

Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks for PAFF Luncheon during Business Summit
June 19, 2012, PAFF, 11:30

Hello everyone. It's a pleasure to be with you all today. I'd like to take a moment to thank Ambassador Kozminski and the Polish American Freedom Foundation for hosting us. I would also like to thank Minister Jacek Michałowski from the Presidential Chancellery and Zbigniew Czech, Director of the Department of the Americas at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. And of course I'd like to thank Assistant Secretary of Commerce Michael Camuñez for traveling from Washington to be here today.

Two years ago, President Obama and President Komorowski announced their support for the Polish American Internship Initiative. In a joint statement released after President Komorowski visited the White House in December 2010, the two Presidents “applauded the partnership between the Polish American Freedom Foundation and leading U.S. companies to bring Polish university students and young professionals to the United States for internships in the private sector.”

A lot has happened since then, and a lot has changed. And I think it would make both Presidents very, very pleased.

For example, last year I had the chance to host the first group of participants in the Polish American Internship Initiative at my home. I understand many of you are here today. Where are the 2011 interns? Good to see you again. And the 2012 interns? Excellent. If 2011 is any indicator, you're about to have an incredible time and an invaluable learning experience in the United States.

Something that's changed since the Presidents' joint statement is that we have more American host companies. Last year we had four: GE Hitachi Nuclear Energy, Westinghouse Electric Company, Pittsburgh Glass Works, and Sikorsky Aircraft Corporation. In addition to these companies – and let me say to the representatives of these companies: thank you for sticking with us – in addition to these companies we also have Chevron North America and Raytheon BBN Technologies. Thank you for joining us.

While some things have changed – we have more companies, we have a new crop of interns, we have some experience because we've organized this once before – some things have stayed the same. Namely, no one other than the Polish American Freedom Foundation, working side by side with the Educational Enterprise Foundation, could have gotten this done.

No one else has the know-how, the connections, and the practical experience to organize such a tremendously professional, tremendously successful program. It's an honor for the Embassy, and for me personally, to be able to work with you.

The other thing that hasn't changed is our vision. A vision in which government, civil society, and the private sector work together as partners. From the Polish-American Enterprise Fund, which successfully invested U.S. government seed money in Polish entrepreneurs, we have the Polish American Freedom Foundation, a self-sustaining NGO which is now working hand-in-glove with the private sector to create educational opportunities for tomorrow's entrepreneurs. It's the very model of a virtuous circle.

The United States is the world's largest economy, and Poland is Europe's fastest growing economy. The potential for further cooperation is all around. Programs like the Polish American Internship Initiative will help promote business ties between Poland in the United States, bridge cultural gaps, and create new opportunities. I'm looking forward to seeing where those opportunities will take us.

Thank you, and I wish all of this year's interns the best of luck.

Thank you.