

## **Opening Remarks**

**Ambassador Stephen D. Mull**

**Opening of U.S.-Poland Defense Industry Day**

**April 16, 2013**

Director General Lis and General Gocuł, ladies and gentlemen:

I know we all have in mind those horrible events that happened in Boston yesterday. I must say it's always difficult for Americans when such things happen and we are away from home.

At such tough moments we enjoy the support of our Polish friends. Since yesterday I have received hundreds of words of sympathy from various ranks of the Polish people.

And this reminds us that Poland is a good partner for America in tough times but also in good times.

I want to thank all our Polish friends for their reliable friendship.

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It is my pleasure to welcome you to today's conference to discuss opportunities for strengthening defense industrial cooperation between the United States and Poland. I would like to thank everyone who worked to organize this conference, which comes at a very opportune time.

I first came to Poland in 1984, at a time when no one could have imagined the close military partnership that has grown between our two countries. Our deep ties are based in shared values and our joint sacrifices on the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Our mutual experiences have formed a strong foundation on which we continue to build for the future. Beginning with the opening of the U.S. Aviation Detachment at Łask Air Base last year, U.S. troops are now stationed continuously on Polish soil, raising our military cooperation to an even higher level. The Aviation Detachment is responsible for organizing training rotations with hundreds of US and Polish troops four times a year – the first of which was completed in March with the next one taking place in May. In 2018, as part of the European Phased Adaptive Approach to missile defense, Poland will host additional U.S. forces and SM-3 missile interceptors in Redzikowo to protect NATO territory and populations against possible ballistic missile attack, particularly against the growing Iranian missile threat..

We have reached these milestones in our military relationship together because both Poland and the United States have recognized that increasing our strategic cooperation serves both our national interests. In 2008, our countries signed a Declaration on Strategic Cooperation recognizing that a strong strategic partnership between not just our militaries – but also our national defense industries – is vital for our shared security and continued prosperity.

The United States strongly support Poland's ambitious plans for the modernization of the Polish armed forces in the coming decade and sees in Poland's plans a unique opportunity to broaden our strategic partnership.

We stand fully behind the U.S. defense companies anxious to partner with Poland's defense industry to develop advanced

technologies and products to sell not just in Poland, but around the world. Partnering with Polish industry makes good business sense for U.S. companies and for Poland.

A great example is the partnership between Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation and PZL Mielec, which has been beneficial for everyone involved. Sikorsky-PZL Mielec are jointly bidding on the Ministry of Defense's large helicopter tender, and we support that collaboration. Similar opportunities exist across the defense industry spectrum – opportunities that will grow both the U.S. and Polish defense industries. U.S. firms also want to participate in Poland's air and missile defense modernization, and the U.S. strongly stands behind them.

A series of agreements between our governments, including the recent bilateral Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement,,

provides a great framework for increasing cooperation between our defense industries. These agreements increase access for Poland's defense industry to the U.S. defense market – the largest in the world – and make it easier for U.S. companies to invest in and partner with Poland's defense industry, which, as we identified in our Declaration on Strategic Cooperation, is in both of our national interests.

Summing up, let me present to you the four top reasons why

Poland benefits from partnering with US industry:

- It signifies U.S. strategic engagement in Poland's defense;
- It guarantees NATO interoperability;
- It brings jobs and technology to the Polish economy;
- It's the best defense technology in the world.

And now, I wish everyone here a successful and productive day as you further develop relationships and identify areas for

cooperation. I am excited about the opportunities that Poland's military modernization program presents for increasing industrial partnership between our great countries. Best of luck in your efforts.