

# Institute of National Remembrance

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## On the anniversary of Ryszard Kuklinski's death – 11 February 2021

In the years 1971–1981 "Jack Strong" handed over 40 thousand pages of documents concerning the Polish People's Republic, the USSR and the Warsaw Pact, to the Americans.



Ryszard Kukliński was born on 30 June 1930 in Warsaw. His father was

killed in Sachsenhausen concentration camp in 1943. He and his mother were probably deported to the Reich. After the war, Kukliński moved to Wrocław. In 1946, he joined the Polish Workers' Party, and a year later, signed up for the Officers' Infantry Academy in Wrocław, which he graduated from in 1950 as a warrant officer.

In the following years, he was regularly promoted (1951 - second lieutenant, 1952 - lieutenant, 1955 - captain) and continued to take further courses. Transferred to Kołobrzeg in 1953, he served in the 3rd Assault-Response Brigade, the 5th Kołobrzeg Infantry Regiment and the 3rd Coastal Defense Brigade. In Kołobrzeg, Kukliński joined the yacht club and studied at the Nicholas Copernicus Secondary School, from which he graduated in 1960.

In 1961, he began studies at the Academy of the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, and from 1962, cooperated with the Internal Military Service. Having graduated in 1964, he was promoted to the rank of major and transferred to Warsaw, where he served in the General Staff.

In the years 1967–1968, he was a member of the International Commission for Supervision and Control of the Geneva Accords in Vietnam. After returning to Poland, he prepared, among others, plans for the invasion of Warsaw Pact troops on Czechoslovakia. From the late 1960s to 1977, in cooperation with the Polish military intelligence, Kukliński performed reconnaissance tasks during his tourist sailing cruises. In 1972, he was promoted to the rank of colonel.

In May 1974, Kukliński was introduced to a project code-named "Albatros", which involved the construction of three underground nuclear shelters for representatives of the Warsaw Pact command in the event of an armed conflict. In 1975, he completed a two-month course at the Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the USSR in Moscow (General Czesław Kiszczak also took part in it).

After the December 1970 massacre, Kuklinski wrote a comprehensive strategic and analytical study on the role of the Polish Army in a possible future war. This was a preliminary step towards establishing cooperation with American intelligence. The first meeting with the Americans took place on 18 August 1972 in the Hague, during a voyage of Polish officers on the "Legia" yacht on the Baltic and the North Sea. Kuklinski then started cooperation with the CIA, under the codename "Jack Strong". In the years 1971–1981, he handed over 40,000 pages of documents concerning the Polish People's Republic, the USSR and the Warsaw Pact to the Americans. From the spring of 1981, he was the head of the team planning the introduction of Martial Law in Poland.

On the night of 7-8 November, 1981, Ryszard Kukliński, together with his wife and two sons, was evacuated from Poland by CIA officers.

In 1984, Kukliński was sentenced to death by the Military Court in Warsaw in absentia. In 1995, the Military Chamber of the Supreme Court revoked the sentence. An investigation into his case was also launched that year. It was discontinued in 1997. On 2 September 2006, President Andrzej Duda posthumously promoted Ryszard Kukliński to

the rank of brigadier general.

Col. Kuklinski died on 11 February 2004 at the age of 73 in a hospital in Tampa, Florida. The cause of death was a stroke. On 19 June 2004, the urn with the ashes of Col. Kukliński was laid in the Avenue of Honour at the Powązki Military Cemetery in Warsaw.

Ryszard Kukliński's biography poses many difficult questions for researchers—about loyalty and the price paid for his own choices, as well as about specific facts from his life: the German occupation and post-war period, the nature of his relationship with the highest Polish and Soviet commanders, and his private life. In 1994, his two sons, Bogdan and Waldemar, died several months apart. The circumstances of their deaths remain unclear to this day.

Ryszard Kukliński was the first foreigner to be honored with the CIA Distinguished Intelligence Medal. He has been numerously commemorated in the form of plaques, squares and monuments. The Gdynia monument, erected thanks to a private donor and unveiled in 2015, is located near the intersection of Józefa Bema and Żołnierzy I Armii Wojska Polskiego Streets and presents a life-size sculpture of Kukliński.

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