

REMARKS: Demczuk Award Ceremony, March 22, 2012

Introductions (Commander Army)

Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Once again, let me welcome you to the Chief of Mission Residence and today's ceremony honoring Admiral Demczuk. It is certainly an honor for me, as the Ambassador to Poland, to be a part of this ceremony to celebrate the accomplishments of one of the many outstanding senior officers the Polish military has sent to Afghanistan.

Before I proceed with my remarks, I'd like to take a moment to welcome and thank General Cieniuch, General Gruszka, and Admiral Mathea as well as all of our esteemed guests from the Ministries of Defense, Foreign Affairs, and elsewhere who have joined us here today.

The fact that you have taken time out of your busy schedules and, in some case travelled from as far away as Gdynia to attend today's ceremony, speaks volumes about the respect you have for Admiral Demczuk and the honor he receives today.

Two months ago, I received a personal phone call from Brigadier General Herbert McMaster, the Commander of the Combined Joint Inter-Agency Task Force Shafafiyat (“Shafa – Fiat”) of the International Security Assistance Force, Afghanistan. General McMaster called me that day to ask if I would personally present his former deputy commander, Rear Admiral Demczuk, with the United States Meritorious Service Medal.

I first met General McMaster in Helmund Province last year. I'm not sure if you know this, but he is a very well known, and somewhat controversial new US Army General Officer. He has gained recognition for his combat prowess in both Desert Storm and Operation Iraqi Freedom, and he is also an outspoken author, whose book about the Vietnam War – Dereliction of Duty – became a best seller and is required reading for the US Marine Corps.

I know General McMaster, and I know he's a tough judge of character and performance. His personal endorsement of Admiral Demczuk speaks volumes about the respect he has for his former Deputy.

As General McMaster and I talked, it became apparent to me that Admiral Demczuk had served with great distinction, had greatly exceeded any expectations that were placed upon him, and had been instrumental in more than fulfilling the Task Force's goals and objectives.

As the Deputy Commander of Task Force Shafafiyat, a word which means “transparency” in Pashto and Dari, Admiral Demczuk aided immensely in accomplishing the stated Task Force goal of reducing corruption so that it does not fatally threaten the Afghan state, thus aiding the realization of President Karzai’s hope for “an active and honest administration.”

The citation for this medal recognizes Admiral Demczuk's role in reducing corruption by facilitating a unity of effort with the command, the Government of Afghanistan and the international community.

Further, by refining intelligence requirements and driving adaptations in intelligence capabilities, Admiral Demczuk's efforts resulted in exposure of corruption on many levels and highlighted the effects such corruption have on the Afghan state.

Admiral Demczuk became an ISAF expert on world-wide anti-corruption campaigns by researching lessons learned from around the globe. Armed with this knowledge and prior education, he developed ways to effectively manage international donor organizations, which play a significant role in helping the Afghan government fight corruption, and he personally engaged these international organizations and coordinated their community initiatives.

His efforts resulted in unprecedented unity of effort, thereby eliminating redundancy and saving valuable international resources.

What makes his achievement that much more meaningful is the fact that in 2010, while serving as the Commander of the Maritime Operations Center for the Polish Navy, Admiral Demczuk *volunteered* for service in Afghanistan, serving for 10 months and leaving behind his wife and two college-aged daughters.

Indeed, Polish soldiers, airmen and sailors are making similar sacrifices every day. Tragically, some have made the ultimate sacrifice in order to rid this world of those that would do us harm and to help make Afghanistan a better place for Afghans.

(TURN TO THE ADMIRAL)

Admiral, on behalf of Brigadier General McMaster, the Secretary of the Army and the US Secretary of Defense, it is my pleasure to present you with the Meritorious Service Medal.

Thank you.

(AMBASSADOR RETURNS TO STAND IN FRONT OF HIS SEAT FACING AUDIENCE, ADMIRAL DEMCZUK AND COLONEL SNELL RISE AND STAND NEXT TO AMBASSADOR)

Reading of the Citation and Presentation of the Award (Commander Army)

(COLONEL SNELL STEPS BEHIND ADMIRAL DEMCZUK AND AMBASSADOR FEINSTEIN AND OPENS CASE WITH MEDAL)

(AMBASSADOR FEINSTEIN REMOVES MEDAL FROM CASE AND CLIPS ON TO ADMIRAL'S UNIFORM)

(PICTURES AS MEDAL IS PINNED)

(COLONEL SNELL PRESENTS AMBASSADOR WITH THE CITATION)

(AMBASSADOR FEINSTEIN PRESENTS THE OPEN CITATION TO THE ADMIRAL, POSES FOR PICTURES, THEN HANDS CLOSED CITATION TO ADMIRAL AND SHAKES THE ADMIRAL'S HAND)

(APPLAUSE)

Ambassador: “Ladies and Gentlemen, Admiral Ryszard Demczuk.”

(APPLAUSE)

Admiral Demczuk remarks

Closing comments (Commander Arny)

(AMBASSADOR AND ADMIRAL DEMCZUK DEPART,
CEREMONY ENDS)

(NO RECEIVING LINE)