

# WAR GAMES AND THE MAN WHO STOPPED THEM

*Reviewed by Lidia Thompson & Marcus Siu*



*1. Ryszard Kuklinski at the Warsaw Pact Conference, 1980*

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*Were it not for the actions of one Polish Colonel, we might all be living in the wreckage of a nuclear war  
– Charlie Cockey*

In the 1970s, the Warsaw Pact armies under the USSR control occupied Poland and most of Central Europe. The Treaty of Friendship, Cooperation and Mutual Assistance, commonly known as the Warsaw Pact, was a mutual defense treaty, subscribed to by eight communist countries in Europe. In May 1955, it was established by the USSR's initiative and realized in Warsaw, as a military response to an integration of West Germany to NATO Pact.

Colonel Ryszard Kukliński, who served over twenty years in the rank with the Polish Army, solely subordinated to political interests of the Soviet Empire. In 1972, Kukliński contacted the CIA, and for nine years, handed them over 40,000 secret Warsaw Pact documents. His position had made him one of the most important sources of information that the Western world had in the Soviet Bloc during the Cold War era. His increasing knowledge about the Warsaw Pact plans, while working in the Operation Board of the General Staff, also played a significant role. According to the plans, Poland could be destroyed and become a nuclear desert as a result from a possible third World War. In 1980, after the Solidarity movement was established, Kukliński continued to inform Washington about the Polish government plans to suppress the Solidarity movement and implement the Martial law in Poland. In November 1981, with his covert operations close to being exposed, Kukliński and his family evacuated to Berlin, and then afterwards, to the United States. On December 13<sup>th</sup>, 1981, the Martial law was established in Poland, becoming reality; military vehicles and soldiers patrolled the major cities of Poland, telephone lines were disconnected, airports and main roads access were closed. Democracy was suppressed for eight long years.

In 1984, in a secret court trial, the Warsaw Military Court sentenced Kukliński to death. In 1990, a year after the communist regime collapsed, his death sentence was changed to 25 years in prison. In 1995, his sentence was cancelled and his ranking of Colonel was completely restored. In 1998, he visited Poland but never returned, remaining in exile during the last years of his life in the United States. His decision to not return to Poland remained controversial, as the Polish people did not know whether or not to deem him as a hero or a traitor. That issue was never fully solved for many Poles.

“War Games and the Man Who Stopped Them”, written, directed and produced by Dariusz Jablonski, is a well done documentary. Jablonski approaches the story from many angles by interviewing the members of the highest echelons from both sides and those most closely associated with Kukliński; from the U.S. head of espionage, General William E. Odom to the Warsaw Pact, Commander-in-Chief Viktor Kulikov, the Polish General, Wojciech Jaruzelski, and former Polish President, Lech Walesa, and to friends and family. The film asks probing questions about Kukliński. When did he become convinced to make his move to contact the CIA? Did he ever regret what he did?

In addition to the extensive archive footage, we see the officials during tightly-framed interviews and meetings in voice-over filmed with a small, often half-hidden camera. Photos of Kukliński come to life with 3D motion effects, and the recurring theme of the war games.

Internationally renowned, Dariusz Jablonski, a graduate of the Directing Department at the Film Academy in Lodz, and recipient of many national and international awards, worked on some of the most ambitious film projects of Polish cinema in the Eighties. He was the First Assistant Director on “The Decalogue” (1989), directed by Krzysztof Kieslowski, and a First Assistant Director on “Magnat” (1987) directed by Filip Bajon. Jablonski is also member of the European Film Academy and the Board of the European Producers Club. He is the founder of Apple Film Production; one of the first and leading independent production company in Poland, which to date has produced 21 documentaries, nine feature films and 15 television series.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGz8PIGxiso>

Director: Dariusz Jablonski; Producers: Izabela Wojcik, Violetta Kaminska; Co-producer: Patrik Pass; Writer: Dariusz Jablonski; Cinematographers: Tomasz Michalowski, Pawel Banasiak; Editors: Milenia Fiedler, Bartosz Pietras; Music: Michal Lorenc; Cast: Józef Szaniawski, Hanna Kuklińska, Stanisław Radaj, Zbigniew Brzeziński, Walter Lang; Countries: Poland, Slovakia; Language: English; Length: 110 min.; Genre: Drama

***War Games and the Man Who Stopped Them* plays on March 5th at 1:30pm, March 9th at 9:30pm, and March 10<sup>th</sup> at 3:45. All screenings are at the Camera 12.**

Buy tickets: [http://www.cinequest.org/event\\_view.php?eid=1560](http://www.cinequest.org/event_view.php?eid=1560)



2. Ryszard Kuklinski at his yacht

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