P.S. to the NEWS
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Outwitting the Communists

The Kremlin bosses must be asking themselves how in the world they were maneuvered into allowing Pope John Paul II to visit Poland. Of course they didn't have to do it; no one can enter or leave a Communist country without official permission, and the Communists had easily denied similar requests by the previous Popes.

From the Communists' point of view, it was a bad mistake to allow the Pope to speak dozens of times to hundreds of thousands of people so forthrightly that the Washington, DC newspapers could run such headlines as "Pope Tells Polish Bishops to Resist Communists." He even dared to call Communism the "enemy" -- a word which went out of the U.S. State Department lexicon more than a decade ago.

The Pope's travels through Poland thrilled the POlish people as no leader has done since the Iron Curtain came down on that country 34 years ago. Certainly no leader in the entire Communist world could make a fraction the impact on the hearts and minds of the people.

The Communist regimes in the various satellite countries, which keep themselves in power by force and create an environment in which all happenings are engineered and controlled by the state, must feel threatened by the way hundreds of thousands of people overcame official obstacles and threats to stand in the crowds and cheer the Pope.

John Paul II is a consummate diplomat who never let "dialogue" obscure his mission. In his Polish tour, he went as far as he could go in attacking the inhumanity and the suppression of religion by the atheistic Communist regime, but not quite far enough to give the Communist dictators an excuse to arrest or expel him.

Joseph Stalin is reputed to have once disparaged the Pope's power with the comment, "How many divisions does the Pope have?" Pope John Paul II doesn't have

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any divisions, but he has a tremendous knowledge of Communist psychology based on first-hand experience during his lifetime years in Poland. That was what enabled him to outwit and outmaneuver the Communists.

Here is how the Pope advised the 70 Polish Catholic bishops: "We are aware that this dialogue [between the Communist Party and the church] cannot be easy, because it takes place between two concepts of the world which are diametrically opposed."

Unfortunately, President Carter seems to think that the United States and the Soviet Union are working toward the same goal of peace and disarmament, and that "dialogue" means acquiescing in whatever the Soviets want. Can you imagine Carter telling Secretary Cyrus Vance and other SALT II negotiators that "we are aware that dialogue between the Soviet Union and the United States cannot be easy because it takes place between two concepts of the world which are diametrically opposed?"

Alexander Solzhenitsyn is one of the few other men of our times who understand the Communists and have outwitted them at their own game of psychological warfare. He was just one man against the mighty state, with no power or weapons; he was just one of the many thousands of unhappy prisoners of the Gulag Archipelago.

But, by understanding the Communist mind and motivation, Solzhenitsyn maneuvered the Soviet rulers into expelling him instead of killing him or sending him to rot in Siberia. The result is that he can now speak freely in the West to warn us about the Communists, which he has been doing.

It is easy to win a game when you hold all the cards or chips. It's easy to win at the conference table when you negotiate from a position of great strength. At the SALT II conference table, however, we had to depend on the wits and skill of our bargainers because we no longer have superior military power.

It's too bad that President Carter and our SALT negotiators don't have the understanding of Soviet psychology and the skill displayed by Pope John Paul II and by Solzhenitsyn. However, we have one new chip: Brezhnev is old and ill and the Russians have no peaceful system for succession. We hope U.S. leaders will know how to use that chip.

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