

Poland's Lech Walesa a big fan of social media, wishes it existed when he founded Solidarity

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WARSAW, Poland (AP) -- Lech Walesa is a big fan of social media - and says if he had it back when he founded the Solidarity rights movement in 1980, he wouldn't have had to keep meeting opposition colleagues in stadiums.

Honored with a 1983 Nobel Peace Prize for his role in peacefully ending communism in Poland, Walesa said he often discussed strategy with other activists while playing soccer or watching other sports to thwart Communist security agents determined to stop such meetings.

"In those days, there were no possibilities of communicating on a larger scale, there were no mobile phones," Walesa told The Associated Press in an interview Friday. "It was inconvenient for them (agents) to make arrests in a pitch (or) disturb a sports event, so we used such opportunities to agree on things."

Walesa served as democratic Poland's first popularly elected president from 1990-95. Now he travels the globe lecturing on having led a peaceful transition from communism to democracy, which Poles voted for in 1989.

The 68-year-old said his Samsung tablet and other Internet communications today help him work "faster, better, wiser."

He said he uses a tablet because it is the "wisest thing ever invented."

"A small appliance that I can put in my pocket and use in my lectures. I have texts, old and new," Walesa said. "It helps me."

Walesa was in Warsaw for the European Championships match in which Italy beat Germany 2-1 and advanced to the final.

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