

**Ambassador Mull's Remarks at the
10TH Anniversary of the Establishment of the Belzec Memorial and Museum
June 25, 2014**

Dear friends, we are here today to remember a place of unspeakable atrocity and the lives of countless victims, and to thank the American Jewish Committee and the government of Poland for their enormous work in preserving this moving site.

In 1943 the Nazis tried to hide their crimes here by dismantling the death camp and disguising it as a farm. They hoped that the killings – and the victims – would be forgotten. I commend the American Jewish Committee and the Polish government for establishing this memorial in order to ensure that the victims are never forgotten. This memorial honors the victims and teaches today's generation – and future generations – about the dangers of intolerance and hatred.

We come to this site to pay tribute to the hundreds of thousands of victims murdered here by the Nazis. While we are here at this site, we also come face to face with a hard truth – that human beings are capable of unspeakable evil. During the Holocaust, too many people stood by in silence as their brothers and sisters were massacred. This memorial teaches us that we all have a sacred duty to take action against hatred and intolerance to ensure that such atrocities never happen again.

The international community has made tremendous progress in building respect for minorities, but the struggle to promote tolerance and an appreciation for diversity is never over. As President Obama said this year on International Holocaust Remembrance Day, "In our lives, we always have choices. In our time, this means choosing to confront bigotry and hatred in all of its forms, especially anti-Semitism."

Sadly, despite the painful lessons of this place which we remember today, hateful expressions of anti-Semitism, racism, xenophobia, and homophobia continue to flare up in societies around the world. Recently, the Warsaw city government decided to rebuild the rainbow arch at Plac Zbawiciela, which had become a symbol of tolerance for diversity; but also the target of repeated arson attacks over the past few years by the forces of intolerance and hatred. The government's

decision was the latest step in Poland's proud tradition of tolerance, yet it was not without controversy. One commentator said, "if people keep burning down the rainbow, there must be something wrong with it." This kind of perverse thinking has been used throughout history to justify book burning, censorship, discrimination, segregation, and, in the worst circumstances, genocide. That is why we must stand up to those who spread hate and intolerance.

At the same time, we should applaud and support initiatives such as the Museum of the History of Polish Jews and the Forum for Dialogue Among Nations. By highlighting the long shared history of Christians and Jews in Poland, these institutions foster an understanding of the remarkable tradition of tolerance and cooperation in Poland.

In the last ten years, over 300,000 guests have visited the Museum-Memorial Site at Bełżec. I congratulate you on this achievement, and encourage you to continue your important work. May current and future generations remember the people who died here. May we remember that every victim had a name. And may we remember not only how they died, but also how they lived.