

Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks at Kozminski University

April 13, 2011

Good afternoon. It is a real pleasure to be here at Kozminski University, along with the American Studies Center of Warsaw University. I want to thank Rector Kozminski and Director Basiuk for inviting me.

I'm going to talk about transatlantic relations today, so it's very fitting that I do so with these two institutions which embody the values and close bonds of this relationship. Kozminski University, of course, was founded by a man who taught at American universities and was the recipient of the prestigious Fulbright scholarship from the U.S. government. Professor Grzegorz Kolodko, also a Fulbright scholar and former Finance Minister of Poland, is another great example. We are proud to have graduates of Kozminski University, like Mariola Biernacka and Agata Piotrowska, working at our Embassy.

And the American Studies Center has been a true friend of the Embassy, and promoter of transatlantic ties since its founding in 1976. We are fortunate to have leaders like Director Basiuk, another Fulbrighter, and Professor David Jones teaching at the Center. And we also have American Studies Center students like current intern Michal Pisarek [sitting in audience] working at our Embassy.

So when I say that transatlantic relations have never been more important, this is a place where you understand what I mean. I'll explain how the United States views the relationship with Europe, and the unique role of U.S.-Polish bilateral relations. Our two governments have achieved a great deal over the last 18 months, and we have a lot to be proud of, and a full agenda ahead. I won't speak for too long, because I look forward to answering your questions. But I hope some of you in the room today will consider contributing directly to transatlantic relations by working at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw.

I say that transatlantic relations have never been more important to the United States because we share values and interests, and because the challenges and opportunities of the 21st century require us to work together.

President Barack Obama's recent announcement that he will visit Poland the end of next month, following stops in Ireland, the UK, and France, is an important symbol of the value he places on Europe and on the Polish-American alliance. This will be President Obama's eighth trip to Europe, more than any other continent and more than any other U.S. president at this point of his term.

The transatlantic space is not simply a geographic expression, but a community of values. There is no more like-minded community in the world. We hold dearly our individual rights and freedoms. In Poland, you understand this as well as any of us. This is why President Obama calls Europe "the cornerstone of our engagement with the world." Truly, we have no better partner than Europe, where we work with democratic, prosperous, militarily-capable allies who share our values and share our interests. The transatlantic space represents what Poland's first

post-Communist Foreign Minister, the late Krzysztof Skubiszewski, called a “community of interests”, where values and economic ties bind us closely together.

The United States has three overarching objectives in our policy toward Europe, and Poland plays an important role in each of them.

First we work with Europe to promote prosperity on both sides of the Atlantic. As the students of Kozminski understand well, a country cannot be strong overseas if it is not strong at home, and that is why President Obama has made expanding international trade and investment a priority. And in this respect the importance of Europe and America to one another cannot be overstated. Together, the United States and Europe are at the core of the world economic system. We are one another’s major trading partners and foreign employer by far.

Second, we work with Europe to meet global challenges. No matter what the issue is, whether it is responding to the stirring for democracy in North Africa and the Middle East; combating violent extremism in Afghanistan and Pakistan, or staunchly opposing Iran’s nuclear ambitions, Europe is indispensable. Together, we are vastly stronger in terms of legitimacy, resources and ideas.

Let me say a word about Libya. Today, NATO is part of a broad international coalition to enforce United Nations Security Council Resolution 1973 to protect Libyan civilians from the vicious attacks of their own government through limited military action. President Obama explained: “we cannot stand idly by when a tyrant tells his people that there will be no mercy.” He believes in America’s – and the world’s – common responsibility to protect civilians.

Third, the United States is also committed to the historic project of building a Europe that is prosperous, whole and free. Poland's bold and skillful democratic transition paved the way for Central and Eastern Europe. And today Poland's expertise and example are inspiration and sustenance for those seeking to build democracy in the eastern neighborhood. The leadership of Poland and Sweden established the European Union's Eastern Partnership Initiative. And America is proud to provide \$310 million in assistance to the countries of the Eastern Partnership, in addition to an additional \$450 million this year for Georgia, the remainder of our \$1 billion assistance package following the Russian invasion in 2008. And we have just signed a five-year package of assistance with Moldova, under the Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact.

Now let me turn to my adopted home of Warsaw. America looks to Poland as one of our closest allies and oldest friends. Our bilateral relations are forged over more than two centuries of supporting each other in wars hot and cold. And now, as we anticipate President Obama's visit, we can be proud of our achievements in broadening and deepening our relationship for the new century. It is a relationship that values and encourages Poland's emergence as a strong and influential member of NATO and the European Union. It is a relationship built on a shared strategic view. I sometimes like to say the laws of physics bring Poland and the United States closer together. Poland is the eastern edge of the European Union and America the western border of the transatlantic space and, because we tend to see the world through a similar lens, we have a unique opportunity, and I might even say responsibility, to forge transatlantic solidarity together.

America's relationship with Poland now is built on three pillars of cooperation: promoting democracy, expanding prosperity, and strengthening mutual security. Allow me to briefly review them.

Former Foreign Minister Professor Bronislaw Geremek, who did so much to make democracy a success in Poland, summarized the first pillar of our relationship: "It should become a principal of international relations that democracy and democratization must be supported in all situations." Current Foreign Minister Sikorski, in a tribute to Professor Geremek, added that democracy has two main advantages: it is morally superior to the alternatives and has achieved better practical outcomes.

Today, Polish and American cooperation on democracy promotion is substantive. Last month, Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Sikorski announced the establishment of a democracy dialogue between our two countries, the only such dialogue America has with another country. During their meeting, Poland and the United States agreed to cooperate in providing assistance to Tunisia. And the Foreign Ministry has already sent a team to Tunis for consultations on the applicability of Poland's experience. We have coordinated our actions on Belarus, supporting Warsaw's lead to announce strong sanctions to punish Lukashenko following the brutal post-election crackdown in December and, as important, announcing an increase in support to civil society and democracy activists in Belarus, to let them know clearly that they are known and supported by the international community.

Together we helped to establish the Community of Democracies, born in Warsaw 10 years ago, under the leadership of Professor Geremek and Secretary

Albright, and last July Secretary Clinton attended the 10th anniversary meeting in Krakow, and established nurturing of civil society as a key task for the CD.

The second pillar of our cooperation is promoting prosperity in both of our countries. Trade and investment between Poland and the United States is probably more than you think – but not nearly enough. In 2010, the value of U.S. investments in Poland was \$30 billion, and U.S. firms now provide direct and indirect employment to more than 350,000 workers in Poland.

Since 2008, the interest in Poland as an investment destination has grown, and the scope of the investment – high tech, energy, research and development – is as important as the size.

One final point. Although the BRIC countries are of growing importance, investment remains significant. Total U.S. investment in three central European countries – Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic – totaled \$83 billion last year, twice the value of investments in India.

Nonetheless, America is the world's largest economy and Poland is the EU's fastest growing, so there is scope for a lot of growth, and I look to all of you to play a pivotal role.

Energy is an area of particular. We are cooperating on clean energy, including wind and biomass. We have signed two agreements with Poland on nuclear cooperation. Poland is a member of the Global Shale Gas Initiative and the Embassy will co-sponsor a conference at the Copernicus Science Center on May 18 with the Foreign Ministry.

Secretary Clinton puts a very high priority on promoting energy diversity in Europe to ensure the security of supplies, competitive prices, and political independence.

Security is of course fundamental, and we have made very significant steps in the last two years. And both of our governments have much to be proud of. At NATO, we agreed to adopt a new Strategic Concept which fundamentally reaffirmed the importance of Article 5 of the Washington Treaty, the article that makes an attack against one an attack against all, and made collective defense once again a

core task of the alliance. NATO developed contingency plans for Poland and the Baltic States. Presidents Obama and Komorowski announced the deployment of an air detachment in Poland to provide a boost to the U.S. capacity to train with Polish, allied, and partner air forces in the future, the first agreement for the permanent deployment of U.S. servicemen and women in Poland.

We have signed an agreement to station ballistic missile defenses in Poland, as part of a NATO system to provide for the territorial defense of NATO Europe against the growing threat of ballistic missiles. And the first Aegis ballistic missile defense ship is already deployed in the Mediterranean. Even Patriot missiles, which once dominated the press, now come in and out of Poland routinely every quarter in all different configurations, as if we've always been doing it. In June of this year, they will be here with live missiles.

The NATO summit also agreed on a strategy for Afghanistan that will gradually turn over responsibility for security to Afghan forces. America and all of the NATO allies greatly appreciate Poland's contribution to the mission in Afghanistan and honor your sacrifices. I personally traveled to Afghanistan and saw the contribution Poland is making. I heard from American generals how honorably Polish troops serve and saw how American troops served under Polish tactical command.

And at least as important as these pillars are people to people contacts, starting of course with the planned meeting of President Obama with President Komorowski and Prime Minister Tusk next month. But also, the many other opportunities we have created.

We have supported the Polish-American Freedom Foundation's internship program for young Poles to work at leading American companies. Through the support of the Polish government we have doubled the size of the Fulbright program. We celebrated the openings of the Kosciusko Foundation office in Warsaw, and look forward to this spring's opening of the German Marshall Fund of the United States for the first time in Poland. And the Atlantic Council and the City of Warsaw, with the support of the U.S. Embassy, have established an important new transatlantic forum, the Wroclaw Global Forum, which meets next in June. The City of Warsaw, supported also by Citibank, unveiled a new monument to Kosciusko, a hero to both our nations for his courage and his true democratic values, here in Warsaw. Jagiellonian University in Krakow organized an important conference to celebrate the 100th anniversary of President Ronald Reagan's birth.

Similarly, American universities hosted conferences to celebrate the 150th anniversary of Ignacy Paderewski's birth.

Our Embassy has become more active in reaching out to the Polish public.

We now have a Facebook page and a Twitter account where we advertise events, hold trivia contests and more. We also have a YouTube channel with a video about U.S. visa procedures.

Finally, we issued record numbers of visas to Poles. I understand that the question of visas in Poland is a sensitive one, but we are working with Congress to right this wrong. No one wants Poland to enter the Visa Waiver program more than I do. In the meantime, over 90% of Poles were approved for ten-year, multi-entry visas last year.

When I think about ties like these that bind our nations together, I realize that being U.S. Ambassador to Poland is one of the best jobs in the world. The United States faces many challenges around the globe, but the United States is blessed to face them together with a true ally and friend like Poland.