

Remarks by Penny Pritzker, Secretary of Commerce

American Chamber of Commerce,

Thank you, Ursula Burns, for your introduction and for your strong leadership as Vice Chair of the President's Export Council.

You and fellow PEC members are demonstrating the vital importance of an effective partnership between the public and private sectors in advancing America's global leadership.

I want to thank and recognize all of the members of the PEC who have traveled with us today:

- David Abney, CEO of UPS
- Mary Andringa, President and CEO, Vermeer Corporation
- Dick Friedman, President and CEO, Carpenter & Company
- Marillyn Hewson, Chairman, President, and CEO, Lockheed Martin
- Arne Sorenson, President and CEO, Marriott International
- Patricia Woertz, Chairman and CEO, Archer Daniels Midland
- Robert Wolf, CEO, 32 Advisors

The bonds of friendship between the United States and Poland are founded on shared values and shared ideals, mutual interests and mutual respect.

Our relationship has grown stronger across key points of both American and Polish history.

At the time of the Revolutionary War, Polish national heroes crossed the Atlantic to fight for America's independence.

At the end of World War I, President Woodrow Wilson led the world in calling for "a united, independent, and autonomous Poland."

As the Cold War ended and the Iron Curtain began to unravel, America's leaders lent their support to the Solidarity movement and to Poland's ascent on the global stage.

As the United States military engaged in Iraq and Afghanistan, Poland was a key partner in both wars, at great sacrifice. Polish troops have fought shoulder-to-shoulder with America's men and women in uniform – and that service is not something we will soon forget.

Our partnership goes beyond politics: it consists of families and friends, historical and cultural ties that enrich both of our countries, including my hometown of Chicago, which boasts a community of nearly 200,000 people of Polish descent.

Given this long history of friendship and partnership, the United States joins you in celebrating Poland's remarkable rise, as the year 2014 marks:

- The 25th anniversary of the end of communist rule;
- The 15th anniversary of Poland's membership in NATO; and
- The 10th anniversary of Poland's accession to the European Union.

These milestones are markers of Poland's extraordinary political and economic transformation since the Cold War – what President Obama recently called, and I quote, “an economic miracle on the Vistula.”

This country's incredible progress has:

- Placed Poland among the top 20 emerging economies in the world;
- Enabled Poland to avoid the broader European recession; and
- Made Poland the 6th largest, as well as the fastest-growing, economy in the European Union.

But make no mistake: while there might have been some luck involved, Poland's miracle did not happen overnight and was not an accident.

I have long believed that luck is what happens when opportunity meets preparation. There can be no doubt that Poland's leaders were prepared to embrace the opportunity of the post-Cold War era.

Poland made the miracle a reality through action, persistence, perseverance, and hard work. Poland set the example of what is possible when a country's leaders come together, develop strong multilateral relationships, and make tough decisions.

Building on generations of friendship, the United States has been a proud partner in Poland's progress.

Yet even as we take stock of how far we have come as friends and allies, we recognize that right now, the U.S.-Poland alliance remains as important as ever.

The situation in Ukraine today poses a serious challenge to the physical and economic security of Eastern Europe.

Russia's aggression in eastern Ukraine is a violation of international norms – of a global order that respects national sovereignty and the rights of all peoples and countries.

Poland has been a vocal leader in advancing a strong, coordinated EU response to Russian actions – as the United States and Europe band together to confront this threat and seek a viable, peaceful solution.

At the same time, the United States has maintained its role as a dependable ally and guarantor of security for Eastern Europe, as evidenced by our increased joint military exercises and the deployment of aircraft and personnel to Poland.

I traveled here directly from Ukraine, where I reiterated America's commitment to help Ukrainian leaders build a stable, independent, and prosperous nation.

My visit to Ukraine – and meetings with the President, Prime Minister and other leaders -- was focused on what Ukraine needs to do to improve its business climate, strengthen its economy, and expand opportunity. The time is now to enact the reforms necessary to encourage companies to consider doing business in Ukraine.

A prosperous Ukraine, where there is efficiency instead of overregulation, where there is transparency in place of corruption, and where people in all parts of the country are free to do business with one another and with partners from outside, will be a better supplier, better customer and better trade partner.

The United States has a stake in a more independent, stable and prosperous future for Ukraine.

And my overarching message is clear – whether in Kiev, in Warsaw, or in other capitals: the United States is committed to the security and stability of Poland, Ukraine, and all of Eastern Europe. We will stand by your side, in word and deed.

We have certainly learned many lessons from the current crisis, but one must surely be that our bilateral relationship is deeper and more strategic than defense cooperation alone.

Our military bonds will remain paramount, but we recognize that Poland's security and prosperity require a deeper economic and commercial relationship with the United States. By partnering more economically we will only deepen the relationship between our two countries.

Put simply: It is in our mutual best interest to have stronger economic ties between our countries, our businesses, and our people.

This message reflects a core tenet of President Obama's foreign policy: that in a rapidly changing world, America must take a more comprehensive, multi-faceted approach to our global partnerships.

That means leveraging every resource at our disposal – whether military, diplomatic, political, or economic.

That means placing our economic and commercial might on par with our military and diplomatic strength.

That means recognizing that the American business community is one of our country's greatest strategic assets – and that the U.S. government and American companies can work more closely together to advance our shared commercial and strategic interests.

Bringing President Obama's Export Council to Poland and Turkey is a perfect example of "commercial diplomacy" in action.

Members of the PEC – just like Joseph Wancer and AmCham Poland – recognize that Poland is a mutually beneficial opportunity market, a country where a strategic investment can improve a business' bottom line.

That is part of the reason we have seen U.S.-Poland commercial connections grow at such a rapid pace in recent years:

- Bilateral trade has quadrupled in the past decade, reaching nearly \$8.8 billion in 2013.
- Among the 100 largest U.S. companies, 56 operate in Poland.
- More than 300 U.S. companies are invested in Poland across all sectors, from retail to services to manufacturing – with a total investment of over \$30 billion over the last two decades.

If we truly want to deepen our ties, let's work together to grow these numbers. Let's make it clear that our economies are as linked as our people and our history.

The Department of Commerce is working with both the American and Polish business communities to move our economic relationship forward.

Our two countries already have a mechanism in place to drive our government to government agenda forward, to strengthen public-private cooperation, and to identify opportunities for expanding trade and investment.

It is called the Economic and Commercial Dialogue, which I am honored to co-chair with Poland's Deputy Prime Minister.

But we can do much more. Our foundation is strong and our potential to advance a more robust economic alliance is clear.

I believe we can start to build our deeper relationship by expanding trade between our two countries.

Although one of the world's 25 largest economies, Poland today ranks as the United States' 54th largest trading partner.

In both countries, we know that we are missing an opportunity to work more closely together.

That is one reason leaders in each of our nations support the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership, or T-TIP.

President Komorowski has referred to T-TIP as "an economic NATO." I love that metaphor. Just as NATO has ensured transatlantic security cooperation, T-TIP will deepen our economic cooperation – to the benefit of businesses on both sides of the Atlantic.

As we make progress with the T-TIP negotiations -- which are important to our future economic success -- Let's not wait.

There are steps we can take NOW to bring the United States and Poland even closer together.

We see 6 critical areas of opportunity where U.S. companies can increase trade and investment with Poland. Those areas of opportunity are:

- Infrastructure;
- Green-building;
- Intelligent transportation systems;
- Energy;
- Defense and defense-related products; and
- Information and technology

This last area is particularly exciting as Poland today represents one of the fastest-growing IT markets in the world.

Poland's government has made this sector a priority: by developing its "Tech Initiative" in Silicon Valley and by sending Polish entrepreneurs to Berkeley and Stanford for more training and education.

In June, President Obama signed a framework establishing the Poland-U.S. Innovation Council, which will mobilize cooperation on science and technology, industries of innovation, and more.

The United States -- in the public and private sectors -- wants to help Poland's startups take the next step forward and figure out the most effective way to move their ideas to market.

We see the potential of Poland's entrepreneurs, and we want to be in the business of helping them succeed.

Supporting innovation and entrepreneurship is not limited to our work in Poland.

Nearly everywhere I travel, I try to visit local incubators, meet with tech leaders and entrepreneurs, and get a chance to listen to their stories and help them with tools needed to spur cutting-edge discovery.

On a broader scale, the Commerce Department leads the Presidential Ambassadors for Global Entrepreneurship.

This initiative that I am honored to chair -- called PAGE -- is a partnership between the federal government and 11 well-known entrepreneurs who founded companies like Coursera, LinkedIn, and Tory Burch to encourage entrepreneurship in the United States and around the world.

Through PAGE, successful American business leaders share their knowledge and expertise with aspiring entrepreneurs around the world, mentoring and empowering them to turn their ideas into the seeds of economic growth.

At home and abroad, PAGE is one way we are acting to develop the next generation of great entrepreneurs.

Another area for growth in our relationship is in the energy sector.

Energy security is a core common interest for the United States and Poland. And achieving energy security requires a greater diversity of energy sources and new technologies.

The U.S. government and our businesses are bringing essential expertise to the table to help Poland diversify its energy supply and secure greater energy independence. And throughout my meetings with the Deputy Prime Minister, energy diversification, infrastructure, and security are at the top of our priorities.

You can rest assured that the United States will continue to support all of our European partners in building a more secure energy future.

In closing, it is incumbent on all of us to build on our long relationship.

Now and in the years to come, we will remain inspired by the courage and conviction of the Polish people who took their futures into their own hands 25 years ago by voting to end communist rule.

As one voter declared after the historic election of 1989, “There is a sense that something is beginning to happen in Poland.”

This simple statement represented the truth of that moment: as Poles chose a future of democracy; as Poles were allowed to select their own leaders; as Poles began to sketch out a more just era for themselves and for their children.

This statement also reflected a change broader than a political revolution: It was a forceful step toward a more open economy and more open markets; toward more successful workers and businesses; toward a more prosperous nation.

What was “beginning to happen” 25 years ago in Poland was the first glimpse of your economic miracle – a miracle born out of focused action, tough choices, and hard work.

The United States was proud to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Polish people then.

Twenty-five years later, your fortitude has made that miracle a reality – and America still stands by your side.

- America stands ready to build a closer commercial relationship with Poland.
- America stands committed to deepening an alliance strengthened by our economic might.

- America stands firm in our desire to expand our business footprint in Poland and to remain open for your business at home.

In that task, we are fortunate to have the leadership of our Under Secretary for International Trade, Stefan Selig, who brings decades of private sector experience to our work promoting trade and investment worldwide.

We are proud to have our Ambassador, Stephen Mull, who stands on the forefront of our efforts to build closer economic and diplomatic ties between our countries.

And we are strengthened by the leadership and partnership of AmCham Poland, a dynamic organization that keeps its fingers on the pulse of U.S. companies doing business here.

Together with all of you, we will build upon the long, enduring, and unbreakable friendship between the United States and Poland.

Thank you.