

## **Asmus Remarks (PISM event May 10, 2011)**

Thank you, Minister Sikorski. On behalf of the Embassy, Ron's family, and Ron's many friends and colleagues in the United States, I want to thank you and all Poles for the many tributes you have extended to Ron. I know he would be gratified by the affection shown by a country that Ron loved and to which he dedicated so much of his personal effort.

I got to know Ron when I worked with him at the State Department, and later at the Council on Foreign Relations and the German Marshall Fund of the United States. Ron and I also shared a close friendship with another great American who passed away this year, Richard Holbrooke. Dick would call Ron every week while Ron was in the hospital. Dick and Ron shared many qualities but most of all they were fighters.

Of course, Ron bravely fought a stubborn cancer. He was also an effective champion for his ideals. At the State Department he was an early and ardent advocate for NATO enlargement. He understood that the project of building a Europe whole and free would not be possible without an alliance of democracies committed to one another's security and committed to one another's ideals.

Ron was a champion of NATO's open door, and a champion of the principle that nations get to choose whether or not they would like to join an alliance or whether or not they would like to host foreign troops. Ron was a champion of the letter. And he used them to great effect to galvanize opinion and action to a purpose. And most of all he was a champion of solidarity between Poland and the United States.

His legacy will continue in Poland, a proud member of NATO and the European Union, and in a few weeks time home to the German Marshall Fund of the United States, which he worked so hard to establish here.