



Michael Dean for The New York Times

Declassified documents and hindsight made for an unusual conference on the 1981 Polish crackdown. Cold war generals, from left: Wojciech Jaruzelski, Poland's last Communist leader, and a fellow Pole, Florian Siwicki, with Viktor Kulikov, the Warsaw Pact chief, and Anatoly Gribkov.

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Old Cold War Enemies Exhume One Battlefield

By JANE PERLEZ

WARSAW, Nov. 10 — For four years he was one of the most wanted underground dissidents in Communist Poland, branded a counterrevolutionary by the Government and always on the run, eluding the police with a different guise every month.

Over the weekend, in a setting that brought the past alive, the former dissident, Zbigniew Bujak, had a chance to confront the Soviet general who helped create all his troubles when martial law was imposed on Poland in 1981, in one of the last dramas of the cold war.

"Marshal, did you have a wish to get to know us?" asked Mr. Bujak, now a well-known politician in a smart suit and tie, as he leaned across the table to engage Marshal Viktor Kulikov, the 75-year-old former Commander in Chief of the Warsaw Pact.

"Did you know the Polish opposition was enchanted with the Russian opposition?" he asked, adding, in a reference to the dissident Soviet physicist, "Did you know that my symbolic godfather was Sakharov?"

The gray-haired general remained unmoved. It was not his job then to get to know dissidents, he said.

In a gathering of living history, the

adversaries who played out the Polish crisis in the early 1980's — stolid Soviet military brass, their subservient Polish Communist comrades, hawkish White House officials and rebel Solidarity activists — met here for three days to thrash out who did what to whom.

Were the Soviets poised to invade Poland in 1980 and in 1981? Was Gen. Wojciech Jaruzelski, the Polish leader, forced to impose martial law in December 1981 to save his country from invasion, as he claimed at the time? Or was he the errand boy of the Soviets?

What influence did one of the C.I.A.'s most successful spies, Ryszard Kuklinski, an officer at the top of the Polish military, have on American policy?

Arrayed around the conference hall were more than 100 secret government documents from Moscow, Warsaw, Washington and former Eastern-bloc countries. The chief organizers of the conference — the National Security Archive, a nongovernmental group in Washington, and the Institute for Political Studies here — managed to get the papers officially declassified and made public over the last three years.

The overwhelming evidence, despite denials from General Kulikov, was that in December 1980 the Soviets were ready to roll into Poland.

But a year later, when General Jaruzelski squashed Solidarity and rounded up most of its leaders, it seemed clear that the Soviets no longer had the stomach for an invasion and, instead, had urged the Polish general to do their bidding.

The two leading American participants in the Polish drama were Zbigniew Brzezinski, the Carter Administration's national security adviser, and Prof. Richard Pipes, the Reagan Administration's Soviet affairs adviser. For them the new revelations meant that General Jaruzelski should have stood up to the Soviets.

"Before this session," Mr. Brzezinski said, alluding to 1981, "I thought the Russians were still likely to come in." He added: "It's now coming out from documents that they were not.

This raises the fascinating question, was martial law necessary? I think Jaruzelski could have said, 'How we run Poland is our business.'"

With remarkable candor, the Polish Communist Party General Secretary of that time, Stanislaw Kania, described how close a call a Soviet invasion was in 1980.

Summoned to Moscow in December, he was shown a map of the route that "masses of troops" would take into Poland. He told of being ushered into the inner sanctum of the Soviet leader, Leonid I. Brezhnev, and virtually begging the Soviets to stay out.

"I said that if there was such an in-

Who did what to whom when Solidarity fell?

tervention then there would have been a national uprising," Mr. Kania said. "Even if angels entered Poland, they would be treated as bloodthirsty vampires and the Socialist ideas would be swimming in blood." Mr. Brezhnev replied, according to Mr. Kania: "All right, we will not go in. Without you we won't go in."

Mr. Brezhnev, it turned out, had probably softened in part because of the work of Colonel Kuklinski, the C.I.A. agent. Unknown to Mr. Kania, the colonel, who served on General Jaruzelski's staff, had alerted Washington to an imminent invasion.

Mr. Brzezinski said Mr. Brezhnev was consequently warned on the hot line of the "gravest consequences" if Moscow went ahead.

But a year later, when martial law came, bureaucratic infighting in the Reagan Administration resulted in Colonel Kuklinski's information having little impact, Mr. Pipes said.

Moreover, the C.I.A. never told the White House that it had the complete plans for martial law from Colonel Kuklinski, Mr. Pipes said. "It was a

tremendous intelligence coup, but had no effect on the course of events because it was so tightly held."

And during the conference, Professor Pipes, well known for having taken a hard line against the Soviets, said he was shocked to learn of another miscue at the White House. He listened as General Jaruzelski said remarks made at the time by Vice President George Bush were interpreted by Poland as a green light for martial law.

General Jaruzelski described sending the deputy chief of the Polish general staff, Eugeniusz Molczyk, to Washington, where he was told by Mr. Bush that martial law was a better option than Soviet intervention.

"We took that as a sort of signal," the general said: "Do it yourselves, or there will be the most feared option."

Professor Pipes said that Mr. Bush had held rather "dovish" views on Poland and that furthermore the Reagan White House foreign policy apparatus was in disarray at the time of the Polish crisis.

General Jaruzelski seemed one of the most troubled figures at the gathering. He sat at the conference table, still ramrod straight at 74, but taking notes with a shaking hand. His attempts to paint himself as a patriotic Pole were constantly being deflated by the Russian general seated two chairs away, who kept lavishing praise on him.

In June 1981, the Russian said, the Kremlin pushed for General Jaruzelski as the new leader of Poland's Communist Party after becoming disenchanted with Mr. Kania.

As for Mr. Bujak, the former dissident, he may have got short shrift from General Kulikov at the conference proceedings, but later, in the corridor, the general approached him to say how sad he was that Poland had moved out of Russia's orbit.

"He kept telling me what a bad idea it was for Poland to join NATO," said an amused Mr. Bujak, taking note that the Soviet military brass had changed little in their imperial manner or attitude. "He took it almost as treason."