

Joint Press Availability With Polish Foreign Minister Radoslaw Sikorski

Remarks

John Kerry

Secretary of State

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FOREIGN MINISTER SIKORSKI: (Via interpreter) John, welcome to Warsaw and Poland. We've known each other for a very long time. I knew you when you weren't the Secretary of State and I personally wasn't a Minister of Foreign Affairs with the Republic of Poland, actually. I'm very glad to keep in touch with you, and I mean keep in touch not only when it comes to Syria and our bilateral relations.

Today's meeting is proof and confirms the good strategic relationship between the United States and Poland. An example of the close link can be the political cooperation and our military cooperation. What's more, we have common economic interest and we conduct democratic dialogue.

When we recall our common actions, I would like to thank you cordially for your yesterday's visit. You visited the resting place of Tadeusz Mazowiecki, the first non-communist prime minister of the Republic of Poland, thanks to whom we are where we are, who paved the way for Poland to the EU, to NATO, the way to freedom, the way for Poland to become a secure and safe and wealthier country.

Next year, the summit of NATO takes place in London. We will sum up our joint operations in Afghanistan and we will set directions for further operations of NATO for common security.

As for the topic of Afghanistan, I'd like to say that this topic is personally – it's very close to me, and I'd like to recall to the Polish media the person of Sergeant Michael Ollis, who on the 28th of August during (inaudible) of a Polish base in Ghazny sacrificed his life to save a Polish soldier. I think this is the best proof of the fact that Poles and Americans are brothers in arms. So my condolences go to the family of Sergeant Ollis. And I'd like to thank you for our military cooperation in Afghanistan.

We have spoken about the ongoing issues that are on the international agenda. John is just returning from the Middle East, but we've not only spoken about the southern neighbors of the EU but also about the eastern neighbors of the EU. We are approaching the Eastern Partnership Summit, and there still is the question of signing association agreement with Ukraine.

Poland, for obvious reasons, supports the signing of a free trade agreement between the EU and the U.S. We promised ourselves that we would consult each other in that matters. Poland is one of the countries who think that for the sake of environment and for the sake of our economies in Europe and in Poland, we should explore and produce shale gas, and gas should flow to our NLG terminal also from the United States.

So John, once again a very warm welcome in Poland, and I hope the rest of your visit will be very fruitful. Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, Radek, thank you very, very, very much. Witam serdecznie. I'm very honored to be here with all of you, and I am particularly grateful to revisit with my friend, the Foreign Minister of Poland. We have collaborated on a number of different issues and engaged in a number of important and close, constructive dialogues. And he has visited with me in Washington; I'm now privileged to visit with him here. And together we have met at a number of other multilateral meetings.

It's a pleasure for me to be back in Poland. I've had the privilege of being here a number of times, particularly for environmental conferences, and we applaud Poland's extraordinary leadership with respect to the environment and environmental issues. And it's no accident that I chose to be here in Poland for my first bilateral meeting in Central Europe. In less than 25 years, since the restoration of democracy, the Polish people have turned the country into an economic and security powerhouse, and the progress that has been made is really quite extraordinary. And the impact of Poland is really felt now throughout the transatlantic community.

Last night, as Radek mentioned, I had the privilege of standing at the gravesite of former (inaudible) Minister Mazowiecki. It was a very moving moment. It was very beautiful in that cemetery with the birch trees and the aroma of the birch trees and the flowers on the graves and the lights of all the various candles. It was really mystical and spiritual, and I was very proud to lay a wreath from the people of the United States to recognize the extraordinary contribution of this man to the cause of freedom and independence and human rights. It is a great story.

I also, knowing the history of this great city and of Poland itself, cannot help but come here with a sense of respect for the remarkable journey of the Polish people. Warsaw – the name Warsaw is associated with so much: the Warsaw Pact, the Warsaw Convention, the Warsaw Uprising. The resistance and the incredible rebuilding of an entire country has come out of the remarkable spirit of the Polish people. And so I feel privileged as an American, and as an American Secretary of State who has great appreciation, having run for President of the United States, for the vast diaspora of the Polish people that contribute to the United States now as Polish Americans.

So I'm glad to come back here, and I am struck by how much has changed in just one generation, and frankly, how much of that change came from the visionary leadership of the Prime Minister, Prime Minister Mazowiecki and also of other great Polish leaders whose names are known around the world. Prime Minister Mazowiecki was obviously an advocate for the best of human rights, the best of democracy, and he launched Poland's extraordinary aspirations that now neighbors and friends around the world can touch and appreciate.

I'm also proud that in this march of progress, the United States and Poland, as allies and friends, continue to promote our shared values and our shared aspirations. And our partnership, quite frankly, is growing stronger because of that.

On the economic side, today the Foreign Minister and I discussed the Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership, TTIP as it's known, which can lead to even further economic and political transformation. In addition, as a NATO member now for almost 15 years and as an EU member for nearly 10 years, Poland's influence in both organizations has grown significantly over that time.

And that is because of the smart choices that the Polish people continue to make. You are opening markets, you are embracing transparency, you are continuing with your defense modernization and building the strength of the country, you are continuing to diversify your energy marketplace, and you are generously supporting the democratic EU and have begun negotiating and recognizing our shared interest in a comprehensive economic agreement that can grow both of our countries and all of the region. Europe and the United States joined together in an economic association would be one of the most powerful economic forces on the planet, and it will raise the standards by which all countries are engaging in economic activity.

Poland is also the largest commercial partner of the United States in Central Europe, and our bilateral trade has quadrupled over the course of the last 10 years. We think we can do even better, and we believe that the TTIP is the key to being able to do that.

On the environmental front, as I mentioned earlier in my comments, Poland is not only hosting the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change for the 19th conference of the parties next week, but Poland continues to send a signal for all of us that we need to demonstrate our commitment to a cleaner energy base and to live up to our responsibilities to lower emissions on a global basis.

As NATO allies, our security partnership, from Afghanistan to Kosovo to Lask, all of these – right here in Poland at the air base – make our relationship even more important and stronger. I look forward to going to Lask later in the day and saluting the work of our armed forces and the work that they accomplish together.

I also want to commend Poland for its \$45 billion investment in defense modernization. The United States defense industry, which we believe is the most innovative, creative, and technologically advanced in the world, is going to compete vigorously here with our government in support of the goals and the upgrades that Poland seeks.

Poland is a very important part of the European phased adaptive approach on NATO missile defense, and we will deploy a missile defense site in Poland in the 2018 timeframe.

We're also enormously proud of our work together to promote democracy on this continent and around the world. I want to commend Minister Sikorski for his tireless efforts in particular for mentoring the Eastern Partnership countries in advance of the meeting in Vilnius. This is a very important opportunity for everybody, and I think Poland has been front and center in its efforts to help advance all of our interests through that association.

The bottom line is this: Poland is thriving and our alliance is thriving. And I look forward to celebrating here today the economic and security benefits with the leaders of Poland, and I particularly look forward to continuing to grow this partnership. We're respectful, enormously respectful of the extraordinary history of the people of Poland, of this city, of this region; mindful that we always have to be vigilant. We know that things can change. The march of democracy is important. We believe in it, but it takes work; it takes nurturing. And all of us have a responsibility to continue to do our part in order to live up to the legacy left us by those who weren't as lucky as we are today, some of whom gave their lives,

many of whom were dislocated, all of whom have been through an extraordinary history to arrive at the place we are today. We have work to do, but the journey of the past convinces us we can get that work done.

Thank you.

MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) Ladies and gentlemen, the time for questions. Mr. Cegielski from Polish Radio.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) Good morning The question goes to both of you gentlemen. Several days ago, Minister Sikorski spoke on the Polish Radio and said that there will be a chance to ask a question about the invigilation. My question is: Have you spoken about NSA (inaudible) and what has been said?

And the question to Secretary Kerry: Have the Americans – are the Americans eavesdropping on Polish politicians?

FOREIGN MINISTER SIKORSKI: (Via interpreter) Yes, we have spoken about it and we have agreed on closer consultations between our services on combatting common threats.

SECRETARY KERRY: Happy to say to you that this is a subject, obviously, of concern – and we understand that – to people. First of all, we need to understand, as the Foreign Minister does, we're all in this together. We are all in the effort to try to be able to provide protection to our citizens, and we have to strike the right balance between protecting our citizens and, obviously, the privacy of all of our citizens. That is a balance that we do try to strike. The President of the United States has ordered a complete review of all of our activity, and we will work very closely with our friends in order to make certain that the road ahead is one that is understood and that is mutually agreed upon.

MS. PSAKI: The next question will be from Jo Biddle of AFP.

QUESTION: Excuse me, sorry about that. Could I just follow up on the NSA allegations and with respect to how this might – how the fallout from all these revelations might affect the TTIP talks which are going to resume from November the 11th in Brussels? It was announced yesterday.

Secretary Kerry, how do you think the trade talks would be affected by these revelations which have left some of the European leaders in very political difficulties back home?

And Foreign Minister Sikorski, also how concerned is Poland about the fallout on U.S.-EU relations as a result of this?

And If I could just ask one more to Foreign Minister Sikorski on the CIA – the allegations of the CIA prison in Poland. There's a European Court of Human Rights hearing next month, and I believe that the Polish Government has asked for this to be closed to the public and press. Why is that? And how is your own government investigation to this going, and are the Americans participating?

Thank you.

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, let me just say, first of all, we are very appreciative of the Foreign Minister's and Poland's strong support for the Transatlantic Trade Investment Partnership. This is a trade partnership that has the ability to lift all of our countries. Europe has obviously been having a very challenging economic time. The United States has also had its challenges; we're starting to come back and get a lot stronger.

But the Transatlantic Trade Partnership is really separate from and different from any other issues that people may have on their minds. This is about jobs. It's about the economy. It's about economic competition in a global community that competes sometimes by rules that are very questionable and shaky.

If the United States and the European Community can come together around this Transatlantic Trade Partnership, we have the ability to raise the standards by which countries around the world are doing business, and we will have one of the most powerful economic marketplaces on the face of this planet. Together, that can have a profound positive impact for our people. It will put millions of people to work, create new jobs, more opportunities, and it's worth pushing for.

Now, that should not be confused with whatever legitimate questions exist with respect to NSA or other activities. And as I have said previously, we want to hear from our allies, we want to have this conversation. President Obama welcomes this opportunity to work with our allies. And ultimately, if we get it right – which we will – we can not only alleviate concerns, but we can actually strengthen our intelligence relationships going forward and we can all be more secure and safer as a result, as well as protecting the privacy of citizens. We will work together very effectively on this.

FOREIGN MINISTER SIKORSKI: (Via interpreter) The TTIP, the deepened foreign trade agreement, is an agreement between the EU and the U.S. Let me remind you that we are represented by the European Commission in these talks. The Commission has the sole competence in this respect. The EU has no competences when it comes to cooperation of intelligence services. Intelligence services cooperation is very important. It is also vital to make sure that our rights and regulations and procedures keep up with the technological progress so that our citizens can feel safe and the alliances are not threatened, are not over-burdened by such incidents as the escape of Mr. Snowden.

But these are two separate things, two separate orders: One belongs to Europe itself, to the Community; the second one is rather national in character; it depends on individual and states vis-a-vis the U.S. And as I promised, as I mentioned, we promised that we will have closer cooperation between our services so that we can make certain that the cooperation is based on frankness, openness, and transparency, but also so that our citizens can feel safe, can be sure that their personal life is not the object of some unjustified interest.

As for the second question, you, Madam, answered your question yourself. Poland is the only country, actually, that is currently running an investigation on the alleged activities. The investigation is closed in nature; therefore, the materials have to be classified. They are not open to the public, so whatever we would like to communicate on an international basis is classified.

Thank you very much.

QUESTION: (Via interpreter) Mr. Wronski from Gazeta Wyborczaadsky, Polish daily. My first question goes to Minister – to Secretary Kerry. At the beginning of this year, the U.S. changed its plan related to the missile defense. You mentioned that due to lower threats, the fourth phase of the missile defense in Poland will not be carried out. In the light of the current situation, i.e., Syria and the violence there, and the (inaudible) of Iran getting different, will the plans of missile defense be changed, the plans related to Poland? Will they be reviewed, maybe?

And my second question is: How does the U.S. want to cooperate in construction of the Polish missile defense?

My third question goes to Minister Sikorski: Have you obtained any clear declaration from Secretary Kerry that Polish politicians have not been the subject of eavesdropping of NSA, have not been the target of NSA? You mentioned the word “consultations.” It was a bit worrying. It awoke some concerns. Does it mean that the Americans are to warn us that they are going to eavesdrop on us, or are we going to do eavesdropping together? What does it mean?

FOREIGN MINISTER SIKORSKI: (Via interpreter) Well, they are very good questions, actually, very good questions for my colleague, for Secretary Kerry.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you. Obviously, it’s premature to make any kind of judgment that would alter the current path, because there’s nothing that’s been altered otherwise. We don’t have an agreement with Iran, nothing has changed, and the plans for missile defense are absolutely on target. We’ve already – on October 28th we broke ground on the phase two adaptive, and we intend to provide for the next phase by 2018, and we’ll deploy that site by that period of time. That is our plan, and nothing has changed in that at this point in time. I don’t foresee it changing at this point. And obviously, we will fulfill our obligations and work together with the Government of Poland with respect to the deployment.

MS. PSAKI: The last question will be from Scott Stearns with VOA.

QUESTION: A question for both of you, if I might. With U.S. and Russian officials meeting in Geneva today on the Syria talks, Syria’s Information Minister has said that the Assad government will not take part in Geneva 2 if the goal is the removal of the Assad government. You said yesterday in Saudi Arabia, Mr. Secretary, that that was the goal of Geneva 2. So how do you move forward to a negotiated settlement where one, if not both, of the parties to the Syrian conflict are doubtful to attend a Geneva 2?

SECRETARY KERRY: Well, the words “regime” and individuals and this and that get confused in this process. The Assad regime knows full well that the purpose of Geneva 2 is to implement Geneva 1. That has always been true. The Russians have accepted that. Every support group of the Syrian opposition has accepted that.

The purpose is to implement Geneva 1. What does that mean? What is Geneva 1? Geneva 1 calls for the installation of a transition government with full executive authority by mutual consent, so both parties have to agree to put in place a transition government that is neutral that will bring about a choice for the Syrian people for the long-term future.

Now, I don't know how anybody believes the opposition is going to give mutual consent to Assad to continue. And the Syrian Government has accepted to come to Geneva. So I hope that the Syrian Government and the Russians and Iranians and others who support the Syrian regime will make certain that the Syrian regime will live up to its obligation to come to Geneva to negotiate a peaceful resolution of the conflict in Syria.

And we and others have already indicated we are prepared to be there and the opposition is. The opposition received a very significant boost yesterday from the Arab League, which overwhelmingly stated a very strong resolution saying that the opposition must go to Geneva, Geneva is important, and Geneva will provide a way to have a negotiated solution here.

One thing is certain: There is no military solution to the conflict in Syria. It can only be resolved through political negotiation. And the framework for that negotiation has been accepted by the international community. It is Geneva 2 negotiation to implement Geneva 1 transition government. And we hope that the Assad regime will live up to its already stated promise to be there and to negotiate. And I think it speaks for itself.

FOREIGN MINISTER SIKORSKI: (Via interpreter) Poland has been supporting the destruction of Syrian chemical weapons when that seemed to be not very likely, and today it is reality. So we are also supporting political talks because we think that this is the last chance, the last resort for Syria and for its citizens. We need to negotiate the solution for nuclear ambitions of Iran.

I'd like to thank and congratulate John Kerry for everything that he does, he's been doing and he does to support the peace process between Israel and Palestine. Thank you very much.

MODERATOR: (Via interpreter) Thank you, ministers. Thank you, guests.

SECRETARY KERRY: Thank you very, very much.