some time, which would merge the offices and functions of the party first secretary and the national president. (Comment: The national president, as chairman of the Council of State, is the official head of state, currently a largely ceremonial position.) This effort would require a change in the Polish constitution, however, and has been continually eclipsed in recent years by more pressing problems, although it has never been totally dropped. The interim solution adopted by the Poles had the KOK, in a move of questionable legality, pass a resolution establishing the power and authority of the party as superior to the KOK, thus granting the party the key role in directing matters of national security and giving the party first secretary a virtual veto over KOK decisions.

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(Source Comment: Minister of National Defense Wojciech Jaruzelski described this resolution as a "gift from the Armed Forces to the Party First Secretary.")

5. The practical consequences of this arrangement were demonstrated in September 1981 in a special session of the KOK called to consider the martial law proposals. The meeting was chaired by Jaruzelski as Premier. Then Party First Secretary Stanislaw Kania was invited to attend. All members of the KOK favored the immediate introduction of martial law at this meeting, but Kania opposed it, with the result that martial law was not introduced at that time.

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