

REMARKS AT THE IL NATIONAL GUARD AND KOSCIUSZKO BRIGADE DINNER RECEPTION

Ambassador Lee Feinstein

March 17, 2010

Embassy Residence

Szanowni panstwo, ladies and gentlemen!

Welcome to our home. And welcome to our guests of honor, the soldiers of the 1st Mechanized Brigade of the Polish Land Forces, also known as the Kosciusko Brigade, and our friends from the great state of Illinois, the Illinois National Guard's BEST team.

As many of you know, these troops have become fast friends over the last three months. U.S. National Guardsmen and women have been in Poland during that time, training side by side with their Polish colleagues. And soon, I believe in fact tomorrow, they will be headed out for a six month deployment to Ghazni province, where U.S. troops will serve under the operational control of the Polish contingent.

There is simply no better example of the shared values and close ties between our two countries than the work you are doing together. It is really our privilege to host you for dinner tonight. I know this is an official residence, but I hope you can relax a bit, make yourselves feel at home, and enjoy some food and drink.

I would also like to acknowledge some of our guests: Rear Admiral Marian Ambroziak, Assistant to the Chief of General Staff for Naval Issues, representing General Gaȓor, Brigadier General Przekwas, Brigadier General Steven Huber, here on behalf the Adjutant General of Illinois Major General Enyart, who visited last week, and COL Nelson, head of the BEST team. And, I would also like to welcome my friend Polish Land Commander General Tadeusz Buk, the Polish Land Forces Commander.

General Buk hosted me and General Ham, the commander of the US Army in Europe in Kielce last week, where I got to see the cooperation between our two forces in person. I wish you could all have been there to see these men and women, Polish and American, working together without regard to the emblems on their uniforms.

At this time, I would like to invite General Buk to the podium for a few remarks.

GEN BUK's REMARKS

Thank you, General Buk.

I would like to present a special gift to the commander of the 1st Armored Brigade to symbolize the close working relationship of our teams. This United States flag flew over the U.S. embassy in Warsaw today to mark the beginning of your duty together in Afghanistan.

AMB PRESENTS FLAG TO GEN PRZEKWAS

I am also pleased to have the honor of presenting a Proclamation from the Governor Pat Quinn of Illinois. The Proclamation reads:

“THEREFORE, be it resolved, by the State of Illinois, that I hereby recognize and commend all the members of the Bilateral Embedded Support Team, an excellent example of the mutual benefits of the sharing of information and expertise between the State of Illinois and Poland, and offer my sincere wishes for a successful mission and most importantly, a safe return home.”

AMB PRESENTS PROCLAMATION TO COLONEL NELSON

So let me conclude tonight's program by offering a simple toast:
"To our departing soldiers: Thank you for your service. All of us
extend our best wishes for a safe and speedy return."
Thank you all for joining us this evening. Please enjoy yourselves.
Dinner is served.