

NORTH ATLANTIC COUNCIL DEPUTIES

SECRETDOCUMENT:AC/2-D/6ENG. ONLY28th April, 1951.EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MILITARY, POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN POLAND AND
CZECHOSLOVAKIA.Draft Summary Report.

At their meeting on 25th April, 1951, the Council Deputies instructed the Political Working Group to draft a summary report of the views expressed by the Deputies in the course of their discussions on conditions in Poland and Czechoslovakia.

There is attached a draft summary which will be considered by the Political Working Group on Tuesday, 1st May, 1951, at 3.00 p.m.

(Signed) L.M. PEART.

13, Belgrave Square,
LONDON, S.W.1.

EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON MILITARY, POLITICAL
AND ECONOMIC CONDITIONS IN
POLAND AND CZECHOSLOVAKIA

On 23rd and 25th April, 1951, the Council Deputies exchanged views on military, political and economic conditions in Poland and Czechoslovakia. The following is a summary of the views expressed:

I. Military Conditions

1. Poland. Under Marshal Rokossovsky the Polish Army has been reorganized as an efficient fighting force and sufficient quantities of Soviet-type equipment for training purposes have been made available, including tanks, wheeled vehicles and heavy artillery. The efficiency of the Polish Air Force has also been increased by the supply of Soviet-type jet fighters. This recent trend suggests that the Soviet Government places considerable value on the Polish armed forces, and in their present state of training and equipment they compare favourably with the armed forces of the other satellite countries, Bulgaria excepted.

According to the latest available estimates the present strength of the Polish forces is approximately as follows:

Army	180,000
Navy	7,000
Air Force	7,000
Frontier and Security Guards	50,000
Police	175,000

In addition there are between two and three thousand Russian officers serving as instructors, and approximately 55,000 Soviet troops stationed in Poland.

2. Czechoslovakia. The morale, training and equipment of the Czech armed forces is at a low level.

/However

However, with the ascendancy of the Defence Minister, who is a Soviet puppet, there has been a general tightening of control over the armed forces. The Army is undergoing reorganization and it has recently been provided with some Soviet-type equipment. Furthermore, it is believed that the Air Force is also being re-equipped to a limited extent. Soviet-type jet fighters are now being manufactured under licence in Czechoslovakia, and air fields are being rapidly enlarged and improved. In its present state of preparedness the army is inferior to those of the other satellite countries.

Present strength of the Czech forces is estimated to be of the order of:

Army	130,000
Air Force	10,000
Para-military	100,000

Foreign instructors probably number about 1,000.

II. POLITICAL CONDITIONS

Neither Poland nor Czechoslovakia has been readily integrated into the Soviet orbit. Their relations with the West have always been closer than those of the other satellite countries, and Czechoslovakia in particular was until 1948 traditionally democratic. However, through terrorization and continuing pressure subservience to Russia is, to an increasing extent, being achieved. Except in Slovakia, where sporadic and ineffective incidents have occurred, there has been no active resistance or Titoist defections and their emergence cannot at this time be foreseen. Latent antagonism, however, exists in both countries.

Fear of German resurgence is still very real in both Poland and Czechoslovakia, for which reason the policy of the Western powers in respect of the rearming of Western Germany is deeply resented.

/1. Poland.

SECRET
AC/2-D/6

1. Poland. The relationship between Church and State is of great importance in Poland. The present regime has handled this situation with some skill, and in general has shown a willingness to compromise with the Roman Catholic Church. It has been their policy to differentiate between the aristocracy of the Church and the main body of the clergy, the former being subjected to much less favourable treatment.

2. Czechoslovakia

The recent purges, and consequent changes in party leadership, can be attributed in part to Soviet dissatisfaction with conditions in Czechoslovakia. Communists, whose sole allegiance is to Moscow, are now firmly in control, whereas national communists formerly dominated the Government.

The regime has been able to come to terms with the churches which, in terms of resistance, are a decreasingly important factor.

III. Economic Conditions

Poland and Czechoslovakia have made considerable progress in the industrial field, although serious difficulties are at present being encountered as a result of shortages of raw materials. On the other hand, in the collectivization of agriculture which is very unpopular, comparatively little progress has so far been made. Trade relations with the West have deteriorated.

1. Poland. Compared with the other satellite countries Poland enjoys a reasonable standard of living. Food and clothing are adequate, but housing conditions are bad. Since the war Poland has been transformed from a mainly agricultural country to a semi-industrialized country without any major dislocation.

SECRET
AC2-D/6

2. Czechoslovakia. A determined effort is being made to turn Czechoslovakia into an arsenal for the Eastern block, and exports to the Soviet and her satellites have increased annually each year since 1949. Introduced in 1949, the Five-Year Plan was revised early this year to place even greater emphasis on heavy industry at the expense of light industry producing for the home market. The aim appears to be to reduce the Czech standard of living to the Russian level.

Due to shortages of raw materials and machine tools, and to lower per capita output, production has recently deteriorated. Efforts to step up production are bitterly resented by the workers, and the results so far achieved are considered by the Soviet to be far from satisfactory.

IV. Statements of Policy

THE ITALIAN DEPUTY expressed the view that every effort should be made to foster relations with the people of Poland and Czechoslovakia. Means of attaining this end should be explored.

THE UNITED STATES DEPUTY said it was the policy of his Government to encourage the political and economic integration of the Sudeten Germans into the West German Republic.