

Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks at the European Academy of Diplomacy

May 12, 2012

Thank you for having me here today. It's an honor to be with so many smart young people and especially with Katarzyna Pisarska, who is a good friend of our Embassy and a good friend of America, and her husband Zbigniew Pisarski, who will moderate today's discussion. Katarzyna has led this institution with vision and energy, and in the process has become a leading voice in the major foreign policy debates of our day. I appreciate Katarzyna's invitation to address you today, a little over a week before NATO's leaders gather in Chicago to reaffirm the key tenets of this enduring alliance, which in its 63 years of existence has become the most successful alliance in history.

Dzień dobry. No tak, to jest możliwe tylko w Warszawie i w Waszyngtonie, żeby tak wiele osób przyszło na spotkanie w majową sobotę. Macie wszelkie zadatki na nudziarzy od polityki zagranicznej. Powodzenia!

[Good afternoon. Well, this is possible only in Warsaw and Washington, to so many people came to the May meeting on Saturday. You have the makings of nudziarzy of foreign policy. Keep Going!]

I would also like to welcome our friends from the Euro Atlantic Association, especially the winners of this year's Aliante contest. Where are our winners? Could you please stand up for a moment? I'd like to give you a round of applause.

For those of you who aren't familiar with the Aliante contest, it's an annual competition where students – mostly high school students – answer questions about NATO. The U.S. Embassy has been engaged in the Aliante contest for a long time now, and I had the pleasure of hosting last year's winners at my residence. So it's good to have you all here today so we can deepen our knowledge about NATO and talk about how President Obama, President Komorowski, together with the other NATO leaders will also chart the way forward in Afghanistan and forge new partnerships with countries around the world.

Myśląc o naszych transatlantyckich relacjach, powinniśmy pamiętać nie tylko o obszarach współpracy, takich jak na przykład bezpieczeństwo. To też wyznawane wartości demokratyczne, czy związki gospodarcze, które są równie silnym fundamentem naszych relacji, co sojusz północnoatlantycki.

[But the Transatlantic relationship is not defined solely by our security ties and cooperation. Our shared democratic values and our economic ties underpin our relationship with strength equal to that of the NATO alliance. Indeed, these three pillars are mutually reinforcing.]

These three pillars also form the solid foundation of the bilateral U.S.-Polish relationship. And I want to spend some time today discussing the U.S.-Polish alliance and partnership, which is evolving as Poland assumes a more influential role in the Transatlantic community. When it comes to the most fundamental issues before us today, U.S. and Polish foreign and security policies are closely aligned. Our military cooperation is closer than it has ever been before. Our bilateral relationship is more comprehensive, and more multi-faceted, as we extend our cooperation to new areas and work together more closely in others. In short, the United States and Poland are in the process of updating our relationship, so that jointly we can harness the opportunities that this moment and the years ahead offer.

It will not surprise you when I say that when the United States and Poland determine to do something, they do it and do it well. The successes of our efforts are being felt around the world, where we cooperate to promote democracy – from Belarus to Benghazi. And, they are being felt here in Poland and in the United States. Our companies are building new economic linkages, and next month Poland will host a Business Summit so that our countries can explore how we can work together better to promote prosperity in Poland and the United States. And, our security cooperation has never been closer or more active.

Our soldiers are standing shoulder to shoulder in the strategically important province of Ghazni in Afghanistan, and Poland will soon welcome the U.S. Air Force detachment at Lask, the first continuous presence of U.S. troops in the country. All these are just a few concrete examples of what the close U.S.-Polish alliance and partnership means in practice.

Our relationship is rooted in our shared history, shared values, and deep ties among our peoples. But I think it is in the nature of both Americans and Poles to always look ahead to the future, and we are doing so in our bilateral relations as well. Together we are building a partnership for the XXI century.

I want to address all these issues today, but I also wish to hear from you – your questions and views, whether they be on the state of the Transatlantic relationship today or the approaching NATO Summit.

For centuries, the Atlantic has been a vital link between our continents. It has carried people and goods, but also ideas, values, customs, and religious beliefs. In times of crisis, as we saw during the wars of the last century, the Atlantic also carried armies, supplies, and assistance, as we stood together, against our common enemies. Today, the speed of travel across the Atlantic is much faster, but that link is as vital as ever. It binds two continents into a single Transatlantic space.

This space represents what Poland's first post-communist Foreign Minister, Krzysztof Skubiszewski, called a "community of interests," where values and economic ties bind us closely together. On our side of the Atlantic, we see things very much as Minister Skubiszewski did. At last November's U.S.-EU Summit in Washington, President Obama declared: "What hasn't changed [in the world], is the fundamental bonds that exist between the European Union and the United States. Our common values, our common belief in the rule of law, in democracy, in freedom, in a free market system – all those things bind us together... And so this is an extraordinarily important relationship."

President Obama has worked to unite and align the Transatlantic community in confronting the challenges of today's complex and fast-changing world. As Secretary Clinton recently stated at the Munich Security Conference: "Europe is and remains America's partner of first resort... And wherever America is working to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons, to fight disease, to help nations on the difficult journey from dictatorship to democracy, we are side by side with our friends in Europe... Today's Transatlantic community is not just a defining achievement of the century behind us. It is indispensable to the world we hope to build together in the century ahead."

This is the starting point for President Obama and his Administration as we consider the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead: we are each other's indispensable partners. And our security partnership is cemented in the NATO Alliance. President Obama together with his NATO counterparts will reaffirm this commitment to the Transatlantic partnership and its key role in addressing global challenges in Chicago in just a few days.

Let me turn briefly to the Transatlantic partnership, which has been so crucial in our efforts to meet common global challenges and harness new opportunities to advance our shared interests.

First, we are working with Europe to promote prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic. And in this respect, the importance of Europe and America to one another cannot be overstated. The transatlantic economy generates close to \$5 trillion dollars a year in commercial sales , 50% of world GDP in terms of value, and employs up to 15 million jobs on both sides of the ocean. America and Europe are each other's biggest trading partners and foreign employers by far. Investment flows total over \$3 trillion a year and U.S.-EU trade accounts for almost 40 percent of world trade. Often, this tremendous economic energy and success is overshadowed by press stories of Transatlantic trade disputes and, more recently, the financial crisis.

I am not here to discount the importance of these issues, but I do want underscore the scope of our commercial and investment cooperation, which has been the engine driving unprecedented progress and prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic over many decades. Like Europe, we in America depend on open markets to sell our products and access resources and commodities. More often than not, we speak with one voice in international organizations to support free markets around the world, ensure a level playing field for our companies so that they can compete, and promote transparency and anti-corruption.

Second, the United States and our European partners like Poland share a commitment to democratic principles and universal values like freedom and respect for the rule of law. With the historic events of 1989, we launched the project of building a Europe that is prosperous, whole, and free. And, we continue to work to strengthen and advance the gains we have made in the past two decades in the rest of Europe and beyond. Together with our European Partners, we do not seek to impose our system of government or the values we live by. Rather, we promote our values first and foremost by living them in our own countries and by supporting those who seek to exercise their democratic rights and the universal values in their own countries.

We do so because governments that respect these universal values and human rights are more just, peaceful, and legitimate.

We also do so because political systems that protect universal rights are ultimately more stable, successful, and secure.

Poland is an undisputed democracy leader. Under Poland's leadership, the European Union's Eastern Partnership Initiative has become the EU's primary mechanism for coordinating policies and assistance to its Eastern partners. The United States has welcomed this initiative and has worked closely with Poland and the EU on advancing our common objectives: supporting political and economic reforms in Eastern Europe.

The United States has already provided \$310 million in assistance to the countries of the Eastern Partnership, plus an additional \$450 million last year for Georgia as part of our \$1 billion assistance package pledge. And we signed a five-year package of assistance with Moldova, under the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact, worth \$262 million. These are but a few concrete examples of our close cooperation with the EU – and especially with Poland – in the EU’s Eastern Neighborhood. We are coordinating our efforts around the globe, from the Balkans, to North Africa, to Afghanistan, to Southeast Asia.

Third is the security dimension of our Transatlantic relationship. It is one that will certainly receive much attention in the coming days, as our leaders gather in Chicago to reaffirm our commitment to what President Obama has called “the most successful alliance in human history.” Since its founding in 1949, NATO has guaranteed our security through the ironclad principle of collective defense enshrined in Article 5 of the Washington Treaty. This principle and this Article, which was invoked by the Alliance for the first time after the 9/11 attacks, are as crucial to the security of the United States, as they are to our European allies.

President Obama looks forward to welcoming President Komorowski and the other NATO leaders in his home town.

Although this is the third time that the United States will host a NATO summit, it will be the first time that the summit will take place outside of Washington DC. So, this will indeed be a special moment for President Obama and the First Lady, as well as all the Chicagoans, many of whom have Polish roots. There are three overarching themes for the Chicago summit, and I would like to mention each one briefly.

First, NATO's leaders will meet to re-affirm our commitment to the Alliance and to update the Alliance for today's world. To do that, they will focus on NATO's capabilities and agree on the essential defense elements that the allies will need to meet emerging security challenges of the XXI century. NATO's leaders will consider ways to provide the most defense for the best value. Labeled as "smart defense," these approaches encourage cooperation among the allies at a time when all allies face budgetary pressures. To quote my good friend, NATO Deputy Secretary General Alexander Vershbow: "

Smart Defence' is a new way of thinking about generating the defense capabilities we need for the year 2020 and beyond. It is about deciding how to manage what we have to cut, but also staying focused on what we need to keep, so that we can meet the Alliance's strategic goals now and in the future. It is about Allies working together to deliver capabilities multinationally that would be too expensive for many of them to deliver alone, ensuring that we all get the maximum return on available defense budgets. And it is also about Allies coordinating their plans more closely than they do now so that they can specialize in what they do best, and focus their resources in those areas.”

So, what does smart defense mean in practice? For example, NATO allies are working together to deploy in Europe a missile defense system, the first phase of which is now becoming operational in the Mediterranean. At Chicago, we plan to declare “interim capability,” handing the command and control of the system from the United States to NATO. It is worth noting that the missile defense system we are putting in place provides protection against a growing ballistic missile threat not only for the United States, but also for our allies, including Poland. This improved system is better for NATO, better for Poland, and better for the United States.

NATO's Baltic Air Policing mission is another good example of smart defense, and all NATO allies, including the United States, appreciate Poland's active role in this mission. Similarly, NATO's Alliance Ground Surveillance system (AGS) will provide allies with crucial intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance. And of course, the U.S. Aviation Detachment which will soon arrive at Lask, here in Poland. Our alliance is always stronger when we work together, sharing the costs and multiplying the benefits for all of us.

Another major focus for the Chicago summit will be the transition that is already underway in Afghanistan. NATO's leaders will reaffirm the framework for transition, which they adopted during their last summit in Lisbon. They will chart the course for transition through 2014, and agree on ways to assist Afghanistan beyond that date.

The Chicago summit will also include an important session with NATO's partners around the globe, in recognition of how closely we have worked with many countries on addressing our shared security challenges.

For example, when NATO moved to enforce UN Security Council resolutions on the protection of civilians in Libya last year, it did so with an active support of several non-NATO partners from Europe, the Middle East, and North Africa. Operation Unified Protector in Libya was a massive and complex undertaking, and its success demonstrated the Alliance's strength and flexibility, including its cooperation and interoperability with non-NATO partners.

These three themes - capabilities, Afghanistan, and partnerships – and the decisions our leaders will take in Chicago will help ensure that NATO continues as “the most successful alliance in human history” into the XXI century.

The three anchors of our Transatlantic ties – prosperity, values, and security - are also fundamental in our bilateral relationship with Poland. Poland’s voice within the European Union, NATO, and other international fora increasingly resonates and Poland speaks with confidence about the defining challenges and opportunities of our day. Poland’s stronger voice – indeed stronger Poland – has enhanced our cooperation in the Transatlantic space across all three areas where are most vital interests align: prosperity, values, and security.

One of the characteristics of a relationship as close as ours is that we do not expect that we will always agree on every issue. But the strength of our very best friendships – like that between the United States and the United Kingdom, AND between the United States and Poland – is that we continue to be friends even when our views may differ. But the truth is on fundamental issues, the laws of geopolitical physics bring Poland and the United States together, especially on issues of democracy, security and our willingness to defense and fight for freedom. And this is a point to remember.

This new reality of Poland speaking and acting with increasing authority in the Transatlantic space represents a strategic opportunity for our two countries. To take advantage of this opportunity, we must move beyond the focus of the past two decades, which for our country meant supporting Poland's efforts to shed its Communist past, chart a new course for its political and economic future, and anchor that future firmly within NATO and the European Union.

With Poland now exercising greater influence within these very institutions, it is time for us to redefine – or update, if you will – our relationship so that we can jointly advance our shared priorities, which will not surprise you: they are the same priorities we share with our other major European allies: prosperity, values, and security. Let me spend a few moments discussing them in the bilateral context.

In little over a month, Poland and the United States will meet to discuss how we can work together to promote prosperity in both of our countries.

President Obama announced the U.S.-Poland Business Summit during his visit to Poland last May. U.S. Secretary of Commerce Bryson will lead the high-level U.S. delegation, which is coming to Poland because our companies recognize that there is much potential for growth in the commercial ties between the world's largest economy and one of the EU's fastest growing economies. Already, trade and investment between Poland and the United States is probably more than you think – but not nearly enough. In 2010, the U.S. asset base in Poland was \$65.1 billion dollars, and U.S. firms now provide direct and indirect employment to an estimated 350,000 workers in Poland.

Since 2008, the interest in Poland as an investment destination has grown, and the scope of investment – high tech, energy, research and development – is as important as the size. Our exports to Poland totaled \$2.3 billion in 2010.

Innovation is another key aspect of our economic relationship and an important driver of growth. Already, American companies like Google and Facebook, which have become synonymous with innovation, have established themselves in Poland, introducing the know-how and innovative practices of Silicon Valley here. We at the Embassy have also been working with the Polish government to bring Poland's best and the brightest to Silicon Valley through Prime Minister Tusk's Top 500 Innovators program.

Already today, a second group of Poland's leading researchers and scientists is studying at Stanford University on a two-month program, which will also introduce them to the companies and institutions that have made Silicon Valley what it is today – a hub of innovation and new ideas that have been driving technological progress and economic growth for the past three decades.

When it comes to our bilateral economic relations, I should also mention the importance of energy, which has emerged in recent years as an important new sector where we can work together on critical issues like energy security, while at the same time creating new opportunities for our companies and growing our economies.

We have cooperated on clean energy, including wind and biomass. We have signed two agreements with Poland on nuclear cooperation. And, we are helping Poland explore and develop its unconventional gas sector using international best practices. Like Poland, the United States shares the goal of promoting energy diversity in Europe to ensure the security of supplies, competitive prices, and political independence.

At the June Business Summit in Warsaw, which will bring together our governments and private sectors, we will focus on all these opportunities to increase our commercial cooperation and take our trade relationship to the next level.

Now let me turn to the second priority in our bilateral cooperation: values. It is a priority that was forged already centuries ago, when Kazimierz Pulaski, Tadeusz Kosciuszko, and George Washington fought for America's freedom and independence. That priority and mutual commitment to the ideals which all of us hold so dear is no less relevant today. Foreign Minister Sikorski recently said in his address to the Sejm: "The United States is our most important non-European partner. We get on especially well whenever and wherever we decide to join forces and foster the ideals of freedom and democracy." In recent years, we have joined efforts around the globe - from Belarus to Benghazi.

Only a few days ago, representatives of the United States and Poland met in Washington under the auspices of the Democracy Dialogue, which Secretary Clinton and Minister Sikorski launched last year. The Democracy Dialogue is the only such dialogue the United States has with another country – a clear signal of how much we value our cooperation with Poland in this area. I am pleased that its work is steadily becoming more tangible. This week we agreed jointly to fund two projects in Belarus and one Moldova, including the funding of an Assistance and Documentation Center for the Victims of Political Repression in Belarus.

I have already mentioned Poland's leadership on the EU's Eastern Partnership. We also support and applaud Poland's efforts within the EU to establish a European Endowment for Democracy, modeled on America's National Endowment for Democracy. And, we look forward to cooperating with the new Polish Know-How Foundation for International Development Cooperation. Poland's leading role in the Community of Democracies, which Professor Bronislaw Geremek and Secretary Madeleine Albright founded in Warsaw in 2000, has ensured that this important global platform for promoting democracy and freedom continues to give voice and hope to millions around the world.

These institutions are only few powerful examples of the role Poland has assumed, as one of the premier partners for the United States and other countries that share our commitment to advancing democracy, human rights, and freedom around the world. As President Obama said when he was here last May, Poland brings special credibility to democracy promotion both because of the success of your transition and the immediacy of your example.

The third shared priority of our bilateral relationship – security – is also firmly rooted in our shared values and the mutual security commitments that we have made as NATO allies and bilateral partners. In the past decade, our security partnership has been steeled through combat in Iraq and Afghanistan.

America and all NATO allies deeply appreciate Poland's contributions, and we honor Poland's sacrifices. In April, General John Allen, the commander of all ISAF forces in Afghanistan, visited Warsaw to thank Poland, which is the sixth largest troop contributor to ISAF, and to pay tribute to Polish soldiers who have fought bravely and honorably to advance security and deny violent extremists safe haven. During his visit, General Allen said: "...as a NATO commander, I am spending a lot of time with [Polish soldiers] in Afghanistan and have a lot of respect for their actions and professionalism, which they show while conducting their operations."

And Polish soldiers are indeed making a difference. I had the opportunity to travel to Afghanistan and to see first-hand the contributions they are making. The transition in the Ghazni Province and the rest of the country is already underway. By the end of this year, Afghan security forces are expected to assume security lead for as much as two-thirds, or possibly more, of the Afghan population. The Polish Task Force White Eagle is preparing the ground for that transition, working together with U.S. soldiers and other ISAF partners. The security gains have been hard fought, in extremely tough conditions. We mourned with Poland the loss of five of its finest last December. In a couple of weeks, the American people will observe Memorial Day, the day when we remember those who died in our nation's service.

We will also remember Poland's fallen soldiers, those who made the ultimate sacrifice in the pursuit of our shared mission. That shared mission and sacrifice have strengthened the bonds of our alliance and friendship.

Here in Poland we are also moving forward to make our security partnership even stronger. As Presidents Obama and Komorowski announced, the United States will establish a U.S. Air Force Aviation Detachment in Poland later this year, bringing for the first time a continuous presence of American "boots on the ground" to Poland and highlighting a premier element of NATO's smart defense.

Based at the Lask Air Base, the detachment will host periodic rotations of U.S. F-16 fighter jets and C-130 cargo aircraft, whose crews will visit Poland and conduct trainings.

Initially, our presence will be modest, but the aviation detachment has great promise; with this step we are leveraging our air assets, strengthening our interoperability, and enhancing our collective security.

Beyond our joint deployments and the Aviation Detachment, we are partnering together in many other ways: Polish and U.S. Special Forces have established a close partnership, training and deploying together, and often using the same equipment; every year, approximately 10,000 Polish service members participate in U.S.-led security cooperation activities, including training in the United States and study in our premier service academies at West Point, Annapolis, and Colorado Springs;

we are continuing our regular deployments of Patriot batteries this year; and, our defense industrial cooperation has never been greater, with Polish firms manufacturing major components of American military aircraft, including the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and the Blackhawk helicopter. I should also mention that initial planning has begun for the third phase of the NATO missile defense system, which will be based at Redzikowo, starting in 2018. In short, our day-to-day security cooperation has never been closer, and our partnership has never been stronger.

Security is indeed fundamental to our bilateral relationship, but we have also raised the importance of our other priorities: promoting mutual prosperity and advancing democracy and human rights around the world. Beyond our cooperation in these three areas, we are also strengthening the ties between the American and Polish peoples. We are expanding the Polish-American Freedom Foundation's Enterprise Internship program for more young Poles to work at leading American companies. This is a program Presidents Komorowski and Obama highlighted when they met in the Oval Office, and now seven of America's most prestigious companies are giving promising Polish the opportunity to bring back their experiences in corporate America to Poland.

We have effectively doubled the size of the Fulbright program, now that Poland has matched U.S. contributions to the program. We have celebrated the opening of the Kosciusko Foundation and the German Marshall Fund offices in Poland. We are a sponsor of the Atlantic Council's annual Wroclaw Global Forum, bringing together transatlantic leaders for productive discussions, and I look forward to participating in the next Wroclaw Global Forum later this month. I should also mention President Obama's recent announcement of awarding posthumously the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Jan Karski. The Medal, which is the highest civilian honor our President can bestow upon an individual, not only recognizes this brave Polish-American but also represents my country's admiration for Poland's many heroes who stood up and fought against the evil of Holocaust.

And I am strongly committed to ensuring that Poland assumes its rightful place as a member of the Visa Waiver Program. President Obama and Secretary Clinton are deeply committed to new legislation which would ensure that our close allies and dear friends can visit the United States visa-free. Poland's membership in the Visa Waiver Program is as much a benefit to the United States as it is to our Polish allies. And there is strong bipartisan support in the United States working actively as we speak to push this through the Congress.

Our historic ties are strong, but we are not resting on our laurels. I think the favorable opinion American and Poles have of each other, as seen in recent polls by the German Marshal Fund and Pew, show how much progress we have made since 2008.

And, fortunately, public opinion in Poland toward the United States has improved by double digits since 2008 according to the German Marshall Fund's annual figures, and is among the highest in the world according to the Annual Pew Global Attitudes survey. But we are not resting on our laurels.

I have already stated that the strong U.S.-Polish bilateral partnership is also vitally important to our strong Transatlantic relationship. And a strong Poland in a strong EU is vital for the United States' interests. Poland does not have to choose between Europe and the United States, as some have suggested. That debate is finished.

Similarly, the recent debate over the rebalancing of U.S. forces in Europe misses the point. The United States is not choosing Asia over Europe. The United States changed its force posture as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan wind down. I would argue that this is in Poland's – and Europe's – interest as well. Under our new concept, the United States will deploy two Brigade Combat Teams stationed in Europe, and will dedicate a third Brigade Combat Team to the NATO Response Force, based in the United States, but with frequent rotations to Europe. This reconfiguration reflects our commitment to Smart Defense, designed to achieve the same capabilities with fewer resources. And it is important to realize that as part of this reconfiguration, our direct military presence in Poland is actually growing.

If the United States were not looking at Asia, given the challenges and opportunities there, you would be right to ask whether we were still intent on maintaining our global leadership. But, we are moving to address the challenges in Asia because we take our responsibility as a world leader seriously, just as we take seriously our responsibility to our European allies – and to Poland. Similarly, Poland and the rest of Europe are increasingly engaging with China, and the United States supports such cooperation. The recent visit of Premier Wen Jiabao to Poland and China’s Strategic Partnership Agreement with Poland demonstrate that when it comes to relations with China – and indeed, Asia – U.S. and Polish policies of engagement and dialogue are very much in agreement.

When President Obama visited Warsaw last May, he said that during his visit to Europe he had: “affirmed the fact that America’s transatlantic alliance is the cornerstone of our engagement in the world. It’s indispensable to the peace and prosperity of the world. It helps to uphold the principles of rule of law and individual liberty around the world. And I think that Poland is a leader on all these issues.” In the past three years, we have made great progress in redefining our bilateral relationship to match our priorities and tasks to Poland’s new leadership role and position as one of our closest allies and friends. This new moment of opportunity in our relationship with Poland means that we should set our sights higher and work together even more closely.

Institutions like the European Academy of Diplomacy – and you – will play a key role as we shape our relationship for the XXI century. I look forward to discussing with you your ideas and answering your questions.

One final note: Please stay in touch with us after today's event, as we need your ideas and feedback. Our Embassy and Consulate have become more active in reaching out to the Polish public.

Ambasada amerykańska w Warszawie i konsulat w Krakowie są na Facebooku. Mam nadzieję, że będziecie tam państwo zaglądać i że nas polubicie.

We also have a Twitter account where we advertise events, hold trivia contests, and more. And our exciting internet page, *poland.usembassy.gov*, has a link to our YouTube video about U.S. visa procedures.