

Washington's Polish dilemma

Poland's charge last week that the U.S. had "betrayed" the Solidarity movement in 1981 was the latest volley in the war of words between the two nations. It also neatly illustrated the basic dilemma in Washington's relations with Poland.

The U.S. is still angry at Poland over imposition of martial law in 1981 and the subsequent crushing of Solidarity. Washington appears determined to keep relations in a deep freeze by snubbing Gen. Jaruzelski's military regime and restricting financial support of Poland.

Last week Warsaw launched a stinging counter-attack, claiming that Washington knew in advance of the planned crackdown on Solidarity but "betrayed" its leadership by failing to inform them of their impending arrests. Washington angrily riposted, claiming that Warsaw's charges were lies designed to demoralize widespread and lively opposition to the Jaruzelski regime.

Self-serving as they were, Poland's assertions may have had some element of truth. Washington has excellent intelligence sources in Poland. The U.S. may well have had advance notice of plans to impose martial law. Its failure to warn Solidarity leaders was not, as Warsaw asserted, caused by cynical duplicity but by the inherent contradictions in U.S.-Polish relations.

Warning Solidarity would probably have jeopardized U.S. intelligence sources in Poland. Worse, Solidarity might have been driven to armed resistance to prevent the military takeover. Had this occurred, what would the U.S. have done?

Eric IV ARGOLIS



No communist regime, save perhaps tiny Grenada, has ever lost power. Poland's communist regime was, in 1980-81, certainly close to collapse but the roar of Soviet tank engines just across the border had a tonic effect upon the party and army. Had the Polish Army not moved against Solidarity, the waiting Red Army would assuredly have done so.

The prospect of armed insurrection in East Europe can be little more appealing to Washington than to Moscow. Sadly, the only people left who think the East European status quo can somehow be peacefully changed are the ever-romantic Poles. Washington, in spite of much empty rhetoric designed to please Polish-American voters, knows in its heart that Moscow would never allow Poland's communist regime to be swept away or be altered beyond recognition. Poland is the linchpin of Moscow's military and political hold over East Europe.

A popular uprising in Warsaw could only mean another Budapest or Prague — tragedies and shameful episodes that Washington would rather forget. Only a general war could wrench Poland away from Soviet control. Anything short of that would mean yet another massacre of Polish

patriots while the rest of the world watched from the sidelines.

Solidarity, for all its courage, could not undo the catastrophe created by Franklin Roosevelt at Yalta. East Europe's continuing servitude is the terrible price still being paid for Roosevelt's mania to utterly destroy Germany no matter what the cost.

Given this grim reality, how then to deal with Poland? Shun them, as Washington is doing, or face facts and treat them like any other East European communist regime? Western Europe and even Britain have decided to forgive and forget by extending new financing and trade credits to Poland. Europeans know that continuing to cold shoulder Poland will neither change Poland's regime nor bring back the balmy Solidarity springtime.

Washington's continued boycott of Poland is not even consistent. It has just reaffirmed favored trade relations with Romania, a nation with one of the world's worst human rights records. Cool but normal relations are also had with totalitarian Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria. Why treat easier-going and less-repressive Poland differently?

Gen. Jaruzelski and his red praetorian guard are in Warsaw to stay. Huffing and puffing won't make them jump the next train to Moscow. Which suggests that Washington swallow hard and either normalize relations with Poland or else sever contacts with all the nasty little Soviet satrapies of East Europe and tell them to go take a flying leap into the Danube.

Anyway, why punish the Polish servant for the sins of his Muscovite master?