

Remarks

Ambassador Stephen Mull

Annual AmCham General Meeting

Sheraton Warsaw Hotel

December 10, 2012

Thank you very much, Joseph, for the introduction. It's a tremendous honor for me to speak to all of you here this evening.

And on behalf of the U.S. Embassy I want to thank the members of the board, Executive Director Dorothy Dabrowski and the staff of the American Chamber of Commerce in Warsaw for all your work in advancing the full range of our business and economic relations with Poland.

Although I am new as Ambassador, I have already heard a great deal about your successful record. You are all doing a great job, and I look forward to working with you and expanding our partnership during the next three years.

But I am afraid that you are in for a big disappointment this evening. I am told that Bill Heidt, our former deputy chief of mission, last year gave one of the best presentations ever at your annual December meeting by delivering a parody of the 12 Days of Christmas.

My staff suggested that I try to top that by dressing up as Santa Claus and serving mulled wine to everyone instead of speaking, but I vetoed that idea. I did promise, though, to observe the holiday spirit by keeping my speech short.

I first came to Poland as a young diplomat in the mid-1980s when it was impossible to imagine an American Chamber of Commerce here. In fact, even the idea of commerce seemed almost non-existent.

What a contrast when I arrived here five weeks ago. Poland is now a thriving, prosperous country with new buildings and businesses reflecting the country's impressive economic growth – thanks in large part to the companies that you represent.

There was no better symbolism of this new Poland and the strength of our trans-Atlantic relationship than the arrival of the LOT-Boeing Dreamliner in Warsaw on November 15.

That event seemed to crystallize our hopes and dreams for the future and it reminded me that all of you here today do not just represent companies or businesses – you can make dreams come true – dreams of a better and more prosperous future for Poles and Americans alike.

I view the American Chamber of Commerce in Poland as not only the leading representative of Polish-U.S. business cooperation but as a partner of the U.S. Embassy in defining the dreams for our two countries in the 21st century. As job creators, you are the people who will shape the future of a free and prosperous Poland.

You have already helped Poland prove how much can be done by a country when it is committed to doing business. Between 2008 and 2011 Poland's economy grew faster than any other in the EU, with cumulative growth reaching 15.8 % during this period. The economy has slowed in 2012 but it is still projected to grow at a higher rate than any other EU country.

American businesses can be proud of contributing to that impressive record. U.S. firms are active in almost every sector in Poland, and the U.S. is the second-largest investor in terms of the number of companies active here. The Embassy's

Commercial Section every day receives inquiries from companies of all sizes that are interested in the Polish market – on average, about 50 U.S. firms a week.

This past year the Commercial Section worked on about 30 trade events to improve trade between Polish and American businesses. They expect to do the same in 2013. This includes working with colleagues in the Polish government to organize trade missions, Foreign Direct Investment missions in both directions, and other events such as the celebration of the Dreamliner's first return flight to America on January 16th.

I would like to take this opportunity to salute Bill Czajkowski, the Embassy's Senior Commercial Officer and his Deputy, Brenda VanHorn, who manage a very busy staff of dedicated Commercial Specialists. In fact, this market is so important that Bill was recently assigned to manage the Commercial Service posts in neighboring countries in Eastern Europe -- further strengthening Poland's reputation as the economic and business leader in this part of Europe.

With the help of Bill and his staff, the Embassy is participating in a State Department pilot project, known as “Direct Line to Business.” Through Direct Line, I will chair quarterly conference calls with U.S. companies that are looking to Poland as a possible market. These calls will give American CEOs headquartered in the States the opportunity to engage directly with me and our Embassy team on specific topics of interest. The next call scheduled for December 18 will deal with “Fostering Dialogue Between U.S. Companies and the Polish Government.” I’d be delighted if some of our AmCham members could join the call as well.

Today marks the beginning of what the State Department is calling *Global Partnerships Week*, which is intended to recognize the critical importance of public-private partnerships as a tool for strengthening our diplomatic efforts. So this is an appropriate occasion to salute you for your past cooperation with the Embassy. I am interested in hearing your ideas about future projects that we should work on together. One of my priorities as Ambassador, for instance, is to increase the number of Polish students attending college and university in the United States. I know that we agree on the importance of American higher education, so I look forward to developing a plan with you on achieving that goal.

Nowhere is the connection between business and foreign policy more clear than in energy security. Promoting a diverse energy mix has been –and will continue to be - a primary focus of our work here in Poland.

The Embassy is working closely with the shale gas industry and the Polish Government's Ministry of Environment and its Geological Institute to share best practices and increase public understanding of this cutting edge resource. There remains much to learn about shale gas extraction and how it can be used safely and with minimum risk to the environment, but we are cooperating closely with Poland on this and other energy issues.

Nuclear energy is a key component of a diverse energy mix for Poland. We remain engaged with Poland's nuclear regulatory

agency and other institutions as we await PGE's issuance of the expected technology tender for Poland's first nuclear power plant later this year. American companies are actively involved in that process and we support them and American technology.

Renewable energy options -- such as waste to energy, wind and biomass -- are all on the increase in Poland. Many American companies are partnering with Polish business to bring these innovative technologies to the Polish marketplace with much success.

In addition, we are now witnessing a surprising phenomenon here in Poland that is great news for all of us. According to some estimates, Polish firms have now invested close to \$1 billion in the U.S. market. The last time I was lucky enough to serve in Poland, during the mid-1990's, our Embassy had a significant USAID presence here.

Now, only about a decade and a half later, we are witnessing a Polish private sector which is so successful that it is now expanding globally. During my tenure here in Poland, I plan to encourage this trend to continue and to promote the American market as the premier destination for this Polish global expansion.

It is evident that the U.S-Poland relationship is thriving, thanks in no small part to the excellent foundation that American businesses have established here.

You can count on my support in doing everything possible to ensure your continued success. I look forward to working with you and talking to you about how we can find new ways to

deepen our commercial ties, to double our exports, to increase bilateral investment, and to make our dreams come true.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!!