COLONEL RYSZARD KUKLINSKI AND HIS UNIQUE MISSION: A JUXTAPOSITION OF THE POST-COLD WAR OUTLOOKS

A dissertation presented

by

Dariusz G. Jonczyk

to
The Department of History

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

in the field of

History

Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts
September 2010
COLONEL RYSZARD KUKLINSKI AND HIS UNIQUE MISSION: A
JUXTAPOSITION OF THE POST-COLD WAR OUTLOOKS

by

Dariusz G. Jonczyk

ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History in the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences of Northeastern University, September, 2010
Abstract

The spy case of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, a Polish Army officer who collaborated with the CIA between 1972 and 1981, has generated passionate debate in the post Cold War geopolitical transition in the world after the fall of Communism. Perceived as a traitor of his nation by his opponents and a hero of the Cold War era by his enthusiasts, Kuklinski accomplished his lonely mission by channeling some 35 thousand top secret documents in both Polish and Russian to the agency. Unlikely fully explored by the American strategists, the files nonetheless disclosed some important technical, operational, and strategic plans of the former Warsaw Pact and the plans for the imposition of the martial law in Poland in 1981. Though sentenced to death in absentia in 1984 in Warsaw, Kuklinski was formally vindicated by Poland’s judicial system in 1997. Upon his triumphant return to Poland in 1998, Kuklinski witnessed Poland’s joining NATO and other new democratic developments after the fall of Communism in 1990. Kuklinski’s solitary efforts proved their validity in the eyes of the public opinion in a prophetic manner no one could ever dare to predict. Yet the significance of his act underwent a discombobulated scrutiny in the court of public opinion in Poland and elsewhere. Consequently, it resulted in a never ending hero-traitor debate.

Interestingly, even after Kuklinski’s death in 2004, the hero-traitor discourse over his spying, which originated in the mid 1980’s still continues. The chaotic voices of his critics, enthusiasts, and those who remain undecided perpetuate the debate and apparently distort the meaning of Kuklinski’s accomplishments and his identity. In addition, the debate prevents viewing the meaning of his spying in a broad context of the social and political developments in the world after the fall of Communism. The fluctuation and dynamics of the individual and social memory of Kuklinski as expressed in the public pronouncements of Kuklinski himself, his
opponents and enthusiasts in the time period of 1982 and 2004 and shortly after parallels the transformation of the world geopolitics in that period of time. As a result, Kuklinski and his commentators express their opinions in the context of the post Cold War reality which projects the old East-West divisions on their perceptions of Kuklinski and his act. Consequently, the Americans acknowledge Kuklinski’s heroism a priori, the Russians consider him a traitor, and the Poles scrutinize Kuklinski in the ethical context of his spying and politicize the significance of his act. Amidst all diverse opinions of Kuklinski’s critics and adherents and Kuklinski’s own peculiar perception of his mission which aimed to free Poland from the Soviet oppression and prevent the atomic holocaust, the need to find another way to approach Kuklinski’s affair is essential. The petty hero-traitor discourse limits the perception of Kuklinski in a complex way of some key historical issues related to his espionage, such as the fluctuation of the individual and social memory of Kuklinski, the nature of the former Polish People’s Republic, the dynamics of the post Cold War set of mind of Kuklinski’s commentators, and others.
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my advisor Prof. Jeffrey Burds for his guidance, constant support, vast expertise, and inspiration to write this dissertation. I would like to thank the other members of my dissertation committee: Prof. Patrick Manning and Prof. Hiroaki Kuromiya for their advice. I would like to acknowledge Prof. Suzanne Fournier and her valuable and exceptional editorial suggestions.

In a special way, I would like to express my gratitude to the Northeastern University History Department Faculty and Staff for their help and guidance in my PhD training. Although there are many teachers whom I would like to single out, I would like to thank Prof. Christine Gilmartin for her help, generous guidance, and inspiration. In addition, I want to express my gratitude to Prof. Harvey Green for his exceptional teaching in public history.

I want to thank Prof. Józef Szaniawski from Warsaw, Poland for accepting my invitation to be interviewed on the person of Kuklinski and for letting me experience first hand who was indeed his dear friend, Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski.

I would like to thank the Staff of the Public Library in Katowice, Poland, the Staff of the Public Library in Częstochowa, Poland, as well as the Akademia Jana Długosza Library in Częstochowa, Poland for their help in locating the many articles and books on the subject.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, my family and friends and all who helped make this dissertation a reality.
Table of Contents

Abstract 3
Acknowledgments 5
Table of Contents 6
Introduction 7
Chapter I: Memories of the Spy. The Perspective of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski 23
Chapter II: Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. Traitor and American Spy 80
Chapter III: Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. Hero of the Cold War Era And Polish Patriot 151
Conclusion: Mission Accomplished Amidst Neverending Debate 225
Bibliography 240
**Introduction**

In December 2008, the country of Poland learned about the new film *Gry Wojenne (War Games)* produced by Dariusz Jabłoński and portraying the heroic figure of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. A CIA source in the Polish People’s Army for nine years (1972-1981), Kuklinski supplied the CIA with some 35,000 pages of secret documents, his own reports pertaining to Warsaw Pact military strategies and equipment, and detailed plans of the martial law eventually imposed in Poland in 1981 by the Jaruzelski regime. The film’s premiere took place on 23 January 2009 in the National Conservatory in Warsaw,¹ and it inspired fresh debates about the choice which Kuklinski made at the beginning of the 1970s.

Ryszard Jerzy Kuklinski was born in Warsaw, Poland on 13 June 1930. He grew up in a working class family on Dzielna Street in Warsaw. The outbreak of the Second World War dramatically influenced the childhood of Kuklinski. Assisted by his friends, the young Kuklinski smuggled food and other necessities to the Warsaw Ghetto to help the starving Jews. In 1943, the Gestapo arrested his father Stanisław, who died shortly after in the concentration camp in Sachsenhausen. After the war, Kuklinski moved to Wrocław. He began working in the City Hall and simultaneously studied in high school. In 1947, Kuklinski was accepted in the Military Academy in Wrocław. In the 1950’s, Kuklinski began his military career as an officer in Piła and then in Kolobrzeg, where he was in charge of the battalion of the airborne-landing brigade. The duty of an Army officer did not prevent Kuklinski from marrying his girlfriend Hanka in 1952 and fathering two sons: Waldemar and Bogdan. Kuklinski’s intelligence, sense of humor, and impeccable work ethic helped to advance his career steadily. Upon his graduation with distinction from the Academy of the General Staff in Rembertów, Kuklinski joined the General Staff of the Polish People’s Army in Warsaw in 1963. Commended by his superiors (Generals

---

Chocha, Jaruzelski, Kiszczak and others) for his hard work and brilliant strategic perceptions of modern warfare, Kuklinski joined the International Control Commission in Vietnam in 1967. Upon his return to Poland in July 1968, Kuklinski briefly served under the command of Marshal Ivan Jakubovski, Chief of the Warsaw Pact headquarters in Legnica. Next, he returned to the General Staff in Warsaw in August 1968.

The Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the suppression of the striking workers in Poland in 1970 inspired Kuklinski to undertake a solitary struggle against the Soviet empire and its ideology. He contacted the American Embassy in Bonn, Germany while sailing with his comrades on a reconnaissance trip across the Baltic Sea coast in 1971. Until his exfiltration from Poland in November 1981, Kuklinski carefully camouflaged his secret bond with the CIA and his clandestine operation even from his immediate family until the last moment, when he was to be exposed at a meeting with his superiors in the General Staff. Kuklinski justified his collaboration with the CIA in purely patriotic terms; namely, he aimed to inform the world about the nature and military strategies of the “evil empire” and to reveal the different Soviet and Polish plans to resolve the developments in Poland in 1981. Kuklinski believed that his revelation of the Soviets’ strategic plans to invade Western Europe in the late 1970s would protect Poland from an atomic holocaust. Although the credibility of this threat has never been proven, Kuklinski was motivated by his fear that this holocaust would be the consequence of NATO forces’ use of atomic weapons to rebuff any Soviet invasion of Western Europe.

After his exfiltration from Poland in 1981 and his exoneration in 1997, Kuklinski was able to return to Poland in 1998. This historic visit reassured Kuklinski that his mission was worthwhile. (Although he claimed on several occasions that he did not expect to be compensated
for his efforts, he earned a salary from the Department of State after 1981. He saw a new
democratic Poland and was acclaimed a hero of Poland and America. Despite the personal loss
which he experienced in 1994 when two of his sons suddenly died in separate and unexpected
accidents whose circumstances are still unclear, Kuklinski believed that his clandestine mission
influenced the course of world history. In the eyes of friends such as Józef Szaniawski, Kuklinski
maintained the humble and even prosaic composure of a Polish Army officer who realized his
call of “higher necessity” to combat the Communist system. The undisclosed location of his
home in the U.S. and the constant protection of the agency’s personnel only added to the harsh
reality that each defector must take for granted. The work in the Department of State in
Washington, D.C. stimulated the life long commitment of Kuklinski to resist oppressive ideology
of the Communists. Until his death on 11 February 2004 in Florida, Kuklinski remained
convinced that his mission aided Poland’s independence from the Soviet hegemony and
furthered Poland’s acceptance in the NATO Pact in 1998. The documentary of Dariusz
Jabłoński, Gry Wojenne, pays tribute to the heroic figure of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski.

The release of the new documentary on Kuklinski in Poland coincided with the CIA
initiative to honor the memory of Colonel Kuklinski at a special symposium which took place on
11 December 2008 at Langley. The agency released a CD with some 81 declassified documents
secured by Kuklinski, which are presented in a documentary entitled Preparing for Martial Law:
Through the Eyes of Col. Ryszard Kuklinski.” An American scholar named Mark Kramer
provided a comprehensive analysis of the newly released documents. Kramer can be additionally
credited for his scholarly pursuit since he was able to copy some important notes taken by

---

General Victor Anoshkin, aide of Marshal Victor Kulikov, a former chief of the Warsaw Pact. While working with Jabłoński on research for the documentary on Kuklinski, Kramer copied the notes from the conversation between General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Poland’s former Prime Minister and Minister of National Defense, and Marshal Kulikov. According to the Anoshkin notes, Kulikov asked Jaruzelski at the meeting on 8 December 1981 if he could report to Brezhnev that the preparations to impose martial law in Poland were finalized. Kulikov asked: “When I make a report to Leonid Brezhnev can we tell him that you have already made a decision to fulfill your plan?” and Jaruzelski answered: “Yes, under one condition— that you will help us.” This affirmative statement of Jaruzelski exposes the mastermind of the martial law and discredits his official justification, namely that his decision about using the military force in December 1981 was in fact choosing “a lesser evil.” In addition, this documented confirmation of Jaruzelski’s plea for the Soviet help validates Kuklinski’s risky mission to disclose the preparations of the martial law in order to save his homeland from Soviet intervention.

However, shortly after the release of the Anoshkin notes, Jaruzelski argued that the note is not “a credible document.” He questioned the inner logic of the time table, arguing that four days before the actual imposition of the martial law was simply not enough time to count on the Soviet help. Jaruzelski, firm and outspoken, continues the logic of Czesław Kiszczak, former Minister of Interior, who argued in the Warsaw Court House on 27 April 2009 that the martial law indeed saved Poland from the outside intervention and unnecessary bloodshed. Kiszczak refuted the accusation of the investigating branch of Poland’s IPN (Institute of National Memory) arguing that martial law was a lawful act legalized by the Polish Sejm in 1981. Kiszczak concluded that the Polish society of the present widely recognizes the fact that the

---

martial law indeed prevented the unnecessary bloodshed, stabilized the social unrest in 1981, and prevented an outside intervention. In addition both Jaruzelski and Kiszczak reject Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski as a traitor and an American spy. Jaruzelski believes that “service in the Polish Army was a service to Poland. Any disloyalty to the military oath should be considered treason.” On the other hand, Kiszczak rejects Kuklinski’s uniqueness. He explains that there were other spies in the Polish Army at that time, such as Jerzy Szumski or Jerzy Pawłowski, who defected to the West and gave up some crucial military and strategic information. Yet, Kuklinski was honored with a special symposium at Langley and memorialized in a documentary, both of which emphasize his exceptional heroism.

Both the release of the film on Kuklinski in Poland and the newly declassified Kuklinski files illuminate the public debate on Kuklinski which originated in late 1980’s in Poland and elsewhere. Kuklinski was indeed recognized for his incredible accomplishments and publicly honored for his heroism. On the other hand, these two hallmarks, though they provide some important documents on Kuklinski’s unique mission, propel the public debate on Kuklinski in the post Cold War world perspective. They still generate some key questions about Kuklinski, such as: What was a rational basis for Kuklinski’s vindication in a global geo-political context of the post Cold War era? What makes Kuklinski different from other Cold War spies? To what degree did the post Cold War mentality stimulate the positive and negative pronouncements on Kuklinski and his accomplishments?

---

5 “General Kiszczak o stanie wojennym”(General Kiszczak About the Martial Law), Nowy Dziennik, 28 Apr 2009, 4.
The newly released documentaries add another element to the complexity of the issue. It might be argued that in reality the files had been previously used by Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski as a source material for his interviews with Józef Szaniawski, Benjamin Weiser, and other scholars and journalists. In consequence, most of the facts found in Kuklinski’s earliest public pronouncement in 1987 as published in *Kultura Paryska* entitled “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War With the Nation Seen From Within). Therefore, it might be argued that the CIA did not release any new material on Kuklinski besides the official portion which Kuklinski already used in his public pronouncements.

Over all, the most recent discoveries add to the continuity of the public debate on Kuklinski in Poland and elsewhere and invite more reactions from Kuklinski’s opponents and enthusiasts. The hero-traitor debate over Kuklinski continues since the 1980’s, when the first news releases informed the American public about their source in the Polish Army uniform. And Jerzy Urban, speaker of the Polish Communist government, attempted to debate these revelations of Kuklinski in front of the wide Polish audience. The morally complex debate -- whether Kuklinski was a hero or a traitor -- influences the social memory of Kuklinski as expressed by his critics and lobbyists, and the newest revelations engage the fluctuation of that memory.

Therefore, there remains an enormous need to provide some clarification and systematization of the complex hero-traitor debate over Kuklinski. In my dissertation, I employ an innovative method of viewing Kuklinski and his commentators. This method explores Kuklinski in the context of the post Cold War era views of his commentators. I propose to analyze the individual and social memory of Kuklinski and his detectors in the post Cold War scenario to contrast their views over time (including before and after the fall of Communism).

---

8 Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War With the Nation Seen From Within), interview by the staff (Paris, April 1987), *Kultura Paryska* 4/475.
A hermeneutical glance at the hero-traitor debate shows clearly that the public pronouncements of Kuklinski himself, his critics and lobbyists follow the old Cold War East-West ideological divisions. In the enduring popular perspective, Kuklinski is viewed either as a hero or traitor. While the enthusiasts of his action accept his hero standing because of his alliance with the Americans, his opponents dismiss his spying instantaneously for the same reason. In general, both the critics and enthusiasts of Kuklinski follow a similar pattern to express their memory concerning Kuklinski. In consequence, the morally and politically implicated public discourse over Kuklinski too often prevents all parties from focusing on important issues pertaining to the broader meaning of his espionage.

From this new perspective I intend to analyze the limits of the memory of Kuklinski and his commentators concerning his spying, present the fluctuation of their recollections as affected by the fall of Communism and find the connections between different approaches to Kuklinski. In addition, I intend to examine the extent of influence of the post Cold War rhetoric in the pronouncements of Kuklinski and his commentators. I argue that Kuklinski and his critics follow the pattern of post Cold War thinking in their pronouncements, which prevents them from seeing thoroughly the figure of Kuklinski. Therefore, the Americans acknowledge Kuklinski’s heroism a priori, the Russians consider him a traitor, and the Poles generally scrutinize Kuklinski in a more overtly ethical context which leads them to vacillate between the American and Russian post Cold War outlooks.

The study of the threefold trajectory of the pronouncements of Kuklinski, his critics and his adherents as passed on in the personal and social memories in the context of the post Cold War outlooks will identify the figure of Kuklinski. This study will underline the meaning of his mission in the transition from 1981--Kuklinski’s exfiltration until his death in 2004 and shortly
after. What will become apparent is that Kuklinski and his action should not be perceived as a whole; rather, Kuklinski and his mission should be studied as a phenomenon which has its inner dynamics, shifts, interactions, and trajectories. This important endeavor will help to illuminate the often distorted memory of Kuklinski as presented in the wider scope of often incoherent public discourse. It will demonstrate the interactions between the public pronouncements of Kuklinski, his critics and enthusiasts. As a result, the commentators of Kuklinski in the Polish debate form their own subjective view of Kuklinski and discriminate on the basis of the popular slogan “tell me what you think of Kuklinski and I will tell you who you are.”

In addition to exploring different perceptions of Kuklinski’s act in time, one must examine the identity of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in the eyes of his enthusiasts and opponents. Tomasz Lis, a Polish journalist comments: “This question is asked by many Poles even until now; however, the present time is replaced by the past. Who was he? Some say - great patriot, others state he was a traitor. Still others keep a diplomatic silence.”

The need to examine Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski and his unique mission in the context of the post Cold War perspective is important because it will help to supply valuable perspective on the post Cold War culture of change after the fall of Communism. It will also systematize the chaotic pronouncements about Kuklinski in Poland and elsewhere. And it will show the impact of the post Cold War mentality on the expressions of Kuklinski himself, his critics, and proponents.

In my dissertation, I will be examining the figure of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski and his act in a world history perspective. The motives for his spying resulted from his desire to fight against the “evil empire” to save his homeland from the atomic holocaust and Soviet dominion. Kuklinski justified his act on the basis of a patriotic duty of an army officer who pledged his

---

10 Tomasz Lis, “Zwyczajny patriota” (An Ordinary Patriot), *Wprost*, 22 Feb 2004, 26
loyalty foremost to his country against the totalitarian ideology. Kuklinski engaged with the Americans because he believed that his holy duty as a Polish Army officer was to protect his homeland. In his self-defined patriotism and aversion toward the Soviet dominance, Kuklinski resembles other spies, yet he is unique because his collaboration with the CIA was selflessly motivated. In consequence, Kuklinski was recognized by the agency as the hero of the Cold War. Kuklinski himself remarked: “I could have gotten any amount of money from the Americans, if I asked. This would, however, diminish my credibility…and the concept of cooperation which aimed to help Poland. For this I could never accept money.”

Kuklinski’s difficult decision to cooperate with the CIA, his apparent vindication in Poland in 1997, and his triumphant return to Poland in 1998 generated an avalanche of positive and negative opinions about his figure worldwide. The reactions to his recognition resulted in a hero-traitor debate implicating the moral, political, and social context of his mission in the global perspective. On the one hand, the hero-traitor debate over Kuklinski refocuses the importance of his act, namely his real contribution to end the Soviet dominion in Poland and elsewhere, if such existed in reality. On the other hand, it helps to perceive Kuklinski in a global context of his mission which concerns the juncture of political and ideological interest between Poland, Russia, and the U.S. before and after the fall of Communism in 1990. Considering the geo-political change in 1990’s, Kuklinski himself as well as his critics and adherents on both sides of the Atlantic demonstrate post Cold War perceptions. While Kuklinski’s post Cold War mentality may seem ingenuous, it was a consequence of his desire to oppose Soviet dominion. His critics and lobbyists in Poland, Russia, and the U.S. display a various degree of the old perceptions of Kuklinski’s act. As a result, the post Cold War perceptions of Kuklinski’s critics and enthusiasts

---

11 Józef Szaniawski, *Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i Zimna Wojna* (Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War), 223
prevent them from viewing Kuklinski and his mission outside the old polarized divisions between East and West. In their stubbornness, some critics and enthusiasts perpetuate the sensationalist arguments designed only to prove Kuklinski’s guilt or vindicate him.

The main argument of my dissertation will develop in three chapters. In the first chapter entitled “Memories of the Spy: the Perspective of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski,” I explore the public pronouncements of Colonel Kuklinski between his exfiltration to the U.S. in November 1981 and his historic visit to Poland in 1998. In this period of time, Colonel Kuklinski expressed his memory to the public reflecting his personal understanding of his unique mission. His personal memory of his mission vacillates between the self-promotion of his heroic act, a view of his death sentence as cathartic, and self-vindication after his escape to the U.S. At the same time, the individual memory of Kuklinski is altered by the changing social and political scenario of the post Cold War reality. In addition, the hermeneutical alteration of his individual memory of his collaboration with the Americans shifts from personal apologetics in the early expressions in 1987 to a triumphal sense of accomplishment upon his return to Poland in 1998. Kuklinski, occasionally assertive in these statements, views himself as a patriot who saved his homeland from the atomic holocaust and the Soviet dominion. Yet his post Cold War perception aligns his pronouncements in accord with the American policy in Eastern Europe against the Soviet “evil empire.” The altered geo-politics of the world after the fall of Communism allows Kuklinski to evaluate his mission from the stand point of completion. Although I refer to the newly released Kuklinski files in this chapter; I consider Kuklinski’s pronouncements to the CIA in the context of his accomplishments. This dissertation primarily deals with the public pronouncements of Kuklinski, his critics and adherents in the time period between 1981 and 2004 and shortly after.
In the second chapter entitled “Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski: Traitor and American Spy,” I focus on the social memory of Kuklinski’s spying as recorded by his critics in order to disclose the nature of Kuklinski’s individual memory of his spying. The individual memory of Kuklinski as expressed in his public pronouncements alters accordingly to the social memory of his critics, who challenge Kuklinski’s uniqueness and launch a progressive campaign to discredit his heroism. While the negative assessment of Kuklinski in Polish circles steadily intensified between 1986 and 2004, the Russians lessened their criticism in 1990’s. On the one hand, the critics of Kuklinski perceive him as an instrument in the hands of the CIA and point out double standards of Kuklinski’s loyalty by suggesting his collaboration with the KGB. On the other hand, the critics view his mission in the moral context of a traitor of his nation. Eventually, the critics fail to damage the image of Kuklinski, since his popularity in Polish society rapidly increased and Kuklinski is acclaimed hero and patriot by most people. By Kuklinski’s return to Poland in 1998 there were more enthusiasts of Kuklinski than critics, yet in the persistent view of his critics Kuklinski still remains a traitor.

In the third chapter entitled “Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski: Hero of the Cold War Era and Polish Patriot” I focus on the public pronouncements of Kuklinski’s enthusiasts. I attempt to show that the adherents of Kuklinski either assume his hero status a priori or slowly develop the notion of his heroism. Kuklinski’s proponents in the U.S. and Poland essentially differ in their perceptions of Kuklinski’s heroism. The Americans view Kuklinski as a fighter for the just cause since he was aligned with the CIA. On the contrary, the Polish supporters perceive his mission as a model to fight against the totalitarian regime. In both instances, the enthusiasts of Kuklinski attribute to him a virtue of patriotism as a venue to justify his mission to the public. In addition, the proponents of Kuklinski display similar shifts of their memory as his critics. In the early
pronouncements, they recognize Kuklinski as an extraordinary fighter for freedom, patriot, and a hero of the Cold War era. They are, however, apologetic and defensive in formulating their expressions about Kuklinski’s heroism. Upon his return to Poland in 1998, the adherents of Kuklinski perceive him as a true hero and a Polish patriot. I point out here another essential difference in the American and Polish perceptions of Kuklinski. The American public views Kuklinski as a hero *per se* due to his collaboration with the CIA, while the Polish enthusiasts of Kuklinski steadily build the case of Kuklinski – Polish and American hero of the Cold War era. Similarly to the critics, the enthusiasts of Kuklinski are affected by the post Cold War point of view which forces them to perceive Kuklinski as an instrument of the CIA.

Facing numerous dangers of misrepresentation of Kuklinski’s individual memory as well as the social memory of his critics and enthusiasts, I employ three methodological principles in my study. First, I analyze the dynamics of Kuklinski memory in the world history context with an emphasis on several periods in his life. I distinguish the apparent shifts in Kuklinski’s pronouncements and juxtapose them with the public pronouncements of his critics and enthusiasts. Next, I contrast the recollections of Kuklinski with two turning points in his life, namely when he was sentenced to death in absentia in 1984 and when he was vindicated by the Military Tribunal in 1997. The alteration of Kuklinski’s memory will be contrasted with the changing geo-political scenario after the fall of Communism in 1990.

Secondly, I analyze the fluctuation of the memory of Kuklinski’s opponents, pointing out the essential differences in the social memory of Kuklinski’s opponents in Poland and Russia. I also identify some common accusations against Kuklinski as I juxtapose the consequences of Kuklinski’s act with the nature of the Polish People’s Republic in 1970’s through early 1980’s and the individual memory of Kuklinski. In accord with the critics’ demand, I challenge
Kuklinski’s uniqueness and refute some common perceptions about him. In addition, I define the shifts in the critics’ pronouncements in time between 1986 – Urban’s earliest reaction to Kuklinski to 2004 – Kuklinski’s death and shortly after in the post Cold War reality.

Thirdly, I analyze the positive memory of Kuklinski in the post Cold War context with a focus on his hero of the Cold War era standing. I center and contrast two key approaches to Kuklinski exemplified in the American and Polish views by Józef Szaniawski and Benjamin Weiser. I examine a gradual development of the recognition of Kuklinski’s heroism in the Polish context in the time period between 1990 – the fall of Communism until his death in 2004 and shortly after.

In addition to establishing the methodological frame, I would like to make the world history context of my dissertation more explicit. In the first chapter, I point out Kuklinski’s awareness that his files were important to the Americans in their efforts to curb Soviet politics in Poland and in the world of the late 1970’s and early 1980’s. In the second chapter, I present the view of Kuklinski’s critics that his spying was futile and in fact did not change the course of historical events in Poland in 1980-81. In the third chapter, I present the view of Kuklinski’s supporters, who maintain his heroism yet overlook the real meaning of his spying and its implications. While the Polish apologists believe that Kuklinski is a hero who changed the course of events in Poland, the American supporters focus on his heroism per se and frame the limits of the real impact of the Kuklinski files on the course of history.

In addition to the methodological structure of this dissertation, I would like to specify the boundaries of my research. While I present the perspectives of Kuklinski and his commentators in the historical context of the post Cold War era, there is no significant historical analysis of the period of time between 1981 and 2004 and shortly after. This dissertation avoids any moral
judgment of Kuklinski and his efforts. Similarly, this study does not focus on the
pronouncements of Kuklinski made directly to the CIA (contained in the newly declassified
files). The aim instead is to examine the juxtaposition of the public expressions of Kuklinski act
in the views of Kuklinski himself, his critics, and lobbyists in the world history perspective. In its
efforts to define the post Cold War outlooks of Kuklinski himself and his commentators, this
study may challenge some common perceptions of Kuklinski and even provide another way to
view Kuklinski and his mission in a positive light.

Several important fresh sources served the larger design of this dissertation. I mention
here the interviews I secured with Józef Szaniawski in Warsaw July 2006, a loyal and close
friend of Kuklinski from 1990 until his death in 2004; acquaintances encountered randomly in
the Powązki Cemetery at the tomb of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in Warsaw in July 2006; Rev.
Maciej Pawłowski, who encountered Kuklinski at Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish in
Washington D.C.; and Major Wacław Wieczorek, a colleague of Kuklinski from the Army. In
order to establish an appropriate context for these interviews, I use my own 2007 experiences at
the Museum of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in Warsaw. I also use the source material Kuklinski
left behind in print such as his first official public expression from 1987 entitled “Wojna z
narodem widziana od środka”(The War With the Nation Seen From Within) and the speeches
Kuklinski delivered when he returned to Poland in 1998 (published in the anthologies of
interviews and comments compiled by Józef Szaniawski and some Polish newspapers). Even
more invaluable were the newly released Kuklinski files available on-line on website
www.foia.cia.gov, and the analysis of these documents provided by Mark Kramer in his
An Analysis of the Newly Released CIA Documents on Ryszard Kuklinski.” I also draw on
various publications, articles published in numerous newspapers and magazines, books, comments, single opinions, reflections about Kuklinski which are available in the English, Polish, and Russian languages. For the most part, I rely on sources published in the Polish language.

In addition to the sources, there are some important bibliographical works which need to be singled out. In my dissertation I rely on the biography of Kuklinski written by Benjamin Weiser, *Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, and the Price He Paid to Save His Country*. Weiser presented a thorough study of Kuklinski’s life and his espionage. Weiser’s account is better understood in the context of Józef Szaniawski’s compilations of articles, interviews, and reflections on Kuklinski published in his *Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kułkini i Zimna Wojna* (Lonely Mission: Colonel Kułinski and the Cold War), *Pułkownik Kułkini: Misja Polski* (Colonel Kułinski: The Polish Mission), *Konrad Wallenrod XX wieku: Pułkownik Kułkini* (Conrad Wallenrod of the Twentieth Century: Colonel Kułinski) and other books and articles. In his popular books, Szaniawski portrays Kułinski as a real hero of Poland and America and emphasizes his distinct virtues. Another attempt at representing Kułinski is found in the novel by Maria Nurowska entitled *Mój przyjaciel zdrajca* (My Friend Traitor). Nurowska claims to base her novel on numerous conversations with Kułinski. Though seemingly authentic, her novel remains a fiction worth of attention. In his book *U.S. Intelligence and the Confrontation in Poland, 1980-1981*, Douglas J. MacEachin presents Kułinski’s mission in the context of developments in Poland during the heated months of the rise of Solidarity rise 1980 and 1981. Most of the works on Kułinski portray him as a hero and a master of espionage, yet with the exception of Douglas J. MacEachin, they lack a thorough analysis of the historical context of the developments in the time period when Kułinski actively collaborated with the
CIA. In general, the works on Kuklinski limit the approach to his figure to sensational expressions of national pride for the role he played to expose the Soviet control in Poland.

It is my hope that this dissertation will contribute to the field of world history in three important ways. It presents an innovative method for approaching Kuklinski and his commentator in the context of the post Cold War outlooks, for this perspective has not been yet advanced in the study of Kuklinski. Further, it shows the trajectories in the public discourse on Kuklinski on both sides of the Atlantic--before and after the fall of Communism. Finally, it analyzes divergent perspectives of Kuklinski and his commentators through the filter of his espionage as it sought to influence the course of world events.
CHAPTER I: MEMORIES OF THE SPY. THE PERSPECTIVE OF COLONEL RYSZARD KUKLINSKI

On 23 May 1984, the Military Tribunal of the Warsaw District secretly sentenced to death in absentia Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kuklinski, an American spy in the Polish military. On 30 March 1995 Colonel Kuklinski’s sentence was revised by the Supreme Court, leading to his vindication on 2 September 1997. Until now Kuklinski remains one of the most controversial spies of the Cold War era, and his case “with the exception of the Rosenberg and Alger Hiss... has aroused so much passionate debate in Poland and elsewhere.” Even after his death on 10 February 2004 in Tampa, Florida, the actions of Kuklinski still remain puzzling for many journalists and scholars worldwide.

The case of Kuklinski became even more puzzling after the most recent announcement of Poland’s Minister of National Defense Radosław Sikorski that 1700 archival units concerning the war plans of the former Warsaw Pact would be made public. In a November 2005 press conference, Sikorski presented among other artifacts a map of Warsaw Pact military exercises. Thorough knowledge of this map and its potential consequences for Poland in case of the Soviet invasion of the West inspired Kuklinski to collaborate with the Americans. Though acclaimed by some as “the First Polish Officer in NATO” and “a true hero of the Cold War,” Kuklinski still remains “an intelligent traitor” to others.

---

The highly opinionated views of Kuklinski’s case worldwide reflect to some extent the way in which Kuklinski expressed the memory of his spying to the public. It seems that Kuklinski’s memory emphasizes self-promotion of his heroic act, a view of his death sentence as cathartic, and self-vindication after his escape to the US. Thus, the individual memory recorded by Kuklinski himself needs to be analyzed in order for one to grasp the often chaotic worldwide opinions about his spying for the CIA. The French historian Pierre Nora describes memory in general terms of the individual and the communal reflection of life. According to Nora, memory is generated by a living and dynamic society. Thus, memory is subject to “permanent evolution.” It embraces “the dialectic of remembering and forgetting” and it remains “unconscious of its successive deformations.” Nora states that memory has a life generating quality in its periodical revivals. Within this framework, the individual memory of Kuklinski, complex in its iterations and susceptible to social and political influences, will remain the focus of this work. The social and political forces in the world polarized by the Cold War, which generated Kuklinski’s ability to remember and express his own view of his accomplishments, will serve as a background for the broader context of the worldwide social memory of Kuklinski as expressed by markedly different groups.

An essential primary source in this study is the repository of interviews which Kuklinski left behind, interviews with both the Polish journalist and scholar Józef Szaniawski and his American counterpart Benjamin Weiser. Before his death, Kuklinski was able to visit his native country of Poland in 1998. This visit produced a number of important statements and clarifications given by Kuklinski himself on different occasions. Yet Kuklinski’s understanding of himself, as recorded in the form of interviews, letters, and statements, might be easily

---

misrepresented. For example, Benjamin Weiser conducted a comprehensive study of Kuklinski’s life and analyzed Kuklinski’s spying in the context of the political and social developments of the polarized Cold War world, basing his work on over 50 hours of interviews with Kuklinski. Yet the meaning of Kuklinski’s expressions, as translated from Polish into English\textsuperscript{17} and recorded in Weiser’s articles and biography of Kuklinski do not accurately represent Kuklinski’s memory. The reasons are that the individual memory of Kuklinski was distorted in translation, and also that Weiser dwelled on Kuklinski’s recollections to create a portrait of an extraordinary Polish Army officer who risked his life to provide “the United States government with the highest secrets of the Soviet and the Warsaw Pact militaries during 9 years of clandestine cooperation with the CIA.”\textsuperscript{18}

A similar misrepresentation of Kuklinski’s individual memory is found in the work of Maria Nurowska entitled \textit{Mój przyjaciel zdrajca} (My Friend Traitor). Polish novelist Maria Nurowska claims to have interviewed Kuklinski personally in different cities in Europe prior to his vindication, and she refers to frequent talks on the phone with Colonel Kuklinski, yet her work remains a fiction based on interviews found in other publications.\textsuperscript{19} Although Nurowska writes her novel from the premise of a thorough understanding of Kuklinski’s personal tragedy based on supposedly close ties with Kuklinski, she creates the portrait of a righteous yet kindly traitor of monstrous Communism.

Another serious problem in any scholarly approach to Kuklinski’s memories exists. It is the lack of distinctions evident in earlier commentaries on his public pronouncements.

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{17} Kuklinski improved his ability to speak the English language after he came to the United States in 1981. He often visited the Our Lady Queen of Poland Parish in Washington D.C., where he gave interviews in fluent English, yet he could better express himself in Polish. Interview with Rev. Maciej Pawłowski, assistant pastor of Our Lady Queen of Poland, 20 February 2007, Central Falls, RI}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{18} Benjamin Weiser, “A Question of Loyalty,” \textit{Washington Post} 13 December 1992, W9.}
\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{19} Maria Nurowska, \textit{Mój Przyjaciel Zdrajca} (My Friend Traitor), 231.}
Kuklinski’s memory regarding his accomplishments is too often treated as a whole by Szaniawski, Weiser, Nurowska, and other writers—rebuffing efforts to make careful discriminations. A lack of attention to the separate periods of Kuklinski’s individual memory may lead to a misrepresentation of his motives and actions and accordingly inspire the confusion which is often reflected in the debates of his defenders and detractors.

Facing numerous dangers of misrepresenting the individual memory of Kuklinski then, one must base this research on firm methodology and historical facts. In order to analyze the memory of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in the context of world history, one needs to explore Kuklinski’s memory about himself in the periods of his early years, his military career in the 1960-80’s, his collaboration with the CIA from 1972 till 1981, his reaction to the pronouncement of his death sentence after his exfiltration from Poland in 1981, his vindication and his historic return to Poland in 1998. It is also critical to distinguish noticeable shifts in Kuklinski’s memory of his own past. In his first public pronouncement in 1987, Kuklinski appears defensive and apologetic for example, versus his historical return to Poland in 1998 when he views his past from the perspective of a hero. In order to thoroughly distinguish the shifts in Kuklinski’s memory, one needs to explore periods of transition and to identify outside influences affecting the fluctuation of Kuklinski’s expression of his memory. Additionally, is essential to show the origin and development of Kuklinski’s Weltanschauung. For example, Kuklinski’s gradual development of the idea of the enemy involves both the Nazi and the Communist systems. This view originated in his childhood and shaped his Weltanschauung in the manner he expressed his views concerning the motives of his spying for the Americans against the Soviets.

While this study examines the public pronouncements of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski and the fluctuation of his memory, it necessarily contends with the contrast between his
pronouncements made directly to the CIA and his public comments. In December 2008, the CIA released a portion of Kuklinski’s files, namely 81 documents which refer exclusively to the Polish crisis between February and December 1981.\textsuperscript{20} As fascinated as some scholars were upon reading the actual Kuklinski files, one needs to acknowledge that the content of the documents revealed by the CIA was already presented by Kuklinski, though partially, to the public in his famous pronunciation entitled “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War With the Nation Seen From Within).\textsuperscript{21} Kuklinski’s pronouncements were published in \textit{Kultura} in 1987. In addition, many facts from Kuklinski files were presented to the wide public in his interviews with his biographers. The CIA declassified files whose content Kuklinski had already partially disclosed when he tendered his official apology in 1987. Though this study will not undertake a close comparison of the files recently revealed by the CIA and Kuklinski’s public expressions between 1987 and 1998, it seems important to underline some key points of Kuklinski’s pronouncement to the CIA.

In his deposition to the CIA, Kuklinski focused on five major areas of his experiences in Poland. First, he gave comprehensive information about General Wojciech Jaruzelski. Second, he described Soviet interaction with the satellite Poland’s Party leadership and military officials. Third, Kuklinski outlined the political and social situation in Poland. Fourth, he thoroughly


\textsuperscript{21} Similar traces found: Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka”[The War with the Nation Seen from Within], interview by the staff of Kultura Paryska (Paris, April 1987), \textit{Kultura Paryska} 4/475, 21 & 40 compare with “Relationship Between the Soviet Military Representation to Poland and the Polish Crisis,” Intelligence Information Report, 13 May 1982, FIRDB-312/01036-82; other similarities Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka,” 28 compare with “Government Exercise in Connection with Possible Declaration of Martial Law,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/00762-81 TS#818067, 16 March 1981. There are other similarities between both Kuklinski’s “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” and recently declassified by the CIA Kuklinski files. It might be argued that the CIA declassified only the documents which Colonel Kuklinski used to prepare his expose in 1987 and to give interviews to Józef Szaniawski, Maria Nurowska, Marta Miklaszewska, Tomasz Lis, Benjamin Fisher, and Benjamin Weiser.
revealed the plans and preparations for martial law in Poland in December 1981. Fifth, Kuklinski described the dynamics of the Party leadership and its reaction to the introduction of the martial law. Kuklinski’s files obviously supplied a clear vantage point on developments of the Polish crisis in 1980-1981.

In his pronouncements on General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Kuklinski expressed his “personal observations of his [Jaruzelski] attitudes, behavior and style for a period of over 25 years.”\(^{22}\) Kuklinski noted that Jaruzelski was speedily promoted to the rank of Colonel after he graduated from the Military Academy in Rembertów because of the “specific preference” of the Ministry of National Defense. Kuklinski added, “Jaruzelski, as the faculty claimed, distinguished himself in all subjects and his recognition was fully deserved.”\(^{23}\) Jaruzelski’s traits such as: political activism, eloquence, self-possession, preparedness and pragmatism caught the attention of his superiors in Poland and in the Soviet Union. As the Minister of National Defense, Jaruzelski had “an inborn instinct for discipline and obedience combined with an instilled worship for power.”\(^{24}\) Unlike other Party members, Jaruzelski “was often reluctant to accept higher and higher government posts which were offered to him because of waves of changing developments.”\(^{25}\) Jaruzelski preferred to promote “mediocre but loyal people, particularly favoring the so called ‘ax-men’, i.e., those who were ruthless and despotic.”\(^{26}\) He also demoted those who opposed him. General Józef Kamiński considered Jaruzelski’s actions “impractical,” for example, and in consequence he was moved to a lower rank position.\(^{27}\) “Bureaucrat and formalist” Jaruzelski preferred to make crucial decisions in solitude, often being “torn internally

\(^{22}\) “Jaruzelski’s Attitude, Behavior and Style,” exemption: HR70-14, Aug. 19, 2008, 1.
\(^{23}\) Ibid. 2
\(^{24}\) Ibid., 9
\(^{25}\) Ibid.
\(^{26}\) Ibid. 12
\(^{27}\) Ibid., 15
when on the one side he shared the decision of the Soviet leadership about liquidation of ‘SOLIDARITY,’ and on the other, he saw initially no chances of implementation of this intent.”

Even though Jaruzelski swayed in times from the hard line of the Soviet thinking which he knew well, he was not recognized as a reliable leader among his subordinates. Kuklinski reported that:

Jaruzelski was accused of having ‘views which changed with the weather’ and being a career-seeking man. People commented in one breath about his procrastination and inability to make decisions, preoccupation with details, formalism and bureaucracy.

In addition to Jaruzelski’s personal virtues, Kuklinski elaborated on Jaruzelski’s relationship with his colleagues at the meetings which Jaruzelski considered “a form of tribune which he used to transmit his thoughts and intentions downward to the armed forces.”

Kuklinski also revealed the following: “JARUZELSKI was connected with the PZPR [Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza – Polish United Workers’ Party] much longer and much more personally and ideologically involved that it is generally assumed.”

In Kuklinski’s telling, Jaruzelski displayed both his ideological correctness and pragmatism in action.

Besides providing a comprehensive portrait of the key figure in the Polish crisis, Kuklinski also conveyed to the CIA the scope of Soviet interference in Poland’s internal affairs. Kuklinski informed the CIA that “the officially established Soviet military presence with the Polish Armed Forces is limited to the ‘Representation of the Commander of the Combined Armed Forces with the Polish Armed Forces.’ This Soviet representation is headed by Soviet General of the Army Afanasiy Fedorovich (SHCHEGLOV), with a staff of about a dozen specialists for various concerns, such as air and air defense, rear services, communications,

---

28 Ibid., 19-20
29 Ibid., 21
30 Ibid., 30
31 Ibid., 31
Kuklinski reported that General Jaruzelski did not like General Shcheglov because of his “hard-headed” personality. The Soviet representation in the Polish People’s Army was stationed in a separate building on Winnicka Street in Warsaw, Poland. In contrast to other Soviet satellite states such as Bulgaria where the Soviet representatives “practically run” the military, in Poland the Soviet representation was isolated to a certain degree. The Soviets were “expected to be comprehensively informed on the status of their special areas of concern in the Polish armed forces, such as air and air defense, rear services, etc.” When the Polish crisis escalated in 1981, the Soviets established two centers of Soviet command, one in Legnica with the staff of 80-100 officers. The other center was located in Rembertów near Warsaw and was staffed with 30 officers from the Soviet General Staff. Interestingly, Kuklinski remarked that the Polish delegation to the Warsaw Pact headquarters in Legnica was represented by General Stanisław Antos who, according to Kuklinski was “a Russian in Polish uniform.” The purpose of those two Soviet command centers was to “evaluate the reliability of Polish armed forces, although under the pretext of evaluating combat readiness.”

Kuklinski also described the level of penetration of the Polish military by the Soviets. He reported to the CIA that “the highest level Soviet penetration of the Polish military exists at the supreme command of the combined armed forces.” In general, Kuklinski noted that “the Soviets have had access to basically, the same information as was available to the Polish General

---

33 Ibid.
34 Ibid., 3
35 Ibid.
36 Ibid., 4
37 Ibid.
38 Ibid.
39 “Soviet Penetration of the Polish Military,” Intelligence Information Cable, TDFIR DB-315/01528-82, 25 January 1982, 1
Staff and MON (Ministerstwo Obrony Narodowej - Ministry of National Defense). Kuklinski also pointed out that another level of manipulation of the Polish military by the Soviets had been established in the Warsaw Pact headquarters. Relying on 30-100 officers both Polish and Soviet, the Soviets often visited local commands. The purpose of such visitations was “under the pretext of examining Polish units for military readiness, the Soviets also checked on the morale of the Polish troops and their ability to function under martial law.”

Besides evaluating the readiness of the Polish troops, the Soviets often posed pressure on the Polish Party leadership to limit the activity of the Catholic Church in Poland. In the eyes of the Soviets, “the main cause for the current Polish situation is the Church’s influence in Poland and the election of the Polish pope.” Thus, the Soviets suggested that “priests, bishops, nuns, and other clerics who speak out against the regime will be isolated and arrested.” Despite this stance, the military council made breaking the workers’ resistance a higher priority than limiting the role of the Catholic Church in Poland.

In addition to the emphasis on Soviet interference in Polish affairs, Kuklinski provided the CIA with important clarification of the current political, social and military situation in Poland. At that time, for example, Kuklinski reported about the strategic differences between Kania and Jaruzelski. While the Soviets were ready to conduct a direct military operation in Poland as specified by the Soviet Minister of Defense Ustinov only “under certain circumstances,” the Polish leadership was divided. Kania “rejected the possibility of introducing

40 Ibid., 2
41 Ibid., 3-4
42 “Soviet Pressure On Polish Government to Act Against the Polish Church,” Intelligence Information Cable, TDFIRDB-315/23025, 24 December 1981, 1
43 Ibid., 2
44 Ibid.
the martial law as a means of eliminating Solidarność in its present form.”  

Stefan Olszowski, a hard line Party leader, was supposed to replace Kania in the hopes of providing more support to Jaruzelski, who was the Soviets’ only trustworthy source. In addition, Kuklinski noted that “most of the military leadership is openly against Jaruzelski.” However, the senior officer cadre was rather “monolithic” in their solution to end the social unrest and it preferred “radical measures by political and state authorities aimed at overcoming the chaos and anarchy and leading the country out of the crisis.” On the other hand, the junior officers were opposed to some degree toward the hard liners’ solution and wanted to organize “an uprising” to express their dissatisfaction with the current leadership. Kuklinski also revealed to the CIA that “the majority of the junior officer cadre and the troops in the Polish military sided with the spirit of the Solidarność movement.” The social unrest during the Polish crisis was described in the document of a Polish Ministry of Internal Affairs. The Solidarity was perceived by the Communist officials as tending to bring about “a permanent functional impairment of the state and its organs.”

Kuklinski also sought to inform the CIA about the complexity of the preparations for the imposition of martial law. As a member of the General Staff with direct access to Jaruzelski, Kuklinski offered some important documents which updated the CIA on the progress of the preparations. Kuklinski provided the document of a Polish Government entitled “Report on

---

45 “Current Political/Military Situation in Poland,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/03245-81 TS#818246, 13 October 1981, 2
46 Ibid., 3
47 “Discipline and Morale in the Armed Forces,” Intelligence Information Special Report, FIRDB 312/03058-81, 12 October 1981, 4
48 “Current Political Situation in Poland,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/03291-81, TS#818252, 19 October 1981, 2
50 “Poland’s Present Tense Internal Situation, and Scenario of Events Before and After Possible Introduction of Martial Law,” Intelligence Information Special Report, Memorandum, FIRDB-312/00763-81 TS#818068, 16 March 1981, 5
Interministerial Decision Making Game.” The decision making game “was conducted in the Polish Government on 16 February 1981 in the framework of a review of the present state of preparation of the nation in case of necessity to promulgate a state of martial law.” The purpose of this game on the ministerial level was to ensure that all branches of the government were prepared to exercise their power in the martial law scenario. Another document provided by Kuklinski concerned the proposals on introduction of the martial law. The document describes the state officials’ and military’s role to ensure security and public order, reinforce the uninterrupted work schedule, and regulate the supplies for the citizens. The document also justifies the introduction of the martial law as approved by the Sejm, clarifying constitutional regulations in the process. By April 1981 when martial law was fully prepared, Kuklinski sent another document which showed the plans for martial law before they were approved by the National Defense Committee. As Kuklinski knew that the imposition of martial law was imminent, he felt compelled to disclose all that he knew to the CIA.

Finally, Kuklinski afforded the CIA an invaluable perspective on the dynamics within the General Staff, the National Defense Committee and Party leadership. Kuklinski’s mission was to forward some specific data about the interaction between the military and Party personnel, and to provide thorough characteristics of some key figures. Consequently, the CIA had a thorough knowledge of the dissipation of power and roles within the National Defense Committee. Protocol No. 01/80 from the meeting of the National Defense Council held on 12 November 1980 shows the members undertaking preparation for the coming martial law.

---

51 “Government Exercise in Connection with Possible Declaration of Martial Law,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/00762-81 TS#818067, 16 March 1981, 4
General Tadeusz Tuczapski, Secretary of the NDC, represented the necessary multilevel defense after the introduction of the martial law, namely political and economic defense, internal order and public security. General Jaruzelski, Deputy Chairman of the NDC, suggested establishing a Defense Council within the party for the time of war and peace and described the way the regulations shaped by top officials would be put into practice at the local level.  

Kuklinski also provided the document which clarified the authority of Premier Jaruzelski as Minister of National Defense. By March 1981, Jaruzelski had accrued enormous power. He was appointed by the Sejm as Chairman of the Council of Ministers and retained the position of the Minister of National Defense. Thus, Jaruzelski was responsible for “preparation of crucial national defense proposals, development of the armed forces and their preparation for the defense of the PPR (Polish People’s Republic), execution, in the Ministry of National Defense, of the decisions of central Party organs and main organs of state authority…” and other important functions. In one of his reports, Kuklinski sent a list of all participants in the decision making game which took place 16 February 1981. In another report, Kuklinski described the members of the Polish Military Council of National Salvation as they appeared in the photo. Kuklinski commented: “the photograph appears to be formal and posed with the WRON (Wojskowa Rada Ocalenia Narodowego) in their official places. The Poles follow the Soviet procedure of seating members of an official body according to their authority within the body.”

Kuklinski also forwarded a few details about the members of WRON. For example, he stipulated that General Tadeusz Tuczapski was excluded from the picture because of his open

---

54 “Meeting of the National Defense Committee Held on 12 November 1980,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/00760-81 TS#818065, 16 March 1981, 6
55 “Authority of Premier Jaruzelski as Minister of National Defense,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/00982-81 TS#818092, 31 March 1981, 4
56 “Participants in Decisionmaking Exercise,” Memorandum, FIRDB-312/00995-81 TS#818094, 1 April 1981
57 “Comments on a Recent Photograph of the Polish Military Council of National salvation,” TDFIRDB-315/03775-82, 26 February 1981, 2
anti-Soviet views. In another document, Kuklinski described the relationship between the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Kuklinski reported:

Early in the crisis, relations at the ministerial level were more difficult, as the Minister of Internal Affairs [Milewski] was much more willing to cooperate with the Soviets than was Wojciech [Jaruzelski] as Minster of National Defense. Jaruzelski and Kania were not pleased that the Soviets were getting access to the Polish security forces point of view on the Polish situation.

Milewski was replaced by General Kiszczak, who had a better relationship with Jaruzelski. In the process of relaying such information, Kuklinski fulfilled the obligation he felt so keenly to alert the CIA about current developments in Poland and the Soviet Union. Although the CIA made little use of this information, Kuklinski came to see himself as a “friend of the free world.”

However, Kuklinski’s pronouncements expressed directly to the CIA in an effort to fulfill his responsibility should be distinguished from his public pronouncements. This essential distinction is imperative if one is to comprehend the motives of Kuklinski’s decision to cooperate with the Americans. In his public pronouncements Kuklinski expressed his views on the Soviet dominion and its implications for his homeland. In his fight against Soviet ideology, Kuklinski demonstrated the dynamics of his memory of the Cold War divisions. And he expressed his memory in the post Cold War rhetoric which perceives the world as divided between East and West, the Soviets and the Americans, and the liberator and the oppressor. It is important to analyze the fluctuation of Kuklinski’s post Cold War memory dynamics in order to better understand the Kuklinski files and to comprehend the views of his apologists and his detractors.

58 Ibid., 7
Kuklinski’s recollection of his past

Ryszard Jerzy Kuklinski was born on 13 June 1930 in Warsaw, Poland, on Dzielna Street 6, where he spent his childhood in the Polish capital. “I started attending school number 23 located at 7 Elektoralna Street, and later [another school] at Miodowa Street and I also attended a Catholic school located at Freta Street [in Warsaw].” Kuklinski grew up in a working class family. “In the beginning of thirties my father was a simple worker in the file meal in Pruszków, and next in Ursus. He was a member of the Polish Socialist Party.” Kuklinski’s childhood, like all of his contemporaries, was interrupted by the outbreak of the World War II. Kuklinski’s memories of the war were especially tragic since his father, Stanisław, was arrested by the Gestapo in 1943 and was tortured in his home [located at 13 Tłomackie Street] and was further detained in the infamous Pawiak Prison in Warsaw. Kuklinski’s father died shortly before the liberation of the concentration camp in Oranienburg-Sachsenhausen, Germany. Kuklinski’s mother, Anna, “confident and strong-willed” remained his only supporter in this difficult period of time. He spent the years before the outbreak of the Second World War as an indifferent student and leisure loving child. He spent summers in the village, Niedybal, outside of Warsaw and played in the streets with other boys while at home.

World War II altered Kuklinski’s Weltanschauung, mainly by influencing his perspective on the presence of the “enemy.” As a young boy, he was exposed to the brutality of Nazism. He experienced this brutality first of all when his father was arrested, tortured and sentenced to death in the concentration camp. At a young age Kuklinski also witnessed the gravity of the Holocaust.

60 Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War with the Nation Seen from Within), interview by the staff of Kultura Paryska (Paris, April 1987), Kultura Paryska 4/475, 6.
61 Ibid., 7
Becoming aware of the Jews living in the Warsaw Ghetto, Kuklinski often smuggled food and other goods to those who lived “on the other side of the wall.” The human degradation and sufferings caused by the oppressive Nazi system made Kuklinski sensitive to the value of human freedom and allowed him to distinguish between the enemy and the oppressed. This memory of his childhood would remain with Kuklinski throughout his whole life, though it would become bound up in his hatred for the Communist oppression in Poland.

After the war Kuklinski started a new chapter in his life. Kuklinski recalled this period of his life with a bit of nostalgia regarding the innocence of his young adulthood, pride in his quick military career and firm rejection of the post-war reality of Communist Poland. As a 15-year-old boy, Kuklinski moved to Wrocław, a city in southwest Poland, and started working in the city hall. At the same time he attended adult evening classes in high school in order to complete his diploma. In 1947, Kuklinski made his first serious decision when he joined the Polish People’s Army. Kuklinski commented:

At that time I believed that it was still a Polish Army. In 1950 I graduated from the Military Academy [of Tadeusz Kościuszko]. The first ten years I was given assignments to the front units, in between I was taking some advanced courses.

In 1963 Kuklinski successfully finished the Academy of the General Staff of the Polish People’s Army in Rembertów and was given an assignment at the General Staff. Another possibility for advancement in the ranks of the Polish military presented itself to Kuklinski upon his graduation from the operational-strategic training which he completed at the Academy of the Soviet Armed Forces in Moscow in 1976. Kuklinski ascended to the position of the chief of the First Strategic-
Defense Department on the General Staff. He held this position until 7 November 1981, the day of his secretive escape from Poland to the USA.\textsuperscript{65}

Kuklinski’s discomfort with the Communist reality in Poland inspired his perception of himself as a lonely, promethean fighter for freedom from the Communist oppression. The intervention of the Warsaw Pact military in Czechoslovakia in 1968 became a prelude to Kuklinski’s memory of disillusionment with the Communist dominion. Nurowska imagines the state of Kuklinski’s mind at that time when she comments: “I was shocked. My mind was filled with confusing thoughts. It was obvious we could not allow our soldiers to take part in this fratricidal assault.”\textsuperscript{66} In his memory of disillusionment, Kuklinski often points out to the total dependence of the Polish Army on their Soviet counterpart, the overwhelming Communist indoctrination and the inability and unwillingness of the Polish military officials to take their own stand. Kuklinski commented:

\begin{quote}
Not willing to participate in the invasion on Czechoslovakia, I made a phone call to Warsaw and under a pretext I asked to be reassigned to Legnica. My wish was fulfilled. My post was given to Colonel Stanisław Radaj. I returned to Warsaw with a bit of hope that I will be able to inform the world opinion about state of things. Yet in my situation this task was neither simple nor easy.\textsuperscript{67}
\end{quote}

Further, Kuklinski states that the tragedy in Gdańsk in 1970 was his “last signal” to act. In the beginning of 1970’s, Poland was in a state of political and economic turmoil. In December of that year, the politburo headed by First Secretary Władysław Gomułka unexpectedly raised the prices for food in order to introduce some economic reforms in an unstable economy of the Polish People’s Republic in late 1960’s. The sky rocking prices of everyday products caused an avalanche of unrest in the Polish society. The strike of the shipyard workers who took their protest to the streets of Gdańsk on 14 December was brutally crushed by the Milicja.

\textsuperscript{65} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{66} Maria Nurowska, \textit{Mój Przyjaciel Zdrajca} (My Friend Traitor), 84.
\textsuperscript{67} Colonel Ryszard Kukliński, \textit{Kultura}, 11-12.
Obywatelska (Militia forces) and the armed forces of the Polish People’s Army. Kuklinski recollects that the civilians revolting were encountered by the force of “61, 000 soldiers, 1700 tanks, 1750 armed vehicles, aircraft forces, a significant number of helicopters, and even several war ships.”

In the face of numerous casualties among civilians in the Baltic Coast, the Polish politburo under the supervision of the Soviet counterpart, removed Gomułka and placed Edward Gierek as a head of the PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza-Polish United Workers’ Party). In his account, Kuklinski stresses the role of General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Minister of National Security at that time, who ordered the use of ammunition for suppression of the protesting civilians. In his order Jaruzelski issued specific instructions stipulating that weapons could be used against civilians only after the firing of initial warning shots in the air, followed by another warning consisting of shots to the ground. As a final solution, the soldiers were directed to shoot the most dangerous aggressors, aiming at their legs. Kuklinski comments that such an order was indeed fatal, since “most victims died from the bullets which rebounding from the pavement hit the marching mob.”

In the aftermath of the Gdańsk incident Kuklinski was shocked with “an unimaginable easiness with which the authorities who considered themselves handmaid of the people, made a decision to turn the armed forces against its own society, which was somehow contradictory to its own vocation, and that someone ordered to ‘suppress’, ‘not admit,’ ‘shoot,’ and there was no one starting with the Minister of National Security and finishing with a commandant of the lower

---

68 Ibid., 14
69 Antoni Czubiński, Historia Polski XX wieku (History of Poland in the Twentieth Century)(Poznań; Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2003), 299-300.
70 Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, Kultura., 14.
level, who would say ‘I cannot fulfill this order’.” The Gdańsk incident and similar incidents in other Polish cities such as Gdynia, Szczecin, Częstochowa, Wrocław, Kraków and Elbląg convinced Kuklinski that he had to move “from talking to acting.” Kuklinski then began trying to find contacts in the Western bloc through which he might channel information about the Communist oppression in the hope of preventing similar incidents in the future.

**Significant alterations in Kuklinski’s life**

The beginning of the 1970’s for Kuklinski was marked by a clear shift from his interiorized thinking about the enormous injustice of Communism—and his disillusionment with Communist doctrine—to the level of acting. Kuklinski’s desire to restore freedom to the oppressed society in Poland guided his actions. The negative feelings of Kuklinski against the “enemy” reached its apogee and resulted in his act of collaboration with the Americans. This shift occurred at a time when no one would dare to predict the fall of Communism, since the Soviet Union had reached the zenith of its political hegemony and military strength and the United States had failed in Vietnam.

In 1971 Kuklinski wrote a secret declaration of his intentions in which he expressed his feelings of dissatisfaction with the state of things. He wrote:

> We, Poles, belong in the present time to the Soviet camp, but this was not our choice, this situation was determined by you [Americans] and the Russians…in case of war, a defensive war against your aggression, we will stay with the Russians and other countries of the Warsaw Pact. This scenario of the future conflict in Europe is almost not possible.\(^{73}\)

\(^{71}\) Ibid., 13
\(^{72}\) Józef Szaniawski, ed., *Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i Zimna Wojna* (Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War), 238.
Fearing the worst and hoping to find a satisfactory solution, Kuklinski rhetorically asks the Americans in his declaration “according to you is there a chance to establish contacts between the Polish People’s Army and the armies of NATO which are stationed in Europe in order to prevent the war…?” An occasion for establishing contacts with the West in order to forward his declaration of intentions came when Kuklinski was sailing with his military colleagues on a reconnaissance trip across the Baltic Sea coast during the summer of 1972. At that time, Kuklinski wrote a letter to the American Embassy in Bonn, which he mailed from Wilhelmshaven, a port where he made a short stop during his sea voyage. Referring to this particular place and time, Kuklinski states:

As a Pole and Polish Army officer, I had an honor to participate in the operation which started in the place where the First Division of General Maczek ended its offensive [during the Second World War], in Wilhelmshaven… It was a desperate attempt to save my country. I did that to fulfill my soldier’s duty.

In a desperate explanation of his act, Kuklinski adds “I am not a spy!!! I initiated a military co-operation with the Americans for the good of my country! And the Americans understood that…” On another occasion he mentions with the pride of an officer, “I became a partner for the Americans in their fight against the Soviets.” These initial contacts with the CIA resulted in Kuklinski’s alteration of his memories. In addition to his memory of disillusionment with the Communist hegemony, Kuklinski stresses his patriotic motives. He acted in a state of a higher necessity out of love for his homeland. From this perspective his choice to spy gains patriotic

74 Ibid.
75 “Kuklinski letter to US Embassy,” Preparations for Martial Law: Through the Eyes of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, FOIA Electronic Reading Room, www.foia.cia.gov, “Dear Ser, I am sorry for my English. I am an foreign MAF from Communistische Kantry. I want to meet (secretly) with U.S. Army Officer (Lt. Colonel, Colonel) 17 or 18, 19.08 in Amsterdam or 21, 22 in Ostenda. It have no many time, I am with my comrade end they can’t know. In Amsterdam I telephoning to U.S. Ambasy (Military Atache) P.V. P.s That Officer must speak Russian or Polish.”
77 Nurowska, 74
78 Ibid., 131
meaning. Kuklinski diminishes his role as a spy for the CIA and explains his actions in the context of his patriotic and military responsibilities and emphasizes his loneliness in action. This interpretation would assist Kuklinski throughout the career that followed.

Concerning the nine years from initial contact with the CIA in 1972 to his removal from Poland in 1981, Kuklinski’s memories and rhetoric become purely technical. Kuklinski never confirmed that he provided the Americans with 35,000 pages of highly classified documents, (of which 34,000 were in Russian), concerning the military strength, equipment, technology, and strategies of the Polish and Soviet military forces. Yet in his own recollection, he defined this period in his life as “the mission” which he was obliged to undertake. A military mission “which in a popular view is considered a spy activity or intelligence, was indeed a desperate attempt to establish an operational and military co-operation with the Americans, behind the back of the authorities of the Polish People’s Republic.” Kuklinski recollects that he was getting ready for this specific move for over a year before he wrote a letter to the American Embassy. He proudly concludes:

The Americans received an olive branch with satisfaction, but did not want to agree on any sort of conspiracy [within the army]. They thought that during the peace time any kind of a full scale clandestine collaboration with the organized group within the military would not withstand one year, and everything could have ended tragically for us and for our common interest.

---


81 Ryszard Kukliński, “Miłość żąda ofiary i wierności,” (Love calls for sacrifice and fidelity), 235.
The specific focus of Kuklinski’s mission is tied to the experience of alienation. “I stood alone on the battlefield,” he ended. The aspect of Kuklinski’s personal alienation, a state of complete kenosis in action, was well reflected in the most recent publication of Józef Szaniawski who compares Kuklinski to Konrad Wallenrod, a romantic figure of the XIX century Poland.

Kuklinski never revealed in public the circumstances which surrounded his meeting with the CIA agents on 18 August 1972 in Haga, Holland and his story of collaboration with the CIA. Though encouraged by his personal friend Szaniawski on many occasions to write an autobiography, Kuklinski put it off for a more opportune time which never occurred. The two Kuklinski biographies colorfully depict this period of his life, however. Weiser’s book *A Secret Life* shapes a narrative of Kuklinski’s life, his motives for collaboration with the CIA, and the response of the Colonel’s American friends. In a deft manner, Weiser begins with a puzzling letter which arrived in the US Embassy in Bonn and was forwarded to the US military attaché. The initial contacts with the American CIA officers gave Kuklinski some hope that he would be able to carry out his solitary enterprise. Weiser presents almost every detail from Kuklinski’s double life. Upon his return from the sea voyage in August 1972, “Gull” (a code name for Kuklinski) or “Jack Strong” (Kuklinski’s pseudonym) was patiently waiting for a response. In the meantime he fulfilled his military duty and took care of his family. American friends of Kuklinski found his willingness to collaborate credible enough that they initiated a secret operation involving Gull and restricted the number of people who were aware of Kuklinski’s case. Drawing on long interviews with Kuklinski and some documents such as personal letters, Weiser describes the method of channeling the secret information to the West, Kuklinski’s

---

82 Ibid.
84 Józef Szaniawski, Interview by Author, Warsaw, 26 July 2006.
private and family life in his apartment in Warsaw, as well as Kuklinski’s dealing with fellow army officers.

Szaniawski’s biography extends our understanding of this same period. Szaniawski’s claims to know Kuklinski well seem well supported, for the author spent a great deal of time with him in the USA and during Kuklinski’s 1998 visit to Poland. Szaniawski assisted Kuklinski in his most difficult times abroad and stood by him until the Colonel’s death in 2004. (At present time he frequently visits the tomb of Kuklinski in the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw, Poland)

Though Szaniawski’s book contains few personal references of Kuklinski’s about actual meetings with CIA agents and the scope of his collaboration, it a valuable source of information about Kuklinski’s view of his espionage. Szaniawski’s approach emphasizes both Kuklinski’s position and his importance for the Americans.

After his initial contacts with the CIA, Kuklinski quickly advanced in the ranking of the officers in the General Staff in the Polish People’s Army. His positions as a vice chief of the Operational Board and the chief of the Defense-Strategic Division afforded him access to the most secret Polish and Soviet military documents. Moreover, his brilliant mind and pleasant personality allowed him to become one of the closest colleagues of Generals Kiszczak and Jaruzelski. After his return from Moscow in 1976 where he successfully finished the Academy of the Soviet Armed Forces of Marshal Voroshilov, Kuklinski became the right hand man of General Jaruzelski, Minister of National Defense at that time. He participated in secret meetings of the Warsaw Pact and was a Moscow-Warsaw communication liaison. In 1976 Kuklinski wrote his secret analytical-strategic testimony concerning the possibility of the outbreak of the third world war which became crucial for the American view of the political and military situation in
the Eastern Bloc. Szaniawski’s book thus provides a number of important documents for historians to consider.

These biographies and Nurowska’s novel advance a view of Kuklinski as a fighter for freedom from Soviet dominion, as a leader who out of a higher necessity undertook a dangerous course of action in order to prevent the outbreak of a third world war and to liberate Poland and other Eastern European countries from the Communist hegemony. Both Weiser and Szaniawski contend that Kuklinski needs to be recognized for his accomplishments on both sides of the Atlantic. Nurowska presents a romantic vision of an extraordinarily skilled Polish People’s Army officer who has to be remembered for what he has accomplished. All three writers, however, fail to represent Kuklinski’s altered memory of his spying. This omission in the different representations of Kuklinski has effectively furthered disagreements among Kuklinski’s critics.

Two imperatives of Kuklinski’s memory

Kuklinski’s recollection of his spying efforts can be sorted into two dominant perspectives which influenced the way Kuklinski expressed his memory to the public. On the one hand, Kuklinski described his achievements in the context of the death sentence imposed on him by the Communist regime, and on the other he attempted to justify his actions by refuting the Communist point of view entirely.

The official pronouncement of Kuklinski’s death sentence, deeply painful to him though inevitable, took place in Warsaw on 23 May 1984. Colonel Monarcha, the chief of the jury along with the judge Colonel Urbanowicz, and the three aldermen Colonels Palka, Dzierżek, and

---

Magiera unanimously pronounced the guilt of Kuklinski. Given Kuklinski’s rank in the military, the court found that he “was in possession of the information directly connected with the security and the defense of the Polish People’s Republic, [Kuklinski] participated in the meetings concerning the security of the state and the fundamental issues of the security of the states in the Warsaw Pact.”\(^87\) The Military Tribunal regarded the apostasy of Kuklinski as endangering the state security of the entire Eastern European bloc. “The damages caused by defendant Kuklinski” were immeasurable and their consequences were impossible to predict in the future due to the information which Kuklinski sold to the Americans as “an advisor on the Eastern European matters.”\(^88\) The recollections of Kuklinski surrounding his death sentence are shaped by his refutation of the Communist hegemony and his desire to justify his act of collaboration with the Americans in this context. Accordingly Kuklinski’s supporters and his detractors follow the same pattern. They approach Kuklinski fully aware of his death sentence and take their different stands on his justification of his spying generate a justification of his act. They formulate their opinions on the basis of the political circumstances which surrounded his case. In the process, they either accept or refute the validity of his spying for the CIA.

Kuklinski himself reflects upon his achievements from the broader perspective of his vindication. On 30 March 1995 the chief justice of the Supreme Court, Stanisław Rudnicki, signed a reversal of the death sentence imposed on Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in May 1984. This decision of the Supreme Court was based on the weak evidence of Kuklinski’s crime. The act of Kuklinski which fell under the article 122 of the Criminal Code of the Polish People’s

---

\(^{87}\) Sąd Warszawskiego Okręgu Wojskowego(The Military Tribunal of the Warsaw District), Sygn. Akt So 183/84, 23 May 1984; see also Józef Szaniawski, ed., Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i Zimna Wojna(Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War), 326.

\(^{88}\) Ibid
Republic\textsuperscript{89} referring to the betrayal of the state and article 303 pp.3 referring to an act of
desertion,\textsuperscript{90} were investigated superficially in that “it did not specify the information transmitted
to the CIA.”\textsuperscript{91} The Supreme Court recognized a need to investigate the motives of the defendant
and it pointed out a state of a higher necessity (działal w stanie wyższej konieczności) in
Kuklinski’s spying episode. “Proving the fact that Ryszard Kuklinski acted for the sovereignty
and independence of the country inspired by his ideology, should influence his exculpation.”\textsuperscript{92}
Thus, the Supreme Court ruled that the verdict of the Military Tribunal imposed on Kuklinski in
1984 was reached with “evident violation of the law.”\textsuperscript{93}

The case of Kuklinski was sent for further investigation to the prosecutor’s office. On 2
September 1997, the Military Prosecutor, Major Bogdan Włodarczyk, on behalf of the Military
Prosecutor’s Office in Warsaw, fully reinstated Kuklinski to his former status. “Accused of
committing crimes which fell under the article 124 pp. 1 of the Criminal Code of the Polish
People’s Republic, which is activity for the foreign service of the United States of America, and
under the article 304 pp. 3 of the Criminal Code of Polish People’s Republic, which is
committing an act of desertion,” the Military Prosecutor pointed out that Kuklinski acted in a
state of a higher necessity.\textsuperscript{94} Reflecting on his vindication, Kuklinski recalls his
accomplishments as those of a patriot who acted --at great risk--on a “higher necessity” to save

\textsuperscript{89} Kodeks Karny, Stan prawny na dzień 1 stycznia 1981[ Criminal Code as of 1 January 1981](Warsaw:
Wydawnictwo Prawne, 1981). Art 122 “A citizen of Poland who participates in an activity of a foreign country or
foreign organization which threatens the independence, a partial loss of territory, an overthrow of the government or
weakening of the defense of the Polish People’s Republic, or who acts in favor of the foreign intelligence, aims at
the defense and security of the Polish People’s Republic.”

\textsuperscript{90} Kodeks Karny, Stan prawny na dzień 1 stycznia 1981[ Criminal Code as of 1 January 1981]. Art 303 pp.3 “A
soldier who leaves his unit or assigned post willfully for the time period of more than 14 days is subject to
imprisonment for the period from 6 months to 5 years.”

\textsuperscript{91} “Rewizja Nadzwyczajna w sprawie płk Kuślikiego”(Extraordinary Revision of the Case of Colonel Kuklinski),

\textsuperscript{92} Ibid

\textsuperscript{93} Ibid

\textsuperscript{94} Polska Agencja Prasowa, “Komunikat “ (Communicate), The Military Prosecutor’s Office in Warsaw, 22
the sovereignty and independence of his native country. Given the political situation in the world of the 1990’s, Kuklinski explains his spying as an attempt to build bridges between East and West. In his own eyes, Kuklinski rises to a heroic status and enjoys overdue recognition for his actions. His critics and his admirers respond again in similar fashion. They formulate their perceptions of Kuklinski in the context of his vindication and his glorious visit to Poland in 1998. In politicizing these events, thus they deviate from the content of Kuklinski’s memories of his spying as expressed prior to his vindication.

**Double memory of Kuklinski**

It is apparent that in the case of Kuklinski, a double memory concerning his spying episode and its significance for Kuklinski himself can be discerned. In his article “Double Memory: Poles and Jews after the Holocaust,” Piotr Wróbel argues that memory, though subject to change under the influence of the time and space, is limited. Memories are constructed “by combining elements from the original material with existing common knowledge.” Memories are “altered” and “made [to] fit” the “existing schema.” 95 Though the argument of Wrobel applies to the case of Kuklinski—a figure whose memories were limited by time and space and were altered by the change in the political configuration of West and East in the 1990’s--the case of Kuklinski’s memory still remains peculiar.

Kuklinski’s reminiscence of the same event, mainly his espionage and his personal motives, remain the same before and after his death sentence and his vindication, while Kuklinski’s explanation of the significance of his act shifts in time and space. In general, the

---

rhetoric of Kuklinski after his escape from Poland in 1981 until 1997 has an apologetic quality. In his public pronouncements, Kuklinski consistently disputes the validity of the Communist system. The death sentence pronounced in absentia, though it caused feelings of rejection and alienation in Kuklinski, influenced his sense of his personal vindication and his posture of self-righteousness. Kuklinski believed that he acted in the best interest of his fatherland. In his interview with Szaniawski in 1993, Kuklinski concluded that whatever he accomplished in his life, he did it for the future of his native Poland.\textsuperscript{96}

On the other hand, Kuklinski’s rhetoric after the official vindication in 1997 and his historic visit to Poland in 1998 has a somewhat global character combined with a moral perspective on his spying and a prophetic fulfillment of his mission. Here Kuklinski views his accomplishments from the perspective of current political events and advances the significance of his spying to the fall of the Soviet empire as part of an intrinsic pattern, a model behavior, for fighting against the Communist system. Commenting on the official pronouncement of his vindication, Kuklinski refers to the subjugation of the Polish People’s Republic to the Soviet Union, though he emphasizes that “a collective action in the military against the Soviet hegemony was impossible and purposeless.”\textsuperscript{97} Kuklinski stated that he wore his military uniform with pride during his 34-year career as an officer and that his spying produced tangible results when Poland was invited to join NATO (the US Senate voted on 30 April 1998 in favor of Poland). He concluded his statement by encouraging everyone to serve a common purpose to promote democracy in his native Poland.\textsuperscript{98} In this perception of his own past, Kuklinski becomes a self-absolved or “beatified spy” as characterized by Adam Michnik, chief editor of

\textsuperscript{97} Józef Szaniawski, ed., \textit{Samotna Misja} (Lonely Mission), 235.
Gazeta Wyborcza in his article “Pułapka politycznej beatyfikacji [The Ambush of Political Beatification]” Eastern and Western opinions about Kuklinski take similar shape. Though the views of Kuklinski’s critics are both more complex and selective than the individual memory of Kuklinski, in their perceptions of his act and its significance, they shift in time and space and apparently reflect Piotr Wróbel’s conclusion that “one man’s history is another man’s lie.”

Significant alterations in Kuklinski’s public expressions

An analysis of Kuklinski’s public pronouncements which are published in Józef Szaniawski’s book Samotna Misja [Lonely Mission] will best help to describe the shift in Kuklinski’s view of his own past. The following texts will be considered: an interview given to a Polish émigré journal Kultura in April 1987-- Kuklinski’s first public statement after the pronouncement of his death sentence in 1984, which underlines his apologetics versus Kuklinski’s statements after his vindication namely Kuklinski’s speeches upon his historic visit to Poland delivered in April-May 1998 in Kraków, Gdańsk and Warsaw.

In his interview with Kultura Paryska, Kuklinski officially responded to the comments made by Jerzy Urban, spokesperson for the Communist government in Poland. Until 1986 the case of Kuklinski remained under total secrecy in Poland. The public learned about Kuklinski for the first time only after the publications in press concerning the meeting of Jerzy Urban with the

---

99 Adam Michnik, “Pułapka politycznej beatyfikacji” (The Ambush of Political Beatification) Gazeta Wyborcza, 9 May 1998. Michnik explained that he knew “people, who for many years belonged to an integral opposition against the Communist regime and paid a big price…and all those people were single minded when it comes to one point: not even the strongest opposition to the PRL authorities, which were considered as dictators subjected to Moscow, should result in a cooperation with the secret service of another country.” Michnik emphasized that Kuklinski should not become an icon of righteousness for the contemporary Poles.

100 Piotr Wrobel, “Double Memory: Poles and Jews after the Holocaust,” 574.
foreign journalists, which took place on 6 June 1986 in Warsaw. Urban briefly described the sequence of events in 1981, when Kuklinski was exfiltrated from Poland and blamed the US government for not disclosing the plans of the Jaruzelski camp to impose the martial law in Poland as conveyed to the CIA by Kuklinski (martial law was established in Poland on 13 December 1981). Urban commented:

Washington was silent. They did not warn their allies... The US government did not lie only to their zealous Polish ally it did also lie to their own society... This is the undertone of the Kuklinski case, Kuklinski who was sentenced by the Polish Military Tribunal to death in absentia. 101

In his demagogic tone, Urban aimed to diminish the significance of Kuklinski’s role by suggesting that his collaboration with the Americans was futile. Not only did the Americans not use the information they acquired from Kuklinski about the suppression of the Solidarity movement in 1981, but he also suggested that the whole Polish society was used by the Americans in the name of their “anti-Communist crusade and American globalism.” 102 Urban used the analogy of the cathedral in Coventry which Churchill supposedly did not prevent from destruction, in order to preserve the secret of Enigma. In the same vein, Urban concluded “the Solidarity played the role of the cathedral in Coventry during the Cold War in 1980’s.” 103

Confronted with the crude accusations of Urban, Kuklinski began his apologetics by refuting forthright the validity of Urban’s statements. He attempted to prove his case and explained his silence concerning the imposition of the martial law in Poland. Both strategies

102 Ibid., 17
103 Ibid.
aimed to underline his main goal – a clarification of the Soviet involvement in internal affairs of Poland and to describe the oppression under Communism. Thus, Kuklinski briefly stated:

The revelations of Jerzy Urban, and, later General Kiszczak were obviously directed against the politics of the United States. I am not an advocate of that government and it is not up to me to protect or even explain its decisions. I thought it was up to the spoke persons of the American administration to do that.  

In his initial statement, Kuklinski disconnected himself from the world politics accordingly he put an emphasis on the loneliness of his mission.

Next, Kuklinski clarified why he did not warn the world beforehand about the imposition of the martial law in Poland. Kuklinski stated:

Even if I revealed the plans of the offensive, I would not be able to baffle them or to prolong them in a least degree. Revealing these plans might have only accelerated the offensive.

Kuklinski pointed out that this decision was made under a direct pressure from Moscow, though it was in the process of preparation for 380 days in the Polish Army headquarters, and in the beginning of November 1981 the martial law was imminent. In Kuklinski’s perspective, the dependency of the Polish government on its Soviet counterpart was apparent. Yet, the plans for the martial law and its introduction were in the hands of the Polish leaders, though under a semi-supervision of Moscow. And in case of failure, the Polish Party leaders were to be supported by the outside intervention of the Warsaw Pact joined armed forces. Thus, the suppression of the Polish opposition, Solidarity, was to be conducted by the Polish People’s Army, and in case of failure, the Soviet, Czech, and German Armies, quietly observing the situation in the Poland’s borders, were to support the efforts of their Polish counterpart. Kuklinski feared that if he revealed these plans, the Solidarity would inspire a general strike of all workers in Poland, since

---

104 Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War with the Nation Seen from Within), interview by the staff of Kultura Paryska(Paris, April 1987), Kultura Paryska 4/475: 3.
105 Ibid. 5
he was a credible source, and subsequently the offensive of the army would be more brutal in consequences. In his explanation, Kuklinski pictures himself as an alienated hero doomed to bear the burden of secrecy in the context of apparent impossibility of taking any steps to heal the situation. The impasse of undertaking any concrete action on the part of Kuklinski is even clearer in the further explanation. Though not able to reveal the plans of the martial law, Kuklinski knew that some members of the Solidarity were aware of their fate. Thus, to further prove the futility of warning the world about the plans of the martial law, Kuklinski referred to the meeting of the Committee of National Defense on 13 September 1981, during which General Kiszczak himself implied that a number of the Solidarity members already had a detailed knowledge of the plans of the imposition of the martial law. Thus, Kuklinski finally justifies his inertia. After Kuklinski’s brief refutation of the accusations of Urban and his explanation of the need for his silence, he gave the reasons of his disillusionment with the Communist dominion based mostly on the interference of Moscow in the internal politics of the Eastern European countries as shown in the invasion on Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the incident in the Baltic region of Poland in the end of 1970, which led to a bloody suppression of the nationalistic movement in both countries.\(^\text{106}\) During the whole interview with the staff of *Kultura Paryska*, Kuklinski expressed himself from a defensive point of view. This is especially apparent when he evaluated and refuted the validity of Communism in the context of the political situation in Poland.

Interestingly, the refutation of the validity of the Communist system in the context of the martial law has a considerable apologetic quality, like any other statements of Kuklinski in the time period between the declaration of his death sentence and his vindication. Here Kuklinski justifies his lonely mission in the context of the overwhelming Soviet oppression and the proponents of the Moscow line in native leadership. Kuklinski appears to fight a lonely war with

\(^{106}\) Ibid., 5-14
the Communist system which he perceived as the “enemy,” the concept which he inherited from his childhood when he fought lonely little wars with the Nazi occupant in Poland. Under this general description of the “enemy” falls the fact that the Polish leadership in 1980’s, succumbed to the demands Moscow in formulating their official political agenda. Kuklinski refers to the meeting of General Tadeusz Hupałowski and Colonel Franciszek Puchała who ordered by completely exhausted General Wojciech Jaruzelski, boarded a plane to Moscow on 1 December 1980, where they were supposedly to receive the details of the using the outside military assistance in Poland. According to Kuklinski, the enemy is treacherous. While on 16 February 1981, a new premier of Poland General Wojciech Jaruzelski appealed in his expose to the society for “three working months – 90 peaceful days”, at the same time a group of some higher ranking Polish officers and the representatives of the Department of Propaganda were discussing the final stages of the imposition of the martial law. In general, Kuklinski views the enemy as the oppressive politics of the Soviet Union and those who succumb to the threats of Moscow. Kuklinski contrasts the concept of the enemy with the role of the oppressed, who in the view of Kuklinski are the people who live in the unjust system. The oppressed live under constant fear that the Soviet Army will interfere in the conflict with the Solidarity. Though, according to Kuklinski, “in the middle of April [1981] the danger of the military intervention of the Soviet Union became to fade, in reality it never stopped.”

Kuklinski counterbalances the concept of the enemy with a concept of a liberator. In the view of Kuklinski, the liberator is a party which opposes the oppressive politics of the Soviet Union and it is apparent that Kuklinski considers the West as fulfilling this role. For example, in the heated month of December 1980, when the fear of the Soviet invasion was apparent,

107 Ibid., 22
108 Ibid., 28
109 Ibid., 37
Kuklinski emphasizes a strong stand of the USA. President Jimmy Carter sent an ultimatum to Soviet Secretary Leonid Brezhnev on 3 December 1980 in which he demanded that the Poles should be allowed to deal with their own internal affairs.\textsuperscript{110} Though an American spy, Kuklinski does not act on behalf of the liberator. He rather acts on his own to help diminish the enemy’s oppression and he sympathizes with the Solidarity movement which is the expression of the people who live under the Communist oppression and yearn for the liberation. The solidarity is the synonym of real social opposition to the enemy. According to Kuklinski, the enemy fears the Solidarity to the degree that it accelerated the imposition of the martial law, since the new soldiers recruited in the fall of 1980 were previously members of the Solidarity. Also the liberating ideas of the movement were easily sponged by the officer’s cadres.\textsuperscript{111} Though sympathizing with the Solidarity, Kuklinski describes his involvement in the preparations of the martial law in the following terms:

I had the role of coordinating the plans of all the participants who were designing the introduction of the martial law and to work out a central plan to govern the country under the martial law.\textsuperscript{112}

Above all Kuklinski remained a watchful eye carefully observing the current developments in Poland and reporting the state of things to the CIA using his military precision. Kuklinski was forced to end his lonely mission when on 2 November 1980 along with General Waclaw Szklarski and his two assistants Colonels Czesław Witt and Franciszek Puchała were summoned to General Jerzy Szklarski of the General Staff of the Polish People’s Army, who coordinated the planning process of the imposition of the martial law. Szklarski informed the summoned among other things about the leak of the martial law plans to the Americans. Colonel Witt added that “all moves of the Solidarity from the day when it was established until now,

\textsuperscript{110} Ibid., 25
\textsuperscript{111} Ibid., 41
\textsuperscript{112} Ibid., 27
confirm that they have a secretive ally in the core of the leadership."¹¹³ Confronted with a life threatening situation and obvious detection, Kuklinski responded: “I agree with the opinion of Colonel Witt and I agree to be subjected to the investigation concerning this matter.”¹¹⁴ After the meeting, Kuklinski never returned to the General Staff again and his lonely mission ended. Yet, according to Kuklinski, during the time of his spying for the Americans, he could not accomplish much by himself. Though he did not receive a direct support of his colleagues, he cherished the idea that there were other people in the General Staff around him who shared his feelings toward Communism. Kuklinski was also aware that there were countless people in Poland who lived under Communist oppression and “opposed the current political system in Poland. And each political crisis in Poland generated in geometrical scale the number of people who opposed the system and were exposed to repressions.”¹¹⁵

Kuklinski’s distinction between the enemy and the liberator in his apologetic expose is supported by listing specific names of the people whom he holds responsible for the preparation and consequent imposition of the martial law in Poland in December 1981, which deepened the national crisis. Kuklinski clearly points out that it was General Wojciech Jaruzelski who gave an order to pacify the revolting workers. Kuklinski comments:

> It is a common knowledge that the basis for the use of weapons in the Baltic region, was the decision of Gomułka (First Secretary of the Communist Party in Poland at that time) and his closest collaborators, which they supposedly made on 15 December 1970, yet the soldiers received an order not from Gomułka and his collaborators, but from the Minister of the National Defense, General Wojciech Jaruzelski.¹¹⁶

In the eyes of Kuklinski, General Jaruzelski remained the main figure responsible for the imposition of the martial law in Poland. He states that:

---

¹¹³ Ibid., 48
¹¹⁴ Ibid., 60
¹¹⁵ Ibid., 10
¹¹⁶ Ibid.
Stanisław Kania – despite all promises which he made to the Soviet leadership to use force in order to protect the socialism, as the Soviets understood it – was an adherent of using political means to deal with the Solidarity.\textsuperscript{117}

Thus, he prolonged the confrontation and influenced the change of plans of General Jaruzelski.

In critical moments of the crisis in the beginning of September 1981, Kania approached Jaruzelski and expressed his disappointment:

\begin{quote}
I gave my word that we will not use force during the VI and IX Plenary Council of the PZPR – Polish United Workers’ Party and during the extraordinary gathering of the Party and I have to keep it.\textsuperscript{118}
\end{quote}

Jaruzelski appears to be a proponent of using the military force during the crisis in the beginning of 1980’s and Kania is forced to resign since he, “though leaned to the Soviet demands, in reality preferred the political means” to solve the crisis.\textsuperscript{119}

In his rhetoric Kuklinski is very direct as he exposes those who succumbed to the threats from Moscow. Kuklinski comments:

\begin{quote}
If the leadership duet Kania-Jaruzelski said NO to the Russians from the very beginning, than under the pressure of official attacks and threats from Moscow, the Solidarity would have to change the aim of their warfare and defend the integrity and sovereignty of the country.\textsuperscript{120}
\end{quote}

Considering this scenario of a unified front of the people and the Communist leadership of Poland, Kuklinski concludes that the Soviet Union would back off its official politics of interference with the internal affairs of Poland. Most probably, “there would be a war of nerves, and if the Polish side would endure this war, eventually Moscow would have to withdraw as well.”\textsuperscript{121} Kuklinski uses comparisons of the current political leaders with those in the past. For example, facilitating the lesson from the most recent history of Poland, Kuklinski juxtaposes the

\textsuperscript{117} Ibid., 21  
\textsuperscript{118} Ibid., 42  
\textsuperscript{119} Ibid., 42  
\textsuperscript{120} Ibid., 15  
\textsuperscript{121} Ibid., 16
leniency of Jaruzelski and Kania to the Moscow line with the scenario of the Polish October in 1956, when Gomułka and Ochab, highest ranking Polish officials at that time, restrained from complying with the will of the Soviets and were not afraid to protect the sovereignty of the Polish interests. The society supported the leadership, thus, formulating a “Polish road to socialism.”

In conclusion, the apologetic tone of Kuklinski in his first and longest public pronouncement is apparent. Kuklinski rejected the point of view of the Communist leaders in Poland, described the oppressor, and revealed its strategies, thus, he justified his spying episode and answered the accusation of the Communist government in Poland after a death sentence was imposed on him in 1984. The apology of Kuklinski is filled with precision and technicality, thus it is really convincing to the public. Kuklinski lists the names of all military personnel in the General Staff who were directly involved in the preparation of the martial law, such as Generals Tadeusz Hupałowski, Jerzy Skalski, Antoni Jasiński, Mieczysław Dachowski and many others who in November 1980 started the preparations for the martial law.122 Besides the description of the people responsible for the state of things in Poland in the beginning of 1980’s and those who obeyed the Moscow directions, Kuklinski quotes rather accurate numbers, as in the case of the repression of the strikes in the Polish Baltic region in 1970. With military precision, he recalls “61, 000 soldiers, 1700 tanks, 1750 transporters…” engaged the workers in 100 operations in Poland.123 In another place, he describes the death toll after the “so-called counterrevolution in the Baltic region of Poland, 44 destroyers of the public order in people’s republic were buried in the cemeteries. Among them were 30 workers and 7 students from technical schools, who were under the age of 18. There were 1164 wounded who were hospitalized, among them was a big

122 Ibid., 18
123 Ibid., 14
number of young people.” Kuklinski uses all possible means to prove his case and to refute the point of view of the enemy, thus, to justify his case and make it appear valid in the eyes of the public.

On the contrary, the tone of Kuklinski’s public pronouncements after his vindication in 1997 has a different character and it shifts from defending his position to acknowledging the importance of his mission. This shift is obvious in his public speeches which he made upon his historic visit to Poland in 1998. On 29 April 1998, Kuklinski was invited to give a speech during the session of the City Council in Kraków, during which he received an honorary title of the citizen of Kraków. Evaluating the political situation in Poland in the past versus the present, the rhetoric of Kuklinski gains a prophetic character. Kuklinski appears to be a prophet of the Cold War who realized beforehand that the Soviet empire was doomed to fail. Thus, he believes that his lonely mission was meaningful and upon his visit to Poland since his exfiltration in 1981, he was able to cherish a well deserved recognition by a great number of his followers. Kuklinski states:

I have never doubted that I will return to the free Poland – to the land of my ancestors, my childhood, my adulthood, and my living which I devoted to my country, Poland. I never expected that the road to my country would be so long with so many ups and downs, and it will eventually lead me to visit the seat of the Polish kings…Your invitation to the city of Kraków equals the invitation to my country.

The prophetic introduction of Kuklinski is supported by his humble expressions about himself. Kuklinski states:

Ibid., 13

I have never had huge ambitions. I consider myself an ordinary soldier of the Polish Commonwealth, who did not accomplish anything extraordinary, anything which would exceed a holy duty of serving my country in need.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}

Kuklinski projects himself as an ordinary person, whose prophetic endeavor was fulfilled, and who was able to undertake a lonely mission against the Communist system in order to save his fatherland from the Soviet dominion, which in fact made his accomplishments recognized by some people in the Polish society as extraordinary. Kuklinski states:

\begin{quote}
What distinguishes me from an enormous mass of people involved in the historical changes of Poland and Europe is a specificity of my mission which I undertook and its consequences.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}}
\end{quote}

Thus, diminishing his accomplishments, yet being fully aware of the importance of his mission, Kuklinski thanked the people of Poland for restoring his good reputation.

In addition to a prophetic character as expressed in language and overall tone of his speech, Kuklinski views his accomplishments and their consequences in a global context. Here Kuklinski talks about the people involved in the historical changes in Poland and Europe, and he refers to the role of NATO during the Cold War as curbing the imperial desires of the Soviet Union. In contrast to his public pronouncement as displayed in his interview with the staff of \textit{Kultura Paryska}, where Kuklinski mentioned NATO only twice, mainly in reference to his position as an officer on the operational planning staff who prepared the plans for the eventual military conflict between NATO and the Warsaw Pact armies. After his vindication, Kuklinski perceives NATO in a broad perspective, as a force which opposed the former Soviet Union as “Empire of Evil.” Kuklinski concludes:

\begin{quote}
I am really satisfied that the Polish society looks at my goals, intentions, and motives with a progressing understanding. And I hope that this understanding becomes common,
\end{quote}
when the public opinion learn fully about the facts and documents concerning a liberating war in Europe as projected by the Empire of Evil in those days.\textsuperscript{128}

In his view, only NATO, a sign of “united front of defense of the free world” and the Solidarity in Poland were able to oppose the “Soviet Empire of Evil.”\textsuperscript{129}

Another shift in Kuklinski’s altered memory of his past is clear in his moralization about his spying. While in the previous time period until his vindication, Kuklinski’s memory of his childhood stressed the crystallization of the idea of the enemy and the oppressed, here Kuklinski refers to his early years as a time of strengthening his strong moral background. Kuklinski states:

During the occupation I was a little boy, yet I remember well and I have always kept in my heart the motto embroiled on the banner by the women of Wilno, which was supposed to reach the Polish Air Force Division in Great Britain via underground channels: Love Calls For Sacrifice.\textsuperscript{130}

Furthermore, while in the previous time period, Kuklinski referred to his time in the Polish People’s Army which he joined because he “believed at that time that it was above all the Polish army,”\textsuperscript{131} after his vindication Kuklinski refers to the Polish People’s Army as the place where “my faith and my convictions were taken away from me, both of which I inherited from my modest home, school, and the church – to this motto I would like to add one more word: Love Calls For Sacrifice and Faithfulness – faithfulness for one God and one beloved country – Poland.”\textsuperscript{132} The moral perspective on his spying helps Kuklinski explain his act in the context of the most recent history of the independent Poland.

\textsuperscript{128} Ibid., 234
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 236
\textsuperscript{131} Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War with the Nation Seen from Within), interview by the staff of Kultura Paryska (Paris, April 1987), Kultura Paryska 4/475: 8
\textsuperscript{132} Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Miłość żąda ofiary i wierności – wierności dla jedynego Boga i jednej, jedynnej ojczyzny – Polski” (Love Requires Sacrifice and Faithfulness – Faithfulness to One God and One Country – Poland), Speech delivered on 29 April 1998 to the City Council in Kraków, Poland, in Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i Zimna Wojna (Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War) (Warsaw: Galeria Polskiej Książki, 2003), 236.
In contrast to his earliest public expose in 1987, Kuklinski sees that his mission was not only to reveal to the world the Soviet domination over Poland, but to reestablish the freedom in his country which at that time was “in slavery” of the oppressive politics of the Soviet Union. His mission was doomed to failure, if he did not engage the United States. Instead of listing the names of those who betrayed Poland and its people and quoting exact numbers of military personnel involved in crashing the national movement in 1970, Kuklinski views his mission as a fulfillment of his patriotic duty. Kuklinski credits that he was a sole architect of his mission, since “it was not an American invention.”\textsuperscript{133} He puts himself in the perspective of other Polish People’s Army officers and describes diversified feelings concerning the oppression of the Soviet Union among his colleagues. He states: “The Soviet Empire of Evil was not weak, small, and peaceful as some of the retired Army generals try to prove today.”\textsuperscript{134} In another place, he states that:

A large number of the officer’s cadres of the Polish People’s Army, especially those among them who listened to the radio Free Europe, were aware that the Soviet Union attacked Poland, made pact with Hitler and split the gain of the Poland’s territory, and that this Soviet Union was responsible for the mass deportations of the Polish people, Katyń and the betrayal during the Warsaw Uprising.\textsuperscript{135}

Kuklinski aims to convince the public that an opposition to the politics of the former Soviet Union among the army men was common since many officers realized that the Soviet Union was not an ally of Poland, but its oppressor. Thus, he was not an exception, rather he undertook his mission on the basis of what some of his colleagues felt, yet they were afraid to put their feelings into action. Thus, he made a decision to spy for the Americans and to conclude the unfinished history of Jalta where “bringing freedom back to Poland and other European nations became a

\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 234
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Ibid., 235
strategic goal of this Empire [the United States].”

Thus, Kuklinski clears his conscience in the eyes of the public and justifies his spying for the CIA.

The moral context gives Kuklinski an opportunity to explain his career as a spy and to justify his act. Realizing the possibility of the “atomic holocaust” in Europe, dismayed by the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968 and the brutality in pacification of the striking workers in the Baltic region of Poland, Kuklinski set his mind to collaborate with the Americans, since he did not see a possibility to “strike a deal with the ally [former Soviet Union] by means of a careful exchange of thought,” in order to prevent the worst to happen. On the contrary, in the previous time period, Kuklinski’s memory of his career as a spy circled around his dissatisfaction with the Communist system based on dependency of the Polish People’s Army on its Soviet ally.

Kuklinski’s decision to spy for the Americans developed gradually and was mainly based on the fact that he wanted to disclose the information of the martial law to the West and to prevent the military conflict. Kuklinski never thought about negotiating with the Soviets, rather, he refuted the Communist system. In the time period after his vindication, Kuklinski perceives his mission as a lonely and dramatic attempt, though in common understanding considered a spy activity, to overstep the Polish Communist leadership by initializing a cooperation with the Americans in order to prevent the ‘atomic holocaust’ and to restore a world order according to the American standards. Because the Americans did not foresee a possibility of an organized front of action among those Polish People’s Army officers who shared a similar point of view as Kuklinski, thus he “was left alone on the battlefield. A person deprived of his honor who acted against the interests of Poland, as some people think. I believe the history will correct this.”

136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
The alteration of Kuklinski’s memory of his past is not always consistent. This inconsistency can be noticed in Kuklinski’s second speech given at the session of the City Council in Gdańsk on 3 May 1998. During the ceremony Kuklinski was awarded an honorary title of the citizen of Gdańsk. Similarly to the speech given in Kraków on 29 April, the rhetoric of Kuklinski has a patriotic background. Kuklinski expresses his joy to be able to visit Gdańsk, “a symbol of the solidarity among the Poles.”

Kuklinski praises the inhabitants of Gdańsk for their commitment in the warfare with “the Communist Evil, fighting for freedom and independence of Poland and for the dignity of the human being and human rights.” The patriotic tone of Kuklinski, however, prevents Kuklinski from giving a thorough explanation of his mission. In his first public expose given to *Kultura Paryska*, Kuklinski presented a thorough context of his mission inspired by the tragedy in Gdańsk in 1970, “the imperialist plotting in Czechoslovakia” in 1968, the dismay with the Communist system. In his speech in Kraków in 1998, Kuklinski emphasized that his motive to spy for the Americans was mainly to prevent “the atomic holocaust” being prepared by the “Evil Empire,” and it was inspired by the dismay with the Communist dominion as seen in the Gdańsk tragedy and the shame of the invasion on Czechoslovakia. In his speech given in Gdańsk, Kuklinski drifts from the main line of his explanation and focuses on the Gdańsk tragedy as “the last signal” for him to fight. In Gdańsk, Kuklinski views his past in a limited perspective, though he briefly refers to the subjugation of Poland to the Warsaw Pact. He emphasizes the role of the Solidarity movement which reminded the world about the subjugation by Moscow. Considering his previous expressions of his

---


140 Ibid.
memory, when Kuklinski put an emphasis on his personal merits and the loneliness of his act, in Gdańsk, Kuklinski puts the fruits of his mission in the global context of a collapse of Communism achieved by a “bloodless revolution” inspired by the solidarity of the Poles aided by the “freedom generating forces in the world under the leadership of the United States.”

Kuklinski recognizes that the Europeans and the Poles cherish freedom in the present time, yet this freedom has to be protected. And the way to protect it is for Poland to integrate with “Euro-Atlantic structures of security and through integration with European Union.”

The altered memory of Kuklinski after his vindication can be easily noticed in the global view of his mission. Here Kuklinski presents his spying in the context of Poland’s membership in NATO. Upon his historic visit to Poland, Kuklinski delivered his third speech at the Royal Castle in Warsaw on 5 May 1998. Here he states:

Over a quarter of a century ago I began – as a Polish Army officer – collaboration with the United States and NATO... The fact that Poland joined NATO is crucial in our present history. It means that for the first time in about 300 years Poland might be protected from its enemies and sure about its allies...

Kuklinski states with pride that he was a Polish Army officer who fought a lonely battle against a totalitarian system “on the American side, on the NATO side, on Poland’s side, against the Soviet Union.” Reflecting upon Jalta agreement, Kuklinski states that Poland belonged unjustly to the “Empire,” and only after 50 years “the PRL (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa – Polish People’s Republic) transformed into an independent nation.” Kuklinski sees the fact that Poland joined NATO as a victory of the US in the conflict between the West and “the Soviet Empire of Evil,” which started in Jalta. The role of NATO was crucial in Kuklinski’s mission. In

\[141\] Ibid., 239
\[142\] Ibid.
\[144\] Ibid.
\[145\] Ibid.
contrast to his earliest public statement after the announcement of his death sentence in 1984, Kuklinski views NATO as:

North Atlantic Pact which always had a defensive character and was established as an answer to an aggressive tendency of the Soviet Union which after it seized Poland and other Eastern European countries, tended to conquer the whole of Europe.\(^{146}\)

Another contrast to his earliest memories is expressed in his view of the Warsaw Pact which Kuklinski calls a “Moscow Pact.” Here Kuklinski does not mention the officers of the Polish People’s Army who similar to him cherished the idea of somewhat romantic independence of Poland from Moscow hegemony. Kuklinski devotes his whole 5 May at the Royal Castle speech to emphasize the role of NATO and the politics of the United States, which “saved the world several times from the atomic holocaust.”\(^{147}\) He emphasizes strong ties between Poland and America which go back to the eighteenth century and found their expressions in the figures of Kazimierz Pułaski and Tadeusz Kościuszko, both of whom were well respected officers of the Polish and America armies. Thus, Kuklinski places himself among great historical figures from Poland, who cooperated with the United States. In this context, he defines his spying as an act of a Polish People’s Army officer who cooperated with America against the Soviet Union.

On the same day, Kuklinski delivered yet another speech in Warsaw, which is most important since Kuklinski summarizes the meaning of his mission with all its complexity. After delivering the speech to the professors and students of the Warsaw University, in the second half of the day, Kuklinski faced the Polish Sejm. In front of the highest ranking Polish politicians, senators and deputies, Kuklinski’s mission of a lonely fighter for freedom from the Soviet oppression is fulfilled. The history turned into Kuklinski’s favor. Poland is again an independent

\(^{146}\) Ibid., 241
\(^{147}\) Ibid.
nation and just in the prior week joined NATO. Thus, Kuklinski talks from the perspective of a conqueror. Though his rhetoric is somewhat reserved when he refers to the former Soviet Union which he characterizes as an “inhumane system,” the alteration of his memory after his vindication surfaces again. Though Kuklinski does not moralize about his spying nor does he appear to be a prophet of an independent Poland and the world free from Communism, he refers to the history of the Polish nation and makes an important reference with regard to Poland’s joining NATO. In Kuklinski’s perspective this fact though geographically does not alter Poland’s political boundaries it brings Poland closer to the West. Here Kuklinski also approves of his public image which projects him as the “first officer of the Polish Army in NATO” and adds he is also “the last Polish political émigré.”

In contrast to his first public pronouncement, Kuklinski does not need to defend himself since he feels that his Romantic role of a lonely fighter for freedom has been brought to completion. He talks from the point of view of a great Polish patriot whose love and service to his country influenced his life story. Thus, he is often compared to Konrad Wallenrod, a great romantic figure in Poland’s history. In the end of his speech to the Poland’s politicians and legislators, Kuklinski somewhat patronizes them and calls them to follow his example of service. He states:

The Polish nation has a great hope in you – the parliamentarians: deputies and senators of the Polish Commonwealth- it should be you who will make the final break with all connections with the old totalitarian system.

While in his speech to the Poland’s leading politicians, Kuklinski’s patriotism was expressed in moderate terms, since he referred in his speech to most recent events in the history

149 Ibid.
of the Polish nation, namely the beginning of 1980’s in connection the Solidarity movement, the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s patriotism in his speech on 6 May 1998 is filled with the symbols of the Polish national tragedy, thus, it reminds a Romantic period in the Polish culture. Here Kuklinski compares Katyń and Oświęcim [Auschwitz] as the symbols of genocide “committed by two big totalitarian states in the twentieth century.”

Furthermore, Kuklinski recalls a great figure of General Józef Piłsudski, who demanded recognition for the participants of the January Uprising in 1863, who were still alive at that time. In a similar fashion, Kuklinski referred to the participants of the November Uprising [Powstanie Listopadowe] in 1830 and the revolt of Kościuszko, whom he put in a perspective of over a thousand years long tradition of the Polish Army. A nationalistic element of his patriotism is evident. Kuklinski glorifies the history of Poland and he concludes that “none of the allies fighting against Hitlerism lost such big number of officers’ cadres during the Second World War.”

In the end, Kuklinski emphasizes that the Polish officers were killed by the shoots in the back of their heads by the NKVD, and they did not die on the battlefield, since “Stalin and Beria considered them as irreconcilable enemies of the Soviet state.”

The Romantic symbolism in the way Kuklinski describes the Katyń tragedy and recalls some important events of the Polish national tragedy puts him in the perspective of an

---

150 Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Pomnik symbol” (Monument-Symbol), Speech delivered on 6 May 1998 in Warsaw, Poland, in Józef Szaniawski, ed., Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i Zimna Wojna (Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War) (Warsaw: Galeria Polskiej Książki, 2003), 244. The Katyn massacre of the Polish Army officers occurred in the spring of 1940. The massacre was made public by the Germans via Berlin radio in April 1943, yet the killing of the Polish Army officers by the NKVD agents remained shrouded in secrecy for half a century until 13 April 1990, when the President of Russia, Mikhail Gorbachev, officially acknowledged Soviet responsibility for the killings in the presence of the Polish leader, General Wojciech Jaruzelski. The official document containing the order of execution signed by Beria and approved by Stalin, Voroshilov, Molotov and Mikoyan and dated 5 March 1940, was handed over to the Polish President, Lech Wałęsa, in 1992 by the President of Russia, Boris Yeltsin. The total of 14, 736 Polish Army soldiers were executed in Katyń. The memory of the Katyn massacre is still vivid in the Polish society and it is a source of inspiration of Polish patriotism. Kuklinski delivered his speech at the monument dedicated to the murdered officers. It was originally his idea which he discussed with Józef Szaniawski and it was supported by the Polish journalists in the U.S. (Krystyna Skoczylas, Andrzej Czuma, Marek Bober, Marek Kulisiewicz, Wojciech Białasiewicz). They collected the funds from the Polonia of Chicago for this purpose.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.
alienated hero, similar to Konrad Wallenrod, who realizes his accomplishments and aims to protect the freedom of an independent Poland, the freedom he helped to restore. Thus, Kuklinski appears as a Romantic soldier with realistic achievements. The speech delivered at the ceremony of dedication of the monument ends Kuklinski’s public expressions after his vindication in 1997.

The five speeches which Kuklinski delivered in Kraków, Gdańsk, and Warsaw in April and May 1998 upon his return to Poland after 17 years of living in the United States represent Kuklinski’s altered memory in comparison to his earliest public pronouncement published in *Kultura Paryska* in April 1987. Kuklinski’s memory of his own past has altered gradually. In 1998 he expresses his memory from a stand point of a winner in contrast to his 1987 pronouncement when he openly defended his position. Though in both time periods, Kuklinski justifies his spying in the context of the public opinion in Poland, it is clear that in 1998 he realizes that his mission is fully justified and approved by the majority of the public opinion. In 1987 Kuklinski is more precise and technical. He reveals to the world a detailed description of the strategies of the “Evil Empire” and the circumstances of suppression of the Polish Solidarity movement. He supports his statement with exact quotation of number of soldiers and military equipment involved in fight against the nationalistic movements in Poland and Czechoslovakia. While in 1998 Kuklinski still refers to the former Soviet Union as an “Evil Empire,” his rhetoric changes and it is more global. Here Kuklinski evaluates his own past in the context of political changes in the world in the past 17 years. Thus, he puts the achievements of the Solidarity in a global perspective associating them with democracy in the West and in the same way, he treats

---

153 Kuklinski resembles Conrad, a figure from Adam Mickiewicz’s *Forefathers’ Eve*, who was persecuted in a Tsarist court and sentenced to exile in Siberia. Conrad, a Romantic Titan, appears in an apocalyptic vision where he is made a savior of the whole Polish nation. In Mickiewicz’s work, Conrad prefigures a leader who will bring about liberation from the Tsarist oppression. In a Romantic context Kuklinski’s sacrifice was not futile. It symbolizes Solidarity’s claim for freedom and independence.
his own merits. In 1987 Kuklinski describes his accomplishments from a defensive point of view of an American spy who seeks understanding and reconciliation with his own nation, though he is fully aware that the Americans fully accept his mission. In 1998, aware of his victory, Kuklinski presents his mission as a fulfillment of his own life.

Gradual shifts in Kuklinski’s memory of his own past might inspire some questions concerning the outside influences on Kuklinski’s expressions of his own past. What was the factor which forced Kuklinski to appear differently to the public in 1987 after the death sentence was imposed on him in 1984 by the Polish Communist justice system versus 1998 namely a year after his vindication? Another puzzle is why Kuklinski was selective in his speeches delivered in Warsaw and Gdańsk in 1998? One possibility to consider might be that Kuklinski’s recollection of his own past altered according to a changing political climate in the world, thus, Kuklinski adjusted his rhetoric to current political circumstances in the world both after the pronouncement of his death sentence in 1984 and his vindication in 1997.

Within this period of time 1984 to 1997, the political equation in the world changed dramatically. The world in 1984 was still divided into Moscow-Washington demarcation lines. President Ronald Reagan’s approach to the Soviet Union was expressed in his denunciation of the “evil empire.” Similarly, Reagan’s administration reinforced its support for the Communist opposition, a reaction most visible in the Third World countries such as Grenada or El Salvador. The Reagan Doctrine which curbed direct or indirect allies of the Soviet Union, prevailed in the American foreign policy at that time.¹⁵⁴ On the other hand, the election of Konstantin Chernienko as the secretary of the Communist Party in the Soviet Union after Yurii Andropov death in February 1984 cemented a decade long Soviet opposition to the West. Yet, the changes

in the world politics started with the election of Mikhail Gorbachev in March 1985. Gorbachev furthered a “new thinking” in the Soviet foreign policy based on cooperative approach and openness to the west. The “empire overstretch” of the Soviet Union resulted in the promotion of glasnost and perestroika in the Soviet domestic affairs, which deeply effected the situation in Europe in the mid-1980’s. The meeting of Reagan and Gorbachev in 1985 and Gorbachev’s visit to the US in 1987 furthered the “winds of change” in the world politics. In consequence, the Berlin Wall was dismantled in 1989, in the same year the Communist regime in Poland collapsed and the Soviet Empire fell in 1991. In the beginning of 1990’s, the United States emerged from the gloom of the Cold War as the only empire able to shape the world’s political scenario.

The influence of the Cold War on Kuklinski’s recollection

It is important to emphasize that Kuklinski expressed the memory of his espionage during the Cold War, in the context of the changing and new political situation in the world in the beginning of 1990’s. Thus, the rhetoric of Kuklinski in his first public pronouncement given to Kultura Paryska in 1987 reflects his Cold War mentality. Kuklinski often refers to the “evil empire,” he sides with the west, and he reveals the strategic plans of the proponents of Moscow in the dealing with the Solidarity movement in Poland. His mission ends with a direct threat of being discovered after channeling the final plans of the martial law to the CIA. Though his first public statement was inspired as a reaction to Urban’s accusations in 1986, Kuklinski responded in a similar fashion by accusing the Polish Communist government, and especially its former

head General Wojciech Jaruzelski, of leniency toward the Moscow line. Kuklinski denied the validity of the Soviet system and rejected any form of cooperation with the “evil empire.” This Cold War pattern of memory expressions of Kuklinski slowly transformed itself into a post-Cold War rhetoric which is most evident in his last speeches delivered in April and May 1998. Here Kuklinski expressed his memory in the context of a new democracy established in Poland after the fall of Communism, the acceptance of Poland into NATO, and a vision of a new united Europe. Yet, still Kuklinski’s recollection of his own past remains peculiar. While a gradual change in his recollection is parallel to the political change in the world within the same period of time, Kuklinski adjusts his rhetoric to the needs of the public and his own circumstances.

The gradual alteration of Kuklinski’s memory in the time period between 1987 and 1998 can be easily discovered in the interviews he gave in the beginning of 1990’s. While still not absolved by the Polish court, accused of President Lech Wałęsa of being a double spy for the KGB and the CIA, and living abroad in the US without a possibility to return to Poland due to a death sentence pronounced in 1984, Kuklinski expresses his own past from the perspective of being caught in “between.” Thus, the gradual alterations of Kuklinski’s memory are influenced by his life circumstances in addition to the impact of the world political scenario, and in consequence result in Kuklinski’s moralization about spying for the CIA, the moralization which emerged during his visit to Poland in 1998.

In his interview with Józef Szaniawski published in Tygodnik Solidarność on 10 September 1993, Kuklinski appears self-justified and somewhat withdrawn. He states:

I do not have anything to hide in my life, I can talk plenty about many things, but I am obliged to keep to myself plenty of secretive information. I took part in many serious endeavors against the Soviet Union, but cannot talk about it yet.156

156 Józef Szaniawski, “Przysięgi dotrzymałem” (I Kept the Oath) interview with Ryszard Kuklinski, Tygodnik Solidarność, 37/1993, 4. This interview is based on Szaniawski’s initial talks with Kuklinski in the USA in 1991 as
Next, Kuklinski refers to the unwelcome subjugation of Poland to the Communist system for 45 years, thus, the isolation from the West. He justifies his spying in the context of his personal desire to level the isolation of the Polish People’s Army from NATO. He states: “I had the privilege and honor in the 1970’s to make the contacts of the Polish People’s Army with the NATO military structures, especially the US, more effective.”

An alteration moment in Kuklinski’s recollection of his memory is apparent when he points out that his contacts with the West started with a critique of the doctrine and military policy of NATO. He turned to the CIA since he wanted to avoid the worst. Kuklinski explains: “My main motive of action was to open the eyes of the Americans to the existing Soviet threats.” Here, Kuklinski does not approve of any political system and appears to act on his own in the best interest of his own nation, Poland. In contrast to his first public pronouncement in 1987, in which Kuklinski denied the validity of the Soviet system only and the other extreme of glorification of the NATO and American involvement in fighting against the “evil empire,” as expressed in his speeches in 1998; here, Kuklinski projects himself as a lonely figure in the Polish military who desired to accomplish the right thing. He states:

It was important to prevent the catastrophe something had to be done, it was important to find ways to prevent the worst…As an officer, a staff member, and a Pole I was obliged to do that something. And I think I have accomplished it to a certain point.

He credits himself that the Americans introduced the so called “conventional option,” which is a relocation of more conventional weaponry to Western Europe in order to counterbalance the Soviet power, thus, to prevent a real Soviet invasion of Western Europe.

he started his efforts to vindicate Kuklinski in Poland. Szaniawski was granted permission to publish this interview only 2 years later.

157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
159 Ibid.
In the context of the global importance of his mission, Kuklinski recalls his life circumstances which are the basis for his self-justification in the public opinion in Poland, thus, moralization about his spying. He states:

I have never received any financial gratification from the Americans. My daily life reminded me of stepping on land mines…There is some evidence that they attempted to kidnap me at least twice from the territory of the United States in order to bring me to the Polish People Republic. There are some traces that after being kidnapped, I was to be transported to Moscow to face an execution squad.\textsuperscript{160}

In addition to the many dangers of living in the US without a chance of visiting Poland at that time, Kuklinski refers to his mission as a direct help to his nation. He states: “An average Pole was not aware that during the Cold War, in the phase of the crisis, Poland was to be a place of total and biological devastation.”\textsuperscript{161} Saving his fellow Poles from the atomic holocaust, Kuklinski concludes with a pride of a soldier that though his accomplishments are essential, he will never ask for pardon, “I am not guilty. I have a clear conscience. Whatever I did, I did it for Poland.”\textsuperscript{162}

The moral context of Kuklinski’s public pronouncements developed further in the beginning of 1990’s, when the Polish public learned more about Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. At that time, an avalanche of reaction over the moral issue of Kuklinski’s spying overwhelmed the Polish media and press, ever since Kuklinski had to react to a hero-traitor debate in his native Poland. In his interview with Marta Miklaszewksa published in the weekly Tygodnik Solidarność on 9 December 1994, Kuklinski clearly moralizes over his spying in an attempt to refute Adam Michnik’s characteristic of him being a “beatified spy.” Kuklinski expressed his confusion in the traitor-hero dispute and concluded with affirmation “I don’t want to overdose with my modesty, but I think I did not do more than a soldier would have to do being aware of an escalation of

\textsuperscript{160} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{162} Ibid.
nuclear holocaust of his own nation.”††† His rhetoric resembles his first public pronouncement from 1987 and it is apparent in its technicality. Here, Kuklinski refers to the subjugation of Poland to the Kremlin and again cites exact numbers of the military personnel on both sides of the possible conflict between the Soviet Union and its allies and the West. The old tactic of Kuklinski of refuting the Soviet plans of invasion of the West helps Kuklinski prove his point that he saved his country and the West from the nuclear holocaust. He concludes: “My body crept when the fundamental for the national security documents were signed without being read, signed for example by comrade Gierek.” Kuklinski presents himself as a soldier whose moral consciousness did not allow him to approve of the Soviet plans of invasion and its consequences for his country. He reveals that in case of a conflict the territory of Poland and Czechoslovakia would become “a piece of land” belonging neither to the NATO nor the Soviet Union and would probably be hit by the first nuclear reaction of the NATO, the plans which later on in November 2005 were officially made public by the former Poland’s Minister of Defense Radosław Sikorski. In the course of the interview, Kuklinski appears as a modest and ordinary person who does not look for praise, but simply explains the importance of his mission in an attempt to be understood and absolved by his fellow countrymen. In this perspective, Kuklinski’s memory is shaped by his current situation. Not knowing of his future vindication, though secretly expecting it, Kuklinski attempts to justify his act in front of the Polish audience.

In both interviews published in Tygodnik Solidarność in 1993 and 1994, Kuklinski’s alteration of memory of his own past undergoes a transformation. Kuklinski blends the apologetics of his first public appearance in 1987 with the expectation of his future recognition. He justifies his spying on the basis of his current life circumstances and again projects to be a

††‡ Ibid., 13
lonely hero whose consciousness did not allow him to let “the worst happen.” He is convinced that he was always faithful to the oath of a soldier and is proud of his contribution he made to keep the peace and stability in the world in the beginning of 1980’s.

Kuklinski gives only two examples of the significance of his spying for the CIA which influenced the change of world events. First, Kuklinski pointed out that his files were effective because in December 1980 President Carter sent an ultimatum to Brezhniev to limit his interference in the Polish crisis. Secondly, Kuklinski asserted that his files made the Americans introduce the so-called “conventional option.” According to him, Americans relocated more conventional weaponry to Western Europe to counterbalance the Soviet power in order to prevent the Soviet invasion of Western Europe. Another perspective on the real contribution of Kuklinski to change the world events is his spying per se. Kuklinski saw his role in changing the course of world events only secondary. He carefully analyzed the developments in Poland pertaining to the martial law and the Soviet military and technologies, sent his observations to the CIA, and trusted his American friends to save his country from the Soviet oppression. Kuklinski did not accomplish anything significant on his own, as he emphasized in Krakow in 1998. Rather, he intended that the content of his files would help the Americans to shape their policies in the world. Therefore, he refers to the role of NATO during the Cold War as the only way to limit the imperial desires of the Soviet Union. Even though the real effect of Kuklinski files on the change of world events cannot be objectively measured, Kuklinski

165 Colonel Ryszard Jerzy Kukliński, “Wojna z narodem widziana od środka” (The War with the Nation Seen from Within), interview by the staff of Kultura Paryska(Paris, April 1987), Kultura Paryska 4/475: 25
166 Józef Szaniawski, “Przysięgi dotrzymałem” (I Kept the Oath) interview with Ryszard Kuklinski, Tygodnik Solidarność, 37/1993, 4
consistently expresses satisfaction with the fulfillment of his mission in his interviews and writing.

In conclusion, the way in which Kuklinski expressed his memory, though complex and altered, to the public during the period of 11 years (1987 – 1998) reflect his perception of his solitary mission fashioned to save Poland from the atomic holocaust and to oppose the Soviet dominion in Poland and elsewhere. During this period, Kuklinski faced either a rejection or acceptance of his mission in the public. The expressions of his memory oscillated between the reaction to the attackers as in the case of Jerzy Urban, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, or General Mieczysław Kiszczak and the explanation of the meaning of his mission as a patriot. In both extremes, Kuklinski’s memory about his past altered. While in the initial stage in 1987 Kuklinski took a defensive and apologetic stand, in 1998 during his visit to Poland Kuklinski viewed his past from the perspective of the fall of Communism and Poland’s acceptance to NATO. In effect, the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s expressions shifted from apologetic to prophetic. At the same time, the purpose of Kuklinski’s mission remained the same. Kuklinski informed the West about the plans of the Soviet attack on Western Europe. He channeled the documents pertaining to the Warsaw Pact military technologies and strategic goals. He disclosed the planning for martial law in Poland, and revealed the information of the political and social situation in Poland and the atmosphere in the Polish People’s Army. Kuklinski’s revelations were to save his homeland from atomic holocaust and free Poland and other countries from the Soviet oppression. Upon his historic visit to Poland in 1998, Kuklinski disclosed a sense of fulfillment of his mission. In fact by 1998 Poland was a free country in a NATO orbit. In Kraków, Kuklinski stated: “My mission which I undertook many years ago came to an end. I can retire now.”\(^\text{168}\)

\(^{168}\) Marek Strzałka, “Nie chce już stąd wyjeżdzać,”(I Do Not Want to Leave Here) Tygodnik Solidarność, 19(10 May 1998), 9.
The finalization of Kuklinski’s mission still leaves his enthusiasts and critics with some unanswered questions concerning Kuklinski’s moral choice. Kuklinski commented: “I had to choose between serving my country and the Red empire.” Interestingly, Kuklinski’s reminiscences his mission and his motives to become an ally with the Americans against the Soviets remain unchanged. Yet, his explanation of the moral choice alters in the context of two turning points in Kuklinski’s life, namely the pronouncement of his death sentence in 1984 and his vindication in 1997. This alteration parallels political changes in Poland. In his early public pronouncements, Kuklinski refutes the validity of the Communist system to justify his act. At the time of his vindication and return to Poland, Kuklinski evaluates his act in the context of the fall of Communism and new democratic circumstances in his homeland. Nonetheless, the pronouncements of Kuklinski cause an avalanche of reactions among his critics and enthusiasts who focus on the moral choice of Kuklinski and heavily politicize his case. Both the critics and enthusiasts of Kuklinski avoid approaching his mission on the basis of his contribution to bring an end to Communism or to expand the influence of NATO in Eastern Europe. Rather, they perpetuate the hero-traitor debate. In fact, both the critics and the enthusiasts of Kuklinski often disregard reaching beyond the figures of the post Cold War thinking. Therefore, they express their views of Kuklinski in the context of the old divisions between East and West and use Kuklinski’s mission as a pretext to either justify their political stand or to express their frustration about the lost past. In order to better comprehend the correlation between Kuklinski’s alterations of memory in the context of his critics and enthusiasts, it is imperative to examine both in the context of their post Cold War point of view of his private mission. This method will

---

help to examine the fact that the opinions of Kuklinski’s opponents and adherents concerning the moral dimension of spying parallel the changing political climate in the world.
CHAPTER II: COLONEL RYSZARD KUKLINSKI. TRAITOR AND AMERICAN SPY

“What I think about Ryszard Kuklinski, I can say this way: he was a brilliant careerist, and a spy. He betrayed a military oath which applied to him as much as it applies to me. He did it, like the rest of them, for the money, to get comfortable living overseas. There are many hardworking and dedicated officers in the Polish Army who never made a fortune fulfilling their holy duty toward Poland, and they have never betrayed,” commented Major Wacław Wieczorek.\footnote{Major Wacław Wieczorek, Interview by the Author, Notes, Torun, 4 September 2004.} Wieczorek, currently on the Polish Army General Staff, knew Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski relatively well. As army colleagues, they met several times during military exercises before Kuklinski defected to the United States in 1981. Both shared the same ideal which was, despite the polarization of the world along the Cold War demarcation lines, to serve Poland to the best of their abilities by fulfilling their military duties in the Polish People’s Army. Wieczorek worked hard for the Polish People’s Army advancement, though he commented, “you can’t even imagine how anti-Soviet the Polish People’s Army was at that time. Despite what you think, there was a great opposition to the ‘Big Brother’ in our midst.” \footnote{Ibid.}

Notwithstanding his accomplishments and heroic status among many of his fellow Poles, the memory of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, an American spy in the Polish People’s Army, still divides public opinion in Poland. The survey disclosed by CBOS (Centrum Badania Opinii Publicznej)\footnote{CBOS: Centrum Badania Opinii Publicznej (The Center For Probing Public Opinion) was established in Poland in 1982 by Colonel Stanislaw Kwiatkowski. The main goal of this research institution is to probe public opinion in Poland.} in 1992 in Poland revealed that 41 percent of the interviewees considered Kuklinski a traitor, in contrast to 20 percent of the respondents who believed that Kuklinski was
a hero. Another poll released by OBOP (Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej) in 1996 showed that 45 percent of the Poles contacted believed that Kuklinski betrayed his country, and only 44 percent of the people subjected to the study believed that he was a patriot. After his death in 2004, another poll published in the Polish newspaper *Rzeczpospolita* stated that 49 percent of the respondents believe that Kuklinski was a hero in contrast to 26 percent of the respondents who remained convinced that he betrayed his country. The rejection of Kuklinski as a result of his spying still manifests itself in public acts such as the recent desecration of his tomb in the Warsaw Powązki Cemetery. Professor Józef Szaniawski, a close friend of Colonel Kuklinski, commented in 2006:

> It has already happened several times this year. Only a few months ago, somebody spilled acid on the Colonel’s tomb. The bushes and flowers around the tomb withered, and you can still see the visible marks on the tomb stone.

The figure of Kuklinski also faces opposition in the press and different publications in Poland and worldwide.

The popular perception of Kuklinski in Poland, which is based on the slogan “tell me what you think of Kuklinski and I will tell you who you are,” supports the argument that the attacks on Kuklinski’s character in Poland come mainly from the former Communist stronghold. Former representatives of the Communist government, military figures, and former Communists generally agree that Colonel Kuklinski was a spy and a traitor. Jerzy Urban, the former

---

174 OBOP: Ośrodek Badania Opinii Publicznej *(The Institute For Probing Public Opinion)* is the oldest institute researching public opinion in Poland. It was established in 1958. Since 1994 OBOP turned into an independent research institute.
177 Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, Notes, The Powązki Cemetery, Warsaw, 21 July 2006.
spokesman of the Polish government, commented that Kuklinski “was a spy who was highly gratified for his spying for the United States…He is a traitor of his homeland.” General Wojciech Jaruzelski, a former head of the Polish Communist government and the main military leader, described Kuklinski as a hardworking spy for the Americans. His escape from Poland was painful to Jaruzelski because “first it was an attack on the currently functioning army and its military secrets,” and also because Jaruzelski could hardly believe that Kuklinski would ever be a double player. However, any assumption that only former Polish Communists reject Kuklinski is challenged by other contemporary public figures in Poland.

Adam Michnik, a Solidarity activist and chief editor of *Gazeta Wyborcza*, does not believe that public opinion concerning Kuklinski’s act follows the political equation inherited from the Communist Poland—in other words, that all former Communists would refute Kuklinski’s act and all former anti-Communists would approve of his doings. Michnik comments: “I was always against the PRL (Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa-Polish People’s Republic), and that is why I have not even traces of respect for traitors.” From this perspective, Kuklinski’s act was a crime against the sovereign country, though under Soviet hegemony, and therefore untenable.

The rejection of Kuklinski’s spying efforts reaches even beyond the boundaries of Poland. Generally the main stream of attacks on Kuklinski comes from the former Soviet Union, though, according to Piotr Jendroszczyk, a Polish journalist, “Polish debate around the issue of Kuklinski and the Warsaw Pact concerns only a small circle of people in Russia.” Generally,
Russians reject Kuklinski for his betrayal of the military secrets of the Warsaw Pact for Americans’ benefit and for his willingness to collaborate with the Americans in order to be compensated. A Russian journalist named Vladimir Kiria points out that Kuklinski remains a strong source of division in Polish society. In addition, Kiria details a negative picture of Kuklinski, concentrating on the Colonel’s personal traits such as pride and stubbornness:

“during the time of Wałęsa, the case of Kuklinski’s guilt was never resolved … because of his stubbornness to petition [President Wałęsa] for forgiveness. Kuklinski remains a traitor and an American spy for the small circle of Russians who voice their negative opinions of his figure.

Interestingly the Russian rejection of Kuklinski differs from the Polish perspective. While the Poles launch a critique of Kuklinski’s spying for the Americans in an intensely moral context shaped by the political dispute concerning his betrayal of his military oath in the Polish People’s Army, disloyalty to his superiors, and his desire to be recognized among the Poles, the Russian perspective on Kuklinski is straightforward. It is set more clearly in the global context of Cold War politics and the current political configuration in Poland. For the Russians, Kuklinski was a spy who acted against the interests of a sovereign country and the Warsaw Pact, for which he was compensated by the Americans. Thus, in the Russian perspective Kuklinski was a traitor, no different than any other Russian who collaborated with the Americans in the Cold War era for monetary compensation.

In addition to the Polish and Russian expressions of disapproval of Kuklinski’s spying, the opponents of Kuklinski also strongly oppose his vindication which took place in Poland at the end of 1997, when Kuklinski was officially granted recognition for his accomplishments. However, the opinions of Kuklinski’s attackers are somehow chaotic and they do shift in time.

---

The negative view of Kuklinski which originated with the refutation of his spying in 1986 by Jerzy Urban, a spokesman of the Communist government, intensified when the Polish government began considering Kuklinski’s vindication in 1995. Kuklinski’s visit to Poland in 1998 produced another barrage of attacks on his character, which continued until his death in 2004. The last wave of criticism of Kuklinski aimed to negate the justification of Kuklinski’s entire mission in the court of public opinion.

On the one hand, the critics of Kuklinski reacted only to his public appearance claiming that he was unworthy of his vindication. This was the case of the Club of the Polish Army Generals which strongly reacted to the possibility of placing of Kuklinski’s monument next to Piłsudski in Kraków, even though some of the prominent military figures do not condemn his spying at all. They argued that “giving such recognition to the person who had been already honored by his supporters, would be a big slap in the face of each respected officer in the Polish Army.”

On the other hand, the negative stand of some opponents of Kuklinski, such as Wojciech Jaruzelski, Jerzy Urban and others who follow their train of thought, remains unchanged. And yet it has intensified in the time period after Kuklinski’s vindication in 1997. Referring to Kuklinski’s vindication General Wojciech Jaruzelski stated in the interview with the Polish daily Źycie Warszawy in 1997:

If we return honor and exonerate Kuklinski, this means that we do not have honor and we are guilty. Kuklinski is not a hero, he was a spy at that time. We cannot simplify Kuklinski’s act and say that he fought against the ‘evil empire’. …During his activity Poland was an independent and sovereign country.

---

185 Ibid., 443
Both the periodic arousals of criticism and steady rejection of Kuklinski have never been analyzed nor thoroughly researched. Though some writers such as Józef Szaniawski in his book _Samotna Misja_ (Lonely Mission) or Maciej Łukasiewicz in his book _Bohater czy zdrajca_ (Hero or Traitor) present the opinions of both Kuklinski’s opponents and enthusiasts, they refrain from launching an analysis of the trajectory of both the negative and positive assessments of Kuklinski. Both Szaniawski and Łukasiewicz limit their studies to repudiation of the documents blended with some facts which directly concern Kuklinski, and they provide either a personal defense to vindicate Kuklinski as in the case of Szaniawski, or a short introduction to each reprinted document and publication as in the case of Łukasiewicz. In addition, it appears that the periodic revivals of criticism of Kuklinski show, on the one hand, that Kuklinski is refuted on political grounds as a result of the political Weltanschauung of the writer. On the other hand, Kuklinski’s espionage is refuted in the moral context of his spying. In both cases, the vindication of Colonel Kuklinski undergoes a strict scrutiny.

Thus, conducting a thorough analysis of Kuklinski’s figure from the negative perspective of his opponents is essential. First, it will help to solidify the basis of Kuklinski’s rejection by his opponents in the Polish and world perspectives by distinguishing some common accusations against Kuklinski, mainly that he acted against the sovereign Polish People’s Republic and betrayed the military oath. Therefore, the examination of the nature of the Polish People’s Republic from the 1970’s through the early 1980’s and the code of criminal law concerning the crime of spying will help to clarify a long and chaotic debate. That ongoing debate considers whether Kuklinski’s act should be considered a crime against “the sovereignty of an independent Polish People Republic” and whether his act was a betrayal of the military oath despite Kuklinski’s higher motives, as both Jerzy Urban and Wojciech Jaruzelski claimed.
Secondly, the study will challenge Kuklinski’s hero status so profoundly acclaimed by his supporters. Therefore, it is necessary in this step to present the figure of Kuklinski in the context of other Polish spies under Communism in 1970’s and 1980’s, who collaborated with the West for various motives and were never recognized for their achievements. Jerzy Urban commented: “it is no big surprise for me that after Rurarz and Spasowski, another outpouring of feelings of another traitor of the nation was made public in the West.”186 This step will challenge the uniqueness of Kuklinski as refuted by his opponents who equal him with other Cold War spies from Poland at that time.

Thirdly, careful analysis of the negative perceptions of Kuklinski will demonstrate that critics’ expressions shifted in time due to a political change in the world of the 1980’s and 1990’s, namely the fall of Communism. The dynamics of the voices of Kuklinski’s opposition in Poland in 1986 was substantially different than in 1998 or 2004. While in 1986 Kuklinski’s act was unanimously disapproved mainly by the PZPR (Polska Zjednoczona Partia Robotnicza-Polish United Workers’ Party) party leadership in the Communist Poland, in 1998 Kuklinski was exposed to the broad variety of opinions in the freshly democratic circumstances in Poland. Upon his visit to Poland in the same year, Kuklinski still faced a furious attack from his opponents. In addition, Kuklinski’s opponents launched yet another campaign with great intensity against his accomplishments in 2004 due to wide publicity of his death notice. Besides shifts in time, the study will also show qualitative shifts of the negative assessment of Kuklinski in the same period of time in the world perspective. The Russian vs. Polish opponents of Kuklinski approached his figure in different contexts. While Kuklinski’s opponents in Poland focused on either rejection of his act in the perspective of the existing Communist system in

1980’s or moralized and politicized the possibility of his vindication in 1990’s, the Russian approach presents Kuklinski in the context of a political scenario in the world under Communism till 1990 and evaluates the implications of Kuklinski’s spying in the context of the contemporary political situation in Poland.

However, the hermeneutics of the opinionated world of Kuklinski’s opponents might be challenged by some factual inconsistencies which cannot be fully explored. For example, Zbigniew Fras and Włodzimierz Suleja in their book *Poczet Agentów Polskich* (The Catalogue of the Polish Spies) treat Kuklinski as a heroic spy who sacrificed much for the independence of his country by combating the Communist system. And yet, they simultaneously repeat some common accusations and suspicions raised against Kuklinski, such as that his work for the CIA was premeditated and carefully planned by Kuklinski himself. Thus, the authors grant Kuklinski the double status of a traitor and a hero. Kuklinski claims that he started his cooperation with the West generally out of deeply patriotic motives and as a personal reaction generated by his dismay with Communism and to protect his homeland from the possibility of nuclear holocaust as planned by the Soviets in early 1970’s. Yet both Zbigniew Fras and Włodzimierz Suleja suggest that Kuklinski’s work for the CIA was carefully planned and shaped by selfish motives. The authors repeat a common suspicion of Kuklinski— that his spying originated in the 1960’s when Kuklinski worked for international release corps in Vietnam for six months.\(^{187}\) Given the fact that the truthfulness of Kuklinski’s view cannot yet be fully proven nor the view of his opponents unanimously challenged, it will be necessary to analyze all negative views of

---

Kuklinski, including the views rejected by Kuklinski and his enthusiasts on the basis of factual incorrectness.\(^{188}\)

In this context, it will be necessary to make some methodological clarifications in order to set the frame for this research. First, it will be important to disconnect the negative assessment of Kuklinski’s critics from their political preference or background in order to refrain from any fundamental and simplistic conclusions, such as that only former Communists or the leftist writers launch a negative view of Kuklinski. Secondly, in order to avert the common perception that Kuklinski is either rejected by some writers or fully approved by others and to refrain from any definitive opinions, it will be necessary to sort the facts or doubtful statements of Kuklinski’s viewers into one segment of negative assessment of Kuklinski. Avoiding an imposition of any moral judgments on Kuklinski’s act, it will be important to approach the figure of Kuklinski on the basis of some common accusations as voiced by various critics, such as Kuklinski’s betrayal of the sovereign state and his disloyalty to the military oath. This step will become a basis for a new approach to the negative assessment of Kuklinski’s figure, which will aim to prove that Kuklinski and his mission have been perceived through the lens of the post Cold War mentality of his viewers. The post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s opponents in this context can be generally defined as a set of mind which provides an a priori negative assessment of the figure of Kuklinski on the basis of the past Cold War division between East and West.

Accordingly, the third methodological clarification will concern the method of the post Cold War approach of Kuklinski’s opponents. Since this work will aim to distinguish the influence of past East-West conflict on the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s opponents in their assessment of his spying, it will be necessary to point out some similarities and differences between the

---

\(^{188}\) Personal acts of Colonel Kuklinski are located in the Central Military Archive in Rembertów near Warsaw CMA # 1783/90.
opinions of Kuklinski’s critics as based on their individual memory and to analyze the influence of the post Cold War mentality on their views of Kuklinski in the context of the social memory before and after the fall of Communism. The context of the individual and social memory concerning the figure of Kuklinski will help to analyze the fluctuation of the memory in general in the post Cold War scenario.

Thus, the views of Kuklinski’s opponents will be analyzed in the context of “lieux de memoire” (places of memory). This concept developed by French historian Pierre Nora generally concerns the historical characters or memorable places, institutions or scenery which inspire and produce social memory. It also engages the trajectory of individual and common reactions to the phenomena. 189 Polish historian Lech Nijakowski builds on Nora’s theory and argues that Kuklinski’s act “was a logical consequence” of the individual and social memory as described by Nora in the contemporary political configuration in Poland. While the former collaborators with the Sluzba Bezpieczenstwa (Security Police in the former Polish People’s Republic) have been publicly stigmatized after the fall of Communism, Kuklinski became a model of righteousness in the illegal and totalitarian state, despite the fact the SB was a legal security force of the state recognized in the international arena until it ceased to exist in 1989. 190 And yet interestingly, in the context of the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s opponents, Kuklinski is viewed as a traitor for the West before the collapse of the People’s Republic in Poland, and a traitor of the Polish nation after the fall. This shift in the individual and social memory concerning Kuklinski shows that post Cold War mentality is a dynamic and transcendent force.

This approach to Kuklinski’s critics in the context of the post Cold War mentality will help to explain the dynamics of the negative assessment of Kuklinski in the time period between

190 Ibid., 218
1986 and 2004. For example, the negative assessment of Kuklinski in Poland steadily intensified ever since Jerzy Urban presented the view of the Polish Communist government of Kuklinski in 1986 and it reached its apogee before Kuklinski’s visit to Poland in 1998. Thus, before Poland reached its independence in 1990’s the critics of Kuklinski’s were fewer than in the democratic circumstances of the late 1990’s. On the other hand, the small circle of the Russian critics of Kuklinski’s act seems to undergo a different fluctuation. While the Russians launched a strong disapproval of Kuklinski’s in the first phase of reaction in beginning of 1990’s, their criticism lessened by the end of 1990’s and they did not react to Kuklinski’s death in 2004 since they exhausted their opinions upon Kuklinski’s visit to Poland in 1998. Thus, the analysis of the trajectory of both the Polish and the Russian negative assessment of Kuklinski will help one to understand better the dynamics of the post Cold War mentality among Kuklinski’s critics in the world context.

Another advantage of the post Cold War mentality approach to Kuklinski’s critics is to show the origin of the post Cold War set of mind of Kuklinski’s critics in time frame. In order to challenge a simplistic notion that the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics occurred with the fall of Communism in 1989, it will be important to study and compare the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s opponents before and after the fall of Communism—in order to demonstrate that the post Cold War set of mind of Kuklinski’s critics is generally a legacy of the Cold War Weltanschauung. It is a process which developed within the Communistic system, and it still dominates the minds of Kuklinski’s critics who express their views of Kuklinski in the categories of the former East vs. West divisions and they continue to revitalize the old pattern of thinking in the present time. In consequence, the critics of Kuklinski follow the pattern of post Cold War thinking and their limitation prevents them from seeing thorough Kuklinski’s actions by
unanimously disapproving of Kuklinski’s figure and his vindication. Consequently, the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics in the context of an a priori approach to his spying episode echoes the old East-West division in the contemporary configuration of world politics.

In order to better understand the origin and fluctuation of the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics, one finds it important to approach their opinions regarding Kuklinski in the context of the post Communist scenario of the periphery states of the former Soviet Union, namely Poland. A well respected Polish sociologist named Jadwiga Staniszkis argues that the earliest stage of the current “state capitalism without a state” began to develop in Poland’s moderate Communist scenario in mid 1980’s, the time which parallels the origin of the post Cold war mentality of Kuklinski’s critics.\(^\text{191}\) Thus, the fluctuation of the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics resembles to some extent post Communist transformation or the democratization process in Poland after the fall of Communism. Staniszkis argues that one of the common outcomes of the political and social transformation in Poland as a periphery state is “deformation and incompleteness, so characteristic for the cultural and institutional pastiche…an inability to intellectual self-identification or self-referentiality as Luhman defines it.”\(^\text{192}\)

Considering Staniszkis’ theory on the trajectory of the intellectual selectivity and the inability to keep self-identity in the post Communism era, one might argue that the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics is exposed to similar fluctuation. In addition, both processes are influenced by neo-traditionalism which, according to Staniszkis, is common in the post Communism transformation of the periphery state. The neo-traditionalist approach of Kuklinski’s critics can be observed in their eagerness to explain Kuklinski’s act through the lens of the Cold War or Communist terms and set of mind. As a result, the critics of Kuklinski limit their own capacity

---


\(^{192}\) Ibid., 148
for clear and thorough perception of Kuklinski because they look at him with their own “ambivalent identity and fear that they will lose it all at once.”  

The limits of Kuklinski’s opponents in this perception of Kuklinski due to their neo-traditionalist mentality also involve their incapacity to record and explain their personal and social memories. A well known Polish philosopher, Zdzisław Krasnodębski, argues that “the Solidarity movement caused an explosion of the confiscated memory.” There was a clash of two cultural memories in the Communist Poland of the mid 1980’s. The social memory of the Communist perception of reality was challenged by the outburst of the confiscated social memory as it was being recorded and explained by the Solidarity movement in 1980’s. Krasnodębski argues that both memories, though each had an opposite pole, “in a great measure were similar when it comes to the form, both memories canonized traditions, glorified the past, and both memories were selective.” In consequence, the critics of Kuklinski with their inherited limitations of self-identity in the post Cold War era were also challenged by their selective explanation of the personal and social memory. The opponents of Kuklinski approach his figure not only in the context of the past Cold War era divisions, but they also explain their own and social memory concerning his figure on the basis of their Weltanschauung so much influenced by the current democratic developments in the post-Communist Poland. As a result, the opponents of Kuklinski often provide a critique of his figure using a similar pattern. For example, they reach out to the Communist past, memory, and rhetoric to dishonor a Polish officer who spied for the CIA during the last decade of the Cold War era—and formulate an apparent rejection of his figure.

193 Ibid., 149
194 Zdzisław Krasnodębski, Demokracja peryferii (Democracy of the Periphery), (Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2003), 72.
195 Ibid., 73
The basis of Kuklinski’s rejection

In general, the formulation of the negative views of Kuklinski in the context of the post Cold War mentality pattern is based on two common accusations raised against Kuklinski, namely that he consciously chose to work against the interest of the sovereign Polish state and that he betrayed the military oath. These accusations were first formulated in the official pronouncement of Kuklinski’s death sentence announced in Warsaw on 23 May 1984. Colonel Monarcha, the chief of the jury along with the judge Colonel Urbanowicz, and the three aldermen Colonels Palka, Dzierżek, and Magiera, pronounced the guilt of Kuklinski and supported their sentence by emphasizing that Kuklinski as a Polish People’s Army higher rank officer “was in possession of the information directly connected with the security and the defense of the Polish People’s Republic.”196 In addition, the sentence pointed out that Kuklinski left the territory of Poland on 7 November 1981 with a presumption never to return to his active military duty. He reached his destination, the United States, and on 8 November 1981 during his interview in the CIA Headquarters in Virginia, Kuklinski released some top secret information which directly attacked the basic security structure of the Polish People’s Republic and the Eastern bloc military system.197

The Chief Justice based the verdict concerning the crime of Ryszard Kuklinski on the article 122 of the Criminal Code of the Polish People’s Republic which clearly states that:

A citizen of Poland who participates in an activity of a foreign country or foreign organization which threatens the independence, a partial loss of territory, an overthrow of

---

197 “Rewizja Nadzwyczajna w sprawie Pułkownika Kuklińskiego” (Extraordinary Revision to the Case of Colonel Kuklinski), Rzeczpospolita, 7 April 1995, 17
the government or weakening of the defense of the Polish People’s Republic, or who acts in favor of the foreign intelligence, aims at the defense and security of the Polish People’s Republic.\textsuperscript{198}

The crime of Kuklinski also fell under the article 303 paragraph 3 which indicates, “A soldier who leaves his unit or assigned post willfully for the time period of more than 14 days is subject to imprisonment for the period from 6 months to 5 years.”\textsuperscript{199} The death sentence imposed on Kuklinski in 1984 was further explained by Commander Piotr Daniuk, acting Chief Prosecutor of the Polish Navy from Gdynia. In his interview with the Polish weekly Sztandar Młodych in 1995, Daniuk confessed that he strongly suggested a death sentence for Kuklinski back in 1984 since the accusations against him were obvious and they still withstand the time table, mainly, Kuklinski committed an act of desertion and he worked for the foreign intelligence, the CIA. Daniuk concludes: “Kuklinski broke the Polish Criminal Law in a brutal manner. Despite the change of the political system, spying still remains a crime.”\textsuperscript{200}

However, these apparent accusations against Kuklinski as listed in the explanation of his death sentence in 1984 should be analyzed in a broader context of the nature of the former Polish People’s Republic, a context which remains the source of the contemporary dispute concerning Kuklinski and a basis for the post Cold War mentality struggle. This is because most critics of Kuklinski’s act believed that in the 1970’s, the time when Kuklinski started his work for the foreign intelligence, the Polish People’s Republic was a constitutionally sovereign state, albeit under the Soviet hegemony. The East-West dispute of Kuklinski’s critics focuses on the fact that Kuklinski, despite his patriotic motives, served a foreign intelligence (the CIA). Andrzej


\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., Art. 303 & 3

Brzezicki in his article “Pytania bez odpowiedzi (Questions Without Answers)” published in the Polish weekly Tygodnik Powszechny in 2004 commented in the following manner: “when talking about Kuklinski we automatically face a question: What was the former PRL (Polish People’s Republic)?” 201 Brzezicki continues. “if we accept what General Jaruzelski said that in the past circumstances the PRL worked, though fallibly, to protect the interests of the Polish people than Kuklinski should be condemned.” 202 On the other hand, Brzezicki explores the argument of the Polish historian Antoni Dudek by commenting, “if we assume that the Polish People’s Army was a part of the Warsaw Pact military forces, and the Warsaw Pact did not protect the interests of Poland,” than Kuklinski should be viewed in a different context. 203

This peculiar reasoning of Brzezicki, widely accepted by other publicists, inspires indeed some inquiry concerning the sovereignty of the Polish People’s Republic in the time when Kuklinski decided to spy for the West in 1970’s. The nature of the former PRL in the late 1970’s and early 1980’s, as presented by Polish scholars, clearly contrasts Kuklinski’s view of acting in a state of a higher necessity to save his homeland from the atomic holocaust with his general dismay with the past Communist regime. In his apology Kuklinski commented:

I saw Poland flooded in an avalanche of steel which moved toward the West….All my worst expectations became real. And in addition Europe cried out that it is better to remain “Red” than “Dead.” I had to do something. And all I did, I did it thinking about Poland. Even if my act was not significant…..it was my life mission. 204

Kuklinski’s urgent mission to save Poland should be contrasted with the point raised by Brzezicki concerning the nature of the former Polish People’s Republic in order to understand the grounds for the refutation of Kuklinski’s act as launched by Jerzy Urban in his public

202 Ibid., 4
203 Ibid.
204 Józef Szaniawski, Konrad Wallenrod XX Wieku (Konrad Wallenrod of the Twentieth Century), 25
pronouncement in April 1987. Reflecting upon the situation in Poland in early 1980’s, Urban stated:

An internal political stabilization has increased in our country. The opponents of socialism feel that they lost and do not have enough social support. They find themselves in a state of inertia being unable to define their program thesis…The history justified the correctness of the decision from December 1981[imposition of the martial law]…it was a decision made by a sovereign Polish state to prevent the inevitable economic disaster.\textsuperscript{205}

In addition to fashioning his apologetic explanation, Urban did not hesitate to call Kuklinski “a traitor who despite wearing his cologne would exhale an odor” and refuted Kuklinski’s act by emphasizing that a progress of the social dialogue and more amnesties for the Solidarity members[imprisoned during the first phase of the martial law] totally disagree with Kuklinski’s urgency to prevent the worst to happen in his homeland.\textsuperscript{206} By Jerzy Urban’s lights, Kuklinski acted against the interests of the sovereign Polish People’s Republic.

**The nature of the Polish People’s Republic**

In the time period of Kuklinski’s collaboration with the CIA, the early 1970’s until 1980, Polish People’s Republic was one of the Eastern bloc countries under the Soviet hegemony. The majority of the contemporary Polish historians view Poland in that period of time in the context of the apparent East-West division. Poland is characterized as having relative economic and political stability. Even though historians such as Antoni Czubiński and Wojciech Roszkowski do not underestimate direct Soviet influence on Poland’s internal and external affairs, they focus mainly on the domestic policies shaped by the former Communists in charge of the government. Wojciech Roszkowski, a well known Polish historian, emphasizes a thaw in Europe which

\textsuperscript{205} „Konferencja Prasowa dla dziennikarzy zagranicznych. Stenogram”(Press Conference for the Foreign Journalists. Stenograph), Rzeczpospolita, 97(27 April 1987): 8

\textsuperscript{206} Ibid.
paralleled the time of political and societal changes in Poland in the 1970’s. He views Poland in the context of the equilibration of military potential of the USA and the former Soviet Republic. The German Bundestag ratified the treaty from December 1970 which recognized the Western boundaries of Poland. Consequently, the Polish People’s Republic and Western Germany established close economic ties. Also in March 1972 Poland’s Prime Minister Piotr Jaroszewicz expressed the willingness of the Polish government to promote European security and international cooperation. A direct result of Jaroszewicz’s initiative was a visit of President Nixon in Warsaw in June 1972 and the economic cooperation with the United States initiated at that time. On a similar note, another popular Polish historian Antoni Czubiński presents Poland in the 1970’s in the context of relatively positive political changes and new economic opportunities, despite the socialist utopia and the occasional demonstration of power in suppressing the striking workers shown by the government. Changes in the Polish Party leadership, the end of social unrest in 1971, and the creation of new work places accelerated a transformation of the Polish way to Communism from within and inspired some dissident political thought in Poland which later blossomed in the Solidarity movement.

Even though in the mid 1970’s Poland experienced another wave of social dissatisfaction with the governmental policies, the government exercised its power to suppress the striking workers in more valiant way than it did in 1956 and 1968. Poor economic planning, the excessive life style of the Communist leaders, an increase of prices, and an insufficient welfare system for the workers caused another open confrontation between the government and the working class. This time, however, the Communist leadership did not aim to repeat the brutal use

---

of Milicja Obywatelska force to quench the mutinying workers as it did in late 1960’s in Gdańsk and other Polish cities, an act which inspired a massive social expression of distrust toward the Communist leaders. Antoni Czubiński suggests that the Party leaders used instead less drastic means of suppression. For example, in Radom where the workers occupied the Party headquarters, the General Walter’s steel factory, and blocked railroads, the Milicja Obywatelska (Citizens’ Militia) and Zmotoryzowane Oddziały Milicji Obywatelskiej (Motorized Units of Citizens’ Militia) still pacified the city of Radom, yet with less demonstration of power. In the aftermath of this incident, it was reported that two people were killed and several were wounded. The striking workers became a powerful force which the Party leaders feared, to the extent that they used lesser methods of suppression in comparison with the incidents in Gdańsk in 1970. Czubiński also points out that in the aftermath of the social unrest in 1976, the civil society began to solidify itself in Poland. In the response to the governmental policies which directly affected the living standards of the workers, the Polish intellectuals from Warsaw established Komitet Obrony Robotników (The Committee for the Defense of the Workers) on 23 September 1976 and appealed to the Polish people to support the cause of the workers. The societal dialogue between the striking workers, the intellectuals, and the governmental body brought about some relative peace which lasted until 1980. For Czubiński, an economic crisis of 1980 was the main source of the general strikes in Poland and the origin of the Solidarity movement, and political aims such as ending the Soviet hegemony are downplayed. In general, Czubiński supports the idea that in the 1970’s Poland was a sovereign state able to manage its internal policies, be governed by its own laws, and the larger Polish society, though it did not have much influence on the political life, it was still engaged in the political and social configuration of the state to a limited extent.\footnote{Ibid., 305-307}
In addition to the view of the historians on the nature of the PRL in 1970’s and early 1980’s, the sovereignty of Poland is acclaimed by the former Communist leaders in Poland. The time when Colonel Kuklinski decided to collaborate with the West parallels a decade of quasi renewal of the political and economic life in Poland as related by Edward Gierek who became the secretary of the Polish United Workers’ Party on 20 December 1970. In his memoirs, Gierek points out that the wave of the strikes in Poland and social unrest was in general caused by erroneous policies of the previous leadership of Władysław Gomułka. Under his leadership a firm economic program based on openness to the Western free market economy was introduced. Contrary to the former policy of creating self-sufficient economy without taking any loans from the West, the new leadership used the thaw to borrow from the Western states and to establish economic ties with France, Germany and the United States.

As a result new industrial centers in Poland, such as Huta Katowice, were established. It appeared that “Poland in the years 1971-1973 was transformed into one huge construction plant….the propagandists assured the public opinion that Poland placed itself on the tenth position among the most industrially developed countries in the world.” Edward Gierek claimed that he was “stripped of any prejudices against the West.” If successfully accomplished Gierek’s program of modernization of Poland’s economy would increase the living standards of the working class in Poland, though Gierek’s plan still envisioned Poland being a part of the Communist hegemony (which, according to Gierek, was not so predominant and overpowering in Poland). The hegemony was almost invisible. Poland was a sovereign country ruled by its own laws and able to manage its economy. Even though in 1973 the conflict

---

210 Antoni Czubiński, Historia Polski XX Wieku (History of Poland in the Twentieth Century)(Poznań; Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 2003), 302.
in the Near East, global gas crisis, and the weak exchange value of the Polish currency shook the foundation of Gieriek’s reform, Poland continued its political and economic transformation. On 10 February 1976, the Polish Sejm approved of an amendment which changed the Constitution of Poland promulgated earlier in 1952. Redefining the status of the Polish State, the Polish People’s Republic became a socialistic state, in contrary to communistic as it was defined in the previous constitution. The citizens of Poland were encouraged to develop a socialist society which was to provide for each citizen of the PRL.\textsuperscript{212}

According to Edward Gierek, it was only in the beginning of 1980’s that the Polish People’s Republic began to disintegrate. The economy deteriorated and in consequence the citizens’ dissatisfaction with the leadership of Gierek increased. Gierek’s plan entered a disastrous phase under Jaruzelski regime in early 1980’s.\textsuperscript{213} The Communist government’s politics toward the unexpected growth in strength of the Solidarity movement was exacerbated by the waves of strikes in the 1980’s, which accelerated the confrontation of the mass movement with the Communist regime. The promising decade of Gierek ended abruptly in December 1981 with the promulgation of martial law. Gierek views the economy as the main cause of the political and social chaos in Poland in the beginning of 1980’s. Thus, he concludes that it was only when Jaruzelski was in charge of the government that the economy deteriorated so badly between 1981 and 1982 to the extent that Poland faced an economic breakdown and moral apathy.\textsuperscript{214} Poland became vulnerable and exposed to the possibility of an outside intervention.

Despite the economic factor which determined the fate of the former PRL in early 1980’s, as suggested by Edward Gierek, there are still other insights into the nature of the former PRL which support the case of Poland’s sovereignty in the 1970’s. Jan Drewnowski, economic

\textsuperscript{212} Antoni Czubiński, \textit{Historia Polski XX wieku} (History of Poland in the Twentieth Century), 304.
\textsuperscript{213} Janusz Rokicki, \textit{Edward Gierek Replika} (Edward Gierek Replica), 168-169
\textsuperscript{214} Ibid., 171
analyst, laid the grass roots thesis of the opposition movement in Poland in 1972 as based on the role of the civil society in the former PRL. Drewnowski states that in their attempts to oppose the Communist hegemony, the oppositionists must not count on any form of an outside help, but rather they should focus on the oppositionist forces active in the Soviet bloc in order to consolidate the opposition. Drewnowski realized that most Poles were against the sovietization of their country, excluding those who constitute the formal governmental apparatus. In addition, the Poles who opposed the regime should work to improve their social values and moral culture. Drewnowski approaches the PRL as a sovereign country, though under Soviet influence. Yet, he aims to encourage Poles to develop their societal energy in the socialist context to prevent the possibility of the political and cultural degradation by succumbing to the Soviet hegemony. Thus, according to Drewnowski reinforcing “the awakening of the democratic forces in the society” was the key to establishment of the opposition within Poland’s civil society in 1970’s. Interestingly, Drewnowski believes that a strong social front based on democratic awareness would bring about a change within Poland. Thus, he saw an opportunity for the youth which aware of the past clashes with the Communist regime in late 1960’s would develop some social discontent in the Communist context of the PRL, which in consequence would decrease its active participation in the Polish United Workers’ Party in the future. Evaluating the economy of Gierek’s regime, Drewnowski emphasizes that in the midst of the economic chaos in early 1980’s, the Polish society should have worked on improving the effectiveness in production to

---

216 Ibid., 26
secure the economic base and at the same time the Solidarity movement should have opposed the abuses of the Communist government, yet within a political culture of socialist democracy.\(^\text{217}\)

Similar insight into the nature of the former Polish People’s Republic is presented by Gale Stokes, whose book *The Walls Came Tumbling Down: The Collapse of Communism in Eastern Europe* describes an anti-political form of resistance in Poland. Stokes argues that the Polish society was not aware of its own resistance in the 1970’s. She follows the idea of Jacek Kuroń who was a resistance activist at that time. According to Kuroń, the sovereignty of Poland was expressed in “the preservation of the culture, the reading of literature, and the discussion of philosophy.”\(^\text{218}\) Kuroń believed that intensity of the social involvement could generate a democratization process in Poland at the time, since the regime was “improvising its repression” of the striking workers in Radom in 1976 and the Sejm (Polish legislature) abandoned its program to increase the prices of food. In the perspective of Stokes, in the mid-1970’s the Polish government was becoming aware of the hidden source of strength in the working class and unnoticed political acts cultivated by the intellectuals. However, the dynamics of the social dialogue supports the idea of Poland’s sovereignty in 1970’s.

In general, when Colonel Kuklinski initiated his cooperation with the CIA in the 1970’s, the Polish People’s Republic was a sovereign state, governed by its own constitutional law, defined by its own social dynamics, and it provided for its citizens.\(^\text{219}\) The dissidents, such as Jacek Kuroń and others who disagreed either with the governmental policies or socialist ideology...

\(^{217}\) Ibid., 128  
\(^{219}\) Stanisław Rogowski, *Historia ustroju i prawa w Polsce* (History of Structure and Law in Poland)(Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, 2006), 337-348. In the Constitution accepted in the Polish Sejm on 22 July 1952, Polish People’s Republic was defined as a republic of the working people. Based on the social unity, the Polish nation fought for decades to liberate itself from the yoke of the occupant. During the Second World War, the Polish nation fought against the Nazi Germany and used the help of the Soviet Union to establish a new government put in the hands of the working class. As a state, Polish People’s Republic was defined in terms of people’s democracy. The governmental powers are in the hands of the working class in the cities and villages.
of the governing elite in PRL, focused on building societal structures of resistance against the official Communist agenda of the government and relied on massive social support. The sovereignty of Poland in the 1970’s is not questioned by the historians, Communist officials or independent social and economic analysts. All refrain from placing Poland as passive and subordinate agent in the orbit of the former Soviet Union only and they rarely emphasize a strict dependence of the Polish military on the Warsaw Pact forces. Therefore, it might be concluded, that the inquiry about the nature of the former Polish People’s Republic, though complex, in the context of the Kuklinski dispute as raised by Andrzej Brzezicki in his article “Pytania bez odpowiedzi” (Questions Without Answer) has no definite answer.\textsuperscript{220} The evidence somehow proves the point of Jerzy Urban that Poland was a sovereign country undergoing some democratic changes between 1982 and 1987. Therefore, Kuklinski’s position that Poland was governed by “foreign puppets butchering the citizens” was simply not debatable for his opponents.\textsuperscript{221} Even though the nature of the PRL was as much diversified as the Polish society was in 1970’s, the Polish People’s Republic defined its political and social status quo on the map of Europe. The opponents of Kuklinski perceive him as an exceptional individual, a spy for the CIA, who does not represent a common social dissatisfaction with the Communist regime and so his act of spying is not sanctioned by all citizens of Poland in 1970’s. Instead, Kuklinski’s opponents argue that he acted according to his own personal vision of liberating Poland from the Communist hegemony, thus, consciously choosing to act against the interests of his own country and betraying the military oath he once took.

\textsuperscript{220} Andrzej Brzezicki, “Pytania bez odpowiedzi” (Questions Without Answer) Tygodnik Powszechny, 8(22 February 2004): 4

\textsuperscript{221} “Konferencja Prasowa dla dziennikarzy zagranicznych” (Press Conference for the Foreign Journalists), Rzeczpospolita, 97(27 Apr 1987): 8
Kuklinski’s betrayal of the military oath

As the Army’s highest ranking officer, General Wojciech Jaruzelski was a strong proponent of the view that any betrayal of the military oath is the gravest offense a soldier can commit. Therefore, Jaruzelski perceived Kuklinski as a traitor who first of all betrayed his military oath. In his interview with Piotr Najsztub in 1992, Jaruzelski stated that “service in the Polish Army was a service to Poland. Any disloyalty to the military oath should be considered treason.”

Interestingly, a similar opinion was expressed by a former president of Poland, Lech Wałęsa, who became a leader of the democratic mass movement “Solidarity” in Poland in 1980. Yet Wałęsa’s opinion, despite his refutation of Kuklinski’s spying, is somehow ambiguous and lacking in logic. Wałęsa simultaneously praises the heroism of Kuklinski but rejects his mission in a fashion similar to Jaruzelski’s. Wałęsa commented on Kuklinski’s spying:

It was a heroic act; however, does this act serve for the future common good of our nation – no, certainly not in the best way. This is, however, a treason….in democratic circumstances such activity would be considered a betrayal. Kuklinski did a great thing for Poland, but he became disloyal to his military oath.

Even though Colonel Kuklinski remarked that if “the Army was Communist than, I am not sure if I would have joined it,” and he further defended himself by explaining, “I only became a partner for the Americans in their fight against the Soviets,” there is some ambiguity in the fact that collaborating with the foreign intelligence he acted against his military oath despite the ruling of the Supreme Court in 1995 which emphasized that Kuklinski acted “in a

---

223 Lech Wałęsa, “Opinie” (Opinions), Życie Warszawy, 10 October 1997, 1; see also Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja (Lonely Mission), 383-385.
224 Maria Nurowska, Mój Przyjaciel Zdrajca (My Friend Traitor), 15.
225 Ibid., 131
state of higher necessity.” In addition, Kuklinski emphasized that when he joined the Polish Army back in 1947, the circumstances were different. He explained:

I never betrayed my country, I was loyal to the military oath which I swore to be loyal to the Polish nation…The military oath which I took after I joined the Polish Army was not the same as the oath sworn a few years after that….After 1948 everything changed. It was not me who changed, it was the oath.\textsuperscript{226}

An official change in the Polish Army oath did take place in 1943, and from that time until 1976 the soldiers who joined the Polish Army swore “to keep an oath of faithfulness to the alliance with the Soviet Union which placed weapon in my hands…to keep brotherhood in arms with the allied Red Army.”\textsuperscript{227} The end part of the soldier’s oath was officially confirmed on 22 November 1952 and it clearly stated that if the loyalty to the oath was violated in any way and “the duty to my homeland broke, may the severe hand of people’s justice reach me.”\textsuperscript{228}

Being fully aware of the attempts of the Polish government in 1995 to reinstate Kuklinski, Jaruzelski wrote to the Constitutional Commission of the Supreme Court 30 March 1995 to further argue his case, mainly that Kuklinski betrayed his military oath. The Commission led by the Supreme Justice Stanisław Rudnicki declared that insufficient evidence and Kuklinski’s exceptional circumstances as well as his higher motives gave the basis for revoking his previous sentence, only to investigate his case again in the democratic circumstances in Poland in 1995.\textsuperscript{229} Faced with a parallel investigation of the authors of the martial law from December 1981 pending since 1993, Jaruzelski questioned the basis of the Polish judiciary system concerning the revision of Kuklinski’s case. According to Jaruzelski, in the eyes of the

\textsuperscript{226} Józef Szaniawski, “Przysięgi dotrzyałem” (I Kept the Oath), Tygodnik Solidarność, 37/1993, 1.
\textsuperscript{227} Andrzej Zwolinski “Przysięga wojskowa” in Encyklopedia Białych Plam (Encyclopedia of White Spots) (Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne, 2005), 117. A change in the Polish Army oath paralleled the change of the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic in 1976. A changed oath put an emphasize on service to the country, protection of the working people, protection of the people’s government and loyalty to the government of the Polish People’s Republic.
\textsuperscript{228} Ibid., 118
\textsuperscript{229} Stanisław Rudnicki, “Rewizja nadzwyczajna w sprawie Pułkownika Kuklińskiego” (Extraordinary Revision of the Case of Colonel Kuklinski), Rzeczpospolita, 7 April 1995, 17
Polish law, Kuklinski cannot be simultaneously guilty and not guilty if he was disloyal to the military oath. In response to the explanation of the Supreme Justice Rudnicki that “it is necessary to consider the fact of the considerable limitations of the sovereignty of Poland and a direct threat of Soviet invasion” at that time, Jaruzelski again challenged the judiciary system in contemporary Poland, emphasizing that the authors of martial law also attempted to protect the good of the Polish people from the Soviet invasion by their willingness to deal with the social unrest by using their own means. He compared this act to Kuklinski’s acting on higher motives to save Poland from the same Soviet invasion. In addition, Jaruzelski argued that the decision to impose martial law in 1981 was accepted by the Polish Sejm(highest legislative body) and this law cannot be averted. In conclusion, Jaruzelski reiterated that Kuklinski broke the law, committed an act of desertion, betrayed the military oath because his action was not to inform “the world,” as the explanation of Justice Rudnicki reads, about the Soviet invasion, but specifically his action was to channel the top secret information to the CIA. In his attempt to challenge the judiciary system, Jaruzelski adds an important distinction to the case of Kuklinski by arguing that a Polish Army officer cannot choose on his own whom to work for if he is bound by the military oath. The opinion of Colonel Stanisław Dronicz, Chief of Staff of the Shooting Unit somehow summarizes the point made by Jaruzelski: “No circumstances justify an officer who serves another country. An officer does not have the right to engage in the international politics on his own. This leads to anarchy.”

Tadeusz Jurga, a Polish military historian, extends the meaning and the consequences of the betrayal of the military oath by Kuklinski, since he attempts to analyze Kuklinski’s case in

the context of Poland’s totalitarian past. Though Jurga questions the validity of the PRL, he sarcastically asks if Kuklinski’s betrayal should be praised. And yet, he moves the Kuklinski’s debate to another level. He believes that the betrayal of the military oath may be considered anarchy at the worst extreme, but in fact it is a betrayal of the Polish nation. In his attempt to approach Kuklinski as a traitor of the Polish nation, Jurga combines Kuklinski’s disloyalty to the military oath with his betrayal of the Polish People’s Republic, a reference which in the historian’s view means all citizens who acknowledged its sovereignty. Jurga contends that Kuklinski’s act will always be perceived as a shameful and dishonorable act of national treason, “despite the subjective political or ideological classification [of Kuklinski’s act] or other classifications, despite the fact who got the information [provided by Kuklinski], whether it was the East or the West…whether the information was read in the White House or Kremlin…”

Contemporary Polish legal experts support Jurga’s stance to some extent. They believe that Kuklinski committed a crime against the contemporary legal system by betraying the military oath and yet they propose leniency toward Kuklinski on the basis of “limited sovereignty of the Polish People’s Republic.” Michał Pietrzak, Law Professor from the University of Warsaw, believes that Kuklinski “acted against the law at that time, but that law did not express the national interest[of Poland],” yet he asks for some leniency in the case of Kuklinski due to the Communist circumstances at that time. Similarily Stanisław Hoc, Law Professor from the University of Opole thinks that, though “the crime of spying has not been…researched thoroughly yet… [and] the assessment of the espionage act is very complex,” the Criminal Law as applied to Kuklinski was based on the 93 article of the Polish Constitution

which specifically implied that “the treason of the nation: an act of espionage, weakening of the military forces, joining the enemy side – should be punished with all severity of the law as the gravest crime.”

Besides a vague definition of Kuklinski’s crime against the Polish nation as explained in the Constitution of the Polish People’s Republic, the Code of the Criminal Law promulgated in 1969 did not adopt the clause “the treason of the nation” with regard to spying. Therefore, the accusation raised by the critics of Kuklinski, who believe that he betrayed the nation, do not have a solid footing in the realm of Poland’s Criminal Law.

Nonetheless, the ambiguity of Jurga’s opinion that Kuklinski betrayed his homeland, though irrelevant to the Polish criminal law, can be traced in the pronouncements of other critics of Kuklinski. Similarly to Jurga, other critics of Kuklinski combine two common accusations against him in their assessment of his guilt, namely that since he acted against the sovereign Polish People Republic and betrayed the military oath, Kuklinski betrayed his homeland. This reasoning is apparent in the view of another publicist, Krzysztof Toeplitz, who believes that Kuklinski acted against the interest of the Polish nation and exposed the Poles to the possibility of nuclear strike in case of war scenario. Thus, Toeplitz strongly disapproves of his act. He stated:

The territory of Poland at that time was considered by the strategists of the Warsaw Pact as a sovereign land which had to be protected against the attack. The fact that amidst Kuklinski’s reports were the instructions what is the best way to paralyze the railroad lines in Warsaw….in the end it would be us who would suffer from the bombs of our liberators[NATO] cannot be overseen.

---

235 Ibid.
236 Krzysztof Teodor Toeplitz, “Zły czy dobry?”(Good or Bad?), Polityka, 41(10 Oct 1992): 2. See also Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., Sprawa pułkownika Kuklińskiego; Bohater czy zdrajca; fakty i dokumenty (The Case of Colonel Kuklinski; Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), 191-192.
Yet another publicist, Ryszard Radziejewski, concludes that Colonel Kuklinski was a traitor of his homeland because if “a high rank Polish Army officer reveals the top secret information, he is unquestionably disloyal to his oath” and will always remain a traitor and his rehabilitation would be a disgrace to the “principles of the security of our nation.”

Another two publicists, Krzysztof Dubiński and Iwona Jurczenko, express the similar point that Kuklinski betrayed the interests of his homeland, but raise the Kuklinski debate to another level. Even though both authors agree that a lack of any historical analysis of the former PRL is “a main reason to provide an impartial evaluation of Kuklinski’s acts,” they focus on the misgivings of Kuklinski to prove their point. Thus, they list numerous details of his spying and his public pronouncements that might be easily doubted due to a lack of solid proof to indicate that Kuklinski indeed acted against the interests of his homeland. For example, both Dubiński and Jurczenko state that:

He [Kuklinski in his public pronouncements] always claims to tell the whole truth about his activity, but he is not telling it. His short public pronouncements, often called by his opponents ‘fabricated though interesting big news’ only react to the polemics of the publicists in Poland, rather than carefully providing details of his collaboration with the American intelligence.

It is in the context of their attempt to denigrate Kuklinski due to his shortcomings, that both Dubiński and Jurczenko launch their main argument against Kuklinski based on his work for the CIA. They argue:

For more than ten years Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski – an officer of the Poland’s General Staff – channeled some top secret military information to the American intelligence, which he acquired while being on military duty. He was simply an eye of Pentagon, who allowed the American strategists and military planners to design military scenario of a possible East – West military conflict in the future.

---
239 Ibid., 155
240 Ibid., 157
The portrait of Kuklinski presented by Dubiński and Jurczenko as an ‘Eye of the Pentagon’ during his military career in Poland, as well as after his exfiltration from Poland in November 1981, constitutes the basis for their rejection of Kuklinski’s spying as a crime against his homeland. Kuklinski collaborated with the CIA on his own initiative. His mission proved futile since on the basis of the information he revealed to the CIA, Poland was exposed to more devastation if war occurred. In addition, Kuklinski was a traitor of his homeland because he knew about the upcoming imposition of the martial law and never informed the Solidarity leadership about it. He never sought any contacts with Lech Wałęsa, the key figure in the movement, to warn him about the state of things in the Polish People’s Army. Kuklinski intended to return to Poland in 1982 out of deep concern for the suffering of his country men under the martial law, but he never made the trip. Kuklinski himself designed his life mission, but he “got his whole life entangled in a complicated plot of coincidences which he himself cannot explain. He is not a sovereign owner of his life, and he is not able to account to all of his acts,” he was advised by the CIA and therefore, he acted against the interests of his homeland.241

Even though the critics of Kuklinski often exaggerate their strong opinions about his figure to prove the validity of their stand, their perception of his act raises some important points that cannot be diminished in any serious debate. First of all, according to Kuklinski’s critics, Kuklinski indeed acted on his own initiative against the sovereignty of the PRL, despite the argued clause of “limited sovereignty,” which indicates that Poland was in the former Communist orbit states and the Soviet hegemony prevented any resistance initiative. Contemporary dealings with Poland’s Communist past, objective and historical in nature, only prove the fact that a thorough analysis of Kuklinski in the negative view is essential in order to

241 Ibid., 156
counterbalance the point of Kuklinski’s enthusiasts.\textsuperscript{242} Secondly, Kuklinski betrayed the military oath as a Polish Army officer by establishing contacts with the CIA, though there existed at the time other forms of resistance to the Communist regime. And yet the opinion that he betrayed the Polish nation (ojczyzna) as a whole might be challenged by Kuklinski’s enthusiasts who praise his accomplishments and are exempt from this far reaching opinion. Nonetheless, the negative assessment of the figure of Kuklinski in the context of the common accusations helps a historian critically understand and counterbalance the image of Kuklinski as launched in the press by his enthusiasts, who argue that Kuklinski was the “First Polish Officer in NATO,” “a true hero of the Cold War,” “a man of many virtues who greatly helped Poland,” or “the best place source…. in the Bloc.”\textsuperscript{243} In addition, an analysis of the common accusations against Kuklinski challenges Kuklinski’s status as hero and apparently places him among other Polish spies during the Cold War era. In fact, accusations leveled against Kuklinski might be applied to any spy who acted against the sovereignty of PRL by either defecting to the West or channeling top secret information to foreign intelligence in the former West and betraying the military oath. An analysis of other spies in the Communist Poland of similar stature as Kuklinski will shed more light on the argument he resembles other spies—and challenge the infallibility of Kuklinski’s exceptionalism as argued by his enthusiasts.

\textsuperscript{242} Contemporary Polish historians tend to overlook the period of 1970’s in their writing of most recent history of Poland. For example, Wojciech Roszkowski in his last publication of Najnowsza historia Polski(The Most Recent History of Poland)(Warsaw: Świat Książki, 2006), begins with the events of 1980’s and focuses on the meaning of the round table talks as a starting point for Poland’s future. Similarly, Antoni Dudek in his Historia Polityczna Polski(Political History of Poland)(Kraków: Arcana, 2007) starts his work in 1989 right after the June elections and the nomination of Wojciech Jaruzelski as President of Poland and Czesław Kiszczak as Premier of the new government. It is disappointing that in the evaluation of the Communism in Poland in the book written by several Polish scholars entitled Komunizm w Polsce(Communism in Poland)(Kraków: Kluszczyński, 2007) to the era of Edward Gierek which paralleled Kuklinski’s spying in 1970’s, Zdzisław Zblewski devotes only twenty pages to such important period in Poland’s history.

\textsuperscript{243} Benjamin Weiser, A Secret Life, 219.
Colonel Kuklinski and other Polish spies

Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski was not the only Polish Army officer who spied for the CIA. In the time period between 1972, when Kuklinski initiated his spying for the CIA until the end of the Polish People’s Republic in 1989, the military tribunals in Poland sentenced 151 people. They were sentenced in accord with both article 121 of the Criminal Code of the Polish People’s Republic accused of spying for the foreign intelligence and article 122 for betrayal of the homeland. There were only 24 military personnel among those who were sentenced and only three were high ranking military officers. In his article, Parada Agentów(The Parade of the Spies), Mirosław Cielemecki, a Polish journalist, describes Kuklinski in the context of two other spies of renown, namely Colonels Jerzy Koryciński and Włodzimierz Ostaszewicz. Cielemecki argues that all three similarly betrayed their military oaths and were compensated for their collaboration with the foreign intelligence and then sentenced to death in absentia by the Military Tribunal of the Military District of Warsaw.

In August 1984 Colonel Jerzy Koryciński, who worked as attaché in the Polish Consulate in Chicago was tried by the same tribunal as Kuklinski. Before his official removal from the post, Koryciński willingly turned to the US officials on 19 August 1983. Cielemecki argues that Koryciński most probably denounced Captain Marian Zacharski, a Polish spy active in espionage in the United States. In July 1985, the Military Tribunal of the Military District of Warsaw sentenced to death another Polish spy, Colonel Włodzimierz Ostaszewicz. Like Kuklinski, Ostaszewicz was a member of the general staff of the Polish People’s Army. He was a resident of the Polish intelligence cell in Berlin and in Brussels. He was also a representative of the Polish government to Vienna. On 20 December 1979, Ostaszewicz was summoned back to Poland due

244 Mirosław Cielemecki, “Parada Agentów” (The Parade of the Spies), Wprost, 41/17 October 1992, 27
to his “personal contacts which extremely reached beyond his competence.” Similarly to
Kuklinski, Ostaszewicz fled Poland in September 1981, and through the former Yugoslavia,
reached Great Britain and revealed to the CIA top secret strategic information concerning the
military strategies of Polish Army and the Warsaw Pact.  

While Cielemiecki lists some Polish Army officers who spied for the West, General
Czesław Kiszczak gives more insight into Kuklinski since Kiszczak was his superior of on the
General Staff. He also describes Kuklinski in comparison to other Polish Army officers who
defected to the West. Even though Kiszczak considers Kuklinski’s treason as one of “the two
biggest disappointments of my career,” since Kuklinski always appeared as quiet and
trustworthy, he emphasizes Kuklinski’s personal choice to work for the foreign intelligence. In
addition, he believes that Kuklinski’s spying was carefully planned. Kiszczak thinks that
Kuklinski cooperated with Ostaszewicz to channel the information to the West. He comments:

> In the same period of time, there was another person who defected to the West, Colonel
> Ostaszewicz who was probably a liaison officer of Kuklinski. Both of them lived in
> neighboring villas which they built next to each other as ordered by the American
> intelligence to make their contacts appear more natural.  

Kiszczak believes that both Ostaszewicz and Kuklinski served a foreign intelligence
service from the early 1960’s on. Kuklinski was stationed in Vietnam and there was no
possibility for anyone to exercise full control over him there. Kiszczak thinks that Kuklinski
could have met a local girl who was probably paid by the South Vietnamese intelligence in
cooperation with the American or other foreign intelligence network. Collaboration with a
foreign intelligence service at that was an undeniably attractive personal challenge for an officer
from the Polish Army.

---

245 Ibid., 28
In the eyes of Kiszczak, Kuklinski planned his spying career from the early stages very carefully, much like other defectors to the West. Although the common perception of Kuklinski as a lucky man is deceptive, he was always helped by his protectors from the West. Kiszczak comments:

Colonel Żarek was a chief of staff of an important division in the General Staff, who unexpectedly died of a heart attack. This episode should be investigated since Kuklinski replaced him shortly after his death, thus gaining open access to some top secret information.⁴⁷

Kiszczak dismisses representations of Kuklinski as unique, viewing him from the same perspective as Ostaszewicz. In Kiszczak’s understanding, both characters lack loyalty and keep up appearances. Concerning Kuklinski, Kiszczak relates:

He was a great womanizer. He always took with him to the forest various women, secretaries, typists, and other attractive women. He did it discreetly, yet he made everyone believe that he was one of those men who liked to make out with women on the side.⁴⁸

In the forest, Kuklinski had a good opportunity to pick up a stone empty inside with a message, which according to Kiszczak, was a preferable tactic of the CIA to leave instructions for its collaborators. The women whom Kuklinski took on such excursions testified later that he suddenly disappeared in the forest to take care of the call of nature and ended each date abruptly upon his return, supposedly wanting to return home to his family.

Clearly, Kiszczak describes both Kuklinski and Ostaszewicz with similar disgust and disappointment in his tone. Yet he gives an example of another spy, Jerzy Sumiński, a young and ambitious officer of the military counter intelligence, whom he surprisingly treats more cordially. Kiszczak helped Sumiński to advance in the military counter intelligence, due to the historian’s personal ties with him. In 1980, Sumiński escaped to Sweden taking his wife and a child with

---

⁴⁷ Ibid.
⁴⁸ Ibid., 175
him. In his letter which he sent to Kiszczak through his father, he promised not to reveal any classified information, yet Kiszczak learned later on from his South American source that Sumiński revealed a great deal of top secret information to the Western intelligence, for example the structure of the intelligence personnel in both East and West Berlin. Kiszczak believes that Sumiński had much more to offer to the CIA than Kuklinski. Attempting to set aside personal prejudices, Kiszczak comments:

In his letter he apologized for his escape, he swore that he would not do any harm, that he would not betray...he promised to get in touch after he settles in the West, letting me know that I can count on his cooperation.\textsuperscript{249}

Interestingly, Kiszczak describes the character of Sumiński in comparison to Kuklinski and Ostaszewicz in a more positive light, despite his apparent disappointment with all three figures. For example, in the eyes of Kiszczak, both Kuklinski and Ostaszewicz remain synonyms of unrepentant traitors and Sumiński, though disloyal, is given a chance to be vindicated, even though the information he sold to the CIA “caused more damage” to the Polish intelligence network than the other twos’ intelligence. In his analysis Kiszczak purposefully points out that both Kuklinski and Sumiński were the two biggest disappointments of his career in the MSW (Ministerstwo Spraw Wewnętrznych - Ministry of the Interior), emphasizing that Sumiński revealed more important top secret information to the West. While challenging Kuklinski’s purported uniqueness, Kiszczak seeks to underscore the point that besides Kuklinski there were other spies who worked for the West in the time period between 1972 and 1989, spies who were far more important than Kuklinski.

Similarly to Kiszczak, Colonel Henryk Dominiczak, Polish military historian, dismisses claims that Kuklinski was exceptional. In his analysis of the spies of that era, Dominiczak focuses on Jerzy Koryciński, who was responsible for denouncing Captain Marian Zacharski to

\textsuperscript{249} Ibid., 179
the CIA. Zacharski, a Polish spy in the United States, was of real value to the Soviet intelligence. One of his major achievements was obtaining the documentation of the Hawk, Phoenix and Patriot rackets. In addition, Dominiczak emphasizes the fact that Koryciński revealed to the CIA the names of 117 Polish active spies.\textsuperscript{250} Interestingly, Dominiczak mentions Kuklinski scarcely, referring to him as an “American spy”\textsuperscript{251} and only listing his name along with two workers of the MSW, Henryk Bogulak and Waldemar Mazurkiewicz. These two figures revealed to the CIA the names of over 100 agents and active assets of the MSW working abroad, documents of strategic importance, and the code keys documentation.\textsuperscript{252} Dominiczak’s surprising silence about Kuklinski recurs in the work of Roger Faligot and Remi Kauffer entitled \textit{Les Maîtres Espions. Histoire Mondiale Du La Guerre Froide A Nos Jours}(Intelligence Service. History of Intelligence and Counter Intelligence Services in the World) Faligot and Kauffer mention briefly the figure of Kuklinski as a recruiting achievement of the CIA in the Soviet bloc, which was able “to recruit an agent from among the highest ranks of the military hierarchy.”\textsuperscript{253}

In general, the opponents of Kuklinski who view his figure in the context of other Cold War spies refrain from granting Kuklinski a superior spy status. In addition, they do not refer to Kuklinski’s great merits which helped to save Poland from the “atomic holocaust” during the Cold War era. In general, the authors simply look at Kuklinski as someone who collaborated with the CIA, disregarding or disputing any patriotic or higher motives of Kuklinski. Some authors attempt to combine both approaches to Kuklinski, and thus they present him as a traitor and a great Polish patriot. This is the case of Zbigniew Fras and Włodzimierz Suleja who in their

\textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 384
\textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 282
book *Poczet Agentów Polskich* (*The Catalogue of the Polish Spies*) analyze the figure of Kuklinski in the context of the views of Kuklinski’s critics and opponents in an attempt to present Kuklinski in most objective way possible. Thus, both Fras and Suleja point out that Kuklinski, frustrated by the use of military force by the Communist government in Poland against its own nation in December 1970, initiated his work for the CIA.²⁵⁴ Ironically, both authors also present an opposite version of Kuklinski’s motives of treason. They base their narrative on the view of General Kiszczak, who strongly suggests that Kuklinski started to work for the CIA by the 1960’s in Vietnam.²⁵⁵ Even though both Fras and Suleja emphasize in the end of the chapter on Kuklinski that they do not intend to blend with “the almost forgotten, utilitarian in character, and politicized discussion concerning the case of Kuklinski,” they make an important point about his case, which is a stumbling block for most of the contemporary viewers of Kuklinski.²⁵⁶ Namely, the case of Kuklinski involves a political discourse. The viewers of Kuklinski have to struggle not only with a moral dilemma “whether in the face of a total evil, such as Communism, each act directed against it could be reconciled,” but they are engaged in a political battle over Kuklinski at the same time.²⁵⁷ Thus, the politicization of Kuklinski’s case, namely viewing Kuklinski in the East-West division line, reflects the Cold War mentality of his viewers. At the same time, the Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics involves engaging political discourse of his act *per se*, since the critics view Kuklinski as a Polish People’s Army officer who collaborated with the CIA, thus he betraying his military oath and his nation.

The best example of such a trajectory between the politicization of Kuklinski’s case and the Cold War mentality is the approach of General Kiszczak. First of all, such a trajectory shows

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 182
²⁵⁶ Ibid., 186
²⁵⁷ Ibid.
in Kiszczak’s Cold War rhetoric in his comments on Kuklinski. Kiszczak relates: “Kuklinski was a classical example of the instrumental treatment of Poland by the United States.” In Kiszczak’s perspective, Poland was a sovereign state whose interests were protected by the Soviet Union in contrast to the “evil empire” which pursued its own interests in Eastern Europe. Secondly, the trajectory between the politicization of Kuklinski’s case and the Cold War mentality is a tool employed by Kuklinski’s critics to prove the futility of his mission by exposing the “evil” intentions of the American foreign policy in Eastern Europe. Therefore, Kiszczak questions the reasons for Kuklinski’s mission by examining American foreign policy during the last decade of the Cold War. Kiszczak states:

The Americans were instantly informed about the technical preparations of the martial law and they knew even more than Jaruzelski, Kiszczak, Siwicki. Kuklinski was familiar with all the details. The Americans did not warn anyone. Neither the pope, nor the episcopate, nor Wałęsa, nor Bujak, nor Kuroń, nor Michnik.

Thus, Kiszczak rejected Kuklinski as the American spy who willingly decided to work for the CIA perceived by Kiszczak as the synonym of the West in contrast to the Soviet satellite Polish secret service. In addition, Kiszczak emphasized that Kuklinski was used by the Americans as an asset of great value in the Polish military circles, and yet the Americans, aware of Kuklinski’s reports but proceeding according to their own agenda, tacitly agreed to the imposition of the martial law in Poland. Thus, the Americans pursued their own political agenda in Eastern Europe. In general, the trajectory between the Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics and the politicization of his case exposes itself in the Cold War rhetoric and an attempt to expose Kuklinski’s treacherous act to the public in an effort to prove the futility of Kuklinski’s mission.

259 Ibid.
The alterations of the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics

The post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics originated in the period of time when the world was still divided by the iron curtain in the middle of 1980’s and it entangled the minds of the early critics of Kuklinski, such as Jerzy Urban and Czesław Kiszczak, who were the officials of the Communist government in Poland. The first reaction to the Kuklinski case on the Polish scene occurred four and a half years after the imposition of the martial law in Poland on 13 December 1980. Jerzy Urban, a spokesman of the Polish People’s Republic government, denounced Kuklinski in the press conference on June 6 1986 as an American spy. Urban disclosed a “double face” of the American politics toward Poland. While the Americans were commonly perceived by the Polish people as supporters of the Solidarity movement, the U.S.A. in fact pursued their selfish interests in Poland. Thus, Urban discredited any American insinuation about the reasons why the Solidarity was not informed by the Americans about the danger of the imposition of the martial law in Poland in 1981. Urban related: “for the record, I think that such important representation of the American government which shapes the US foreign policy, jokes from the truth and continues to lead astray its own public opinion.”

Urban explained that the Americans did not purposefully warn the Solidarity about the upcoming martial law, since they not only wanted to protect Kuklinski, but also they simply jeered with “extremists of Solidarity and the whole bunch of sympathizers of the American politics of diversion.” Finishing his reaction to the publication of an article in Newsweek entitled “A Polish Agent in Place” by David C. Martin from December 20, 1982, Urban emphasized that the American government lied not only to the Solidarity activists, but also to its own citizenry.

261 Ibid.
During the same press conference of June 6 1986, Urban spent some time to reflect on Czesław Kiszczak’s view of Kuklinski as published in Polityka two weeks later.262 Disgusted with the Kuklinski episode, Kiszczak directly attacked US Secretary of State, Alexander Haig, stating: “a high functionary of the US government jeered once again at the leadership of the former Solidarity and his clientele in Poland.”263 Kiszczak concluded that “the Americans do not have to hide the fact, that Kuklinski was their agent, he was not endangered in any way [after his escape to the US],” since he was already on the US territory.264 Pointing out the misgivings of the American foreign policy in Eastern Europe, Kiszczak introduced the rhetoric of the real enemy of the Polish People’s Republic, meaning the Americans and the supporters of the American policy in the East. According to Kiszczak, the enemy “apparently hoped that the imposition of the martial law in this situation[after Kuklinski revealed the plans of the martial law to the Americans] would be doomed and that we would not be able to effectively and fully paralyze the counterrevolution, they hoped for a bloody confrontation…they hoped for ‘Lebanonization’ of Poland.”265 Kiszczak aimed to convince the public opinion that:

The imperial forces of the West” desired only to cause more blood shed in Poland. In addition, the “western man dataries” lied to their Polish supporters, namely the members of Solidarity, ignored them and used them in “their global fight against socialism.”266

The apparent futility of Kuklinski’s effort to channel the plans of the martial law to the West as expressed in the Cold War rhetoric of Kiszczak and Urban shape the approach to Kuklinski in the reality of the Polish People Republic. The future expressions of Jerzy Urban and Czesław Kiszczak concerning Kuklinski’s act followed the same pattern. At the next press

263 „Konferencja Prasowa dla dziennikarzy zagranicznych, stenogram” (Press Conference for the Foreign Journalists, Stenograph),” Rzeczpospolita 133(9 June 1986), 1
264 Ibid.
265 Ibid.
266 Ibid.
conference for foreign journalists which occurred on June 17, 1986, Urban responded to the
foreign press revelations about the CIA spy in the Polish military. In his rhetoric, Urban
contrasted Kuklinski’s spying episode viewed by Urban as distractive to the proper functioning
of the government, with the peaceful initiative of the Jaruzelski’s government to form a national
reconciliation forum in Poland in 1981. The purpose of the forum was to summon the
representatives of the Communist government, the Catholic Church, and Lech Wałęsa as a
representative of the Solidarity. Since the reconciliation talks were rejected by the Solidarity and
Wałęsa faced strong opposition upon his return to Gdańsk, Kuklinski was certain that the
imposition of the martial law was imminent, thus, he fled the country. Urban disclosed good
intentions of the Communist government to restore peace in the Polish society in contrast to the
American attempts to cause more disorder. In a confusing manner, Urban made an effort to
lament that Kuklinski escaped from Poland once he sensed that his supervisors became aware of
the breach in the highest circles of the General Staff, yet he did not give an exact explanation of
what really accelerated Kuklinski’s exfiltration.\footnote{\textsuperscript{267}}

Similar representation of the figure of Kuklinski was demonstrated by Urban a year later,
after the publication of an interview with Kuklinski in \textit{Kultura} in April 1987. Urban used the
same tactics to undermine Kuklinski’s mission. At the press conference on April 14, 1987 Urban
ironically explained that the news of Kuklinski’s interview was no surprise to him, since this
action was rather apparent and it happened in the case of other spies who fled to the West.\footnote{\textsuperscript{268}} On
another occasion on April 21, 1987, Urban explained that Kuklinski was “a long term and highly
paid spy for the United States.”\footnote{\textsuperscript{269}} In contrast to his earlier expressions in which Urban tried to
denigrate the news of the foreign press concerning Kuklinski, this time Urban launched a stronger attack on Kuklinski’s character. Urban stated that Kuklinski was a “traitor of his nation, Poland, sentenced to death in absentia.”²⁷⁰ Yet, he used the same Cold War rhetoric to support the Communist government in Poland, after the damage done by Kuklinski’s supervisors in America. Urban stated: “An internal political stabilization is in progress in Poland. The opponents of socialism have the feeling of being defeated and they lack stronger social support. They reached an impasse, unable to define their strategic action.”²⁷¹ Urban’s critique of the enemies of socialism is followed by his reaffirmation of the perpetual Polish-Soviet friendship. Urban stated:

The important changes which are happening in the Soviet Union gave the Polish-Soviet relations more depth and a new look, which cemented bilateral respect, understanding and cooperation.²⁷²

According to Urban, the CIA used the events from 1980’s in Poland to generate anti-soviet feelings in the Polish society. He concluded that the martial law imposed in 1981 was a sovereign act of the Polish government to prevent the economic disintegration, unnecessary blood shed in Poland, and in consequence the deterioration of the Polish state. In order to reject Kuklinski’s confession published in Kultura, Urban focused on the progress of the national reconciliation since 1981 and economic reforms. He stated:

I will not discuss each and every revelation of Kuklinski. First of all, these facts oppose the thesis which Kuklinski was given to sign. Secondly, it would be beneath the dignity of the Polish government to confront a disgraced traitor and a spy.²⁷³

It is worth noticing that the first critics of Kuklinski, mainly Urban and Kiszczak, set a pattern for other critics in the post Cold War reality of Poland in 1990’s. In the new wave of

²⁷⁰ Ibid.
²⁷¹ Ibid.
²⁷² Ibid.
²⁷³ Ibid.
negative assessment of Kuklinski in the early 1990’s, his critics emphasized Kuklinski’s spying as the crime against the nation and focused on the futility of his mission. Yet, it is important to notice the shifts in the rhetoric of the critics. While Urban and Kiszczak’s expressions in 1986 reflected a typical Communist propaganda of the late Polish People’s Republic, the new wave of critics employed modified rhetoric, though based on the same accusations against Kuklinski. Namely, that Kuklinski was an American spy and his efforts to save Poland were futile, destructive, and criminal in nature. The post Cold War thinking of these early opponents was gradually formulating. They still viewed Kuklinski as a CIA agent who worked for the foreign intelligence; consequently, he was a traitor.

The second wave of criticism of Kuklinski was inspired by two events which took place in 1990. First, the case of Colonel Kuklinski was submitted to the Minister of Justice, Aleksander Bentkowski, in July 1990 with a formal plea to revise Kuklinski’s sentence. Though this plea was rejected, Kuklinski’s death sentence was changed by the Warsaw Military District Tribunal and reduced to 25 years. Secondly, the new wave of criticism was inspired by the appearance of Zbigniew Brzezinski, advisor to President Carter, on the Polish Television evening news broadcast on December 13, 1990. In his speech, Brzezinski emphasized that

Kuklinski was not a mere American spy, he was a heroic ally, in the times when the entire military leadership of the Polish People’s Army was sold to the Soviets. Colonel Kuklinski risked his own life…and rendered worthy services to Poland. Brzezinski emphasized that Kuklinski’s honor should be restored and his person recognized for his heroic act. The appeal of Brzezinski caused an avalanche of criticism. The critics of Kuklinski unanimously rejected Brzezinski’s appeal and launched an attack on the character of Kuklinski.

---

274 Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., Sprawa pulkownika Kuklinskiiego; Bohater czy zdrajca; fakty i dokumenty (The Case of Colonel Kuklinski; Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), 99; see also Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja: Pulkownik Kuklinski i zimna wojna (A Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War), 306-314.
In the eyes of the critics in the early 1990’s, Kuklinski was simply an American spy and a traitor. Piotr Adamczewski, a journalist, argued: “the proposals of Zbigniew Brzezinski are rather shocking. They sanction, even more glorify treason and spying.”

Andrzej Milczanowski, Chief of the Bureau of State Security, protested against Brzezinski’s appeal and he stated:

This is a very risky statement. Risky, because it would sanction the idea, that the agentural work for a foreign country is a matter of conscience of the individual functionary.

On the other hand, Jacek Markel, Secretary of the National Security Council, stated that:

It is impossible to break with the past, in the army there are still many friends of Kuklinski and they have a sense of loyalty. It is in the military circles that the view of Kuklinski is negative.

General Władysław Pożoga, former Vice Minister of the Interior stated: “A spy is always a spy and will remain a spy, even if he was a colonel in his country. Having joined the side of an adversary, he has to do what he is ordered to.”

Challenging the truthfulness of Kuklinski’s story of his escape from Poland, Pożoga stated:

The stories of Kuklinski about his dramatic escape are only the myth of a thousand and one nights. It is probable that he left in a truck ‘Dadge’ with American plate numbers and diplomatic signs.

Referring to the publication of Kuklinski in Kultura, Pożoga stated:

Because of his position, he had an insight to some important matters, but not the most important. These most important matters were passed on in a small circle without participation of the colonel. There are no written trails of them.

---

275 Piotr Adamczewski, “Przeciw propozycji Zbigniewa Brzezińskiego. Bohater czy zdrajca?” (Against the Proposal of Zbigniew Brzezinski. Hero or Traitor?) Polityka, 47 (22 December 1990), 2
278 Henryk Piecuch, W kręgu zdrajców (In the Circle of Traitors), (Warszawa: Agencja Reporter, 1992), 139.
279 Ibid.
280 Ibid.
In general, the critics of Kuklinski in the early 1990’s used the same arguments as Jerzy Urban and Czesław Kiszczak in 1986, though their rhetoric did not have the same tone of Communist propaganda in the past. In their eyes, Kuklinski remained an American spy, a traitor, and consequently a person who lacked loyalty.

While the post Cold War mentality of the opponents of Kuklinski in early 1990’s came up in their perception of Kuklinski as an American collaborator, General Czesław Kiszczak disclosed a stronger influence of the Cold War mentality. Interviewed by Piotr Najsztub for Gazeta Wyborcza, Kiszczak stated:

If the decision to reinstate Kuklinski was made now, it would be a slap in the face of the entire officers division. It would mean that he was a hero and the rest of us were traitors.  

Rejecting the possibility of reinstating Kuklinski, Kiszczak also rejected the American interpretation of Kuklinski’s recruitment by the CIA. Kiszczak related: “The Americans state that Kuklinski turned to them via military attaché in Germany. On the basis of our information, such spies were recruited in Vietnam.” Again, Kiszczak reaffirmed that Kuklinski was not in any danger of being arrested. Thus, Kiszczak concludes:

The Americans do not have to hide that they evacuated Kuklinski due to strategic and political reasons. They wanted to tell us: General Jaruzelski, General Kiszczak, we know everything about the martial law plans and it works for us that it is you who will do it and not the Russians.

The rhetoric of Kiszczak from 1986 which often referred to the instrumental treatment of Poland by the United States shifted to another level. In 1992, Kiszczak viewed American position on

---

281 Piotr Najsztub, “Mój Przyjaciel Zdrajca” (My friend Traitor), Gazeta Wyborcza, 229(29 September 1992), 2; see also Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., Sprawa pułkownika Kuklińskiego: Bohater czy zdrajca; fakty i dokumenty (The Case of Colonel Kuklinski; Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), 133-135 and Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja (Lonely Mission), 574-577
282 Ibid
283 Ibid.
Kuklinski as lacking basis. In his view, it was impossible to reinstate Kuklinski because of his collaboration with a foreign intelligence.

Similarly to Kiszczak, General Wojciech Jaruzelski interviewed by Piotr Najsztub for Gazeta Wyborcza followed the same pattern. First, Jaruzelski aimed to discredit the person of Kuklinski, and thus to reject the possibility of reinstating Kuklinski. According to Jaruzelski Poland was a sovereign state in 1980’s and it was not “a satellite of the Soviet Union. Considering that – the service in the Polish Army was equal to the service for Poland. Any disloyalty to the military oath in that situation meant treason.”

Similarly to Kiszczak, Jaruzelski thought that returning honor to Kuklinski would be a “dangerous precedence.” In addition, Jaruzelski doubted the possibility that Kuklinski was able to channel to the Americans the technological documentation of over 200 kinds of Russian weapons. The attack on Kuklinski’s character and proofs of Kuklinski’s lack of effectiveness as a spy helped Jaruzelski to discredit his figure. The rhetoric of Jaruzelski in the post Cold War reality does not contain an old form of Communist propaganda. Rather, Jaruzelski aimed to discredit the Americans and emphasized the ineffectiveness of Kuklinski in his work for the CIA. In addition, Jaruzelski emphasized the role of the former Soviet Union in providing security for Poland’s boundaries. Jaruzelski concluded: “Indeed, in the reality of the post Jalta agreements, our sovereignty was limited, but it is a fact that the Soviet Union was a warranty of our Western boundary during the entire 40 years.”

The second wave of Kuklinski criticism ended in 1992 leaving the public with a suspicion that Kuklinski, in addition to being an American spy and a traitor of his nation, was

---

284 Piotr Najsztub, “Taki pracowity szpieg” (Such A Busy Spy), Gazeta Wyborcza, 229 (29 September 1992), 3; see also Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., Sprawa pułkownika Kuklińskiego: Bohater czy zdrajca; fakty i dokumenty (The Case of Colonel Kuklinski: Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), 136-139 and Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja (Lonely Mission), 569-572.

285 Ibid.
also a double agent who worked for both the CIA and KGB. Magdalena Próchnicka interviewed an anonymous officer of military counterintelligence in October 1992. The anonymous source suggested that: “there are many facts which took place as well as an absence of facts which should happen, suggest that he spied for the CIA and the KGB."\textsuperscript{286} Exaggerating the perfectionism of the KGB, the officer revealed that Kuklinski was probably recruited by the KGB in Moscow when he underwent an officer’s training. The KGB knew about his collaboration with the CIA and left him no alternative. Thus, Kuklinski channeled to the CIA the top secret information about the Polish military as ordered by Moscow. Referring to Kuklinski’s escape from Poland in 1981, the anonymous source pointed out that

\begin{quote}
He fled his country with a briefcase full of information. But the most important and the only one from the Moscow point of view was hidden in his memory. It was the information about the date of the imposition of the martial law and that Poland was not endangered in anyway…The Russians cared about it very much.\textsuperscript{287}
\end{quote}

The anonymous officer viewed Kuklinski’s activity as a spy game between two powerful intelligence agencies, the CIA and the KGB. In his view the KGB designed the scenario of events which took place in the Soviet western borderlands in 1981 and the CIA accepted it.

The third wave of attacks on the figure of Kuklinski, stronger in tone and more elaborate in content from the previous two waves, was inspired by the developments in the period between 1994 and 1998. The first inspiration was a publication of the last four urgent telegrams of Kuklinski to the CIA in 1994 in the Polish weekly \textit{Solidarność}.\textsuperscript{288} The second was a formal revision of Kuklinski’s case, which began in 1995 by the Supreme Court and ended with the 1997 decision of the Military Prosecutor of the Warsaw District, Major Bogdan Włodarczyk, to

\begin{footnotesize}
\textsuperscript{286} Magdalena Próchnicka, “Kuklinski w KGB?” (Kuklinski in KGB?), \textit{Sztandar Młodych}, 212(28 October 1992), 1
\textsuperscript{287} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{288} “Ostatnie telegramy Kuklińskiego(Jacka Stronga) przesłane do USA, informujące o wprowadzeniu stanu wojennego,”(The Last Telegrams of Kuklinski[Jack Strong] Sent to the USA Informing About the Introduction of the Martial Law), \textit{Tygodnik Solidarność}, 9 December 1994, 13.
\end{footnotesize}
revoke the case of Kuklinski and vindicate his figure. The third event was Kuklinski’s visit to Poland in 1998. Even though the opponents of Kuklinski still refer to his act in the context of the Cold War polarization of the world and they still politicize and moralize his spying, the third phase can be perceived generally as an apology of Kuklinski’s opponents for their post Cold War mentality. In their pronouncements, Kuklinski’s critics often refer to the military and national values and laws which abided in the Communist Poland. Though they unanimously reject Kuklinski’s vindication and oppose his visit to Poland, the critics pronounce their arguments in a more elaborate way by employing past Communist ideal of patriotism and military loyalty. They also reject Kuklinski as a person by emphasizing that he was simply a traitor unworthy of any recognition.

The strongest attack in the third phase was launched by General Wojciech Jaruzelski. In his letter to the Commission for the Constitutional Responsibility of the Sejm dated May 12, 1995, Jaruzelski formulated his opposition as a reaction to the reversal of the Kuklinski case initiated by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court in Poland. Jaruzelski again acknowledged the sovereignty of the PRL and the possibility of foreign military intervention in the heated months of social unrest in Poland in 1981. He quickly pointed out that Kuklinski consciously chose to work for the CIA and his spying did not generate any helpful solutions for the Solidarity, the church, and the Polish society. Jaruzelski wrote: “The escape of Kuklinski did not inspire at that time any preventive reaction on the part of the world.”289 In addition, Jaruzelski reaffirmed that that the decision to introduce the martial law in Poland was approved by the Sejm of the Polish People’s Republic and “this decision of the Sejm no one until now annulled or lawfully

---

The argument of Jaruzelski is more complex than any of his previous pronouncements concerning Kuklinski, however. Jaruzelski not only attacks Kuklinski, but he also challenges the current code of law in the democratic Poland in order to lesser his guilt as the author of the martial law. Being aware that the same article of the Criminal Law, Article 123, was applied to Kuklinski, and now it would also apply to him, Jaruzelski wrote: “This is really pathetic. How can a person be simultaneously accused of betrayal and protection of a sovereign state.” Thus, Jaruzelski concluded that in both cases the political revenge took precedence over the law. Jaruzelski sarcastically contrasted the crime of betrayal of Kuklinski with his own, since both Kuklinski faced the same accusation, namely the betrayal of the Polish nation.

The reaction of Jaruzelski to the possibility of Kuklinski’s vindication in 1995 is nonetheless overshadowed by his definite rejection of Kuklinski’s spying as well as his character in his letter to the Chief Military Prosecutor, General Ryszard Michałowski from September 1997. Jaruzelski wrote his letter on behalf of 30 other former generals and admirals of the Polish People’s Republic. In his letter, Jaruzelski launched the most devastating and sophisticated attack on the figure of Kuklinski. And he disapproved the decision of the Military Prosecutor’s Office for the District of Warsaw from 22 September 1997 to vindicate Kuklinski in the eyes of the current code of law and public opinion. Unable to read the formal decision of the Chief Prosecutor, Jaruzelski pointed out the shortcomings of the judicial procedure of Kuklinski’s vindication case by seeking more clarification on issues obvious to him. Assessing the documents which Kuklinski could have possibly copied and then channeled to the CIA, Jaruzelski wrote:

290 Ibid., 343
291 Ibid.
Ryszard Kuklinski disclosed to the US intelligence infrastructure, main and neuralgic military lines and places on our territory, thus, he pointed out the potential goals for the hydro atomic strike.\(^{292}\)

Thus, Jaruzelski not only aimed to belittle the importance of the documents which Kuklinski could have accessed, but he also sarcastically proved that by his spying Kuklinski consciously endangered the Polish territory by revealing the strategic military points to the enemy. Jaruzelski rejected any insinuation that the materials Kuklinski was able to channel to the CIA had any important value. In addition, he presented Kuklinski as a spy who despite his knowledge that the territory of his homeland would be hit first in the nuclear strike, Kuklinski continues his worthless mission.

In his last pronouncements on Kuklinski, Jaruzelski reveals his post Cold War outlook most clearly. Even though Jaruzelski does not employ Cold War rhetoric in his expressions as he did before, using terms such as “imperial forces” or “enemy of our socialist nation,” he attacks Kuklinski by nostalgically appealing to the past military and national values and seeking to reaffirm that the Polish People’s Republic was a sovereign state. Jaruzelski’s memory of the Communist reality of Poland finds fulfillment here in the democratic Poland of 1990’s. And this leads him to discredit Kuklinski by blaming his supporters for using political influence and media to support Kuklinski’s cause. In addition, Jaruzelski uses a dose of sarcasm as a way to prove his inability to prevent Kuklinski from being vindicated. Jaruzelski wrote:

> Anyone who willingly joined the Polish People’s Army between 8 May 1954 and 4 June 1989 and stayed with the Army despite any dramatic developments in our history….and personal painful experiences knew exactly what army he serves, what he swears unto, in what alliance he is, and in what possible military conflict he would participate.\(^{293}\)


\(^{293}\) Ibid., 363
By contrast, Jaruzelski reaffirms that Kuklinski consciously chose to become a Polish People’s Army officer and his mission would only bring more devastation in the possible nuclear conflict which Kuklinski also must have envisioned when he joined the military.

While Jaruzelski’s stand on Kuklinski does not change in its form, it alters in its essence. The other opponents of Kuklinski in the third wave of criticism, taking shape in the period between 1994 and 1998, reveal a different pattern. Jaruzelski’s rejection of Kuklinski steadily intensified until 1998 and it reached its peak in the last pronouncement made on behalf of other Army generals. Jaruzelski was able to adopt his old rhetoric to the new democratic circumstances in Poland. His last attack was more elaborate since by challenging the validity of the vindication process of Kuklinski, he challenged the judicial procedures of the current law system in Poland, thus pointing out the inability of the contemporary lawmakers in Poland to deal with its Communist past.

On the contrary, other critics of Kuklinski in the third wave of criticism focus on a different pattern of Kuklinski’s rejection than Jaruzelski. Their critique is less elaborate than Jaruzelski’s and it centers on the fact that Kuklinski spied for the Americans, and thus should be recognized only by the Americans. The critics reveal their post Cold War mentality by viewing the Americans or the CIA in the context of the East-West division of the world. Accordingly, they dismiss Kuklinski on the grounds of his collaboration with the Americans. In addition some of the critics point out different ways of resistance to Communism. For example, Krzysztof Dubiński and Iwona Jurczenko believe that Kuklinski was simply an “Eye of Pentagon, which allowed the American strategists and military planners create military scenarios of the East-West conflict in Europe.”

Piotr Kołodziejczyk, Minister of National Security, argues: “Poland was

---

an ordinary state and the Polish Army was an ordinary army at that time. It is a complete absurdity to call Kuklinski ‘the first Polish officer in NATO’. ”

Though Kołodziejczyk agrees that Kuklinski should be recognized for his accomplishments by the Americans only, he should not be glorified in Poland. Thus, Kołodziejczyk dismisses Kuklinski’s heroic status in Poland. The view of Zbigniew Siemiątkowski, speaker for the SLD – Social Democratic Party, adds to the point of Kołodziejczyk. Siemiątkowski states:

> He [Kuklinski] was an officer of a lower rank so he could not have an access to the most important documents of the Warsaw Pact… and his political information about the Martial Law was not used by the West.

Like other colleagues, Siemiątkowski believes that Kuklinski should be recognized only by the Americans. Similarly, General Tadeusz Pióro, a military historian, believes that Kuklinski accomplished something extraordinary for the Americans only and besides he was paid by the Americans. Therefore, he dismisses Kuklinski on the grounds of his conscious collaboration with a foreign intelligence.

Yet, Pióro raises the Kuklinski’s debate to another level. After publication of his book “Armia ze skazą” (Army With a Scar), Pióro was denounced by his fellow colleagues, since in his work he provided a healthy critique of the Polish People’s Army. Pióro comments: “I believe that it was necessary to write this book, though some may say that I acted against the rules.”

Pióro was forced to retire in 1967, even though he was a rising star in the military circles.

Similarly, Adam Michnik, Chief Editor of Gazeta Wyborcza, believes that there were other ways to resist Communism other than spying for the Americans. Michnik sees in the vindication of

---

295 Piotr Kołodziejczyk, “Jak Pan/I ocenia decyzję prokuratury o umówieniu sprawy pułkownika Kuklińskiego” (What Do You think About the Decision of the Prosecutor to Revoke the Case of Kuklinski), Przegląd Tygodniowy, 1 October 1997, 2

296 Zbigniew Siemiątkowski, “Zdrajca czy bohater” (Traitor or Hero), Gazeta Wyborcza 3-4 June 1995, 9

297 General Tadeusz Pióro, “Zdrajca czy bohater” (Traitor or Hero), Gazeta Wyborcza 3-4 June 1995, 9
Kuklinski a real trap for political beatification of a spy who chose to work for the CIA. Michnik and his resistance colleagues believed that “resistance against the PRL authorities which they considered subjected to Moscow cannot lead to the cooperation with the foreign intelligence.”

Thus, both Pióro and Michnik denounce Kuklinski on the basis of his collaboration with the foreign intelligence and use their own experience of resistance with Communism as a foundation for that rejection. It is apparent that all critics of Kuklinski display some difficulty to deal with Poland’s Communist past. They still approach his figure without any firm analysis of the nature of Communist Poland and its interpretation in the present democratic surroundings. This apparent inability to come to terms with Poland’s past inspire some critical statements addressed to Kuklinski from the circle of his supporters.

For example, Kazimierz Dziewanowski strongly agrees that Kuklinski accomplished something important, yet he cannot explain how to justify Kuklinski’s collaboration with the foreign intelligence. Dziewanowski believes, “Colonel Kuklinski indeed broke the existing laws in the PRL by channeling the information abroad…” And at the same time, he adds that Kuklinski “brought Poland profit by making it difficult for the Warsaw Pact to resolve the ‘Polish quest’ in the years 1980-1981 in the most brutal way.” Though he recognizes the complexity of the issue to thoroughly justify Kuklinski, he shows not desire to deal with Kuklinski in the context of the existing law in the PRL. Yet, he concludes that Kuklinski’s vindication was “the final triumph of justice.”

298 Adam Michnik, “Pułapka politycznej beatyfikacji” (A Trap of Political Beatification), Gazeta Wyborcza, 9-10 May 1998, 11
299 Kazimierz Dziewanowski, “Zdumienie, gniew, pogarda”(Wonder, Anger, Disgust), Rzeczpospolita 229/1-2 October 1994, 3; see also Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i zimna wojna (A Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War), 395-397
The third wave of criticism of Kuklinski ends with his official visit to Poland in 1998. Kuklinski’s visit enraged his opponents. It also created a great confusion in the Polish society according to his critics. Jarosław Kurski and Paweł Smoleński commented:

By visiting [Poland] he created an unheard confusion…The notions already defined began to have new meaning, the insults were perceived as the compliments, and the compliments became the insults. 301

Reflecting on Kuklinski’s visit, both Kurski and Smoleński conclude that it cause a greater division in the Polish society. Contrasting Kuklinski with Jaruzelski, they ask:

If the foundation to Kuklinski’s glorification is weakening Communism, so let’s think who made it weaker in the first place: a man who disclosed a handful of secrets to the Americans [Kuklinski] or the one who conceded the power to the anti-Communists [Jaruzelski]? 302

In general, the critics of Kuklinski in the third wave display their inability to reevaluate their negative stand on Kuklinski in Poland’s new political surroundings. Their lack of coherence, the incompleteness of their assessment of Kuklinski, and the lack of self-identity only exemplify the process of their adjustment to the new socio-political reality in Poland in late 1990’s. In addition, they convey the memory of Poland’s Communist past with regard to Kuklinski in the context of Krasnodębski’s notion of “confiscated memory.” In other words, the critics approach Kuklinski feeling that their own memory is “confiscated” by the post-Communist’s public opinion; thus, they are forced to protect their old system of values, such as loyalty to the socialist state, as their basis for Kuklinski’s negative assessment. The best example of such stand is the negative assessment of Kuklinski launched by Adam Schaff, a Polish Marxist philosopher. Schaff responds ironically to signs of euphoria as expressed by some Polish politicians and journalists who claim a national hero status for Kuklinski. Schaff states that “the

302 Ibid.
conclusion has not been made yet to build him a monument in the form of hillock in Kraków as they built one before for Kościuszko and Piłsudski."³⁰³ Schaff claims that he “cannot remain indifferent,” especially, if some important questions concerning Kuklinski have not yet been asked in the public. For example, why was Kuklinski able to retain his position in the Polish Army until his escape from Poland despite his anti-Soviet sentiments supposedly so often expressed out loud by him? Dwelling on the past accusation that Kuklinski was a double agent, Schaff “cannot be indifferent when something bad might happen in Poland.”³⁰⁴ Schaff ironically points out the political character of Kuklinski’s vindication. Thus, he concludes that Kuklinski’s vindication is not a condition for Poland to be accepted to NATO. Schaff’s reaction bears some traces of the past accusations and doubts raised against Kuklinski. For example, he notes that Kuklinski must have been compensated for his spying because even the higher ranking Polish Army officers who served at the same time as Kuklinski, were not able to afford as much as he did. Schaff exclaims that “facts cannot be negated.”³⁰⁵ In his opposition to Kuklinski, thorough and devastating, Schaff discusses Poland’s Communist past. He states: “the Warsaw Pact was a reality which gave Poland for many years carefully designed warranty of Poland’s territorial sovereignty.”³⁰⁶ According to Schaff, it was only in 1990 that the German opposition to recognize the softening of the western borders of Poland. The facts from the most recent history of Poland that Schaff employs in his attack on Kuklinski cannot be overlooked, and so Schaff concludes that “the story of Kuklinski as built on such illogical and faith lacking foundation

³⁰⁴ Ibid.
³⁰⁵ Ibid.
³⁰⁶ Ibid., 5
cannot be defended.”\textsuperscript{307} In the eyes of Schaff, Kuklinski “a CIA agent did his part and the rest was out of his reach.”\textsuperscript{308}

Even though Schaff makes some important points in his attack on Kuklinski, it is apparent that he struggles to define his own stand on Kuklinski. First, he repeats the accusation against Kuklinski already voiced by Jaruzelski and Kiszczak in the past, namely that Kuklinski was compensated for his spying. Thus, in Schaff’s perspective Kuklinski was simply a spy for the CIA. Secondly, Schaff approaches the past Communist reality of Poland considering only the benefits of Soviet protectorate, such as territorial integrity and protection of Poland’s boundaries. Schaff’s nostalgia for the past values of the socialist state and his apologetics on behalf of other Army officers eventually lead him to refute Kuklinski’s figure. The rhetoric of Schaff’s pronouncement on Kuklinski was intended to engage a broad social dialogue with Kuklinski’s supporters, rather than demagogically express his post Cold War set of mind. Thus, Schaff’s expressions on Kuklinski might be considered a good transition to the fourth wave of criticism inspired by Kuklinski’s death in 2004.

On 12 February 2004 Poland’s newspapers published widely the news of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski’s death which occurred on 11 February in Tampa, Florida due to a massive stroke. Kuklinski’s death caused another reaction of his opponents. Though Kuklinski was no longer among the living, his critics undertook an effort to evaluate Kuklinski in a broad context of his spying and his legacy. Interestingly, Kuklinski’s opponents focus on Kuklinski’s drama as a human being. Thus, in their eyes Kuklinski is a tragic figure who “was the most valuable source of information in the whole Soviet Bloc…The Communists condemned him to death, and

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{308} Ibid.
the Americans considered him their most important agent from behind the iron curtain.”

These critics portray Kuklinski as lacking self-identity and roots. They envision him as a Polish Army officer who spied for the Americans and did more for the CIA than he was able to accomplish for his own country. In comparison with the first three waves, Kuklinski’s critics are rather moderate in expressing their opinions in the fourth wave. For example, Robert Luft, Krzysztof Budka, and Jarosław Szczepański present Kuklinski in a positive perspective as they reflect on other’s direct experiences with Kuklinski; however, Kuklinski is still a person of mystery and to arrange a meeting with him required “a long and never precise planning.”

The authors also support their views in the context of Lech Wałęsa’s opinions on Kuklinski which is also dubious. Wałęsa acknowledged that Kuklinski was indeed “a tragic person.” Besides Kuklinski’s human drama, Wałęsa recalls that “Mr. Kuklinski was a colonel of the Polish People’s Army and at the same time he was a spy for the United States… [though] He was a spy for a right cause.”

Even though the critics of Kuklinski lack a strong Cold War rhetoric and they demonstrate their post Cold War mentality in their perception of Kuklinski’s spying for the Americans as opposed to the Soviets, they raise Kuklinski’s debate to a new level of public discourse which is based on a more thorough study of the figure of Kuklinski.

Reflecting on Kuklinski’s death, Andrzej Brzeziecki, a Polish journalist, summarized to some extent the opinions of Kuklinski’s critics in the fourth wave of negative assessment of Kuklinski. Brzeziecki states: “it is really puzzling that knowing so little about Ryszard Kuklinski, we are ready to come up with definitive opinions about him.” Thus, Brzeziecki
argues that the public opinion in Poland is not prepared yet to discuss Kuklinski’s case since there remain many questions about Kuklinski which cannot be answered yet. Brzeziecki suggests that the public debate about Kuklinski is indeed a debate about the nature of the former Polish People’s Republic. And he couches this debate in the broad global political context of the early 1980’s. He suggests that the American strategy “was not bad.” The Americans did know about the plans for the martial law, yet they did not react. Brzeziecki states: “this was encouraging for Jaruzelski. Being aware that the Americans know and do not react, he thought that it[the martial law] was accepted by the West.”

Thus, Brzeziecki continues:

Most probably the martial law [in Poland] was also a comfortable solution for the leaders of the Western Europe. The Americans imposed sanctions [on Poland], and the governments of Germany and France breathed with ease because they feared that the conflict would have spread in the whole continent, otherwise it was solved in the boundaries of Poland.

Similarly to Wałęsa, Brzeziecki feels that the example of Kuklinski is not good for contemporary soldiers since “one of them might come to a conclusion that NATO and EU are against the interests of Poland,” and he may feel free to repeat the act of Kuklinski. Thus, Brzeziecki asks the public opinion to approach the Kuklinski’s episode with caution and reserve. It is still too early to create any definitive profile characteristics about Kuklinski.

Brzeziecki closes the fourth wave of negative reactions to Kuklinski, leaving the public in Poland with some important questions which have to be answered before anyone can analyze thoroughly significance of Kuklinski’s espionage in the time when Poland was a Communist country. The post Cold War rhetoric of Brzeziecki oscillates between his assessment of Kuklinski in the context of the Communist reality of Poland and the Soviet vs. American balance of power in the early 1980’s in Europe. Brzeziecki refrains from building his argument on

313 Ibid.
314 Ibid.
315 Ibid.
common accusations against Kuklinski, though the writer rejects any notion that the spy’s actions should be imitated. Interestingly, he points out that the Kuklinski’s case is politicized. Thus, his spying and loyalty to the Americans were used in support of Poland’s aim to join NATO. In the present reality of Poland, Brzeziecki’s point is even more relevant since Poland has already joined NATO. Questions linger, however: for example, how does one analyze Kuklinski and his spying in the time when Poland was under Communism from a contemporary perspective? In addition, another question which arises requires a moral consideration of Kuklinski’s spying in general.

Clearly, all four arousals of criticism concerning Kuklinski in the time between 1986 and 2004 in the Polish public debate have an apparent dynamics. And each wave adds some new elements to a negative debate over Kuklinski. Even though each wave might be characterized with its own portrayal of Kuklinski, all four are based on the same presumption, namely, Colonel Kuklinski was an American spy and he betrayed the military oath. Yet the consequences of such accusations against Kuklinski were interpreted differently in each stage. In addition, it might be argued that all critics of Kuklinski who expressed their opinions in the four periods lack the self-identity so characteristic to post Communist developments. They usually approach Kuklinski with their outlook still heavily impacted by the past Communist ideology. This method leads them to refrain from formulating a logical and thorough analysis of Kuklinski in the negative perspective. For example, in the first arousal of criticism of Kuklinski, the critics denounced him as an American spy whose mission was futile. Kuklinski was used by the Americans in their global war against the Soviets. Thus, Kuklinski was used as an instrument of American imperialist political agenda. In the second phase, the critics opted to focus on Kuklinski’s character. Since he betrayed his nation by spying for the Americans, Kuklinski was
automatically rejected on the basis of his moral character. In addition, the critics aimed to prove that his mission was ineffective and Poland did not benefit from it. Kuklinski served only the interests of the Americans. In addition, the second phase leaves the public opinion with some doubts whether Kuklinski was a double agent of the CIA and the KGB. In the third wave, the critics more seriously engage the legal system in Poland to justify their stand. They also nostalgically reach out to the past Communist values such as loyalty to the Socialist state and the military traditions. In the end, the critics reject Kuklinski since he betrayed both his nation and the military loyalty and therefore was perceived simply as an “eye of the Pentagon” in the Polish Army.

While these first three waves of criticism generally focus on Kuklinski’s spying and its consequences (betrayal of the nation and loyalty to the military oath), aim to discredit the American foreign policy in Eastern Europe, and reject his vindication, the critics in the fourth wave perceive Kuklinski in the context of his personal drama. As a result of his spying, Kuklinski lacks a viable identity in the present. Though some may believe that he accomplished great things, yet in the moral realm his example cannot be followed by future generations. Kuklinski’s personal drama continued until his death which left the public opinions with many unanswered questions concerning the nature of the former PRL and Kuklinski himself.

The Russian critics of Kuklinski

While the Polish debate about Kuklinski is elaborate in its content and devastating to Kuklinski’s character, the Russian critics view his spying in a broad perspective of the former East-West divisions and its consequences for contemporary Poland. Even though the Russian
reaction to Kuklinski’s spying is limited to a few public pronouncements, it shows a certain dynamics. Different from the dynamics of the Polish opposition to Kuklinski, the Russian critics develop their negative assessments of Kuklinski in three ways. First of all, it might be argued that the Russian critics of Kuklinski refrain from politicizing and moralizing about Kuklinski’s spying. Rather, they take an apologetic stand to convey a positive image of the Soviet influence in Eastern Europe. At the same time, they diminish the role of Kuklinski by proving that there was no possibility of the Soviet intervention in Poland or elsewhere at all. Therefore, the mission of Kuklinski to inform the West about the Soviet plans to invade Western Europe and to impose the martial law was futile. Secondly, the Russian critics view Kuklinski in the context of the former Warsaw Pact vs. NATO contest of power which clearly shows their post Cold War set of mind. Thirdly, the Russian debate seems to have an opposite fluctuation from the Polish discourse. While the Polish critics of Kuklinski appear to escalate their attacks on Kuklinski, the Russians demonstrate an opposite reaction. This means that the Russians scarcely reacted to the possibility of Kuklinski’s vindication in 1997 and his visit to Poland in 1998. And they maintain a uniform and obvious approach to Kuklinski which is based on the a priori assumption that he was always a spy or a double spy.

The Russian negative assessment of Kuklinski does not involve a political and moral context of Kuklinski’s spying; rather it focuses on the world political climate in the early 1980’s. In 1997 both Martial Victor Kulikov and General Anatolij Gribkov debated about Kuklinski in the context of the 1980’s Cold War scenario. Both knew Kuklinski well and both hold the same position on him. “He is a traitor and a rat, unworthy of the uniform of the Polish Army officer.”316 They got to know Kuklinski when he was assigned to assist with the preparation of the martial law in Poland in 1981. Interestingly, Kulikov and Gribkov do not politicize the case

316 Piotr Jendroszczyk, “Układ” (Pact), Rzeczpospolita, 7 November 1997, 8.
of Kuklinski. Rather, they view him in the context of the Cold war scenario of early 1980’s. They also refrain from assessing the damage caused by revealing top secret materials to the CIA. In addition, both Kulikov and Gribkov do not evaluate Kuklinski’s spying in the moral context. They pursue their approach to Kuklinski on the presumption that he was a spy who automatically classifies Kuklinski as a traitor or a rat. In addition, both military figures diminish the importance of Kuklinski’s spying. They rather provide a Soviet perspective on the developments in Poland in 1981 in which Kuklinski played a minor role.

According to Piotr Jendroszczyk, a Polish journalist who interviewed Kulikov and Gribkov, both military figures do not agree on the importance of the documents that Kuklinski could have possibly accessed. Gribkov believes that Kuklinski could have read all secret documents regarding the plans of the martial law and other top secret materials concerning the Warsaw Pact. On the other hand, Kulikov is convinced that Kuklinski had an access to some secret documents concerning the imposition of the martial law only. Both agree that “after the escape of Colonel Kuklinski the plan of the imposition of the martial law was changed.”

Interestingly, Kulikov and Gribkov do not exaggerate their negative views of Kuklinski; instead, they rather try to convince the public that it was never a Soviet intention to deploy the Soviet Army to Poland in order to help the Polish government official deal with their interior problems. Both are firmly convinced that all top Soviet officials agreed that the Poles should take control over Solidarity themselves. Kulikov emphasized the fact that Poland was a sovereign state and the Soviet apparatus did not have a great influence over Polish government. Kulikov states: “If Gierek or Jaruzelski did not say where, what, and how, we did not act.” Both Kulikov and Gribkov also deny that the former Soviet Union had planned aggression against Western Europe.

317 Ibid.
318 Ibid.
They clarify that the strategic intention of the Warsaw Pact under the Soviet leadership was to establish a defense line in case of NATO invasion. In their attempt to explain the political and military strategy of the former Soviet Union, both military officials undermine the importance of the materials which Kuklinski channeled to the West. Both Kulinkov and Grobkov conclude: “we have never anticipated a situation in which the party initiating the military operation would be the forces of the Warsaw Pact.”

Even though the Russian critics of Kuklinski take a different approach to discredit his figure in the public, they still express their views in the context of the post Cold War mentality. Similar to their Polish counterpart, the Russians approach the mission of Kuklinski in the former East – West contest of power in Eastern Europe. In an effort to clarify the situation in Poland in 1980’s, Jurij Siergiejevich Ryliov, a former Soviet attaché in Warsaw, aims to abolish the old myth that the former Soviet Union was a military threat for the West. He claims that the former Soviet Union tried to find a good solution to the Polish problems because the social unrest in Poland was escalating. Ryliov states: “Internal political problems in Poland were slowly turning into an international confrontation and they could provoke a new spiral confrontation between East and West, the situation was not acceptable for the Soviet Union.” Therefore, the Soviet leaders took some steps to prevent their country being unintentionally dragged into a new international conflict. They used their agent Kuklinski who had an enormous knowledge about the martial law in their operation called kuklovod (puppet man). The role of Kuklinski was to convince the Americans that there would be no Soviet military intervention in Poland. In his explanation of the Soviet intentions regarding the Polish solution in 1980’s, Ryliov attempts to

---

319 Ibid.
convince the public that Kuklinski was a double agent recruited by the Soviets back in 1960.

Ryliov clarifies:

Working in Vietnam he was recruited by the Americans. He was caught by making a usual mistake – contacts with the local prostitutes and engaged in a small business…in 1974 he was summoned back to Moscow supposedly to advance in his studies…

In his view on Kuklinski, Ryliov demonstrates his view of the world as divided by the iron curtain in which the former Soviet Union found solutions to negotiate with the Americans possibly dangerous conflicts in Eastern Europe.

In contrast to the negative opinions of Kuklinski expressed by Ryliov, Kulikov and Gribkov, Vladimir Kiria, a Russian journalist, approaches Kuklinski in the context of the current democratic surroundings in Poland. Kiria does not engage so much in the Cold War discourse on Kuklinski, but rather he portrays Kuklinski in the context of the scandal which he caused in the Polish society. Reflecting on the pleas to the General Prosecutor who withdrew the accusations against Kuklinski and labeled his motives as top secret, Kiria exclaims: “What secrets they want to save? Maybe those which do not exist anymore….What else do they have to hide from the citizens?” In addition, Kiria wonders if the publicity on Kuklinski surrounded in scandal would reflect well on the Polish Army soldiers who served with Kuklinski. In the context of Kiria’s criticism of Kuklinski, it appears that the case of Kuklinski does not interest the scarce Russian circle of his critics. Since the Russians view Kuklinski simply a spy who betrayed his country, therefore, they are scandalized as Kiria indicates in his stand on Kuklinski that the Poles absolved him. For the Russians, Kuklinski played merely a minor role of a double spy who was cunningly used by both sides, the Americans and the Soviets in the late Cold War period as a way to communicate their bilateral intentions.

321 Ibid.
In conclusion, the Russian critics of Kuklinski are less elaborate but more convincing in their negative assessment of Kuklinski than the Polish critics. While the Russians provide a straightforward view on Kuklinski, the Polish opponents reveal that the case of Kuklinski still causes a great amount of misunderstanding in the Polish society. As a result, the Polish critics of Kuklinski can still argue against his vindication. Though both the Russian and the Polish critics express their opinions in the context of the Post Cold War set of mind, they differ in the way they convey their argument. While the Russians aim to protect the importance of their former Soviet Union in the East-West power contest, with an exception of Kiria’s view, the Polish critics of Kuklinski seem to reject Kuklinski on the basis of their subjective perception of the nature of the former PRL. This is because the Polish critics look at Kuklinski from the perspective of their confiscated memory. In addition, they show that post Communist political scenario in Poland affects their views on Kuklinski. Therefore, they often politicize and moralize their debate about Kuklinski reducing it to a simplistic question about him, which is how to prove that Kuklinski was indeed a traitor? In an effort to answer that question they employ a moral context to their debate to prove Kuklinski’s treachery to the public in order to dishonor him.

This conclusion is somehow supported by the theory of Jadwiga Staniszkis, a Polish sociologist who argued that the cultural change in the post Communist periphery inspires selective approach to the phenomena. Thus, in the periphery [Poland], Kuklinski’s critics were exposed to a selective or peripheral method of reaction to Kuklinski’s spying. Staniszkis clarifies:

Periphery as an intellectual function has a different dynamic. The multitude of overlapping grammatical rules causes that the situations(relations) create and strengthen some rules of selection, and diminish others. There is always a lack of focus of the boundary.323

---

323 Jadwiga Staniszkis, *Postkomunizm*(Post Communism), (Warsaw: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 2001), 149
In their effort to prove that Kuklinski was a traitor, the Polish critics lose a clear perception of Kuklinski’s mission and its consequences. Their attempt to discredit Kuklinski ad hoc causes that they approach him by building on facts selectively chosen. For example, General Wojciech Jaruzelski builds his case against Kuklinski on the basis of the common accusations of Kuklinski. In the eyes of Jaruzelski, Kuklinski will always remain a traitor, an American spy, a person who lacked loyalty to the military oath. Jaruzelski is unable to reconcile his past dealings with Kuklinski with the present post Communist scenario. Being unable to break with their intellectual inability to evaluate Kuklinski’s spying in its complexity, the Polish critics are somehow ineffective to fully prove the validity of their stand.

The lack of full knowledge about the Kuklinski files prevents his critics from assessing the scale of the actual impact of his spying on the course of world events. Therefore, Dubiński and Jurczenko urged Kuklinski to reveal the whole truth about his episode instead of his providing the public with ‘fabricated though interesting big news’. It seems; however, that all critics believe that Kuklinski’s spying was futile and worthless. Kuklinski provided the CIA with some important classified information, yet the Americans did not do anything at all, as if they did not consider his files at all. This point is best explored by Kiszczak who suggested that the Americans were supposedly well informed about the martial law, yet they did not alarm anyone. Believing in the futility and ineffectiveness of the Kuklinski files, Urban explained that the Americans purposefully did not warn Solidarity because they wanted to protect their source in Poland and advance their diversion within the Solidarity circles. The silence of the

325 Witold Bereś and Jerzy Skoczylas, General Kiszczak mówi(General Kiszczak Speaks)(Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1991), 175
326 Jerzy Urban, “Konferencja Prasowa, stenogram(Press Conference, Stenograph),” Rzeczpospolita 133(9 June 1986), 1
West in the face of the information about the Polish crisis which Kuklinski provided, makes Kiszczak accuse the U.S. for their hopes of ‘Lebanonization’ of Poland.\(^{327}\) Therefore, proving the fact that Kuklinski files did not have any impact on the change of the course of events in the Polish crisis, the critics prove that the materials revealed by Kuklinski were not important at all. Kuklinski’s files might nonetheless have been consequential for Poland. Jaruzelski argues that by providing the CIA with the information on the “infrastructure, main and neuralgic military lines and places on our territory” Kuklinski disclosed the potential goals for the atomic strike, if indeed it would occur at all.\(^{328}\) In conclusion, the critics of Kuklinski believe that his spying was worthless and did not change the course of history at all.

Overall, it seems that the negative assessment of Kuklinski, as analyzed in this chapter, is exposed to a fluctuation in the context of the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics in the period between 1986 and 2004. The early pronouncements on Kuklinski launched by Jerzy Urban in mid 1980’s bear visible traces of the Communist propaganda. In his rhetoric Urban referred to Kuklinski as “a highly compensated spy for the United States” and “a traitor of his nation.”\(^{329}\) The characteristics of Kuklinski as an American spy and traitor of his nation were exposed to further elaboration by his critics who looked at Kuklinski in the context of the “global fight against socialism” as launched by the Americans.\(^{330}\) In the early 1990’s the critics dwelled on the perception of Kuklinski as an American spy and a traitor; therefore the critics did not see any possibility of vindicating him. In addition, the critics raised a suspicion that he was a double spy. In mid 1990 Kuklinski’s opponents contrasted the moral context of Kuklinski’s spying with

---

\(^{327}\) Ibid.


the values of the former Polish People’s Republic, such as loyalty to the military oath. In addition, for some critics Kuklinski became “an eye of Pentagon.” In the last wave of criticism as inspired by Kuklinski’s death in 2004, the critics focused on his personal drama and apparent futility of his mission. And yet, the critics eventually recognized that in the post Communist reality of Poland they were unable to fully discuss Kuklinski’s spying. They found themselves trapped between the Communist past and the limitations imposed on them by their confiscated memory.

One might conclude that the critics of Kuklinski moralize his case, thus demonstrating the truth of the popular slogan “tell me what you think of Kuklinski and I will tell you who you are.” The moralization of Kuklinski’s case aims to discredit him in the eyes of the public as a person lacking loyalty and character. Reflecting about Kuklinski’s work in the General Staff, General Wojciech Jaruzelski commented: “He was such a busy spy.” Lech Wałęsa believes that Kuklinski was a spy, but also “a hero whose example no one should follow.” On the other hand, the critics look at Kuklinski in the political developments of the post Communist Poland. Adam Michnik believes that “Kuklinski became an instrument of those few on the top, who like to play games and initiate wars.”

Besides moralizing and politicizing Kuklinski’s spying, his opponents seem to agree on two common accusations against him. First of all, Kuklinski was a spy for the Americans, though some suggest that he was a double spy for the CIA and the KGB. Secondly, Kuklinski was a

---

332 Jarosław Kurski and Paweł Smoleński, “Pielgrzymka czy szopka?” (A Pilgrimage or A Cabaret?), Gazeta Wyborcza, 9-10 May 1998, 3
333 Piotr Najsztub, “Taki pracowity szpieg” (Such a Busy Spy), Gazeta Wyborcza, 229(29 September 1992): 1
334 Robert Luft, Krzysztof Budka, Jarosław J. Szczepański, “Postać tragiczna; zmarł Ryszard Kukliński” (A Tragic Figure: Ryszard Kuklinski Has Died), Wydarzenie Życia, 12 February 2004, 3.
335 Adam Michnik, “Pułapka politycznej beatyfikacji” (An Ambush of the Political Beatification), Gazeta Wyborcza, 9-10 May 1998, 11.
traitor because he betrayed his military oath by working for the foreign intelligence. Nonetheless, the majority of Kuklinski’s critics initiate their attack on his figure by using these two accusations as a starting point of their pronouncement. For example, Generals Wojciech Jaruzelski and Czesław Kiszczak, as well as Martial Kulikov and General Gribkov doubtlessly view Kuklinski as an American spy who as a Polish Army officer betrayed his military oath by revealing some top secret documents to the CIA. Interestingly, all four critics do not agree on the importance of the documents Kuklinski could possibly channel to the CIA. For example, Kulikov thinks that Kuklinski “had some credible materials only about the plans of the martial law.”[336] Yet, Gribkov believes that Kuklinski accessed not only the martial law plans, but also “all top secret documents.”[337] In contrast, Jaruzelski believes that Kuklinski “exaggerates the importance of the materials he channeled to the Americans…he tells some farfetched story which I think was supposed to emphasize his role in the victory over Communism.”[338] It appears that Kuklinski’s critics often reveal a lack of specific information on Kuklinski, which makes them often to speculate about a damage he caused by his spying.

It might be also concluded that the critics’ lack of full knowledge of Kuklinski himself and the materials he channeled to the CIA cause them to formulate their negative pronouncements on the basis of their assumptions. Adam Michnik illustrates this point well. He rhetorically asks: “Who indeed was Ryszard Kuklinski? I don’t know. However, I know that his case is far from being unanimous.”[339] And yet knowing little about Kuklinski’s motives, Michnik makes a compelling point. He states:

---

[337] Ibid.
You may say that if you live in Washington, D.C. only that at that time the world was an arena of the struggle of two blocs – democratic and totalitarian, and Kuklinski acted for the benefit of the free world against the oppressive ideology.\textsuperscript{340}

Michnik explains well the position of most of Kuklinski’s critics whose insufficient knowledge of the figure of Kuklinski forces them to look at his spying in the perspective of the global struggle during the late Cold War era. Thus, for some critics, Kuklinski will always remain “an Eye of the Pentagon,”\textsuperscript{341} or “a classical example of the instrumental treatment of Poland by the United States.”\textsuperscript{342} And others will remain convinced that “a spy is always a spy and will remain a spy.”\textsuperscript{343}

\textsuperscript{340} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{341} Krzysztof Dubiński and Iwona Jureczenko, \textit{Oko Pentagonu: Rzecz o pułkowniku Ryszardzie Kuklińskim} (An Eye of Pentagon: a Question Concerning Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski), 154
\textsuperscript{342} Witold Bereś and Jerzy Skoczylas, \textit{General Kiszczak mówi} (General Kiszczak Speaks) (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1991), 175.
\textsuperscript{343} Henryk Piecuch, \textit{W kręgu zdrajców} (In the Circle of Traitors), (Warszawa: Agencja Reporter, 1992), 139
CHAPTER III: COLONEL RYSZARD KUKLINSKI, HERO OF THE COLD WAR ERA AND POLISH PATRIOT

Ever since the revelation of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, a CIA source in the Polish Army, began attracting the attention of wider circles of public opinion in Poland at the beginning of the 1990s, Polish historian Józef Szaniawski became de facto a leading expert on the intriguing figure of “a true hero of the Cold War.”\(^{344}\) A quick survey of the barrage of Polish publications which followed the news of Kuklinski is convincing enough to invite some hasty conclusions about him, as expressed in the popular slogans: “the first Polish Officer in NATO,” “the last fortress,” “the spy for freedom,” or “Konrad Wallenrod of the XX century.”\(^{345}\)

Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, who spied for the CIA for nine years (1972-1981), was at one time unanimously acclaimed as a hero of the Cold War and a Polish patriot. Political transformations in the world after the fall of Communism proved the validity of Kuklinski’s heroic mission. The Soviet empire collapsed due to its overextension and Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski was perceived in a popular view as a hero who contributed to that collapse. As a close friend and biographer of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski, Józef Szaniawski worked dauntlessly to preserve and popularize that image. Szaniawski shared some values and experiences in common with Kuklinski. In addition to their mutual love of freedom and democracy, both men were prosecuted by the same military prosecutor, Piotr Daniuk. Daniuk petitioned the military tribunal to sentence Kuklinski to death in absentia in 1984 and Szaniawski to 10 years in prison in 1985. Daniuk argued that both Kuklinski and Szaniawski had committed a shameful crime.

\(^{344}\) Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, Recorded in the Old Town, Warsaw, 21 July 2006. See also Benjamin Weiser, *A Secret Life* (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), 338. CIA Director George Tenet included Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski among the “Cold War Heroes.”

against the Polish People’s Republic: the crime of spying for the government of the United States.\footnote{Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, 2006; see also Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Pierwszy polski officer w NATO” (The First Polish Officer in NATO), \textit{Czas Krakowski}, 19 Jul 1997, 1.}

After he was released from prison, as the last political prisoner of the PRL - Polish People’s Republic, Szaniawski sought justification for the unlawful accusations and sentencing of Colonel Kuklinski. His aim was threefold: to exonerate Kuklinski in the eyes of the Polish people; to attribute to him the well deserved status of a Cold War hero and to grant him public recognition as an exceptional Polish patriot. Reflecting on the achievements of Colonel Kuklinski, Szaniawski commented:

I will begin with my first impression of Colonel Kuklinski, the impression that still stays with me until today. I met Colonel Kuklinski for the first time in June 1991. I was deeply surprised and almost shocked, when I saw a short man with a beard and grey hair, unlike Harrison Ford or James Bond. And yet Colonel Kuklinski was the most popular hero of the Cold War.\footnote{Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, 2006.}

According to Szaniawski, Kuklinski looked more like an intellectual than an ordinary Army officer, and he could be easily distinguished from among ordinary army officers who served in the military barracks.

In the eyes of Szaniawski, while Kuklinski did indeed betray the governing elite in the Polish Communist circles and his friends in the Soviet Army, he remained faithful to his military oath and to Poland, by helping the Americans end the Cold War. This distinction stems from Kuklinski’s motive for spying, which was to protect his homeland from the atomic holocaust that was being strategically planned by the Soviets in their attempt to invade Western Europe in early 1980’s. Therefore, Szaniawski believes that Kuklinski, despite the strong voices of his critics, has earned the titles of not only Cold War hero but also great Polish patriot. Consequently
Kuklinski should be fully exonerated in eyes of the people in Poland and elsewhere. In addition, Szaniawski proposes that Kuklinski’s motives in undertaking his heroic and lonely mission should be viewed in the global context of the Cold War in 1970’s and 1980’s and the Communist scenario in Poland in the same period of time.\textsuperscript{348}

Szaniawski’s view generally reflects positive mainstream opinions commonly expressed about Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. In a popular perception, Kuklinski is indeed viewed as “the First Polish Officer in NATO” or “the most important source of the CIA.” Thus, on the basis of these premises, Kuklinski’s supporters often authoritatively conclude that Kuklinski was “a true hero of the Cold War.”\textsuperscript{349} However, understanding Kuklinski’s heroism in such generic and bold statements is not sufficient when attempting to explain Kuklinski’s image as a hero of the Cold War in the positive perspective as such formative statements do not allow for objective study of Kuklinski. Moreover, simplistic acclamations, though profound and rightly claimed, cause an immediate outcry from his opponents, thus ending any chance for dialogue. In addition, these statements can hinder attempts to explicate the true character of the Cold War era hero versus the Polish patriot. Another danger in propelling such short statements is that they may eliminate historical objectivity from Kuklinski’s story, replacing it with false patriotism, romantic nostalgia, and nationalism. In general, the popular slogans of Kuklinski could lead to some false conclusions about Kuklinski himself by distorting his true image.

Therefore, it is necessary to examine the caliber of Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of the dynamics of the memory of Kuklinski as expressed by his apologists. The main argument in this study of the positive pronouncements which Kuklinski has received will be that Colonel

\textsuperscript{348} Ibid.
Ryszard Kuklinski is perceived *a priori* as a Cold War hero by his American supporters because of his loyalty to the CIA. Therefore, his followers view him as a fighter for the just cause without further moral introspection. On the other hand, Kuklinski’s Polish supporters understand his heroism generally as a way to fight against the totalitarian regime. While both the American and Polish apologetics of Kuklinski’s standing as a hero essentially differ, the proponents on both continents seek to attribute virtues such as patriotism to his personality in order to justify his acts in the eyes of the public opinion. While the post Cold War memory of Kuklinski’s American supporters justifies his spying as the right venue to end the Soviet dominion, the Polish proponents propose to perpetuate his heroism as a symbol of a lonely struggle against a totalitarian oppression and a way to save Poland from the atomic holocaust. In addition, both the American and Polish followers of Kuklinski use his files to explain some crucial moments in Poland’s history in 1980-81, thus bringing to light the endeavors of the former Communists who sought the help of the Soviet Army to crash the Solidarity movement. However, the Soviet response was formed along the struggles of the empire’s overextension. As a result, the Soviet leadership applied incredible pressure to the Polish Party members to impose martial law, and the Polish leaders faithfully complied, hoping for the Soviet solution. In order to accomplish the goals of this study, it is essential to analyze the positive pronouncements in regards to Kuklinski’s heroism as revealed to the public in the time between Kuklinski’s exfiltration to the United States in 1981 until his death in 2004 and shortly after. Conducting a thorough analysis of the positive memory of Kuklinski is necessary because of the following three demands.

First of all, the study will provide validation for Kuklinski’s supporters concerning his hero status. Thus, it is essential to analyze the rhetoric of the pronouncements of Kuklinski’s followers both in the United States and Poland in the context of the historical and political
developments in both countries as well as the dynamics of the positive public reaction to his figure. Since a similar study has never been conducted before; it will require a clear methodological frame to better understand what motivates Kuklinski’s adherents to view him as a hero and what arguments they use to justify their stand. It is also necessary to present the views of Kuklinski’s supporters in a chronological sequence, in order to show how the perceptions of Kuklinski’s adherents fluctuated in that period.

Second, the analysis will show the dynamics of the memory of Kuklinski’s supporters over two decades diversified by political change in the world because of the fall of Communism in Europe in 1990’s. Thus, the study will basically underline the essential differences in the pronouncements about Kuklinski before and after the fall of Communism. It will investigate the correlation between the political agendas and foreign policies of the United States and Poland in that period and their influence on the views of Kuklinski’s supporters. The hermeneutics of such views will concern the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s followers on both continents.

Third, the analysis of the affirmative memory of Kuklinski will show the trajectories of the two intrinsically different approaches to Kuklinski’s hero status as demonstrated by his American and Polish sympathizers. For example, one may consider Szaniawski’s view that Kuklinski was a hero of the Cold War because of his deep higher personal motives to save his homeland from the atomic holocaust and to free his fellow Poles from the Soviet oppression. Both motives were inspired by Kuklinski’s patriotism. Therefore, in the eyes of Szaniawski, Kuklinski is a hero because of what he was able to accomplish for Poland. Metaphorically, Kuklinski made Poland an imagined ally of the United States in the fight against the Soviet dominion. Thus, Szaniawski justifies Kuklinski’s hero status by his personal desire to fight a lonely war against the oppressive Communist regime in Poland and against the Soviet hegemony.
elsewhere. In the eyes of Szaniawski, Kuklinski was rightly rewarded by the Americans for his accomplishments with the Distinguished Intelligence Medal and an American citizenship shortly after his exfiltration to the United States in 1981.\textsuperscript{350} Yet, for Szaniawski, Kuklinski’s heroism differs from the perception of his American counterpart, Benjamin Weiser.

In his biographical account of Kuklinski, Weiser generally views Kuklinski as a very personable, incredibly canning, and down to earth Polish Army officer who made a personal decision to collaborate with the CIA because “the CIA is the face America first offers people who, like Kuklinski, are inspired by Western ideals.”\textsuperscript{351} Weiser reaffirms that Kuklinski “did not see himself as an American spy or mole; he always felt that he had acted on behalf of his own country, and that he had in effect ‘recruited’ the United States to work against Poland’s Communist leadership and the Soviet Union.”\textsuperscript{352} Weiser interestingly concludes his biography of Kuklinski by describing a well deserved recognition of Kuklinski by “his American friends.” The recognition took place in November 1999 during a memorial service for fallen CIA operatives at Texas A&M University. George Tenant, director of the CIA, made a remark about the Cold War era heroes and he paid tribute to Colonel Kuklinski. Tenant emphasized that he was “a man who risked great danger to work for us…” Tenant also pointed out that because of “the bravery and sacrifice of patriots like Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski that his own native Poland and other once-captive nations of Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union are now free.”\textsuperscript{353} In his biographical work, Weiser does not directly claim a hero status to Kuklinski, yet he presents enough evidence to support this cause.

\textsuperscript{350} Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, Recorded in the Old Town, Warsaw, 21 July 2006  
\textsuperscript{351} Benjamin Weiser, \textit{A Secret Life} (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), xiii.  
\textsuperscript{352} Ibid., xv  
\textsuperscript{353} Benjamin Weiser, \textit{A Secret Life}, 339.
The hermeneutical difference between these two perceptions of Kuklinski’s hero status as launched by Szaniawski and Weiser might be better understood in the context of Weiser’s remark on the nature of the Polish nation. Weiser was inspired by a historian, Simon Schama, and accordingly wrote:

Poles have a spectral notion of themselves, like a political hologram. They are visible, they are invisible. And they constantly have the sense that their national identity is contingent really on sustaining some inner belief against those who say, ‘We’ll allow you to be a nation….'

Thus, Weiser justifies Kuklinski’s adherence to Western ideals of freedom and democracy and his personal decision to be employed by the United States as an heroic act of opposition to the Soviet hegemony. In the perspective of Weiser, Kuklinski falls in the category of the Poles who personally experienced the oppressive environment under the Soviet dominion and decided to act against their perpetrators by collaborating with the West perceived as a synonym of a free world. Though Weiser does not claim directly Kuklinski’s Cold War hero status, one may only conclude that Kuklinski fully deserved recognition after making a great contribution to the CIA and a lifelong commitment to fight against Communism. Thus, Weiser led CIA Director George Tenant to publicly recognize Kuklinski as a hero of the Cold War.

In addition to the hermeneutical differences between the American and Polish approaches to Kuklinski’s hero status, there are some inconsistencies which follow both thought streams. For example, some American scholars and journalists refrain from claiming Kuklinski’s hero status, perhaps stemming from their own reservations in engaging in a moral dispute of whether Kuklinski was a hero or traitor. Similarly to Benjamin Weiser, Douglas J. MacEachin, a historian and former CIA Deputy Director for intelligence, refrains from acknowledging definitely the validity of Kuklinski’s hero status. Asked to clarify his personal stand on whether

\[354\] Ibid., xiv
Kuklinski’s mission was “a betrayal of his country,” MacEachin rhetorically answered: “If the military suppression had been deterred because of efforts taken by Colonel Kuklinski at the risk of his own life, would he be judged today as a hero or villain?”

MacEachin concludes with another rhetorical question: “The question is – was it worth trying? And how does a person who tried, at the risk of his own life, become condemned?” Thus, refusing to provide a direct answer, MacEachin proposes a justification of Kuklinski’s action on the moral grounds by asking rhetorical questions which inspire a unanimous answer, though doubtful, that Kuklinski was brave enough to do it. One may conclude with an affirmative statement that Kuklinski indeed risked his own life and his family to fight against the Soviet oppression in the totalitarian circumstances in Poland; therefore, he was a hero per se.

In contrast to the views of most American scholars, Szaniawski is forthright about Kuklinski’s hero status. In addition, he often remarks about Kuklinski’s hero standing in the context of the Romantic notion of wallenrodisms, which reflects Poland’s lonely struggle against the Tsarist Russia in the nineteenth century, when Poland was under partition and did not exist as a state on the map of Europe. Thus, Szaniawski views Kuklinski in the context of a long historical drama of the Poles being oppressed by both the Tsarist occupant in the XIX century and the Soviet regime in the XX century. Thus, the global understanding of Kuklinski’s hero status, namely Kuklinski’s heroic efforts to end the Cold War era as described by Weiser, takes a nationalist turn in the view of Szaniawski, since he portrays Kuklinski foremost as a Polish patriot and lastly as a CIA collaborator. 

---

356 Ibid., 246
358 Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, Recorded in the Old Town, Warsaw, 21 July 2006.
engages a rhetoric which irrevocably characterizes Kuklinski as “a hero of Poland and America,” as well as “the first Polish Officer in NATO, and the last Polish vagabond soldier.”

However, analysis of the two key approaches of Kuklinski’s proponents as exemplified by Szaniawski and Weiser might encounter some challenges. A simplistic distinction between the American and Polish approach may not be sufficient to thoroughly assess Kuklinski’s Cold War hero standing, because some American supporters of Kuklinski differ from Weiser’s approach. They often omit personal references to Kuklinski, choosing to instead provide a more pragmatic and politically balanced view of Kuklinski’s role as a CIA source in the Soviet bloc. They rather view him either in the context of the clandestine CIA operation in Eastern Europe or they focus on the importance of the intelligence materials which Kuklinski channeled to the CIA. These materials disclosed the intent of the Communist leadership in Poland in early 1980’s to impose the martial law and the possibility of the Soviet intervention in Poland in the beginning of 1980’s. For example, in his book *Legacy of the Ashes: The History of the CIA*, Tim Weiner portrays Kuklinski as “the highest ranking source that the agency had behind the iron curtain” who provided a direct insight in the Soviet military and power. Kuklinski’s reports were very helpful for President Carter and his staff to look at the Soviet empire from within in order to conclude that the Soviet Union was on the verge of collapse in late 1970’s in contrast to the deceptive image built by Yuri Andropov.

Similarly, in his book *From the Shadows: The Ultimate Insider’s Story of Five Presidents and How They Won the Cold War*, Robert Gates, former CIA Director relates to Kuklinski as “a remarkable and courageous staff officer of the Polish General Staff,” who informed the

---

359 Józef Szaniawski, “Bohater Polski i Ameryki” (Hero of Poland and America), *Glos* 28/1042 (10 July 2004), 13
Americans about the military strategy of the Warsaw Pact. Gates emphasizes that Kuklinski provided intelligence materials concerning the preparation of the martial law in Poland, which helped the Americans to assess the political situation in Poland in the beginning of 1980’s and the possible military intervention of the former Soviet Union. In conclusion, both Weiner and Gates in their positive view of Kuklinski do not characterize him as a hero of the Cold war era, and yet like Benjamin Weiser, the authors provide enough evidence of Kuklinski’s contribution to end it that this attribute is apparent. Contrary to Weiser, both supporters of Kuklinski’s do not view him as “a friendly spy,” rather they focus on the contribution that Kuklinski made to end the Cold War, namely the content of the intelligence materials that he channeled to the CIA.

However, there are still some challenges with the popular perception of Kuklinski, which counterpoise a dogmatic or traditional approach to Kuklinski’s hero status. For example, some scholars and journalists who research contemporary Polish history choose not to engage the materials which he channeled to the CIA in the months preceding the imposition of the martial law in Poland in 1981. In his study of the Solidarity movement in Poland, Timothy Garton Ash, a prominent Oxford historian does not consider these materials at all and makes no references to Kuklinski. Yet, one may argue that Ash published his book in 1983, which is one year after the first news of Kuklinski was published in Newsweek on December 20 1982 by David C. Martin. Therefore, he may not have any knowledge of their existence. Similarly, a prominent Polish historian, Antoni Dudek in his major work on the political history of Poland after the fall of Communism entitled Historia Polityczna Polski 1989-2005 (Political History of Poland 1989-

---

363 David C. Martin, “A Polish Agent in Place” Newsweek 20 Dec 1982, 49
2005) does not use Kuklinski’s case at all. The political debate in the Polish media concerning Kuklinski began after the publication of Benjamin Weiser’s article in September 1992 in the Washington Post entitled “Polish Officer Was U.S.’s Window on Soviet War Plans.” Yet the reaction reached full force after Weiser published his second article on Kuklinski in December 1992. Yet, it seems that Dudek does not follow the popular stream of political disputes as launched by other scholars. He rather provides a survey of political policies of the Polish democratic governments in the period of 16 years following the fall of Communism. Thus, he undermines the political discussion concerning the importance of Kuklinski.

Still there are some Polish scholars who propose an essentially different assessment of Kuklinski’s hero status than Józef Szaniawski. They seem to be either reserved or moderate in their pronouncements, yet they still consider Kuklinski a Cold War hero. For example, Lech Kaczyński a former President of Warsaw and President of Poland exclaimed in his eulogy at Kuklinski’s funeral in 2004:

Rest in peace, soldier, you served your homeland very well. When I talked to some high rank officers in the Polish Army several years ago, they told me - if Colonel Kuklinski is considered a hero, we are traitors. No gentlemen, you are not traitors, but he is a hero.

Kaczyński reflects upon Kuklinski’s figure in the context of some strong voices of Kuklinski’s opponents who fervently refused to grant him a full recognition. In an attempt to reconcile both sides, Kaczyński focuses on some historical facts which are widely accepted in the Polish society. Using a strong post Cold War rhetoric, Kaczyński continued:

---

367 Lech Kaczyński, “Z pożegnalnych przemówień” (Eulogies), Nasza Polska, 26(453) 29 June 2004
When [Kuklinski] started his job to save Poland, the Soviet empire was on the offensive. When it seemed that this empire would invade Europe and the whole world, Colonel began his lonely fight and he succeeded.\textsuperscript{368}

Besides Kaczyński, there still other supporters of Kuklinski in the Polish scene, who differ from Szaniawski’s approach. For example, in his nostalgic reflection of Kuklinski’s accomplishments, Kazimierz Groblewski, a Polish journalist, lists the accomplishments of Kuklinski with a special emphasis on the turning points in Kuklinski’s life such as his decision to collaborate with the CIA, his exfiltration to the United States, the loneliness he experienced during his mission, the importance of his contributions, and death sentence pronounced upon him in absentia. Groblewski ends his reflection with a nostalgic idea based on Kuklinski’s desire not to leave his homeland after his visit to Poland in 1998. Groblewski does not attribute the Cold War hero status to Kuklinski, yet the way he presents his figure elevates Kuklinski to the rank of a great patriot hero whose roots are in his homeland, Poland, which he saved from the Soviets. Thus, Groblewski’s approach differs from both Szaniawski and Kaczyński’s attempts to attribute Colonel Kuklinski a hero status and to justify their positions.\textsuperscript{369}

Over all, considering these inconsistencies and challenges which result from the essential differences of the formative pronouncement that Kuklinski is “a hero of the Cold War,” it is imperative to establish some methodological clarifications of this study. First, the analysis of the positive opinions of Kuklinski which attribute him a Cold War hero status will be based on two assumptions. The first assumption is that most American supporters of Colonel Kuklinski aim to present his accomplishments to crackdown the Soviet dominion without directly claiming his hero status, yet they provide apparent evidence of Kuklinski’s merits to justify the title. As a consequence, they take Kuklinski’s heroism for granted as Benjamin Weiser does. Still there are

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{itemize}
\item[\textsuperscript{368}] Ibid.
\item[\textsuperscript{369}] Kazimierz Groblewski, “Już nie chcę stąd wyjeżdzać” (I Do Not Want to Leave), \textit{Gazeta Wyborcza}, 36(6719) 12 February 2004, A3
\end{itemize}
\end{footnotesize}
some exceptions among Kuklinski’s followers, those who do not engage a moral debate, rather, they ascertain the importance of Kuklinski’s intelligence materials or discuss his aid in the U.S. endeavors to crush Communism.

The second assumption concerns the Polish enthusiasts who recognize Kuklinski’s hero status gradually. They develop the notion of Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of the current political scenario in Poland. In addition, the Polish followers often mingle both attributes of Kuklinski, namely, his heroism and his patriotism as Józef Szaniawski’s does. Szaniawski approaches Kuklinski as a hero of the Cold war and a Polish patriot simultaneously. Still, there will be some exceptions in the Polish way of attributing Kuklinski a hero status. Namely, there are some Polish proponents of Kuklinski, who present his accomplishments without directly claiming the hero status similarly to their American counterparts. Nonetheless, it is important to separately analyze the views of the American and Polish supporters of Kuklinski. In addition to this distinction, it is important to clarify that all proponents of Kuklinski, who view his figure and his accomplishments in a positive perspective, thus contributing to Kuklinski’s hero status, will be studied in a chronological order.

Still there is a need for more clarification in this study. It is important to analyze the impact of the post-Cold War mentality on Kuklinski’s supporters on both sides of the Atlantic in order to examine the extent of influence of the post Cold War rhetoric in the pronouncements of Kuklinski. This rhetoric is predominant in some expressions of Kuklinski’s followers as they reserve the hero status for Kuklinski. For example, Lech Kaczyński often refers to the offensive ambitions of the Soviet empire and he builds on the example of Kuklinski as a means of thwarting them. Some supporters of Kuklinski view him as an instrument for the West in the fight against the oppression of the Soviet dominion. For example, Józef Szaniawski often

---

370 Ibid.
emphasizes that Kuklinski helped the Americans to win the war with the “evil empire.”\textsuperscript{371} Yet, some scholars display their post Cold War mentality in their views of the former Soviet empire in general. For example, Robert Gates discusses the efforts of the five American presidents directed to bring the destruction of the “evil empire,”\textsuperscript{372} and he uses his knowledge of the content of Kuklinski’s materials to explain the U.S. policies made in 1980-1981 toward Poland as a Soviet satellite state.

This study will show the fluctuation of the post-Cold War mentality reflected in the pronouncements of the American and Polish supporters of Kuklinski. And it will explain the presumption that the Polish supporters of Kuklinski, more so than their American counterparts, still perpetuate the post-Cold War rhetoric in their pronouncements. It might be argued that the Polish supporters of Kuklinski can personally relate to his accomplishments, namely a Cold War hero who fought against the common enemy which was the Soviet dominion.

The post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s American proponents as expressed in their rhetoric will be studied during three periods. The first period will embrace the time between 1981, which marks the time of his escape from Poland, until the fall of Communism in 1990’s. The second period will involve the time between 1990, when the discussion of Colonel Kuklinski’s exoneration began in Poland in a new democratic climate after the fall of Communism and Kuklinski’s death in 2004. The third period will concern the memory of Kuklinski’s supporters shortly after his death. This time frame will allow study and comparison of the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s American supporters before and after the fall of Communism in 1990’s.


However, the pronouncements of the Polish followers of Kuklinski should be examined in a different time frame, due to the fact that the positive opinions of Kuklinski’s heroism were formulated only after the fall of Communism in 1990. Therefore, the positive views will be examined in the following time periods. The first time frame will begin with the fall of Communism and it will end in 1997 when Kuklinski was vindicated. The second period of study will concern the time between Kuklinski’s vindication and his death in 2004. And the last period will involve the time shortly after his death. Both the American and Polish pronouncements of Kuklinski’s heroism will be examined in the context of the post Cold War mentality as expressed in the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s followers who often perceive him as a CIA instrument in the fight against the “evil empire.”

The view of the American supporters of Kuklinski

The earliest reports of Kuklinski published in the American press had an informative character. In his article “A Polish Agent in Place,” David C. Martin informed the American public camouflaging Kuklinski’s identity: “the CIA had a longtime secret agent who by 1981 had risen to the rank of colonel at Polish Army headquarters.”373 Kuklinski’s exfiltration to the United States in 1981 was covered in a veil of secrecy as Martin explains not to compromise the safety of the source. Martin reports: “the Polish colonel’s existence was so closely held a secret that at first nothing could be done with the intelligence he provided for fear of compromising him.”374 Martin further comments that the information Kuklinski channeled to the CIA had an

---

373 David C. Martin, “A Polish Agent in Place,” Newsweek, 20 Dec 1982, 49
374 Ibid.
incredible value. First of all, the Americans knew late in 1980 that the Polish Communist
government was leaning toward an internal solution of the social unrest. In addition, Martin
reported “the Polish Army had no intention of initiating or joining an operation that might end in
violence and bloodshed.” By the end of December 1980, the US government assessed from
Kuklinski’s reports that the Soviet forces, some 27 divisions, who were prepared for an invasion
of Poland were not a sufficient force to combat the Solidarity movement and reestablish order in
the Polish society as demanded by the Soviet politburo.

In July 1981, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, Prime Minister of Poland, reaffirmed his hard
line. The implementation of the martial law was immanent in order to defy the Solidarity
movement. Martin unjustly comments that Jaruzelski was relieved at “the prospect of crushing
Solidarity without the Russian aid,” yet he lacks clear evidence to support his view. In
general, Martin focuses on the importance of Kuklinski as a CIA source in the turbulent months
between December 1980 and December 1981, when martial law was imposed in Poland. He
views Kuklinski as a spy “who took huge risks to provide a continuous stream of current
intelligence.” Even though Kuklinski was not able to prevent the imposition of the martial law
by informing the CIA about it or anyone from the Solidarity circle already infiltrated by the
Polish government spies, Kuklinski provided a priceless material which helped the American
strategists properly assess the social and political developments in Poland in the beginning of
1980’s.

Martin’s article did not cause any reaction in the Polish Communist government which
camouflaged Kuklinski’s espionage from the public opinion in Poland. Yet, his news about “a
secret agent in place” was a tribute to Colonel Kuklinski who risked his own life and his family

\[^{375}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{376}\text{Ibid.}\]
\[^{377}\text{Ibid.}\]
to inform the CIA about the developments in Poland during the heated months of 1980 and 1981. Martin refers to Kuklinski’s heroic act in terms of his enormous contribution to the just cause. Thus, he initiates the pronouncements of Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of his Cold War hero standing.

In addition to David C. Martin, there were two other journalists in 1980’s, Bob Woodward and Michael Dobbs who add more content to Kuklinski’s heroism. In their article “CIA Had Secret Agent on Polish General Staff,” both Woodward and Dobbs like David C. Martin, emphasize Kuklinski’s importance as one “who provided such superior intelligence about the planned crackdown and forthcoming imposition of the martial law that the White House had ‘the operational blueprint.’” 378 President Regan personally reviewed the intelligence submitted by Kuklinski, a reliable source because of Kuklinski’s position in the committee which planned the martial law, as the authors were informed by an undisclosed source. Both Woodward and Dobbs emphasize the importance of the intelligence material, yet they also describe the reaction in the Polish government circles caused by Kuklinski defection. Therefore, they use Kuklinski’s accomplishments to counterpoise Jerzy Urban’s remarks concerning Regan’s abandonment of the Solidarity at the time after December 13, 1981, when martial law was imposed. On the other hand, Urban, Spokesman of the Polish government attacked the American officials and Kuklinski for not informing the Solidarity leaders about the forthcoming crush of the movement. 379

In the period from 7 November 1981, the day of Kuklinski’s exfiltration from Poland, to the fall of Communism in 1990’s, the American supporters of Colonel Kuklinski provide some general information about him. Their memory fluctuates between recognizing the merits of

379 Ibid.
Kuklinski and presenting the importance of the intelligence materials which he channeled to the CIA. Considering the political scenario in Poland in mid 1980’s, it seems that the three journalists: Martin, Woodward and Dobbs inform the public about Kuklinski in tune with the American foreign policy in Eastern Europe. The containment became relevant in face of Soviet expansionist ambitions as demonstrated in Afghanistan in 1979. Therefore, since the beginning of 1980 “President Jimmy Carter abandoned détente and inaugurated a new phase of confrontation.”

It seems that the pronouncements of Kuklinski’s hero status by the three journalists aim to confront the Polish Communists’ officials and challenge them on the Kuklinski affair. Thus, in the eyes of the journalists, an effort to prove Kuklinski’s hero qualities, despite their plausible remarks about his brevity and importance, is not their primary goal. Rather, they use Kuklinski’s merits to confront the Polish Communist leadership in accord with the U.S. foreign policy. This explains the fact that Bob Woodward remained moderate on the issue of Kuklinski, when confronting Jerzy Urban back in 1986 in Warsaw, Poland. Woodward confronted Urban with the news of Kuklinski, yet he was not vocal enough to force Urban to acknowledge truthfully that Kuklinski did indeed transmitted some important Warsaw Pact documents and the plans of the martial law to the CIA.

In conclusion, the early pronouncements by Kuklinski’s American supporters are politicized to some extent. The journalists attempted to establish the facts about Kuklinski’s escape and his role in informing the West about the imminent imposition of the martial law, when they confronted the Polish government official. Yet, their confrontation was moderate. Both Woodward and Dobbs also reflect President Ronald Regan’s new policy toward the Soviet Union, introduced in January 1984. The policy involved paving “the way towards the more

---

constructive relationships” with the Soviet Union. Therefore, “cooperation, dialogue, and understanding” in the US-Soviet policy and convincing Russia of the American “benign intention” toward “the evil empire” influenced the journalists’ view of Kuklinski’s heroism. Yet, Woodward and Dobbs reinforce the validity of Kuklinski’s mission by exposing the lies of Urban. The Spokesman of Polish People’s Republic first acknowledged that the martial law was “a last minute decision” and then he denied it by confirming that the planning to impose it started long before Kuklinski’s escape. The pronouncements of Kuklinski’s supporters in the first period, 1981-1990, make a little contribution to his hero status. In their eyes, Kuklinski is a hero of the Cold War because he channeled important materials about the martial law in Poland to the CIA, yet his figure became instrumental to confront the Communist officials in Poland.

In contrast to the first phase of the early pronouncements of Kuklinski, the second period, which embraces the time of transformation after the fall of Communism until Kuklinski’s death in 2004, can be characterized with a firm acknowledgement of Kuklinski’s hero standing by his American supporters. The proponents attempt to formulate a reasonable explanation to justify their stand in clear contrast to the journalists who made the pronouncements on Kuklinski before the fall of Communism. Since there was no need to inform the public about Kuklinski’s achievement or confront the Communist officials in Poland about an Army officer who leaked the information to the West, the supporters of Kuklinski in the second phase prepare the ground for further Kuklinski justification in Poland on the premise that his act was heroic and benevolent to Poland. Kuklinski’s lonely mission to weaken the Soviet dominion in Poland and elsewhere proved itself after the fall of Communism. However, after his escape from Poland in

---

1981, Kuklinski still remained with his family in the United States without being able to officially return to his homeland. His death sentence was reduced in 1990 to 25 year prison term on the basis of the amnesty act promulgated on 7 December 1989.\textsuperscript{383}

While Józef Szaniawski and Benjamin Weiser paved the way for Colonel Kuklinski to justify his hero status in the publications both in Poland and the United States, Zbigniew Brzezinski, a former advisor to President Jimmy Carter, initiated the process which would grant Kuklinski’s heroism full recognition. Brzezinski appeared on the main channel of the Polish TV on 13 December 1990, the ninth anniversary of the imposition of the martial law in Poland. In his expose, Brzezinski noted that Colonel Kuklinski:

\begin{quote}
Was not an ordinary spy for the U.S., but he was a courageous ally, at the moment, when the Polish Army commend served the Soviets. Putting his whole life and his family in jeopardy, Colonel Kuklinski served Poland well.\textsuperscript{384}
\end{quote}

In a direct and apologetic tone, Brzezinski explained to the Poles why Kuklinski earned his hero status. Next, Brzezinski justified his view in a way that inspired all supporters of Kuklinski to follow his steps. Building upon the apparent merits of Kuklinski, Brzezinski appealed for Kuklinski’s vindication. He said:

\begin{quote}
This is the reason why the newly elected President of Poland should grant him the highest military honor and exonerate him to his previous military position. I am not talking here about rehabilitation because the sentence imposed by the Communist regime was invalid from the very beginning.\textsuperscript{385}
\end{quote}

Brzezinski’s apology caused an avalanche of reactions both positive and negative in regards to Kuklinski. Contrary to the view of Benjamin Fisher who argued that Kuklinski was exonerated

\begin{footnotes}
\textsuperscript{383} Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, 21 July 2006
\textsuperscript{384} Zbigniew Brzezinski “Apel Zbigniewa Brzezińskiego” (Appeal of Zbigniew Brzezinski) published in Sprawa pułkownika Kuklińskiego: Bohater czy Zdrajca (The Case of Colonel Kuklinski: Hero or Traitor), Maciej Łukasiewicz ed. (Warszawa: Most, 2002), 99. In his TV appeal Brzezinski stated that in on 8 Dec 1980 Polish Army Generals: Jaruzelski, Siwicki and Hupałowski were well aware about the Soviet plans of immanent Soviet invasion, therefore, they made a solution to introduce a sovereign way to solve the social unrest, therefore, they decided upon the imposition of the martial law.
\textsuperscript{385} Ibid.
\end{footnotes}
in Poland thanks to the efforts of Brzezinski who started pleading his case with the post
Communist government in Poland in 1997, it worth noticing that Brzezinski’s apology of
Kuklinski was a major turning point in the dispute over Kuklinski hero status and it already
started in December 1990, when Brzezinski voiced his strong appeal to vindicate him. 386

On another occasion, Brzezinski was more specific about Kuklinski’s merits. He
clarified his statement on how well Kuklinski served Poland. In his interview with the Polish
newspaper Rzeczpospolita in 1992, Brzezinski stated: “Risking his own life and without any
compensation he accomplish a great deal for Poland, he played a decisive role in two cases of
historical value.” 387 Then, Brzezinski explained that Kuklinski channeled the information which
enabled the U.S. administration to use pressure of the international opinion on the former Soviet
Union to prevent the Soviet invasion Poland in December 1980. Secondly, Brzezinski believed
that in the 1970’s, the former Soviet Union attempted to outtrace the United States in military
techniques and strategic planning, and the information of Kuklinski helped the Americans to
have a direct insight into the Soviet plans. 388 Brzezinski provided his justification of Kuklinski’s
heroism on the basis of two premises: Kuklinski risked his own life and his family to cooperate
with the CIA and the value of the materials he submitted to the CIA was incomparable. He also
created the first popular slogan about Kuklinski when he referred to him as “the first Polish
officer in NATO.” 389 Brzezinski clearly anticipated a full vindication of Colonel Kuklinski in
Poland, which would parallel Poland’s invitation to join NATO.

---

388 Ibid.
389 Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Pierwszy polski oficer w NATO,” (The First Polish Officer in NATO), Czas Krakowski, 19 Jul 1997, 1; see also Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja(Lonely Mission), 306.
While Brzezinski created the bare structure for Kuklinski’s hero status, Benjamin Weiser filled that contour with a warm and persevering personality of a hero. In general, Weiser’s perspective of Kuklinski might be better understood, if it is juxtaposed with Kuklinski’s letter written to his American friend Daniel, a former CIA contact of Kuklinski. He wrote:

I am deeply aware of the enormous need for pulling out of the shadows of darkness of the tightly closed Communist system everything which does not serve peace of the world and freedom of nations.\textsuperscript{390}

Kuklinski concluded: “In this conviction, I once more want to confirm my readiness to serve our common cause to the limits of my strength and capability…”\textsuperscript{391} Weiser’s perspective is indeed an emphatic description of heroic virtues of Kuklinski, which developed over time. In 1992, Weiser emphasized Kuklinski’s frustration with “the Communist-led and Soviet-dominated system” in Poland.\textsuperscript{392} Thus, Kuklinski “made a choice to change his life….at a great personal risk and without pay” submitted 35,000 pages of highly classified material to the CIA.\textsuperscript{393} This intelligence allowed the CIA to have an exclusive view into the Soviet military strategies in case of war as well as the strategies of the entire Warsaw Pact military and its five-year plans. Thus, commenting on the content of the intelligence Weiser uses the words of a former Army intelligence officer who stated that Kuklinski’s hard work gave the CIA “a look at the entire landscape.”\textsuperscript{394} In addition, to Kuklinski’s total hard work ethic as fueled by his perseverance, Weiser adds that Kuklinski never sought to be compensated for his activity nor desired to defect. Rather, Kuklinski viewed his activity as a mission as “he wanted his country back.”\textsuperscript{395}

\textsuperscript{390} Benjamin Weiser, A Secret Life: The Polish Officer, His Covert Mission, and the Price He Paid to Save His Country, (New York: Public Affairs, 2004), vi.
\textsuperscript{391} Benjamin Weiser, A Secret Life, vi.
\textsuperscript{392} Benjamin Weiser, “Polish Officer Was U.S.’s Window on Soviet War Plans,” The Washington Post, 27Sept. 1992, A1
\textsuperscript{393} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{394} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{395} Ibid.
Weiser completed Kuklinski’s hero profile in his famous article entitled “A Question of Loyalty” published in 1992, which incidentally stirred a huge public discussion in Poland over the issue of Kuklinski’s betrayal. In addition to his earlier comments, Weiser clearly intended to juxtapose Kuklinski’s hero status with his warm personality as an American ally in the Polish People’s Army. Describing the meeting of Kuklinski with a group of all intelligence officers who supervised his case while on a mission in Poland, Weiser wrote: “The owner of the house [Kuklinski] greeted everyone at the door…a grey-suited man then in his mid fifties, vigorously shook the hands of his guests or embraced them…all had come to honor the colonel and to toast his new status as an American citizen.”

At that meeting, Kuklinski, well mannered and dignified, still made a reference to his romanticized version of his patriotism: “In my heart, my body, I will always remain a Pole.”

In Weiser’s perspective Kuklinski was right about his decision to become a CIA ally, absolving Kuklinski of any wrongdoing. If indeed “Kuklinski found himself repelled by what he saw – the lack of independence of the Polish military and his country’s vulnerability in any Soviet war plans for Europe,” the only reasonable way out “was to engage in an act that virtually everyone else would see as betrayal.” Commenting on Kuklinski’s motives, Weiser pinpoints some turning points in Kuklinski’s life, which helped to shape his hero profile. These crucial moments were Kuklinski’s decision to join the underground resistance during World War II, the arrest of his father by the Nazis and his subsequent death in the concentration camp in 1945, and entering the Polish Army in 1947. These experiences reinforced his inner decision to work against the Soviet oppression, especially once Kuklinski was confronted with the deceptive Soviet intentions in Poland. The decision to collaborate with the CIA was secretly protected by

397 Ibid.
398 Ibid.
Kuklinski from the outer reality of the political and social landscape in Poland as designed by the Soviets. Thus, Kuklinski the hero yearned for “a Poland free of dominion by outside powers” during the Nazi occupation and the Soviet oppression.\textsuperscript{399} Weiser exemplifies Kuklinski’s yearning for freedom in the context of the romantic concept of Joseph Conrad, a Polish Romantic figure who never accepted the subjugation to the Tsarist regime, at least in his state of mind despite the oppressive circumstances. In addition, Weiser also introduces another metaphor to pinpoint Kuklinski’s love of freedom, namely his love of the sea. Thus, Kuklinski, a sailor, made his sea voyage along with his comrades to initiate his mission. After providing 1500 pages of some top secret documents concerning the Soviet war strategy, Kuklinski was soon recognized as a valuable source and was given an opportunity by the CIA to “fight for freedom.”\textsuperscript{400}

In addition to the explanation of the well deserved merits of Kuklinski as a hero, Weiser also provides a solid explanation of the value of the materials that Kuklinski shared with the CIA. In the eyes of Weiser, Kuklinski was a very productive friend of the CIA, yet Weiser’s justification of this point is not in tune with that of the public opinion in Poland. Weiser reaffirms that “he [Kuklinski] passed along so much Soviet military material, the CIA translators could not keep up.”\textsuperscript{401} Thus, Kuklinski helped the CIA to assess the development of the events in Poland in 1980-81. Weiser clarifies that by the end of 1980, the Polish officials were resistant to envision the Soviet invasion, yet the Soviets disappointed with the state of progressive gaining power of the Solidarity movement, began pressing the Polish leadership. As a result, General Wojciech Jaruzelski, as Weiser points out, became more frustrated. Once Jaruzelski became the Prime Minister in Poland in February 1981, Kuklinski gained more access to the martial law

\textsuperscript{399} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{400} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{401} Ibid.
planning documents. Thus, he “observed for the first time ‘the whole picture’ of how the crackdown would play out – the suspension of civil rights, the mass arrests of Solidarity leaders.”402 Weiser’s contribution to Kuklinski’s hero status on the basis of the materials sent to the CIA is compromised with the way that the American friends of Kuklinski utilized this information to prevent the possibility of the bloody confrontation between the Solidarity and the Polish government. Weiser comments only briefly on Kuklinski’s reaction to Jerzy Urban’s accusation, that “America had betrayed Solidarity by not providing it with advance warning of the December crackdown after learning it from Kuklinski.”403

Therefore, one may conclude that Weiser’s being unable to produce a more constructive explanation of the complexity of the issue leaves Kuklinski’s hero status in jeopardy. It might be assumed that it is not sufficient to present Kuklinski in the context of his personal treasures stored in his study, such as “wood carvings of Polish kings, paintings of Warsaw street scenes and a sailboat at sea” to gain him an immediate recognition of a Polish patriot.404 This stream of thought causes Kuklinski to be perceived as a nostalgic hero who above all seeks his vindication in Poland. It may also inspire some negative reaction such as that Kuklinski was a semi-patriot whose primary motives was to work for the CIA in order to satisfactory fulfill his mission as designed by his American friends. On the other hand, Weiser builds his apology on Kuklinski’s explanation that the revelation of any signals of what is to come to the Solidarity would be in vain, and he is not explicit enough to convince the public opinion in Poland about the validity of his stand. In consequence, Weiser’s apology of Kuklinski inspired a discombobulated and

---

402 Ibid.
403 Ibid.
404 Ibid.
embittered dispute over the Kuklinski episode, which involved a wide circle of the public opinion in Poland. 405

The idea of Kuklinski as recalled by Brzezinski and Weiser evolved in time. The appeal to vindicate Kuklinski made by Brzezinski in 1990 and an apologetic approach to his hero status launched by Weiser in 1992 were transforming parallel to the changing political circumstances in the world in the second half of 1990’s and Kuklinski’s vindication in Poland in 1997. Therefore, in the end of the second phase of reinforcing Kuklinski’s hero status, the American scholars and journalists generally leaned more toward putting Kuklinski in the historical perspective of the Cold War, applauded his vindication in Poland in 1997, and raised more questions about the secrecy of his mission. This change in focus in their exploration of Kuklinski’s hero status is natural. Kuklinski is formally justified, yet his act is still evaluated in a broader context of the post Cold War memory.

Therefore, former CIA Director Robert M. Gates assesses Kuklinski as an important figure to probe the reaction of the former Soviet Union to the workers’ strike in Poland. He considers the Polish crisis of 1981 a direct challenge of the new presidency of Ronald Reagan. In the eyes of Gates, Kuklinski’s role was rather instrumental. He submitted the materials according to the agenda of the CIA. Gates comments:

We had been getting the information on the Warsaw Pact from him for years, but now we were most interested in his information on preparations for military action in Poland by either the Poles or Soviets. 406

---

405 Benjamin Weiser supports provides some figures from the 1992 survey of the public opinion in Poland which found that 46 percent of the Poles believe that Kuklinski betrayed his homeland and only 16 percent view him as a hero. In contrast, 59 percent of the same surveyors believe that Jaruzelski’s move to impose the martial law was patriotic and 15 percent consider him a traitor. (w9)

406 Robert M. Gates, From the Shadows, 227
Kuklinski fulfilled his role as a source of reliable information, yet the CIA looked beyond the personal motives of Kuklinski, namely to save his homeland from atomic holocaust. Gates relates that:

> Poland’s crisis and possible Soviet military action cast a global shadow of tension, the danger of miscalculation, and even the military conflict between the superpowers.\(^{407}\)

Thus, recognizing Kuklinski’s undisputed heroic standing, Gates discusses the U.S. policy of contingency in case of the Soviet military action. Subsequently, Gates prioritizes two motives in the context of Kuklinski’s heroic accomplishments, namely a thorough and careful assessment of the developments in Poland in 1981 by the CIA and the possibility of direct consequences reinforced by the American government in case of the Soviet military invasion. Therefore, in his perspective, Kuklinski’s brevity and the importance of the information he transmitted play a secondary role. It is apparent that Gates, though he applauds Kuklinski for being such an essential source of classified information, explains Kuklinski’s hero status in the perspective of the possible crush of two superpowers. Therefore, Gates writes his apology of Kuklinski in the context of the post Cold War state of mind. For him, Kuklinski was a hero of the Cold War because of the role he played in delivering the intelligence which made one superpower ahead of the other one. In addition, Gates discusses the constant preparedness of the Americans to respond to any conflict situation in Poland in 1981 in contrast to the Soviet diminishing possibilities of any demonstration of power due to the overextension (military conflict in Afghanistan). His post Cold War mentality reveals itself in the fact that Gates downplays the true motives of Kuklinski as expressed by Weiser, for example, namely Kuklinski’s primary motive to save his homeland. For Gates, Kuklinski is a hero because he helped the Americans win over the Soviets.

\(^{407}\) Ibid., 231
Even though the American supporters of Kuklinski never question his hero standing, some of them formulate a problematic basis for an explanation of that status. In consequence, their arguments make Kuklinski’s hero status, though fully justified, vulnerable to the attacks of his opponents. For example, Jane Perlez, an American journalist, describes Kuklinski’s virtues and accomplishments, but at the same time adding a measure of controversy to Kuklinski’s legacy. First, Perlez suggests that “Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski may go down in cold war history as one of the United States’ most valuable spies.”\textsuperscript{408} Then, she adds that “even though the Warsaw Pact is no more, the Communist are out of power and Poland is seeking admission to its former adversary, NATO, Mr. Kuklinski may be a cold war hero without honor, a spy first and last.”\textsuperscript{409} Therefore, Perlez does not explicitly appeal for Kuklinski’s vindication in Poland, though she attributes to him the role of the most important American spy during the Cold War era. In another place, she questions whether the CIA’s slow process of revealing the materials sent by Kuklinski might be the reason that the CIA leans to preserve Kuklinski image, thus, “they show Mr. Kuklinski in a favorable light, as a concerned Polish patriot.”\textsuperscript{410} Thus, the view of Perlez assumes Kuklinski’s hero standing, yet without a need to seek his recognition in Poland. Kuklinski accomplished a great deal for the CIA, thus, he was subsequently rewarded by the CIA. His mission ends with the American victory after the collapse of the Soviet empire.

Another example of shifting memory of Kuklinski’s followers in America in the second period is an explanation of his hero standing in the context of his vindication in Poland and a progressing discussion over his hero status. Christine Spolar and Andrew Nagorski, both journalists, contribute to that shift. Both present their views of Kuklinski in the context of the current developments in the world. And both focus on the accomplishments of Kuklinski.

\textsuperscript{409} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{410} Ibid.
though they avoid engaging the hero-traitor dispute as launched in Poland. Spolar notices that “the Kuklinski affair, deeply rooted in intrigue, ended in intrigue.” Thus, she emphasizes some ironies about the process of absolving Kuklinski in Poland and returning to him his well deserved hero status, though she does not question his hero status from the America perspective. One of the additives was the fact that Kuklinski’s case was brought to the political life in Poland by Aleksander Kwaśniewski, former President of Poland and Leszek Miller, former Minister of Interior, who were former Communists. Now, Kuklinski was subjected to the political game among the former Communists who wanted to contribute to their public image when they reached out to Kuklinski. In addition, Kuklinski’s case coincided with Poland’s acceptance in NATO.

Spolar clearly alters the perception of Kuklinski’s hero status. In her eyes, Kuklinski became a hero caught in the political agenda of the Polish government forcefully planning to be accepted in NATO. Therefore, she comments: “only as the Polish military shook off its Soviet legacy and the prospects of the country’s joining NATO brightened were serious steps taken to resolve his case.” And Nagorski adds that Kuklinski’s case, though legally cleared, still causes a heated discussion in the Polish society. Both Spolar and Nagorski emphasize the accomplishments of Kuklinski, his personal sacrifice, and his commitment to oppose the Soviet dominion.

In addition to their altered perspective on Kuklinski’s hero standing, both journalists agree that Kuklinski’s case is very complex. Therefore, Nagorski suggests that Kuklinski’s absolution in Poland is not a matter of legal clearance as he indicates in the title of his article, Spolar, Christine. “A Cold War Spy, Warm at Last: Polish Colonel Who Fed Soviet Secrets to CIA Is Absolved by His Homeland,” Washington Post, 2 Oct 1997, A17.

Ibid.

Nagorski, Andrew. “All Is Forgiven, or IS It?” Newsweek, 27 Oct 1997, 40
where he rhetorically asks “All Is Forgiven, or Is It?” Rather, he points out that Kuklinski should be vindicated by the public opinion in Poland only, since he is already acknowledged a hero in the United States. The pronouncements on Kuklinski’s hero status of both journalists alter the memory of Kuklinski on another level. They testify that Kuklinski’s supporters who express their views about him in the future will be forced to engage in the moral dispute over his hero status. Or they will disengage with the moral aspect and focus on the research of the materials transmitted by Kuklinski to the CIA, subsequently putting Kuklinski’s heroism “in the shadows.” Therefore, Nagorski metaphorically ends his article with the comment of Kuklinski that though he feels moral urge to return to Poland, he would rather “retreat into the shadows,” of the place “where he’s used to living.”414 These two approaches of Kuklinski’s followers project a strong influence for any pronouncements concerning his hero standing in the future.

In an effort to emphasize the complexity of Kuklinski’s heroism, both journalists call for more transparency in regards to his figure. Thus, besides the ironies of Kuklinski’s case presented by Spolar, Kuklinski’s hero status needs more clarification. Commenting on the need of Kuklinski’s frequent relocation, while he lived in the United States due to the possibility of the KGB retribution, Nagorski points out the mysterious death of two sons of Kuklinski. Though Kuklinski avoided any insinuation that both deaths were caused by the KGB operatives, still Nagorski does not clarify this tragic moment in Kuklinski’s life.415 On the other hand, Spolar refers, in general terms to Kuklinski’s personal drama after his escape from Poland. A double life of a spy in Poland and the secretive lifestyle in the United States took an incredible toll on

414 Ibid.
415 Ibid.; Both sons of Kuklinski, Bogushaw and Waldemar died in mysterious circumstances. The younger son, Bogushaw disappeared in a sailing adventure of the coast of the Golf of Mexico in January 1994. The older Waldemar died when he was hit by a car in July 1994.
Kuklinski’s psychological balance. Another unresolved issue pointed by Nagorski is the fact of Kuklinski’s exfiltration from Poland in 1981. Nagorski briefly refers to Kuklinski’s reminiscence: “he says it was masterminded by a reassuringly calm young female CIA agent whose team included a former cop.” And yet the whole truth of the event has not yet been revealed.

In general, the end of the second phase can be characterized with the evolution of the post Cold War memory of Kuklinski. In the eyes of the American supporters, Kuklinski’s hero status alters in two directions. First of all, Kuklinski’s mission demands more transparency as pointed out by both Christine Spolar and Andrew Nagorski. Therefore, Kuklinski’s supporters will need to launch more comprehensive research of his hero status on the basis of the developments in Poland in 1980-81, while disengaging with the moral debate. A second direction of alteration will challenge Kuklinski’s hero standing in the moral context. This is because a clearly romanticized image of Kuklinski-hero presented by Weiser is challenged by some thought provoking inquiries about the moral context of his spying. For example, Mary Williams Walsh portrays Kuklinski as “a hunted man.” She thinks that:

Even in exile, Kuklinski has led the life of a hunted man…even now, although he may no longer be a convicted traitor, Kuklinski remains reluctant to emerge from the American shadow life.

In the eyes of Walsh, Kuklinski needs to be fully reinstated in Poland in order to end his Cold War ordeal marked by his personal drama. Thus, in the final stages before Kuklinski’s death in 2004, his hero standing is presented by his American supporters in a more transparent context of

417 Andrew Nagorski, “All Is Forgiven, or IS It?” 40.
the Cold War era with some limited thought provoking uncertainties concerning his past. It
might be argued that this shift of the memory of Kuklinski is caused by the developments in the
Polish scene. In 1997, Kuklinski is officially exonerated and in 1998 he visited Poland for the
first time after his exfiltration to the United States in 1981.

One of the strong voices of that period is Mark Kramer who published his popular article
in 1998 entitled: “Colonel Kuklinski and the Polish Crisis, 1980-81.”419 Kramer’s contribution is
a breaking point in the approach to Kuklinski’s heroism. By 1998 the hero-traitor debate over
Kuklinski in Poland was in favor of his proponents. Kuklinski was fully cleared in the eyes of
the Polish law system and was able to visit his homeland. Kramer remarks: “the visit marked a
decisive vindication for a man who only recently had been under sentence of death in his
homeland.”420 Therefore, Kramer focuses his apology of Kuklinski on the three pieces of
intelligence material transmitted to the CIA and released in the early 1990’s. Kramer remarks:

Although these three items are only a minuscule fraction of the materials that Kuklinski
provided to the CIA, they give some idea of the extraordinary contribution he made to
Western intelligence analysis during the Polish Crisis.421

Thus, emphasizing the exceptional role of Kuklinski, Kramer analyzes the content of the
documents in such a way that he lets Kuklinski himself reaffirm his hero status on the basis of
the importance of the documents he sent to the CIA. In his analysis, Kramer focuses on the
importance of three documents, thus, establishing the basis for the exceptional role of Kuklinski
as a crucial CIA source in Eastern Europe.

In general the documents allowed the CIA to have a thorough insight into the
developments in Poland in 1980-81. In his “Very Urgent” report, Kuklinski is approached by

419 Mark Kramer, “Colonel Kuklinski and the Polish Crisis of 1980-81,” Cold War International History Project
420 Ibid.,50
421 Ibid.
Kramer as an important source in the inner circle of the Warsaw Pact transmitting the news of the three armies’ readiness to cross the Polish border on 8 December 1980: the Soviet Army, People’s Army of the GDR, and the Czechoslovak People’s Army. According to the report, all industrial cities in Poland were to be encircled. Kuklinski emphasized that the people who had knowledge of such plans were “very depressed and crest fallen.”\textsuperscript{422} The Communist party leadership was caught in between the public support for a growing Solidarity movement in Poland and the pressure from Moscow. The political situation in Poland in 1980 was changing instantly; therefore, Kramer comments that “Kuklinski’s dispatch outlined a scenario that, by the time it was reviewed by the U.S. officials, had already been put on hold.”\textsuperscript{423}

Another document considered by Kramer is Report Nr. 2 from 26 April 1981 entitled: “A ‘Hopeless’ Situation.”\textsuperscript{424} Kramer explains that the nature of this second report corresponded with the political climate in the heated months of 1981 for the Polish Army General Staff which felt enormous pressure from their Soviet counterpart and the social developments in Poland. Thus, Kramer remarks that the “hopelessness” of the situation during the Polish crisis was caused by the fact that “Marshall Kulikov, his chief deputy, Army-Gen. Anatolii Gribkov, and other Warsaw Pact military leaders reemphasized at this session [Warsaw Pact Military Council in Bulgaria, April 21-23] that they were as determined as ever to keep Poland and the Polish Army fully within the socialist commonwealth.”\textsuperscript{425} In the context of the second report, Kramer underlines Kuklinski’s vigilance and selfless motives. Kuklinski realized by mid-April that the imposition of the marshal law was imminent and the confrontation of the Polish and Soviet Armies exceeded his imagination. Thus, Kuklinski ends his report:

\textsuperscript{422} Ibid., 54
\textsuperscript{423} Ibid., 53
\textsuperscript{424} Ibid., 54
\textsuperscript{425} Ibid.
We Poles realize that we must fight for our own freedom, if necessary making the ultimate sacrifice. I remained convinced that the support your country has been giving to all who are fighting for freedom will bring us closer to our goal.\textsuperscript{426}

The third document analyzed by Kramer is the summery of the extraordinary session of the KOK (Komitet Obrony Kraju – Committee for Homeland Defense) in which Kuklinski was not present, yet he was briefed by General Tadeusz Tuczapski, the secretary at the session. By 15 September 1981 the KOK made a definitive decision to impose the martial law. In the context of this third report, Kramer describes Kuklinski’s hero status by establishing his value and credibility. The methods of implementation and general organization after the imposition were still in planning stage. Kuklinski made some specific points on the number of soldiers involved in the arrests in Warsaw and the number of people to be detained. Kuklinski was aware of the leak from within the Solidarity circles. Solidarity members were invigilated, therefore, Kuklinski decided to be more vigilant. The report was signed “Long live Solidarity, which brings freedom to all oppressed nations! Jack Strong.”\textsuperscript{427} In the perspective of Kramer, Kuklinski is a mastermind of espionage. Vigilant and canning, Kuklinski prepared his reports emphasizing his selfless motives to support freedom and democracy in Poland and in other oppressed by the Soviet system nations in the world.

While Mark Kramer proposes an innovatory approach to Kuklinski’s hero status, some American supporters of Kuklinski in the end of the second phase return to the traditional method as demonstrated by Benjamin Weiser in the beginning of 1990’s. Such is the case of Benjamin Fisher. Similarly to Weiser, Fisher portrays Kuklinski in a positive light of a friendly CIA spy with selfless motives. Thus, Fisher launches the same strategy to present Kuklinski’s hero status as Weiser. He begins his article with the official recognition of Kuklinski in November 1999 at

\textsuperscript{426} Ibid., 55
\textsuperscript{427} Ibid. 56
the George Herbert Bush Library at the University of Texas by former CIA Director George
Tenet. At the ceremony devoted to the countless anonymous Americans “who died that others
might be free,” Tenet attributed to Kuklinski a title of “a true hero of the Cold War.” Thus,
establishing irrevocable grounds for Kuklinski’s Cold War hero status, Fisher engages the moral
debate over Kuklinski in order to prove that Kuklinski’s vilification was wrong and his
vindication was just.

Similarly to Weiser, Fisher presents Kuklinski’s apology in the historical context of his
espionage, namely the Communist scenario in Poland in 1980’s and in doing so, aims to directly
confront Kuklinski’s attackers. Responding to the accusations of former Speaker of the Polish
Communist government Jerzy Urban, namely that the Reagan administration had no intentions of
warning the Solidarity about the upcoming bloodshed, Fisher downplays Urban’s rhetoric. He
states that despite some voices that “Poles felt betrayed” by their American ally in the fight for
democracy and freedom, there is not much truth in Urban’s stand. “Having lost its source, the
Agency did not know and could not predict when or if the plan would be implemented.”
Fisher believes that in those crucial, heated moments in 1981 one could barely predict the
outcome of the struggle between East and West. Thus, he comments:

The West had been confused, Solidarity had been intimidated, and Jaruzelski could claim
that, by instituting martial law, he had chosen the ‘lesser evil’ and avoided the ‘greater
catastrophe.’

The confusion of the Cold War developments in Poland at that time causes some public figure to
remain uncertain about Kuklinski’s hero standing. That is why Kuklinski is a lonely hero in the

428 Benjamin B. Fisher, “Entangled in History: The Vilification and Vindication of Colonel Kuklinski,” Studies in
Intelligence 9(Summer 2000), 19.
429 Ibid., 21
430 Ibid., 22
eyes of the Polish public opinion, even considered a double spy for the KGB and CIA by former President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa.

Despite the provoking idea of Michnik, Kuklinski’s Polish opponent, that ‘Poland should not become a collective Kuklinski’, Fisher focuses on the vindication process of the hero. In August 1996 the military prosecutor announced that “a long-standing warrant for Kuklinski’s arrest had been rescinded” and Kuklinski was to be charged on the account of espionage. Yet, the “bizarre set of circumstances” of the trial conducted in absentia revealed that Kuklinski’s case was being politicized since the only witnesses called for by the prosecution were Jaruzelski and Kiszczak, men who were Poland’s last Communist strongholds. Fisher points out that it was in September 1997 that Kuklinski was finally vindicated by the military prosecutor with the hesitant approval of the President of Poland. In choosing to absolve Kuklinski in the historical context of the political situation in Poland in 1980’s and after the fall of Communism, Fisher exposes his post Cold War mentality. Therefore, in his perspective, the vindication of Kuklinski reveals on the one hand Poland’s good faith effort to deal with its totalitarian past in a new set of democratic circumstances, but on the other hand it shows the legacy of the former Communists’ dealings by exposing the illogical assessment of Kuklinski as expressed by his accusers.

The post Cold War mentality of Fisher can be projected to a certain degree on all American supporters of Kuklinski with the exception of Mark Kramer so far. In his analysis of Kuklinski’s reports, Kramer makes Kuklinski present the importance of the materials he transmitted to the CIA. On the contrary, Fisher and other followers of Kuklinski focus on the contribution of their hero to the cause of fighting “the evil empire” to a varied degree. All acknowledge that Kuklinski supplied Americans with invaluable intelligence documents and

431 Ibid., 31
432 Ibid., 28
433 Ibid., 29
they easily justify his spying. Even though they portray Kuklinski in the second phase of this study which embraces the time between the fall of Communism until his death in 2004, in the center of his personal drama, they downplay the moral legacy of his act. In fact, it seems that the American supporters of Kuklinski deal barely with the moral context of his mission, because they believe that he was fighting for a just cause, thus, he earned his hero status per se. Therefore, they focus on the value of the intelligence materials which ultimately benefited the NATO camp versus the Warsaw Pact alliance, rather than on Kuklinski’s personal drama and his supposed culpability for spying in the eyes of the Polish public. In the American perspective, Kuklinski as a hero serves as an icon of a true Polish patriot still haunted by his past even when he escaped to the free world. In addition, Kuklinski is presented as “a true hero of the Cold War” by George Tenet. Consequently, Kuklinski as a hero becomes an epitaph of those who fight for freedom against any oppressive totalitarian system. Jane Perlez summarized that point when she reflected about Kuklinski’s peculiar loneliness. She wrote:

> By those he served, his intelligence had been ignored at a key moment; to those he aided in Poland, his treason therefore still seemed futile; those he betrayed, he remained an enemy.434

Yet, Andrew Nagorski simplifies even further Kuklinski’s moral justification. He commented:

> “A person who cooperated with NATO cannot be considered a traitor, since Poland is trying to become a member of that alliance.”435

In contrast to the common perceptions about Kuklinski’s hero standing in America in the second period of this study, the approach of Douglas J. MacEachin brings new perspective of Kuklinski’s heroism, similar to the view of Mark Kramer. It is also worth noticing that the pronouncements of both MacEachin and Kramer will shape the future apology of Kuklinski’s

434 Jane Perlez, “A Cold War Spy Doesn’t Dare Go Home,” 3.
435 Andrew Nagorski, “All Is Forgiven, or IS It?” 40.
heroism in the American perspective. Unwilling to state unanimously his own moral justification on Kuklinski, MacEachin provokes the public opinion with his apology. In contrast to Fisher, MacEachin does not confront nor refute any statements of the former Polish Communists’ officials concerning the silence of the United States in late 1981; rather, he points out the shortcomings of the CIA to properly assess the documents which Kuklinski channeled. He comments: “The handling of Kuklinski by the CIA does not excuse the failure to produce the integrated assessment of the information outlined in that chronology.”

MacEachin explains that Kuklinski’s reports were assessed in chronological order, and thus they were never studied as a whole. Therefore, the CIA did not work out a comprehensive method of probing the Soviet, but rather focused only on the invasion of Poland. Thus, MacEachin concludes:

Had such an assessment been prepared, it might well have provoked a more proactive effort to seek what else Kuklinski had to offer, especially in regard to the prospect of martial law.

In addition, MacEachin brings more light on Jaruzelski’s popular line of defense that the imposition of martial law was choosing of ‘the lesser evil’. MacEachin comments: “Jaruzelski was indeed looking for a Soviet guarantee of military backup…” and “the Poles had no basis to expect it.”

MacEachin builds his defense of Kuklinski heroism by pointing out the shortcomings of both the CIA and the weaknesses of the former Soviet empire in 1981. In his perspective, Kuklinski provided crucial information to the CIA but the CIA did not make a full use of it at that time. His spying was an honorary act against “the dictatorial alliance” in whose name General Jaruzelski, under the pretext of the immanent Soviet invasion decided to “employ

---

437 Ibid., 228-229
438 Ibid., 240
Poland’s military forces – as a ‘lesser evil’ – to crush the civil opposition of Polish workers and dissidents.\textsuperscript{439}

The end of the second period of fluctuation of the memory of Kuklinski’s hero status as expressed by his American followers produced two distinct apologies of Kuklinski’s heroism. First of all, some American followers of Kuklinski build their apology to further Kuklinski’s justification in the eyes of the public opinion in Poland. Therefore, both Weiser and Fisher presented Kuklinski in a positive light as a hero of the Cold War, who transmitted the crucial information on the Warsaw Pact alliance. The second method of apology is exemplified by Kramer and MacEachin. Both scholars view Kuklinski in a peculiar way without engaging the moral context of the hero-traitor debate. Therefore, they do not confront the attacks on Kuklinski made by the former Communists in Poland. Rather, they pursue research based on the documents available to them and use Kuklinski’s reports as an insight to view the political developments of 1980-81 in Poland. Though, they do not directly vindicate Kuklinski, they allow the documents he obtained to prove his validity in the historical context of the fall of Communism.

The death of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in February 2004 begins a third phase of the efforts of his American supporters to develop their defense of his hero status in the eyes of the public opinion. Kuklinski’s death was not eulogized by his American followers as it was by his Polish proponents. The American proponents aim to reflect on the greatness of Kuklinski’s figure and his selfless heroism. It might be argued that in this period, Kuklinski’s supporters aim to bring a closing to his hero adventures, on the one hand. Thus, they complete his image of a selfless and friendly source of information for the CIA. On the other hand, his followers use the

\textsuperscript{439} Ibid., 245
intelligence materials to fully justify his role as an important source of information to the West, thus, they use his accomplishments as an inspiration for further research.

Shortly after Kuklinski’s death Benjamin Weiser published his monumental biography, which some could argue has ultimately closed the chapter on Kuklinski. Weiser continues his own traditional approach to Kuklinski as displayed in 1992, which is similar to Fisher’s apology of Kuklinski’s hero status. First, Weiser projects an a priori hero image on Kuklinski. Second, he lists his accomplishments, namely the reports sent to the CIA. Third, he portrays Kuklinski as a friendly spy with a charming personality, who despite the consequences of a double life was able to exceptionally manage his family life and work. Thus, Weiser cemented Kuklinski’s hero status on the basis that:

He was a proud Pole who harbored a deep rage toward the Soviet Union, which had taken control over Poland at the end of World War II, imposed a Communist regime, and effectively turned the Polish military into a subsection of the Soviet armed forces. Disclosing portions of the material that Kuklinski sent to the CIA, Weiser proves that Kuklinski is a fitting example of “how human intelligence operations can succeed when they are handled with scrupulous care and imagination.”

Weiser claims that Kuklinski was a man with deep sense of right action in a world divided by the Iron Curtain. David Forden, a chief of the “Russia” section of the CIA in his interview given to the Polish TV in 1997, remarked in a similar tone:

Kuklinski was an honest man, an honest volunteer who did not count for our help in his dangerous mission…he was not a spy; he was a Polish officer who fought for the freedom of his country.

---

441 Ibid., xiii.
In his recognition of Kuklinski heroism, Weiser adds other qualities beyond Kuklinski’s honesty and patriotism. Above all, Weiser considers him a family man and a caring father. In fact, “the serenity in his family life was clearly a source of great satisfaction to him [Kuklinski].” His wife Hanka was very understanding, when he had to bring roses to a surprise meeting and always believed what she was told by her husband. His son, Waldek had “strong moral character and was deeply emerged into philosophy, literature, and the law.” Kuklinski’s second son, Bogdan “improved his grades and rekindled dream of medical school.” Kuklinski’ strong family ties helped him to accomplish his goal. Therefore, he was well equipped psychologically. When advised that it usually takes “five or six years before the psychological toll became too taxing,” Kuklinski decided not to postpone or interrupt his mission. Thus, Weiser presents Kuklinski-hero in a positive light almost unimaginable for someone who had to live under a constant pressure of being captured and executed as Oleg Penkovski, the Soviet GRU colonel was. In general, Weiser paid an extraordinary tribute to Kuklinski, declaring his hero status clearly. And yet, one may argue that Weiser’s biography closes the chapter on Kuklinski’s heroism with no venue for further research. Weiser’s apology of Kuklinski is definite and unquestionable. Weiser thoroughly researched and explained his apology of Kuklinski’s heroism extremely well.

While Benjamin Weiser indefinitely closed the chapter on Kuklinski, Mark Kramer begins his efforts to rethink the Polish crisis on the basis of the documents that Kuklinski sent to the CIA. On 11 December 2008, the CIA declassified 81 new reports from Kuklinski, which

443 Benjamin Weiser, A Secret Life, 130.
444 Ibid., 129
445 Ibid., 130
446 Ibid.
447 Ibid., 125
448 Ibid.
concern mainly the Polish crisis of 1980-81. Thus, Kramer continues his approach of Kuklinski’s hero status by allowing Kuklinski’s own legacy to prove his validity as a hero. In his analysis of Kuklinski’s reports, Kramer acknowledges that his files “reveal or corroborate several crucial points about the martial law planning, civil military relations in Poland, and Soviet-Polish interactions…” Kuklinski’s methodical work allowed the CIA to have a comprehensive insight into the pressures of the Soviets and other Eastern European Communist leaders within the Polish Party leadership, mainly General Wojciech Jaruzelski and Stanisław Kania. The planning period for martial law was very stressful for Jaruzelski who was convinced that the Soviet leaders were willing to invade Poland in order to reestablish the Communist rule and order.

In the judgment of Kramer, Kuklinski was a careful observer capable of providing a psychological profile of Jaruzelski disclosing the “conflicting standards of Jaruzelski’s personality.” On one hand, Jaruzelski appeared to be decisive and strong. On the other hand, he was chaotic and emotional. In addition, Kuklinski’s reports help to clarify the grounds for Soviet invasion of Poland in 1981. Kuklinski was convinced that the Soviets aided by other Eastern European armies (including Hungarian and Bulgarian) would enter Poland, if the Polish Army had trouble in implementing the martial law as planned. Still the Polish Party leadership was in a position to ask the Soviet leadership for outside help. Thus, Kramer clarifies that Kuklinski was right in his assessment of the developments in Poland in 1981. On the other hand, Jaruzelski asked for the Soviet intervention in the last minute, yet his plea met with the Soviet

---

450 Ibid., 9
451 Ibid., 11
452 Ibid., 13
453 Ibid.
unwillingness to act prior to Jaruzelski’s move. Thus, Kramer defines Kuklinski’s hero status on
the basis of his enormous contribution to provide an insightful retrospect of the Soviet policy in
Poland in 1980-81 and the internal mechanisms of the Polish Communist leadership.

In conclusion, the American supporters of Kuklinski acknowledge his hero status a priori.
Their view is based on the fact that Kuklinski transmitted to the CIA a crucial evidence of the
Soviet military strategy and technologies. He also provided some essential pieces of information
on the developments in Poland in 1980-81. Accordingly, the perspective of the American
supporters of Kuklinski can be characterized with a peculiar dynamics which stays within the
ramification of two premises. First of all, they develop their apology of Kuklinski’s hero status in
the post Cold War context on the premise that Kuklinski was indeed the ‘first Polish officer in
NATO,’ who supplied the Americans with an insider’s perspective on the Soviet empire and the
satellite state, namely Poland. Therefore, their a priori acknowledgment of his hero status is
based on the value of his files as exemplified by Mark Kramer. Secondly, Kuklinski’s followers
create an image of Kuklinski as a friendly and canning American ally in the Polish People’s
Army or an intriguing Polish Army officer who worked for the CIA in his lonely rebellion to end
the Soviet domion as expressed by Benjamin Fisher and Benjamin Weiser. The American
supporters of Kuklinski generate their memory on the basis of these two premises.

The fluctuation of the memory of Kuklinski’s hero standing generally correlates with the
American policy to the former Soviet Union and the Polish People’s Republic. For example,
Woodward aims to confront Jerzy Urban with revelations about Kuklinski and he receives a
desired response which serves as a base to his apology of Kuklinski’s hero standing. On the other
hand, Weiser reflects on Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of his virtues. He attributes to
Kuklinski the standing of a just man. In consequence, he antagonizes the former Communist
officials in Poland on the issue of Kuklinski, who fell short to constructively refute his arguments, thus, the Communist officials conclude that Kuklinski was a traitor of his nation. The memory of Kuklinski’s heroism as expressed by both journalists, in two different phases, emphasizes Kuklinski’s contribution in the context of the ‘free world’ of the U.S. versus the Soviet oppression. Yet, both Woodward and Weiser write their apology as a final chapter of Kuklinski’s accomplishments, while Mark Kramer projects his hero standing in the future. He dwells on Kuklinski’s files to clarify certain back points in Poland’s most recent history, such as Jaruzelski’s betrayal of his own country or the dealings with the inner circle of the Polish Communist leadership in 1980-81. Nonetheless, in the context of the American proponents, the fluctuation of the memory of Kuklinski’s hero status provokes more inquiries into the legacy he left, namely his files.

The view of the Polish supporters of Kuklinski

While the American followers of Kuklinski generally take his hero standing for granted, the Polish proponents juxtapose his hero status with the slow process of coming to terms with the Communist past of Poland in 1989. In consequence, the basis for attributing Kuklinski a hero status was evolving accordingly. Therefore, the first phase of formulating the memory of Kuklinski’s heroism among his Polish supporters contrasted with their American counterparts, who provided strong evidence of his virtues. As a result of the first public election in the process of de-communization of Poland, which took place on 4 June 1989, the members of the opposition to the Communists were elected to all available seats in the Polish Sejm.454 Kuklinski

454 Henryk Głębokier, “Wojna z własnym narodem” (The War with Their Own Nation), published in Komunizm w Polsce (Communism in Poland) (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Kluszczyński, 1995), 382; Even though all seats in the
was not yet a well known public figure at that time. Just a handful of people remembered Jerzy Urban’s attempts to underestimate his role from 1986. Some members of the opposition might have remembered Kuklinski’s monumental article *Wojna z narodem widziana od środka* (The War with a Nation, Seen From Within) published in *Kultura* in 1987. Kuklinski’s article was a popular expose of the Soviet dominion and a testimony of Kuklinski’s own motivation. And it circulated within opposition circles. However, the Polish public opinion learned officially about its hero from the book of Gabriel Meretic entitled *Noc Generała* (The Night of the General).455 Meretic classifies Kuklinski as “an agent of big caliber.”456 Meretic wrote:

> He is the highest ranking officer of the Polish Army, who joined the other side, what is more important, this man who in the General Staff in Warsaw was responsible for coordination of all plans and action which led to imposition of the martial law.457

Meretic detailed Kuklinski’s role in informing the CIA about the Soviet war plans and the imposition of the martial law. Yet the Meretic’s information about Kuklinski resembles the text of Kuklinski from 1987.

Another revelation about Kuklinski’s heroic act was delivered by Zbigniew Brzezinski, National Security Advisor to President Jimmy Carter. Brzezinski made an official appeal on 13 December 1990 in the Polish Television to vindicate Kuklinski.458 While Meretic’s revelations did not inspire any reactions within the public opinion in Poland, Brzezinski’s appeal provoked immediate response. In fact, it initiated the dynamics of the memory of Kuklinski, which ended with Kuklinski’s official vindication in 1997. In contrast to the American journalists and scholars

---

456 Ibid., 120.
457 Ibid., 121.
458 Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., *Bohater czy zdrajca. Fakty i dokumenty* (Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), (Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza Most & Presspublica, 1992), 99
who took Kuklinski’s hero status a priori, the Polish followers began to shape the basis for Kuklinski’s justification. Dariusz Lipiński explained this process well, when he commented: “The annulment of the shameful sentence would equal the acknowledgment of the unjust and unlawful existence of the second PRL (Polish People’s Republic).”

Realizing the difficulty to vindicate Kuklinski, Lipiński reported: “Everything but the symbolic vindication which means a symbolic nullification of the PRL.”

Similarly, Andrzej Gelberg believes that the process of the vindication of Kuklinski has a symbolic meaning because “it regards our national identity.” In consequence, the initial attempt to justify Kuklinski’s heroism is juxtaposed with the nature of the former PRL. Therefore, in order to justify his hero standing, the Polish followers of Kuklinski are forced to engage the moral debate over his heroism in the context of the nature of the former Communist Poland. They aimed to prove that Kuklinski acted in a state of higher necessity and the Communist circumstances validated his act of channeling the information to the CIA. Thus, the initial formulation of Kuklinski’s heroism was incoherent and laconic. In his reaction to Brzezinski’s appeal, Jacek Merkel, former Secretary of National Security, responded:

This is not a matter of vindication…Colonel Kuklinski acted when Poland was still under Communism, so in his attitude, one may find some traces of patriotism…we cannot discontinue history…

The revelation of Zbigniew Brzezinski faced some opposition then, because in the initial stages the Polish proponents of Kuklinski’s heroism were not ready to formulate their apology which included their dealing with the nature of the former PRL. In addition, some voices suggested that

---

459 Dariusz Lipiński, “Ostatnia Reduta” (The Last Castle), Tygodnik Solidarność, 40 (1 Oct 1993), 10; the second PRL means the post Communists who oppose the vindication of Kuklinski. For example, Lech Wałęsa did not react to the letter of Zbigniew Herbert, a poet, who appealed for Kuklinski’s vindication.
460 Ibid.
Kuklinski’s files were important for the U.S. government only after the imposition of the martial law. Interviewed by Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, General Alexander Haig commented on the value of Kuklinski’s files: “his files were not used before it was imposed.”\(^{463}\) When Haig learned about the Polish crisis, he talked to CIA Director Casey and the U.S. government focused on its reaction to the martial law. The notion of Kuklinski’s heroism began emerging in the eyes of the public in Poland after the publication of Weiser’s article in September 1992. Andrzej Krajewski published a summery of Weiser’s testimony of Kuklinski’s heroism, which made a vivid reaction to his spying and encouraged his followers to reinforce his vindication.\(^{464}\) Ryszard Kaczorowski, former President of Poland from before WW II, wrote: “If he wanted to save Poland, he is a hero.”\(^{465}\) Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, a former reporter for Radio Free Europe commented: “Kuklinski saved Poland from the Soviet invasion twice, in December 1980 and in March 1981, during the military exercises of the Warsaw Pact armies “Sojuz 81” in Poland.”\(^{466}\) Jeziorański rhetorically asked:

> Were the United States our enemy when they wanted to protect us from the Soviet dominion? Was it a betrayal to cooperate with the West, or was it a patriotic responsibility to remain faithful to the military oath which was to serve the Soviet Union?\(^{467}\)

The Polish followers of Kuklinski began to formulate their defense of his heroism in the context of the moral responsibility of an Army officer. They perceive Kuklinski as a fighter for the just cause, namely his selfless desire to save Poland and to end the Soviet dominion. Thus, the first stage of the formulation of the memory of Kuklinski’s heroism emphasizes his patriotism as a basis for his vindication.

---


\(^{464}\) Andrzej Krajewski, “Pułkownik Kukliński ujawnia 35 tys. stron dokumentów dla CIA” (Colonel Kuklinski Transmitted 35 Thousand Pages of Documents to the CIA), *Rzeczpospolita* 228(28 Sept 1992), 1.

\(^{465}\) Ryszard Kaczorowski, “Poznać prawdę” (Learn the Truth), *Gazeta Wyborcza* 229(29 Sept 1992), 1. 8.

\(^{466}\) Jan Nowak-Jeziorański, “Zdrajca czy bohater” (Traitor or Hero), *Gazeta Wyborcza* 229(29 Sept 1992), 1.

\(^{467}\) Ibid.
Kuklinski’s patriotism viewed in the context of his moral responsibility as a Polish Army soldier is well explained by his former Army colleague, Konstanty Staniszewski. In 1947 Staniszewski became Kuklinski’s first supervisor. He was always proud of Kuklinski’s prominent career in the General Staff and he credited it to his leniency toward his person. In 1950, Staniszewski became an Information Officer in the 14 Infantry Division in Piła, where he met Kuklinski after they both left the Army Academy in Wrocław in 1949. Staniszewski recalled that he helped to clear Kuklinski’s file to reassure his good standing in the Party eyes. When in 1947 Kuklinski was entering the Army, “he wrote in his biography that during the war he joined the Sword and Plough organization” which was an underground Polish militant group fighting against the Nazis.\(^{468}\) This incident resulted in Kuklinski being banished to the rank of the sergeant to one of the People’s Army units in Silesia in Southern Poland. He was expelled from both the school and the party. However, Kuklinski convinced Staniszewski that he disclosed his membership in the Sword and Plough because of “his fantasy.” Staniszewski commented: “When the war broke out he was 9 years old and when it ended he was only 15.”\(^{469}\) The apparent frivolity of Kuklinski might have strongly influenced his future career. Yet he was able to avoid a careful scrutiny of the information officers in the future because Staniszewski burned his file in his presence in 1952 with the approval of his supervisors. Allowing Kuklinski to act freely, Staniszewski was aware that he helped Kuklinski immeasurably. Commenting on Kuklinski’s patriotism, Staniszewski said:

If indeed he was inspired by his patriotic motives and not by his willingness to be compensated, I would pronounce him a patriot. It is difficult for me to condemn him we knew each other for so many years.\(^{470}\)

\(^{468}\) Konstanty Staniszewski, “Teczka Ryszarda Kuklińskiego” (Kuklinski’s File), interview by Tomasz Stańczyk \(Rzeczpospolita\) 268(14-15 Nov 1992), 2.

\(^{469}\) Ibid.

\(^{470}\) Ibid.
Therefore, in his nostalgic reminiscence about Kuklinski, Staniszewski supports the view of most of Kuklinski’s followers, namely that his patriotism was based on selfless and higher motives to defend Poland and to oppose Communist oppression.

However, the heroism of Kuklinski as viewed by his followers in 1992 in the context of his patriotism encountered a neo-Communist reality in Poland. Therefore, Kuklinski’s heroism had to be translated by his proponents into that new democratic reality in the context of Poland’s Communist past. This aim was rather simple for Józef Szaniawski, who believed that “Jaruzelski should be condemned and Kuklinski vindicated.” Szaniawski supported his view by the pronouncement of Jarosław Kaczyński, Leader of the Prawo i Sprawiedliwość Party. Kaczyński thought that:

The case of Kuklinski became an essential symbol…until the person who did so much for the independence of Poland, is still bound by the horrible sentence, nothing can be said about the western option for Poland.\(^472\)

Kaczyński concluded:

Kuklinski acted against the imperial interest of Kremlin against Poland’s dependency on the Soviet Union…He postulated only those prospects of military strategies to defend Europe against the Soviet Army, which would not harm Poland.\(^473\)

Using a similar rhetoric, Szaniawski further explained the reasons behind the need to vindicate Kuklinski in the documentary entitled *Polska z oddali* (Poland Seen from Afar) aired on Polish TV I on 5 October 1992. Szaniawski argued that:

The thorough explanation of the Kuklinski case will allow to look at Poland’s past without lies and errors, the past which has an impact on the present time and causes confusion in many people’s minds.\(^474\)


\(^{472}\) Ibid.

\(^{473}\) Ibid.

According to Szaniawski, Kuklinski’s vindication parallels the effort to examine Poland’s Communist past. Thus, he proposes to examine two closely connected words, namely, alliance and ally. He rhetorically asks:

Was the Soviet Union our ally, which attacked Poland with an agreement with Hitler…? Was the United States our enemy, which used peaceful measures to aid to liberate Poland and its neighbors from the Soviet dominion…?

These provocative questions from Szaniawski illustrate two themes which dominated the debate over Kuklinski’s heroism in Poland in 1992. The first theme is that Kuklinski should be exonerated on the basis of his selfless alliance with the United States, the nation perceived as Poland’s ally in the fight against Soviet dominion. The second theme concerns the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s observers, who perceive his accomplishments in the context of his alliance with NATO to defeat the former Soviet Union. In the eyes of his supporters then, Kuklinski did not spy for the CIA; rather, he allied himself with the United States to end the Soviet dominion in Poland and elsewhere. However, in 1992 the public opinion in Poland was not ready yet to agree unanimously with that analysis and so Kaczyński’s claim to vindicate Kuklinski in the eyes of the Polish legal system did not bring expected results. The Polish Sejm rejected both Kaczyński’s and his Porozumienie Centrum Party’s appeal to revise Kuklinski’s case in October 1992.

In addition to both Kaczyński and Szaniawski’s views, other defenders of Kuklinski in that period of time dwell on the post Cold war rhetoric--namely they view Kuklinski in the past conflict between the East and West, and they either romanticize or moralize the notion of his selfless mission. For example, Andrzej Oseka, a journalist wrote: “for several decades the

475 Ibid.
476 Maciej Łukasiewicz, editor, Bohater czy zdrajca: fakty i dokumenty (Hero Or Traitor: Facts and Documents)(Warsaw: Oficyna Wydawnicza MOST, 1992), 167. The votes of the delegates were: 85 delegates in favor the appeal, 161 were against it and 59 refrained from taking stand.
functionaries of the organization with its headquarters in the capitol of a foreign empire decided
about what is ‘Polish’ and ‘anti-Polish’.” Acknowledging Poland’s past restrains, he elevates
the justification of Kuklinski’s affair to the level of a personal conscience. He explains that even
the Generals Jaruzelski and Kiszczak are allowed to view Kuklinski as a traitor since it is their
natural reaction. On the other hand, those who “still remember their fears that they will live
under Communism until the end of the lives” should view him in contrast to those “who worked
for the prolonging and promotion of the Communism in the world” like Generals Jaruzelski and
Kiszczak. Osęka continues: “General Kiszczak imprisoned those who wanted independence
for Poland.” He also points out Jaruzelski’s eagerness to label the members of the opposition
as “agentural” and “anti-Polish.” In his attempt to justify Kuklinski, Osęka engages the past to
show the discrepancy between what was right to do in the time when “normality of life” was
ddictated by the Communist ideology. In consequence, Osęka discredits the former Communists
to prepare the ground for Kuklinski’s justification. He uses strikingly patriotic images to
underline the fact that the members of the opposition within the Solidarity movement fought for
the independence of Poland and so did Kuklinski.

While Osęka builds his apologia on the moral choice of what was right to do under
Communism to oppose the Soviet dominion, Andrzej Gelberg romanticizes the heroism of
Kuklinski. In contrast to the Communists who promised to be faithful to the Polish nation in the
time of crisis and then betrayed their citizens, Gelberg believes that “the only true Konrad
Wallenrod, known to me, was Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski in the vague circles of the Communists

477 Andrzej Osęka, “Z pnia zdrady” (From the Root of Betrayal) Gazeta Wyborcza 232 (2 Oct 1992), 2; see also
Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., Sprawa pulkownika Kuklińskiego; Bohater czy zdrajca; fakty i dokumenty (The Case of
Colonel Kuklinski; Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), 179-181.
478 Ibid.
479 Ibid.
elites.\textsuperscript{480} With these words, Gelberg emphasizes the fact that Kuklinski was indeed a member of the Communist Party and an officer of the Polish People’s Army, yet in contrasts to his fellow comrades, he was able to fulfill his patriotic duty to oppose the Soviet dominion and remain in soul with his fellow Poles. Because of Kuklinski’s patriotic motives, a small group of Polish intellectuals believed that he deserved “admiration and respect,” and called on the President of Poland and the Sejm to allow Kuklinski to return to Poland and be exonerated.\textsuperscript{481}

However, the slow process of coming to terms with Poland’s Communist past became problematic for Kuklinski’s proponents who were forced ad hoc to provide the public in Poland with a clear and more substantial basis for the justification of Kuklinski’s heroism. Zbigniew Herbert, a well known Polish poet, emphasized that challenge when he pointed out that the Communists left the legacy of economic and ecological devastation. However, Herbert emphasizes that the most far reaching devastation inherited by the Polish nation concerns the “moral and intellectual” sphere of the social memory. Here is the reason, Herbert believes that the majority of the Poles in 1992 believed that Jaruzelski was a hero and Kuklinski was a traitor. In his metaphorical language, Herbert points out that the confusion in the moral sphere of the nation caused Jaruzelski to receive “Wawel” and Kuklinski to be banished to the “American prairies.”\textsuperscript{482} In consequence, the heroism of Kuklinski is overlooked by the Polish society which is “in a state of semantic trauma,” as an aftermath of the Communist indoctrination.\textsuperscript{483} In the context of a social marginalization of Kuklinski’s heroism, Herbert wrote an appeal to the President of Poland, Lech Wałęsa, in December 1994. In contrasts to his previous expose, Herbert aimed to convince Wałęsa that the case of Kuklinski concerned the conscience of the

\textsuperscript{480} Andrzej Gelberg, “Pułkownik Kukliński” (Colonel Kuklinski), \textit{Tygodnik Solidarność}, 40(2 Oct 1992), 5
\textsuperscript{482} Zbigniew Herbert, “Wierność” (Loyalty), \textit{Tygodnik Solidarność}, 40(1 Oct 1993), 11
\textsuperscript{483} Ibid.
Polish nation—and so his justification should be viewed as a symbolic act in the process of the de-communization of Poland. Herbert wrote: “the case of Kuklinski concerns all of us, it appeals to our conscience and our image as citizens. Colonel Kuklinski is one of us.”

In the process, Herbert establishes a new basis for Kuklinski’s justification. For Herbert, Kuklinski prefigures all Poles of good will and moral conscience, who opposed the moral, intellectual and economic privation caused by the Communists. Consequently, he should be vindicated. Herbert also points out that Kuklinski is a tragic hero because of the consequences he had to suffer when living in the United States. Herbert emphasizes the fact that both sons of Kuklinski, Waldemar and Bogdan, died in unclear circumstances. Herbert concludes: “the way they died is dubious and it points out not ambiguously to the perpetrators of these horrible deaths.”

The heroism of Kuklinski as explained by Herbert is further developed by Dariusz Lipiński, a Polish journalist. Lipiński believes that the justification of Kuklinski’s heroism equals the nullification of the former Polish People’s Republic. In his metaphorical language, Lipiński contrasts Kuklinski’s heroism with a new language of neo-Communists and he calls it “a language of the PRL-bis.” The neo-Communists use this language to continue the old ways of perception of the world which has been contently changing after the fall of Communism. Lipiński claims that despite the democratic changes the “PRL-bis” officials want to justify Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of the legal system of the Communist Poland. Lipiński believes that this discrepancy cannot be continued in a democratic Poland. Therefore, the neo-

---

484 Zbigniew Herbert, “Do Prezydenta Rzeczpospolitej Polskiej” (To the President of the Polish Republic), 5 Dec 1994, Rzeczpospolita 7-8 Jan 1995, 16.
485 Ibid.
Communists have no right to address “Kuklinski as mister and Jaruzelski as general,” because they only desire to continue the Communist system.486

In 1995 Kuklinski’s heroism was addressed by the Supreme Court in Poland while his case was revised. The Chief Judge of the Supreme Court, Stanisław Rudnicki explained on 30 March 1995 that the sentence of the Military Tribunal of the Warsaw District from 23 May 1984 imposed on Kuklinski lacked essential elements. There was neither sufficient evidence nor grounds for the sentence. Therefore, a new investigation would need to reflect the evaluation of Kuklinski’s motives, namely a state of higher necessity in his collaboration with the CIA.487 A more detailed investigation was initiated. However, the proponents of Kuklinski’s heroism were not satisfied with the language of the Military Prosecutor’s Office, which conducted the review and the developments which followed. Józef Szaniawski commented:

The Military prosecutors did not change their stand. It still supports its investigation of Kuklinski on the basis of article 122 of the Criminal Law, which is the betrayal, for which he is still bound by a death sentence.488

Moreover, the Military Prosecutor expected Kuklinski to testify, yet he was not officially accused on any grounds. Szaniawski expressed his dissatisfaction with the handling of the case of Kuklinski and blamed it on the former Communist prosecutors who prolonged the investigation.

However, the news of the revision of the case of Kuklinski inspired his supporters to reflect on his heroism on a different level. They evaluate his heroism in the context of current developments in Poland, namely the possibility of Poland joining NATO. They express positive opinions focusing on Kuklinski’s virtues. Yet, some proponents express more reserved views.

487 “Rewizja Nadzwyczajna w sprawie płk Kuklińskiego” (Extraordinary Revision of Colonel Kuklinski’s Case), Rzeczpospolita, 7 Apr 1995, 17
and they do not claim directly his hero status, though they fully acknowledge his accomplishments. While initially Kuklinski’s followers discussed his accomplishments in the context of Poland’s national identity, wallenrodism, and the rejection of Kuklinski by the neo-Communists, the second wave of the pronouncements is more substantial yet reserved. In their pronouncements, Kuklinski’s admirers also use a moderate rhetoric of the post Cold War reality. The followers of Kuklinski do not express strong opinions of the instrumental role of their hero in the East-West conflict; rather, they focus on Kuklinski’s image as a Pole who made a right decision as a soldier to oppose the Soviet Union. Stanisław Broniewski, a former Leader of the anti-Nazi Szare Szeregi (the Grey Lines), believes that Kuklinski is a hero. He “cared about what each soldier should care most: about the freedom and sovereignty of Poland. As each soldier should, he risked his own life.”

489 Ryszard Dembiński, Curator of the London Institute of Władysław Sikorski, questions the validity of Kuklinski’s military oath and he asks: “Was this oath valid, when one took it under pressure without any belief in its validity?”

490 In his eyes, Kuklinski made the right decision, yet Dembiński would not call him a national hero. Similarly, Jerzy Turowicz, chief editor of Tygodnik Powszechny, believes that Kuklinski served the right cause in the circumstances, when Poland “was not independent and sovereign, and it depended on the Soviet Union, and the Americans were our natural allies.”

491 Yet he strays from immediate recognition of his hero status. Generally the reservations of some proponents of Kuklinski in the end of the first period of the analysis might have been inspired by the uncertainty of the outcome of the revision of his case. Therefore, the followers acknowledge a
great contribution of Kuklinski and his personal virtues as a soldier, yet they refrain from calling him a hero. This limbo of Kuklinski’s adherents changed its dynamics, when his case was annulled by the prosecution.

The reverse in the positive perception of Kuklinski shifted to another level after the Military Prosecutor of Warsaw District decided about the discontinuance of the investigation of Kuklinski on 2 Sept 1997.492 In general, the motive of the Military Prosecutor in discontinuing his case was that Kuklinski acted “in a state of higher necessity.”493 Thus, Kuklinski was fully justified and his heroic act was recognized as his personal choice to protect the Polish nation from the Soviet dominion. The followers of Kuklinski build on that ruling and they aimed to create an image of Kuklinski as a national hero whose memory should carried on in the Polish society as a Polish monument of ending Soviet dominion. In consequence, the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s proponents in the second period, namely between 1997 and Kuklinski’s death in 2004, alters. The primary task of Kuklinski’s followers is to present Kuklinski’s heroism to the Polish society to prepare the public opinion for Kuklinski’s first visit in 1998. Their rhetoric is also more substantial, firm, and articulate. In this period, the followers of Kuklinski express their views from the perspective of those who have triumphed over Kuklinski’s critics. For example, Andrzej Rzepliński, Law Professor from Warsaw University, provides a strong legal and moral explanation of Kuklinski’s heroism. Rzepliński comments:

The acts of Colonel Kuklinski are exceptional and they are a basis for his name to be placed among most venerable persons who had courage to break the military oath for the sake of Poland.494

---

492 Polska Agencja Prasowa, “Komunikat” (News release), in Józef Szaniawski Samotna Misja (Lonely Mission), 351
493 Ibid.,352
494 Andrzej Rzepliński, “Polski agent nr. 1” (Polish Spy Number 1), Wprost, 41(12 Oct 1997), 103
Rzepliński also adds that even though the case of Kuklinski is closed, his affair will always encourage more reflection and national debate in the future.

Interestingly, Rzepliński describes the fluctuation of his personal memory of Kuklinski’s heroism which resembles to some degree the fluctuation of the social memory concerning a hero’s status. Rzepliński acknowledges that when he first learned about Kuklinski during the martial law, he only made a guess “what was Kuklinski’s secret evidence. The generals of the Polish People’s Army were simply mere players who were allowed to have their toys for so long as their supervisors agreed.”\footnote{Ibid.} In order to emphasize his initial memory of Kuklinski, Rzepliński uses strong post Cold War rhetoric and he concludes:

In case of the aggression into the West, our soldiers and officers would become the instruments of the interests of the empire which was in conflict with the Polish aspirations.\footnote{Ibid.}

The shift in Rzepliński’s personal memory over Kuklinski took place after the fall of Communism, when the lies of the Communist system were exposed. Rzepliński comments:

Considering the fact that many low ranking members of the PZPR (Polish United Workers’ Party) decided to cut the navel-string with the ‘powerful leadership’ even before 1989, especially during the consequent turning points in the politics, among the most initiated Communists the cases of breaking up with the utopia never happened.\footnote{Ibid.}

Rzepliński recalls only two cases of a courageous breaking up with the system, one of them was Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. Rzepliński’s gradual admiration for Kuklinski’s courage led him to justification of his heroism in the context of the legal system in Poland. In addition, Rzepliński initiates an altered view of Kuklinski’s heroism, specifying that the followers of Kuklinski will pronounce their opinions in the future fully convinced that he was justified in the

\footnote{Ibid.}
eyes of the legal system in Poland. Thus, Kuklinski’s heroism was granted to him per se. Jan Parys, former Minister of Defense explains that point well, when he comments:

Now we got the answer; however, there is a new question we need to ask, should we now take to court the people like Jaruzelski? If Kuklinski was inspired by patriotic motives, can we classify the acts of Jaruzelski as patriotic or traitorous?⁴⁹⁸

In his rhetoric Parys acknowledges Kuklinski’s heroism per se. He simultaneously opts to deal with the treachery of the former Communists. Janusz Onyszkiewicz, former Minister of National Defense suggests that in such case “there is a collision of two values: loyalty and the national interest. We will struggle with this problem for a long time.”⁴⁹⁹

Interestingly, Józef Szaniawski avoids further discussion of Kuklinski’s heroism in the moral context. Rather, he aims to grant Kuklinski a national stature in the context of the social memory of the post Cold War scenario in Poland. He enthusiastically refers to the decision of the Military Prosecutor as he comments: “this is a formal annulment of the sentence. In fact, the history proved the justification of Kuklinski.”⁵₀₀ In his attempt to establish grounds for the recognition of Kuklinski’s heroism as a national figure, Szaniawski makes some symbolic connections of the disassociated symbolic events for Poland. For example, he states that:

The decision of the Prosecutor was implemented on 17 September, which is an anniversary of the Soviet aggression on Poland. This happened by mere chance, yet it means something.⁵₀₁

Another example of shaping the monument for Kuklinski’s heroism is the pronouncement of Lech Falandysz, former Minister in the President’s Chancery, who states that “considering this past time, one may indeed realize how great was his act and how much courage it cost.”⁵₀²

---


⁵₀₁ Ibid.
On 27 April 1998 Kuklinski was able to visit Poland for the first time after his exfiltration to the United States in November 1981. He was enthusiastically welcomed by his followers who perceived him a national hero. Andrzej Gelberg observed that “triumphant – as it might be said without exaggeration – return to Poland of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski is an occasion to compensate him what he lost.”\textsuperscript{503} Recognizing Kuklinski’s extraordinary virtues, Gelberg concluded “Colonel…put his life at stake and he fulfilled his duty as directed by his conscience, the conscience of the patriot and the honor of the Polish officer.”\textsuperscript{504} Gelberg noted that Kuklinski’s triumphant visit inspired more reflection about the nature of the former PRL. He stated:

This return has a much deeper meaning. It forces us to start again the discussion about the nature of the former PRL and the role of those who sentenced Colonel in absentia, those who occupied leadership positions in the country?\textsuperscript{505}

Aware that Kuklinski’s heroism proved itself in the context of Poland’s legal system and the history, the followers tend to reminisce the Communist past of Poland. Inevitably then, they often change their rhetoric. While in 1992 Gelberg claimed that Kuklinski’s heroism, or wallenrodism as he approached it, required “admiration and respect” in contrasts to those who betrayed Poland namely, the Communist leadership, in 1998 Gelberg tends to portray Kuklinski as a “triumphant” figure whose act proved to be exceptional in the context of the years of failure launched by the Communists.\textsuperscript{506} Therefore, Gelberg’s post Cold War view of Kuklinski underlines his patriotism in contrast to the oppressive nature of the former PRL. For Gelberg, Kuklinski is a hero whose acts were justified by the fall of Communism.

\textsuperscript{502} Lech Falandysz, “Opinia” (Opinion), Przegląd Tygodniowy, 1 Oct 1997, 2.
\textsuperscript{503} Andrzej Gelberg, “Honor Polskiego Oficera,” (Honor of the Polish Officer), Tygodnik Solidarność, 19(503)1998, 4
\textsuperscript{504} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{505} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{506} Andrzej Gelberg, “Pułkownik Kukliński” (Colonel Kuklinski), Tygodnik Solidarność, 40(2 Oct 1992), 5; see also Maciej Łukasiewicz, ed., Sprawa pułkownika Kuklińskiego; Bohater czy zdrajca; fakty i dokumenty (The Case of Colonel Kuklinski; Hero or Traitor; Facts and Documents), 186-188.
Similarly to Gelberg, other Polish journalists recognize Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of the fall of Communism and they attempt to find recognition for their hero in the Polish history. For example, Barbara Niemiec commented:

The long journey full of suffering, journey to the sovereign nation of this soldier, as he often calls himself, was written in the history of Poland’s endeavors for the sovereign nation.\textsuperscript{507}

Using the same symbolic rhetoric, another journalist named Krzysztof Piesiewicz portrays Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of his personal drama. He states:

Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski returned to Poland. This journey to his homeland was long and it was affected by the martial law, the suffering of many Poles, and a constant faith that the Poles would be able to reach independence.\textsuperscript{508}

Similar nostalgia concerning Kuklinski’s heroism surfaces in the comments made by two journalists: Maria Szczęśniak and Małgorzata Kuźma. Szczęśniak describes Kuklinski’s visit in Katowice, in Southern Poland, in May 1998. Kuklinski paid homage to the Polish miners from the coal mine “Wujek” who were shot by Militia Obywatelska on 16 Dec 1981. In the eyes of Szczęśniak, Kuklinski is a hero who pays tribute to other Polish heroes who were murdered for their attempts to oppose the Communist regime.\textsuperscript{509} On the other hand, Kuźma reports the memorable moment in Kuklinski’s life, when he received the honorary citizenship of the city of Gdańsk to emphasize his accomplishments. The meaning of Kuklinski’s visit to Gdańsk is enormous because of the Solidarity movement which was initiated in the Gdańsk shipyard.\textsuperscript{510} Both Szczęśniak and Kuźma, present Kuklinski’s heroism in a symbolic context. Kuklinski is a hero who pays tribute to other Polish heroes who were murdered for their opposition to Communism. And Kuklinski’s heroism is enthusiastically acclaimed and his figure generates the

\textsuperscript{508} Krzysztof Piesiewicz, “Odwaga” (Courage), Tygodnik Solidarność, 19(8 May 1998), 5.
\textsuperscript{509} Maria Szczęśniak, “W hołdzie bohaterom” (Tribute to the Heros), Tygodnik Solidarność, 19(8 May 1998), 5.
\textsuperscript{510} Małgorzata Kuźma, “Po honory i jacht” (To Receive Honors and A Boat), Tygodnik Solidarność, 19(8 May 1998), 5.
respect of his fellow Poles. In conclusion, the historic visit of Kuklinski to Poland in May 1998 inspired among his followers more steadfast view of his heroism. Kuklinski’s proponents use some symbolic language to find a place for their hero in the Polish history and portray Kuklinski as a national hero. Moreover, the journalists engage the post Cold War rhetoric. They attempt to reach out to Poland’s Communist past in order to reconcile it with the present democratic developments. Krzysztof Piesiewicz comments that Kuklinski’s visit is “an opportunity to enlarge the area in which we feel all together…this visit demands courage from those who received an opportunity to follow the truth and normality in a peaceful way,” namely those who were active under Communism.  

Similar post Cold War rhetoric of that period emerges in the pronouncement of Józef Szaniawski. In his interview with Tomasz Gdula, Szaniawski evaluates with a decade’s hindsight the validity of Kuklinski’s heroism. He states: “the time works for Kuklinski, as Leszek Miller said sometime ago in the interview on the radio and I agree with his opinion. Today even the people such as Jaruzelski cannot say that the Soviet Union was the best state in the world and that Poland was sovereign back then.” The fall of the Soviet empire is the predominant proof for Szaniawski to vindicate Kuklinski and to prove his heroism. According to Szaniawski, an essential merit of Kuklinski’s heroism was that Kuklinski informed the Americans “not only about the weaknesses of the Soviet Army in Europe, but also all the weak points of the NATO forces in Europe.” In the eyes of Szaniawski, Kuklinski’s mission has been accomplished and the Americans rewarded him accordingly. Szaniawski underlines the virtues of Kuklinski, such as modesty, loyalty, and patriotism. Kuklinski proved himself to the Polish society and his

---

511 Krzysztof Piesiewicz, “Odwaga” (Courage), 5.
513 Ibid.
heroism is widely accepted. Szaniawski comments that “today there is only a small group of people” who disapprove of Kuklinski in the Polish society. The Poles adopted Kuklinski as their hero.\textsuperscript{514}

In general, the end of the second period of formulating the pronouncements of Kuklinski by his Polish followers can be characterized with an apparent conviction that Kuklinski’s heroism has been widely accepted within the Polish society. Kuklinski emerges as a national hero who is rightfully awarded by the Americans. His nostalgic visit in Poland adds to the recognition of his heroism within the wide circles of the Polish society. In contrast to the first phase in which Kuklinski’s followers aimed to provide an apology of his heroism in the perspective of the fall of Communism, the rhetoric of Kuklinski’s followers in the second phase focuses on Kuklinski’s heroism as supported by the current democratic developments. Thus, Kuklinski’s followers in the second phase launch an effort to acclaim Kuklinski as a national hero and write his name in the history of Poland.

On 10 February 2004 Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski died in Tampa after a stroke.\textsuperscript{515} The death of Colonel Kuklinski started a new phase of formulating the pronouncements of his heroism. In this phase, Kuklinski’s proponents reevaluate his accomplishments in the context of his life. Also, they make an attempt to define his national hero stature. The dynamics of that period extends from the initial eulogies at Kuklinski’s funeral in Poland to a transition of the post Cold war rhetoric to more moderate opinions of Kuklinski’s instrumental role as a CIA collaborator.

The official celebration of Kuklinski’s funeral took place on 19 June 2004 in the Polish Army Cathedral in Warsaw. The supporters of Kuklinski respond to that event with either a

\textsuperscript{514} Ibid.
nostalgic reflection about Kuklinski’s heroism or they romanticize his accomplishments. Ewa Stawicka, a Polish poet wrote: “You are with us. The world cannot be changed by the force, laud cry, and despair, but with imagination.”\textsuperscript{516} With similar nostalgic rhetoric about Kuklinski as a great national figure who helped change the course of the world history, Bishop Sławoj Leszek Głódź, a Polish Army Bishop, glorified Kuklinski’s heroism. He focused on four crucial elements of the national debate over Kuklinski. First, he referred to Kuklinski’s return to the place of his birth. He said: “this part of Warsaw in which we are here today, is the world where he lived as a child, we remember it with nostalgia and deep feelings.”\textsuperscript{517} Second, Głódź also connects the debate over Kuklinski to a debate over most recent Polish history. He comments:

It is a debate about that period of Polish history, which one could expect would end in 1989. Yet, what happened before has not been finalized. It is a debate about Poland whose character and future were declared in Yalta.\textsuperscript{518}

In his perspective, the caliber of Kuklinski’s heroism parallels the answer to the question asked by Głódź: “Can disloyal activity against the state be loyal toward the nation?”\textsuperscript{519} Thus, Głódź suggests that Kuklinski’s heroism should be moved to the level of “a dilemma between forced loyalty and individual conscience.”\textsuperscript{520} Kuklinski chose to serve his nation. And his mission was to help the better future of the Polish nation. The second point of Głódź correlates with two next ideas. Głódź emphasizes Kuklinski’s heroism as a way to serve the future of Poland. Therefore, according to Głódź there is no apparent difference between Kuklinski’s loyalty and morality of his act. Kuklinski chose to oppose the Soviet oppression and his collaboration with the CIA is fully reconciled by the suffering of his fellow Poles. Fourthly, Kuklinski’s heroism expressed in

\textsuperscript{516} Ewa Stawicka, “Pułkownikowie” (Colonels), \textit{Kurier}, 23-25 July 2004, 28.
\textsuperscript{517} Sławoj Leszek Głódź, “Współczesny Wallenrod” (Contemporary Wallenrod), \textit{Kurier}, 23-25 July 2004, 28
\textsuperscript{518} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{519} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{520} Ibid.
his love to his nation was purified by his personal sacrifice. In the broad context of all who endured suffering under the oppressive Communist system, Głódź concludes:

May the life and the act of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski become an inspiration to reflect upon how many sacrifices, struggles, human drama, and difficult decisions, the love of the nation entails.

Similar pathos characterizes the pronouncement of the leader of the International Union of the Homeland Army Soldiers, Colonel Stanisław Karolkiewicz. Similarly to Głódź, Karolkiewicz engages post Cold War rhetoric, yet he speaks much more emphatically. For example, defining the caliber of Kuklinski’s heroism and the dangers Kuklinski could possibly face, he comments:

In the period which is still so alive in the memory, the period of stupefying and criminal ideology, when the plans were made to conquer and subject the whole world to that ideology…You, Colonel Kuklinski were the only one who had courage to undertake this most difficult and risky act...

Thus, emphasizing Kuklinski’s heroism and its exceptional character, Karolkiewicz portrays Kuklinski as national hero who deserves the highest recognition for his act. In the eyes of Karolkiewicz, Kuklinski should be remembered for his loyalty to the nation and personal sacrifice.

Yet, the pathos of the eulogies over the grave of Kuklinski shifts to another level of perception of his heroism. In the popular view, Kuklinski’s heroism is taken for granted. And indeed it withstood the test of the Communist era. Yet, his heroic act does not have personality attached to it. Therefore, the need to portray Kuklinski on a personal basis was undertaken by Maria Nurowska. In her novel entitled Mój przyjaciel zdrajca [My Friend Traitor], Nurowska familiarizes Kuklinski’s followers with his friendly personality. Nurowska portrays Kuklinski as a courageous and ordinary officer who had his dreams, desires, and ambitions. Kuklinski is a

521 Ibid.
family person and a devoted and understanding father. He is a loving husband and his wife, Hanka understands that even though he meets with other women, he never betrays her. Kuklinski is also an exceptional and brilliant officer. He was very talented map sketcher. His decision to collaborate with the Americans developed steadily. Kuklinski realized the nonsense of the Communist system and the oppressive character of the Soviet dominion, therefore; he decided to act on his own. He was worried about his family, yet the love for his homeland prevailed.

Besides familiarizing the public with Kuklinski’s warm personality, Nurowska attempts to define the caliber of Kuklinski’s heroism and its legacy in the world perspective. In her novel, Kuklinski comments:

> Our national tragedy is that the West, the Americans, because they are the most important for us, cannot discern on their own, do not understand the Soviet soul. And this will always have far reaching consequences, because the more they fondle the Russian bear, the louder it will roar.\(^{523}\)

Interestingly, the antipathy to the Soviets turned to Kuklinski’s distrust to President Vladimir Putin. Kuklinski comments:

> The West is already raising a new generalissimo in the person of Putin, but this is not my concern. I have finished my war with the Soviets. Another Kuklinski is needed?\(^{524}\)

Thus, Kuklinski’s heroism serves as an inspiration to others to undertake a lonely fight against any oppressive ideology.

The affable temperament of Kuklinski characterized by Nurowska is supplemented with a fundamental work of Józef Szaniawski. One of the most knowledgeable scholars on the figure of Kuklinski, Szaniawski solidifies the position of Kuklinski among the greatest Polish heroes. Szaniawski does not change his perception of Kuklinski here. In each of the four editions of his popular book entitled *Pułkownik Kukliński: Wywiady, opinie, dokumenty* [Colonel Kuklinski:\


\(^{524}\) Ibid.
Interviews, Opinions, Documents], Szaniawski updates the public opinion with current discoveries. Similarly to his American counterpart, Benjamin Weiser, Szaniawski recognizes Kuklinski’s heroism ad hoc and his position on Kuklinski does not change. His dogmatic approach to his hero closes the chapter on Kuklinski in the Polish debate. And it features a solid explanation of his life, accomplishments, and motives to collaborate with the CIA. In the eyes of Szaniawski, Kuklinski was “next to Oleg Pienkovski, the most important intelligence source during the entire period of the Cold War, who fought against the Soviet Communist evil empire.”\textsuperscript{525} Justifying Kuklinski’s heroism, Szaniawski points out that “the intelligence is either good or bad in itself. Everything depends on what purpose and whom it serves.”\textsuperscript{526} In this way, he justifies Kuklinski as a fighter for the just cause, namely to save his homeland from the atomic holocaust planned by the Soviets.

Szaniawski provides an extensive characteristics and explanation of Kuklinski’s heroism. In the eyes of Szaniawski, Kuklinski is Poland’s national hero who can be characterized with a deep sense of loyalty. Kuklinski was faithful to his wife, Hanka, even though he often picked up female coworkers whom he took outside of his office in the General Staff to reach the drop off place in the forest on the outskirts of Warsaw. He was also faithful to his military oath. Kuklinski betrayed his comrades in the Soviet and Polish military circles, yet he did not betray his homeland.\textsuperscript{527}

Besides his loyalty, Szaniawski defines Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of his personal drama. Both of his sons died in unclear circumstances. Yet, despite this affliction, Kuklinski’s heroism motivated him to sacrifice his life for his homeland. Szaniawski points out that there

\textsuperscript{526} Ibid., 10
\textsuperscript{527} Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author, Recorded in the Old Town, Warsaw, 21 July 2006
were several motives of Kuklinski’s collaboration with the CIA. First, he was a patriot. Kuklinski believed that Poland was occupied by the Soviet Union. The Second World War did not end in 1945; it extended for the duration of the Soviet dominion in Poland. Kuklinski was aware that the Soviets located on the Polish territory the Soviet nuclear weapons and Poland could be targeted in case of the nuclear conflict. The second inspiration was the Warsaw Pact invasion on Czechoslovakia in 1968. And the third was the involvement of the Polish People’s Army to suppress the protesting civilians and striking workers in Gdańsk, Bydgoszcz, and Elblag in 1970. What shocked Kuklinski was that the soldiers who were supposed to protect the civilians from the enemy killed over 500 innocent people in the streets of these Polish cities. Kuklinski believed that the Americans could make use of the material he would channel to them in order to help protect his fellow citizens from the Soviet dominion.\(^{528}\)

Szaniawski emphasizes that Kuklinski “did not think that he was a hero, though, he was proud that he broke the skeleton of the Soviet marshals without shooting any bullets.”\(^{529}\) As a hero, Kuklinski was afraid of being captured. Yet, this fear simply made him more careful. He paid attention to all details when collecting evidence, so that he would not make any foolish move. He was depleted near the end of his work, because he always lived under incredible stress. He was afraid of the torture. Kuklinski often repeated: “they would make a monkey out of me. They can make me say some stupid things on TV.”\(^{530}\) For the last three years before his escape from Poland, he always carried a capsule filled with potassium-cyanide in case he was captured.

In America, Kuklinski missed Poland. He could not understand that Communism fell and he was not able to return to a free Poland. No one was able to help him to visit Poland. His homeland was precious to him. Being able to visit his homeland in 1998 though, Kuklinski was satisfied.

\(^{528}\) Ibid.
\(^{529}\) Józef Szaniawski, Interview by the Author
\(^{530}\) Ibid.
that his heroic act found its fulfillment. Poland was free from the Soviet oppression and he was able to return to an independent and free homeland for the first time in his life. Thus, in the eyes of Szaniawski, Kuklinski’s heroic mission has been accomplished.\footnote{Ibid.}

While Szaniawski closes the chapter on Kuklinski’s heroism, Radosław Sikorski, current Minister of Foreign Affairs in Poland, alters his accomplishments on another level. Sikorski underlines the change of the mind set in the present political elites in Poland. When he was named Minister of Homeland Security in 2005, he faced a strong post Communist environment in his resort. Sikorski comments:

\begin{quote}
In 1992, the higher ranking members of staff considered him [Kuklinski] as a traitor, now the Chief of the General Staff came to the opening of Kuklinski’s museum in the Old Town in Warsaw as a free will gesture, and I suppose, without a political mercenary.\footnote{Radosław Sikorski, \textit{Strefa zdekomunizowana: Wywiad z Radkiem Sikorskim} (De-Communized Zone: An Interview with Radek Sikorski), interview by Łukasz Warzecha, (AMF: Warsaw, 2007), 142.}
\end{quote}

In a spectacular way, Sikorski captures the post Cold War mentality change in the opinion makers of Kuklinski. He comments:

\begin{quote}
The more Poland feels among its Western allies, and the effects of the Communist brain wash disappear, Kuklinski is less often considered a foreign spy, and more often as ‘the first Polish officer in NATO.’\footnote{Ibid., 144}
\end{quote}

The post Communist changes among the opinion makers influence their pronouncements on Kuklinski. These changes allow that Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski “was buried in Poland with military honors. He will join Claus von Stauffenberg in the pantheon of the tragic heroes who betrayed their own state to save their nation.”\footnote{Ibid.} This shift in the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s followers allows them to discover the full scale of Kuklinski’s heroism and translate it into Poland’s new reality.

\begin{footnotes}
\footnotetext{Ibid.}
\footnotetext{Radosław Sikorski, \textit{Strefa zdekomunizowana: Wywiad z Radkiem Sikorskim} (De-Communized Zone: An Interview with Radek Sikorski), interview by Łukasz Warzecha, (AMF: Warsaw, 2007), 142.}
\footnotetext{Ibid., 144}
\footnotetext{Ibid.}
\end{footnotes}
In conclusion, the third period of formulating the pronouncements about Kuklinski’s heroism in the Polish circles can be characterized as that of a slow transformation of the post Cold War mentality of the proponents. The scale of the dynamics of this shift can be observed in the context of the initial eulogies proclaimed at Kuklinski’s grave in the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw in 2004 and the remarks of Sikorski which underline the de-Communization process in Poland’s governing elites. In the initial stage, Kuklinski’s followers recollect his heroism in the context of his patriotism and return to the Communist past to uncover Kuklinski’s personal drama caused by the Communist oppression. The post Cold War rhetoric still penetrates the minds of his followers, since they view Kuklinski as a lonely hero who fought against the evil empire. Simultaneously, Kuklinski the hero is presented to the public as a friendly and ordinary person who sacrificed his life to save his homeland from the atomic holocaust and the Soviet oppression. The justification for his hero standing is based on the notion that Kuklinski betrayed the state to save his fellow countrymen. Thus, Kuklinski’s followers solidify his national hero standing. The transition in the perception of Kuklinski parallels the change of the political elites in Poland, as explained by Radosław Sikorski.

The shift in perception of Kuklinski’s heroism in the third phase developed gradually. This alteration was influenced by the two previous periods before Kuklinski’s death in 2004. However, it is important to emphasize that Kuklinski’s proponents in Poland differ from their American counterparts who accept Kuklinski’s hero of the Cold War status ad hoc. Yet, the American followers develop the notion of Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of his contribution to end the Cold War. On the contrary, their Polish counterparts slowly foster the notion of Kuklinski’s heroism on the platform of his national hero recognition, eventually overlooking his contribution to end the Cold War. For example, in the first phase which embraces the time
between the fall of Communism to Kuklinski’s vindication in 1997, the proponents of Kuklinski aim to provide an apologetic view of his merits and accomplishments, thus, they nurture a response to the accusers of Kuklinski, who stigmatize him as a traitor and an American spy. In that period, Kuklinski’s proponents emphasize his role to end the Soviet oppression in Poland and elsewhere. As a result, Kuklinski is perceived first of all as the hero of the Cold War era, and secondly as a Polish patriot. In the second phase, namely, the time between 1997 and Kuklinski’s death in 2004, the followers extend the caliber of his hero standing and they emphasize a national recognition for Kuklinski. Thus, besides Szaniawski’s claim that Kuklinski is the hero of the Cold War, he is also recognized as Poland’s Wallenrod. Consequently, the enthusiasts of Kuklinski’s heroism dwell on the notion that his stature is fully accepted within the Polish society. Therefore, they aim to solidify and personalize their memory of Kuklinski and make it accessible for the broad public in Poland. As a result of this alteration in the development of the memory of Kuklinski’s heroism, the proponents of Kuklinski aim to deal with Poland’s most recent past in the context of Kuklinski’s accomplishments. And they avoid engaging the moral context of the hero-traitor debate. An example of this disassociation with that debate and the post Cold War rhetoric is the newly released film about Colonel Kuklinski entitled Gry wojenne[War Games] produced by Dariusz Jabłoński and shown in January 2009 in Poland. The film presents the memory of Kuklinski as recorded by his opponents and followers and it inspires the public to recognize the caliber of Kuklinski’s heroism.

Both the American and Polish enthusiasts of Kuklinski established grounds for his heroism, yet their perception lacks an explicit defense stipulating the extent to which Kuklinski’s files helped to change the course of world events. The American enthusiasts argue that his files

535 “Powstał film o płk Kuklińskim” (The Movie about Colonel Kuklinski Was Made) Nowy Dziennik, 9 Dec 2008, 3; see also Antoni Dudek, “Układ Jaruzelskiego” (The Jaruzelski Pact), Wprost, 50(14 Dec 2009), 127.
helped the American government to assess the location of the Soviet military prior to the imposition of the martial law in 1981 and any potential Soviet invasion. The revelation of developments in Poland was disruptive to the Polish Communist leadership, as Weiser argues. The materials sent to the CIA were used by the American government to prevent the possibility of the bloody confrontation between Solidarity and the Polish People’s Army. Yet, the enthusiasts of Kuklinski do not specify to what extent the American government interfered in the Polish crisis. Robert Gates acknowledges the importance of Kuklinski files and evaluates them in the context of the “global shadow of tension between the superpowers,” but Douglas MacEachin argues that Kuklinski’s reports were assessed by the CIA in chronological order and thus were never examined comprehensively by the CIA. Therefore, it is doubtful that the CIA fully used Kuklinski files to affect the developments in the Polish crisis because the Americans simply lacked a thorough view.

On the other hand, the American supporters of Kuklinski specifically point out his influence on the course of world history. For example, Zbigniew Brzezinski was more explicit in his comments. He suggested that Kuklinski files helped the American government to use political pressure to curb the Soviet influence in Eastern Europe, resulting in the failure of the Soviets to invade Poland in 1980–81. Brzezinski also contended that Kuklinski files helped Americans to have direct access to the Soviet military technologies and strategies in the 1970’s armed race.

---

536 David C. Martin, “A Polish Agent in Place,” Newsweek, 20 Dec 1982, 49
538 Robert M. Gates, From the Shadows, 231
540 Zbigniew Brzezinski, “Ryszard Kuklinski dobrze zasłużył się Polsce,” (Ryszard Kuklinski Contributed a Great Deal for Poland), Rzeczpospolita, 235 (6 Oct 1992), 10
For the Polish supporters of Kuklinski, his impact on the course of world events in 1980-81 is only secondary. This is because the Polish debate focuses primarily on proving the case of Kuklinski’s heroism. Therefore, the Polish perspective focuses on viewing Kuklinski as a hero whose accomplishments do not need verification. Szaniawski compares Kuklinski to Oleg Pienkovski and in his abrupt statements emphasizes that Kuklinski prevented the atomic holocaust in Poland. Yet, Szaniawski also emphasizes the fact that back in 1985 during the U.S.-Soviet summit in Reykjavik, the Americans used the Kuklinski files to convince the Soviets about their thorough knowledge concerning the Soviet bunkers in Poland prepared for the worst case scenario of a third world war.\textsuperscript{541} In effect, Leszek Głódź eulogizes Kuklinski for his accomplishments which changed the course of world history.\textsuperscript{542}

Above all, both the American and Polish pronouncements of Kuklinski’s heroism essentially differ, even though both parties grant a full recognition to their hero. This difference can be observed in the hermeneutics of Kuklinski’s heroism as exemplified by both parties. While the American supporters of Kuklinski acknowledge his hero status a priori, the Polish supporters simultaneously develop the notions of Kuklinski as a hero of the Cold War and a Polish patriot. The American supporters develop their apology of Kuklinski’s heroism in the post Cold War context which defined Kuklinski as the ‘first Polish officer in NATO,’ who supplied the Americans with an insider’s perspective on the Soviet empire and the developments in Poland’s military elites. Furthermore, the American followers measure the caliber of Kuklinski’s heroism with the value of the files he funneled to the CIA as demonstrated by Mark Kramer. They also emphasize his dramatic mission to end the Soviet dominion as viewed by Benjamin Fisher and Benjamin Weiser. In addition, they show the greatness of Kuklinski’s heroism in the

\textsuperscript{542} Sławoj Leszek Głódź, “Współczesny Wallenrod” (Contemporary Wallenrod), \textit{Kurier}, 23-25 July 2004, 28
context of his contribution to the ‘free world’. On the contrary, the Polish supporters initially discuss Kuklinski’s heroism in the context of Poland’s national identity, Communist past and the notion of the wallenrodism. They are preoccupied to find the arguments to vindicate their hero in the eyes of the public opinion and to provide an apology of his heroism to neo-Communists. Józef Szaniawski acclaims his Cold War hero who made a right decision as an Army officer to end the Soviet dominion in his peculiar way. On the other hand, Kuklinski’s heroism emerges on a national scene. His nostalgic visit to Poland in 1998 adds to the recognition of his heroism in the public opinion in Poland. Kuklinski’s name is written in the most recent Polish history.

Another difference is the moral context of Kuklinski’s heroism. While the American followers of Kuklinski generally avoid engaging the hero-traitor dispute, the Polish proponents are forced to address the issue directly. For Szaniawski, the Americans do not have any reason to argue about Kuklinski, since they are detached from the political dispute and they can approach his heroism from their perspective.543 On the contrary the Polish followers will always oscillate between two extreme points which require a moral dispute. One is Kuklinski’s statement: “I believe that there is no case of Kuklinski at all. There is only a question what Poland and to whom it belongs?”544 And the other point was made by Jaruzelski: “If we return the recognition, honors and justify Kuklinski – it means that we are without recognition, honor – and it is us who are guilty.”545 Therefore, the Polish followers of Kuklinski’s heroism are forced to engage the moral context of the traitor-hero dispute, yet they can also rise above the moral and political context of Kuklinski’s patriotism. And they can approach Kuklinski’s heroism from the

544 Józef Szaniawski, Pułkownik Kukliński: Misja Polska (Colonel Kuklinski: The Polish Mission), 1
545 Ibid.
perspective of his standing as the first Polish Army officer in the NATO forces, as their American counterparts did.
CONCLUSION: COLONEL RYSZARD KUKLINSKI. MISSION ACCOMPLISHED
AMIDST NEVERENDING DEBATE

Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski indeed accomplished his mission. He fulfilled his self-defined duty to inform the free world about the Soviet plans for invasion of Western Europe and the preparations of martial law in Poland in 1981 with the potential direct intervention of the Soviet Army. However, contemporary research is not yet sufficient to determine convincingly the extent to which the CIA used the information which he supplied. Even though the current Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radoslaw Sikorski, presented in 2005 some 1700 documents revealing the strategic plans of the Soviet Union to invade Western Europe and its consequences to Poland, no one can verify that these were in fact the real intentions of the Soviet leadership in the late 1970’s. Kuklinski himself maintained on more than one occasion that the Soviets planned this invasion and that it was real, the factual verification of these plans appears impossible today. In the same way, the likely American response to a Soviet attack on Western Europe might be only guessed. The available Kuklinski files suggest that there was a possibility of the Soviets invading Poland in the months prior to the imposition of martial law in 1981 in Poland. However, it is unclear to what degree Kuklinski files in fact influenced the course of world history before and after the fall of Communism.

Nonetheless, enthusiasts of Kuklinski such as Szaniawski and Weiser argue that his files provided the CIA and the American government with enormous insight into the situation of the Polish crisis in 1980-81 and the Soviet military technology and strategies. Critics of Kuklinski such as Urban and Jaruzelski emphasize that the information he gave to the CIA was of no value. Americans did not act on Kuklinski’s warning either to prevent the imposition of martial law in Poland or to inform Solidarity about upcoming developments in 1981. Therefore, both the critics
and enthusiasts of Kuklinski express their opinions with strongly contrasting perspectives on his efforts in the West.

The hero–traitor debate, as it originated in the late 1980s, is still reflected in the social memory on both sides of the Atlantic. Amidst the seemingly unending discussion of Kuklinski which involves the moral and political implications of his spying, the lines of debate in fact distort Kuklinski’s image and the legacy of his mission. Kuklinski realized that fact back in 1994, when he commented:

I would like to emphasize that in the hero–traitor debate swung by the native post-Communist left something more important is at stake than my person which does not matter much nowadays…In a debate which involves such extreme judgments, I cannot find myself.  

Stymied by the complexity of the debate, Kuklinski was provoked by the vagaries of public opinion to reveal his personal dilemma. Glorified as a great patriot by some or stigmatized as a traitor of the nation by others, Kuklinski deeply believed that he did everything he could for his homeland. Kuklinski’s opponents comment:

Today’s knowledge about the real activity of Kuklinski allows us to say only one thing despite of his ideological and non materialistic texture. For more than ten years Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski – officer of the Polish General Staff – supplied the American intelligence service some secret information of the military value.

The lack of thorough knowledge about Kuklinski—and his motives—has too often reinforced hasty conclusions.

On the contrary, Kuklinski’s defenders eagerly acclaim him as a great patriot of the Cold War era, a true Polish and American patriot. They romanticize his figure and portray Kuklinski in the context of the national drama of the Polish People’s Republic. Tomasz Lis once referred to

546 Ryszard Kukliński, “Mówi płk Kukliński” (Colonel Kuklinski Speaks), interview by Marta Miklaszewska, Tygodnik Solidarność, 325(9 Dec 1994), 1
Kuklinski as a Shakespearian dramatic persona, explaining: “Shakespearian in the sense of participating in the incredible drama which was the PRL and which was also the fight of the Poles to become independent.”

Polish journalist Andrzej Brzezicki stated:

> It is amazing that knowing so little about Ryszard Kuklinski, we are ready to come forward with such single minded opinions. The perception of Colonel Kuklinski mission parallels to some extent our perception of the individual in the history context and our view of what was the nature of the PRL.

Kuklinski himself remarked in Kraków in 1998 that [since] his “mission undertaken many years ago came to an end,” the continuing debate over his accomplishments forces the public to take a stand or simply keep silent.

In this conclusion to my dissertation, I would like to underline three points emerging from my research. First, considering the analyzed sources and the pronouncements of Kuklinski and his commentators, there is a need to formulate a new perception of Kuklinski. This new perspective requires viewing the meaning of his mission in the context of his personal memory of his accomplishments, juxtaposed with the post Cold War outlooks of his critics and his enthusiasts as demonstrated in the three chapters of this dissertation. In a common perception, Kuklinski is presented either as a hero or traitor without any attempts to achieve a comprehensive view of his figure and his accomplishments. The second point concerns the alterations of the individual memory of Kuklinski and the social memory of him produced by figures debating his actions. The shifts in the memory parallel the changing geo-political circumstances in the world after the fall of Communism and alter the meaning of Kuklinski’s mission. The third point underlines the venues in which the post Cold War mentality affected the

---

549 Andrzej Brzezicki, “Pytania bez odpowiedzi” (The Questions with No Answer), Tygodnik Powszechny 8(22 Feb 2004), 4
550 Marek Strzała, “Nie chcę już stąd wyjeżdzać” (I Do Not want To Leave Here), Tygodnik Solidarność, 19(10 May 1998), 9.
memory of Kuklinski as expressed in Poland’s divergent views to the extent of propelling the myth of Kuklinski’s heroism. On the basis of the weaknesses of the popular perceptions, I suggest a new approach to Kuklinski.

In the popular perception Kuklinski is viewed either as a hero or a traitor, with some few commentators who refrain from taking any public stand. One of the greatest weaknesses of this perception is that it fails to consider Kuklinski’s mission from the broad perspective of the post Cold War outlooks. Kuklinski’s act is either rejected or approved in the court of public opinion as expressed in the popular slogans or pronouncements. Polish commentators formulate their moral judgments in the context of the popular slogans. The popular debate over Kuklinski’s spying is dynamic, yet it generates three different perspectives on Kuklinski’s mission involving Kuklinski himself, his critics, and his adherents. In the popular view, each perspective of Kuklinski takes on separate status. There is no effort to point out any trajectories or parallels. Among many examples of the popular perception of Kuklinski is the work of Józef Szaniawski entitled Samotna Misja: Pułkownik Kukliński i Zimna Wojna (Lonely Mission: Colonel Kuklinski and the Cold War). In preparing this comprehensive work, Szaniawski compiled a great range of information: the views of both Kuklinski’s apologists and critics, his and others’ interviews with Kuklinski, official documents regarding the case, and other important pieces on the colonel. However, Szaniawski’s study does not draw connections between the loose pieces of information and sporadic comments.

In a different approach, this dissertation advances a new perspective which views Kuklinski in the context of his personal mission as challenged by his critics and reinforced by his adherents. One of the greatest advantages of viewing Kuklinski in a broad post Cold War perspective is that it requires perceiving the figure of Kuklinski in a juncture of his individual
memory with the social memory of his opponents and his admirers. The new perspective disqualifies the old limitations of viewing Kuklinski either as a hero or a traitor. Rather, it invites viewing Kuklinski in the context of his personal memory juxtaposed with the memory of his commentators. The new perspective refrains from engaging the political or ideological influences as developed by the Cold War scenario. Instead, it facilitates the post Cold War mentalities of the viewers of Kuklinski and it demonstrates the dangers of distorting the meaning of Kuklinski’s spying and its real impact on the course of world history.

From this new vantage point, Kuklinski is perceived as a Polish and American iconographic hero of the Cold War era whose growing distrust of the Communist regime inspired him to undertake a lonely, almost promethean fight for freedom from the Soviet dominion. I argued in the first chapter of this work that the meaning of Kuklinski’s action is shaped by his perception of the Soviet system as an enemy whom he aimed to fight based on his self-defined patriotic duty. Thus, Kuklinski’s memory of disillusionment with the Communist system in Poland imposed by the Soviets turned into his memory of a heroic mission which he defines as “a desperate attempt to establish an operational and military co-operation with the Americans” since he does not consider it “a spy activity.” In an attempt to justify his endeavor, Kuklinski explained that he accomplished his mission to see Poland free from the Soviet dominion. Upon his return to Poland in 1998, aware that Poland was accepted into NATO, Kuklinski exclaimed in Kraków: “My mission undertaken many years ago has come to an end. I can retire now.”

The meaning of Kuklinski’s undertaking, as reflected in his memory, is affected by two important events in his life. In his public pronouncements in 1998, Kuklinski reminiscences about his activity from the perspectives of the death sentence imposed on him by the Communist

---

551 Ryszard Kukliński, “Miłość żąda ofiary i wierności” (Love Calls for Sacrifice and Fidelity), published in Józef Szaniawski, Samotna Misja, 235
552 Marek Strzała, “Nie chcę już stąd wyjeżdzać” (I Don’t Want to Leave Here), 9
regime in Poland in 1984 and his official vindication in 1997 in Poland. The first event allows him to point out the validity of his cooperation with the Americans. The second event allows Kuklinski to see the sense of his risky action. While in his public pronouncements Kuklinski partially dwells on the information contained in the files he gave up to the Americans, his rhetoric changed steadily from apology for his acts to a triumphal and even prophetic justification of his acts to the Polish nation at the time of his visit in Poland in 1998.

Kuklinski’s memory of his act needs verification in the context of the social memory of his detractors, as I argued it in my second chapter. Their negative scrutiny of Kuklinski juxtaposes his action with the nature of the former PRL. Though considered a sovereign state, Poland remained under the Soviet dominion at least on the superficial level. After the fall of Communism the critics of Kuklinski maintain their old perceptions, portraying Kuklinski as an American spy and the traitor of the Polish nation and his spying as futile and criminal. The post Cold War mentalities of his critics inspire the opponents of Kuklinski to develop strategies of rejection of his action in the new democratic circumstances in Poland. Interestingly, while the Polish attackers intensify their efforts of rejection in the years between 1986 and 2004, the Russians lessen their disapproval. The critics of Kuklinski help to portray his action in the context of the nature of the former PRL and eventually compel Kuklinski to apologize, thus providing some strong arguments against the sovereignty of the former PRL.

In the third chapter, I argued that Kuklinski’s action, though rejected by his opponents, is fully acknowledged by his apologists who view the Communist past as an era of Poland being subservient to the Soviet regime. These Polish apologists provide a strong defense of Kuklinski in the 1990’s and (like the man himself) view his action consistently in a manner anticipating his vindication in 1998 and his death in 2004. The American supporters of Kuklinski acknowledge
his heroism *a priori* and attempt to raise the Kuklinski debate above the old Cold War mentality of division of the world between West and East and validate his act.

Besides clarifying the meaning of Kuklinski’s choice to collaborate, the new perspective on Kuklinski underlines the inner dynamic of the memory of Kuklinski and his commentators. The social memory of his opponents and enthusiasts fluctuates and alters the meaning of Kuklinski’s action, while his individual memory of his act also adjusts and corrects. Kuklinski’s critics initially focused on refuting the validity of Kuklinski’s action and rated his act as a crime against the Polish nation. This early memory altered to another level after the fall of Communism in 1990. Then, the critics aimed to discredit the loyalty and dignity of Kuklinski, suggesting that he was a double agent for the CIA and the KGB (as well as disloyal and untrustworthy). In the next alteration, the critics display their nostalgic view of the Communist past and contrast Kuklinski’s spying with the loyalty to the Polish nation. Although, Kuklinski’s accomplishments were validated in the eyes of the Polish law in 1997 on the grounds that he acted in a state of higher necessity, some critics such as Adam Michnik pointed out that Kuklinski was the source of confusion in the political life in Poland and his exoneration should be considered “an ambush of the political beatification.” Yet the memory of Kuklinski’s critics evolved again to the final stage, in which the critics basically agreed to view Kuklinski’s action in the perspective of his “spying” for the right cause without underlying the notions of the betrayal of the nation and disloyalty to the military oath. Another important shift in the memory of Kuklinski’s critics involves the progress from viewing Kuklinski as an American spy and traitor to sympathizing with his personal drama and a lack of self-identity, though discouraging future generations from dwelling on his example.

---

553 Adam Michnik, “Pułapka politycznej beatyfikacji” (An Ambush of the Political Beatification), *Gazeta Wyborcza*, 9-10 May 1998, 11
The alterations of the critics’ memory coincide with the alterations of Kuklinski’s individual memory and the memory of his enthusiasts. While Kuklinski’s memory of his cooperation with the Americans basically shifts due to his death sentence in 1984 and his vindication in 1997, the enthusiasts of Kuklinski revise their memory of his heroism much as his critics do. Therefore, Kuklinski’s view of his espionage oscillates between self-promotion of his action and self-vindication versus the prophetic fulfillment and the sense of accomplishment. The memory of Kuklinski’s enthusiasts developed a similar pattern as his critics’, differing in only a few essentials. The enthusiasts see Kuklinski’s heroism first as a patriotic act to save his native Poland. Then, they establish the grounds for his vindication (or take it for granted). Next, they reaffirm his loyalty and credibility—and finally view Kuklinski’s heroism in the global perspective of geo-political change in the world after the fall of Communism.

The alterations of the memory of Kuklinski himself, his critics and his enthusiasts—as demonstrated in their public pronouncements—ultimately change the meaning of Kuklinski’s mission. This is because they all focus on interpreting their perceptions of Kuklinski’s spying in the context of the political and moral implications of his act. Ultimately they lose their focus on the impact of his act on the geo-political change in the world after the fall of Communism, if indeed such existed. In the closing remarks to his major work *U.S. Intelligence and the Confrontation in Poland, 1980-1981*, Douglas J. MacEachin comments:

Rightly or wrongly, everything the United States claims to stand for would have compelled some effort to deter a plan to impose a military suppression of a popularly based movement seeking greater democracy and economic openness.  

MacEachin concludes that Kuklinski files were not “effectively employed” by the American administration or fully facilitated. The apparent discrepancy between the meaning of Kuklinski’s

---

spying in the context of the real effectiveness of the files he channeled to the CIA and the alterations of the memory of Kuklinski himself, his critics and his opponents adds to the futility of the popular perceptions of Kuklinski. The contrast also calls for the need for the new perception to focus on the importance of Kuklinski’s files in the context of the geo-political change in the world after the fall of Communism.

Finally, this new approach to Kuklinski clarifies and systemizes the perceptions of Kuklinski’s critics and enthusiasts in the context of the post Cold War mindset. I based my approach on the concept of lieux de memoire as developed by French historian Pierre Nora and his Polish counterpart Lech Nijakowski. Nijakowski adapted Nora’s theory to the reality of the political and social changes in Poland after the fall of Communism, arguing that the meaning of Kuklinski’s mission “was a logical consequence” of the individual and social memory in Poland’s political scenario after 1990.555 While the former collaborators with Poland’s Security Police were stigmatized after the fall of Communism, Kuklinski was exonerated. Similarly, Kuklinski is perceived by his critics as a traitor of the PRL who spied for the CIA before the fall of Communism, and a traitor of his nation after 1990. Kuklinski’s enthusiasts perceive him as a hero because he was employed by the CIA before the fall of Communism and a Polish and American hero of the Cold War era after 1990. In the Polish debate exclusively, Kuklinski is perceived as a real hero under Communism and a national hero with some patriotic connections to some important Romantic figures from Poland’s history such as Konrad Wallenrod.

The shifts in the perception of Kuklinski before and after the fall of Communism demonstrate the fluctuation of memory in the political context of the post Cold War era. Considering the current developments in Poland, Nijakowski argues that the politics of memory

inspires the cult of Romantic heroes. The need for new heroes in new social and political circumstances of Poland allows Kuklinski to become a national hero without considering a broad context of his accomplishments and the meaning of his mission. Besides Kuklinski, Nijakowski employs another example of the politics of memory in today’s Poland. He describes the observance of the 60th anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising in 2004 organized by former President Lech Kaczynski as propelling the cult of Romantic heroes similarly to Kuklinski. In his perspective, the politics of memory limits the ability of the scholars to look for answers whether the decision to begin the uprising against the NAZI occupants back in 1944 in Warsaw was in fact “an example of political irresponsibility.” Kuklinski’s glorification exemplifies a close correlation between memory and politics in a national context. Kuklinski’s vindication was conditioned by the new political climate in Poland after the fall of Communism. He is recognized as a hero because he fought against the Soviet regime to protect Poland from the Soviet aggression, as he defined it, and he also cooperated with the U.S. Being anti-Soviet and pro-American was an apparent means to break with the Communist past of Poland and to shape a new icon for a new reality. Yet, this justification for Kuklinski’s vindication in Poland requires looking for a broader context of political influence on national memory and asking some important questions.

For example, if Kuklinski was vindicated in Poland after the fall of Communism because he gave an example of fighting the Soviet regime, can similar justice be done to others who fought with the Soviets in different geo-political circumstances? I propose to consider the case of the Ukrainian insurgents during the Second World War. Can they be granted exoneration for their fight with the Soviet hegemony? In addition, can the crimes committed by the UPA (The

556 Ibid., 220.
557 Ibid., 222.
Ukrainian Insurgent Army) during WWII be justified in the current circumstances considering the patriotic motives and vivid national memory of the Ukrainian insurgents who fought against the Soviets, Poles, and the Nazis at the same time. In his book *Ukrainska partyzantka 1942-1960* (Ukrainian Insurgents 1942-1960) Grzegorz Motyka argues that the UPA considered the Russians and the Poles as their common occupant of their territory. Though the brutality of the warfare and the Polish cleansing leave the Polish-Ukrainian dialogue unresolved, the Ukrainians consider that period of time as “a regular warfare during which both sides committed crimes” and the Poles “look at that period in the context of crimes committed on the Polish populace.”

Even though the UPA insurgents fought against the Soviet regime, the proposal of former President Victor Yushchenko to reconcile both the former Soviet and UPA veterans and to award the letter with the veterans’ benefits was rejected. Yet, the UPA veterans were unofficially given some benefits and recognition because of their involvement in the warfare against the Soviets.

Considering the Ukrainian insurgents’ involvement in combating the Soviet hegemony in Ukraine, one might hastily conclude that they have earned these compensations, yet the politics of memory of the painful past prevents them from gaining the same rights as the Soviet veterans and justifying the crimes committed on defenseless civilians.

Similarly, the recognition of the figure of Kuklinski in the Polish scenario causes pain and protest of those who fought with Communism and have not been recognized as Kuklinski, such as Adam Michnik, or those who believed that Kuklinski was a traitor and expressed some strong arguments in support of their point, such as General Wojciech Jaruzelski and many others. It is essential to emphasize that Kuklinski was exonerated and made a national hero because of the politics of memory in the Polish society during the post Communism era. The recognition of

---

559 Ibid., 653.
Kuklinski by his American friends (as he often referred to the CIA) was an apparent result of the amount of information he gave up and his loyalty to the agency. In both cases, the memory of Kuklinski and his commentators undergoes a process of forgetting, in the sense that their memories are irrelevant to the course of world events. Thus, such memory becomes a national myth which focuses on the reacting to various events which did not or could not possibly occur. This perspective allows one to view Kuklinski as a mythical character who indeed spied for the CIA and whose accomplishments cannot be explicitly to determine whether they helped to change the course of events in the world or not. Similarly, Kuklinski’s commentators react to his figure without asking important questions regarding the real meaning of his spying. Instead, they become entangled in the sensational hero-traitor debate which does not help to verify the reality.

Aleida Assmann, a German scholar who wrote on the topic of the political memory of the German past, describes five strategies of ousting some painful memories from one’s awareness, thus creating an asymmetric perception of the past and memory expression as adopted in the German society. “Asymmetric” here means that the memory is deformed by an outside sensational or political influence. This asymmetric perception might result in individual memory which does not interfere with the overall scale of the political memory. She believes that human psyche allows one to create some self-defense mechanisms when faced with the feeling of guilt. These mechanisms are compensation, externalization, disconnection, silence, and misconstruction of the painful memory. The fluctuation of the political memory allows both the oppressors and the oppressed to engage one or all five strategies in order to move “the center

of gravity". This means that the process of forgetting the painful memories which hinder the rational expressions of the individual memory needs time to look at the past from a different perspective, while engaging with the facts. In this perspective, Colonel Kuklinski, his critics and enthusiasts disclose asymmetric perceptions, since all of them undergo memory lapses concerning their real past and allow the expressions of their memory to evolve in time in the post Cold War context after the fall of Communism. In consequence, the memory of Kuklinski and his commentators undergoes the process of forgetting, in the sense that their memory does not reflect the reality; in consequence, it becomes a myth.

Therefore, the concept of the post Cold War mentality of Kuklinski’s critics and enthusiasts as employed in my dissertation is a necessary tool to point out the weakness of the old perceptions of Kuklinski and to underline their asymmetric memory. Namely, most critics and enthusiasts of Kuklinski in their public pronouncements consider Kuklinski as an instrument of the CIA in the Polish People’s Army without considering his personal memory and the nature of the former PRL. In addition, both the critics and enthusiasts perceive Kuklinski as a pawn in the Cold War game between the West and the East casting moral judgments in accord with the political change in the world. Therefore, in the context of the post Cold War mentality, the critics of Kuklinski were influenced by the context of the two common accusations imposed on him, namely that he consciously chose to work against the interests of the Sovereign Polish state and that he betrayed the military oath. They aimed to prove their point by politicizing Kuklinski’s case. General Czesław Kiszczak commented that “Kuklinski was a classical example of the instrumental treatment of Poland by the United States.” In Kiszczak’s view, Poland was a sovereign state whose national interests were protected by the Soviet Union in contrast to the

561 Ibid., 348
562 Witold Bereś and Jerzy Skoczylas, General Kiszczak mówi (General Kiszczak Speaks) (Warsaw: Polska Oficyna Wydawnicza, 1991), 175
“evil empire,” namely the U.S. which pursued its own Eastern European policy. In addition, the critics employ the same method to point out the futility of his mission. Aware what Kuklinski might have possibly leaked to the West, Kiszczak concluded: “The Americans did not warn anyone.”

Supporters of Kuklinski, however, justify his spying as the right venue to end the Soviet dominion in Poland and elsewhere and to save Poland from the Soviet invasion. They claim that Kuklinski should be exonerated on the basis of his selfless alliance with the Americans perceived as Poland’s ally in the fight against the common enemy and view his accomplishments as a right cause to fight against the “evil empire,” namely the Soviet Union. Similarly to the critics, the enthusiasts of Kuklinski politicize his case by returning to the original question of the nature of the PRL. Szaniawski asks:

Was the Soviet Union our ally, which attacked Poland with an agreement of Hitler…? Was the United States our enemy, which used peaceful measures to aid to liberate Poland and its neighbors from the Soviet dominion…?

In conclusion, the post Cold War mentality as displayed by Kuklinski’s critics and enthusiasts frames the limits of their perceptions. It gives a foundation to a new approach to analyzing the accomplishments of Kuklinski and his place in history. It allows for the viewing of Kuklinski in the context of his own pronouncements, juxtaposed with the perspectives of his critics and enthusiasts. The debate over Kuklinski still exists, and it reflects the politization of his case. Unfortunately, some critics and enthusiasts of Kuklinski make their judgments in the context of their political affiliation. Some of them still cast moral judgments which either approve or disapprove of Kuklinski. Yet, the variety of opinions of Kuklinski depends on the reality of the

---

563 Ibid.
post Cold War era in which the debate will be continued as long as the idea of the East-West
demarcation lines of the Cold War lingers in the subconscious. In the new geo-political scenario
in Poland and elsewhere, Kuklinski should be acknowledged as the first unofficial Polish officer
in NATO and a figure of enormous courage.
Bibliography

Kuklinski files available on website www.foia.cia.gov:


“Tasks for National and Provincial Officials in Case of Increased Threat to Poland's Security” Intelligence Information Special Report FIRDB-312/00221-80. Feb 27, 1980


“Proposals on Introduction of a State of Martial Law in Poland” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00268-81 Jan 28, 1981


“Jaruzelski's Views on Polish Events, Military and Party Responses” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00269-81 Feb 13, 1981


“Ministry of Communications Preparation For Fulfillment of Tasks Under Special Conditions.” CIA Memorandum. FIRDB-312/00764-81 March 12, 1981

“Preparatory Work of the Minister of Domestic Trade and Services for a ‘Special Situation’” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00766-81 March 12, 1981

“Government Exercise in Connection with Possible Declaration of Martial Law” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00762-81 March 16, 1981
“Meeting of the National Defense Committee Held 12 November 1980” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00760-81 March 16, 1981

“Poland's Present Tense Internal Situation and Scenario of Events before and after Possible Introduction of Martial Law” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00763-81 March 16, 1981


“Comments on the Military Aspects of the Current Crisis in Poland” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00985-81 March 30, 1981

“Authority of Premier Jaruzelski as Minister of Defense” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00982-81 March 31, 1981

“Participants in Decision Making Exercise” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00995-81 Apr 1, 1981

“Soviet Reaction to Polish Proposals Regarding the Declaration of Martial Law” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/02056-81 Apr 2, 1981


“Polish-Soviet Accord on Soviet Armed Forces 'Temporarily' Stationed in Poland.” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/00996-81 Apr 21, 1981


“General Staff Plans in Preparation for Martial Law” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/02143-81 Jul 17, 1981

“Polish General Staff Evaluation of Soviet Military Presence and Activities in Poland and Jaruzelski and Polish Ministry of Defense Attitude” CIA Memorandum FIRDB 312-02264 July 17, 1981


“Martial Law in Poland” CIA Memorandum TS#815501 Aug 25, 1981


“New Draft Decree on Martial Law and Current Situation in Poland” CIA Memorandum FIRDB-312/02823-81 Sept 9, 1981


“Current Political Situation in Poland - 19 October.” *CIA Memorandum* FIRDB-312/03291-81 Oct 19, 1981


“Procedures for Interment of Polish Citizens” *CIA Memorandum* FIRDB-312/03273-81 Nov. 6, 1981


“Permit Regulations for Publications, Radio, TV, and Live Performances” *CIA Memorandum* FIRDB-312/03272-81 Nov 12, 1981


“Background to Present Situation in Poland and Possible Soviet Role” FIRDB-315/22804-81 Dec 21, 1981


“Cable - Possible Future Phases of Martial Law” *Intelligence Information Cable*. TDFIRDB-315/00301-82 Jan 8, 1982

“Cable - Contacts Between Polish Military and Politburo Officials” *Intelligence Information Cable*. TDFIRDB-315/01100-82. Jan 20, 1982

“Cable - Soviet Penetration of the Polish Military” *Intelligence Information Cable*. TDFIRDB-315/01528-82 Jan 25, 1982
“Cable - Soviet Pressure on Polish Leaders to Impose Martial Law” Intelligence Information Cable TDFIRDB-315/01627-82 Jan 27, 1982

“Cable - Measures Taken to Ensure the Reliability of Polish Conscripts.” Intelligence Information Cable TDFIRDB-315/01801-82. Jan 28, 1982

“Cable - Relationship Between the Polish Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of Internal Affairs.” Intelligence Information Cable TDFIRDB-315/01802-82. Jan 29, 1982

“Cable - Comments on a Recent Photograph of the Polish Military Council of National Salvation.” Intelligence Information Cable TDFIRDB-315/03775-82. Feb 26, 1982

“The Polish National Defense Committee” Intelligence Information Report FIRDB-312/00640-82


“Relationship Between the Soviet Military representation to Poland and the Polish General Staff.” Intelligence Information Report FIRDB-312/01036-82. May 13, 1982

“Jaruzelski’s Attitude, Behavior and Style” Released in part exemption HR 70-14 Aug 19, 2008

“‘Hero or Traitor’ - Adam Michnik” Transitions Sept 1998

“O sprawie płk Ryszarda -- Adam Michnik.” Gazeta Wyborcza. May 9, 1998

“US Intelligence and Polish Crisis, 1980-81”

“Thank You Letter from Dariusz Jablonski to DCI Hayden for Allowing Presentation of ‘War Games’.” Fax # 703 613 3063. Nov 18, 2008

Primary Sources


“Mówi płk Kukliński” (Colonel Kuklinski Speaks). Interview by Marta Miklaszewska Tygodnik Solidarność 50 (9 December 1994): 1.12.14

“Ku Chwale Ojczyzny” (In the Name of My Homeland) Dziennik Związkowy Chicago, 31 October 1997, 1

Nurowska, Maria. Mój przyjaciel zdrajca (My Fiend Traitor). Warsaw: Opolgraf, 2004


, ed. “Powiedzieli o Kuklińskim” (They Commented On Kuklinski) Gazeta Polska. 5 September 1996, 6

“Krętaćwa prokuratury wojskowej” (The Lies of the Military Prosecution) Gazeta Polska. 5 September 1996, 7

”Agent wolności” (The Agent of Freedom) Interview by Krzysztof Masłoń. Rzeczpospolita, 24-25 August 2002

“Atakują Kuklińskiego, bronią sierpa i młota” (They Attack Kuklinski Protecting Sickle and Hammer) Interview by Kaja Bogomilska. Nasza Polska Nr. 1 532 (3 January 2006): 14

Secondary Sources


**Articles**

Fischer, Benjamin B. “Entangled in History: The Vilification and Vindication of Colonel Kuklinski.” *Studies in Intelligence* 9(Summer 2000): 19-33


Martin, David C. “A Polish Agent in Place.” Newsweek, 20 December 1982, 49.


“Rzecznik Rządu o oświadczeniu Departamentu Stanu USA” (The Speaker of the House about the declaration of the U.S. State Department). Rzeczpospolita. 133(9 June 1986): 1 and 7.


Smoleński, Paweł, ed. “Zdajca czy bohater” (Traitor or Hero). Gazeta Wyborcza. 3-4 June 1995; 8-9


Toeplitz, Krzysztof Teodor. “Zły czy dobry?” (Evil or Good?) Polityka. 41(10 October 1992): 3


**Interviews:**

Major Wacław Wieczorek. General Staff of the Polish Army. Interview by the author. Łódź, 4 September 2004.


Acquaintances at the Powązki Cemetery at the tomb of Colonel Ryszard Kuklinski. Interview by the author. Warsaw, 26 July 2006.