Ambassador Feinstein's Remarks at Warsaw University's
Institute of International Relations
March 10, 2011

It is a real pleasure to be here at the Institute for International Relations. I want to thank Director Halizak for inviting me.

I also have to say I owe him a great debt, because so many of the Institute's graduates come to work at the U.S. Embassy in Warsaw. And that is a tradition that I hope continues, including with some of you here today.

I'm billed to talk about foreign policy and especially the relationship between the United States and Central Europe and how that relationship contributes to European and global security. Let me try to do that relatively briefly so that I can take your questions.

You have picked an incredible moment to enter the field of international relations, as we witness the events in North Africa and the Middle East unfold. And, you are studying in a country and in a part of the world that has an important role to play.

Every situation is, of course different, but Poland, because of its experience and because of its success, has a unique contribution to make at this time of change.

As the world is transfixed by the upheaval in the Middle East, Poland, the United States and Europe are essential in assisting new governments to develop democratic institutions and practices.

We've already taken a united stand in condemning Colonel Gadhafi and the violence he has unleashed on his own people. One of our priorities early on as developments in North Africa have moved forward is to cooperate, to have the international community speak with one voice which we succeeded doing in UN Security Council Resolution 1970. We put a high priority on speaking together and sending the message that we're standing up for the citizens of this region, just as we did for the citizens in Central Europe.

Poland has a special role serving as a model for others to learn from. And, indeed, long before recent events unfolded, government officials and democracy activists from Afghanistan, Jordan, Egypt and elsewhere visited Poland to learn firsthand about Poland's bold and skillful transition.

Polish-American relations are of course broad and deep, forged over more than two centuries, during which we have supported one another's fight for freedom. But today, Poland and the United States are working together to address the challenges of the 21st century, concentrating on three essential areas: promoting democracy, expanding prosperity, and building our mutual security.

Allow me now to briefly review these three key pillars of our relationship.

The United States and Poland are adding structure and substance to their common efforts to promote democracy around the world. Last week Secretary Clinton and Foreign Minister Sikorsky announced establishment of a democracy dialogue between our two countries. And indeed there is a lot for us to do together.

Poland has shown strong leadership in promoting political and economic stability in the Eastern neighborhood. The United States believes that enhanced political and economic relationships with the countries of the Eastern Partnership are important to the EU's future and to the stability and prosperity

of a part of Europe that faces significant challenges. I can tell you that Secretary Clinton and is very much focused on these countries.

Let me say a word about what we're doing. The United States in 2010 allocated $310 million in assistance to the EPI region, provided the remainder of our $1 billion in assistance package to Georgia. And we have just signed a five year, $262 million Millennium Challenge Corporation Compact with Moldova. So I'm pleased to say we are putting our money where our mouth is in terms of our commitment to these countries.

We have focused on support for democratic actors and civil society capacity, building economic growth and stability, promoting health and education, and bolstering peace and security in the region. These are goals that are very consistent with the Eastern Partnership's goals. And we very much hope and believe that the initiative will provide additional funds and programs to the region, and that by closely coordinating our assistance – and this is something we do put a premium on and I'm pleased to say has gone very well – we can leverage our contributions and maximize our impact by working together.

We also welcome the planned EU Eastern Partnership Initiative Summit to take place later this year in Warsaw, and we expect to participate at a very senior level.

The United States and Poland can together send a powerful message of solidarity, something we have done recently with respect to Belarus, working with the European Union. Together with the targeted set of sanctions that both the EU and the United States announced on January 31st, we have sent a very clear message to the government of Belarus and to Mr. Lukashenko that business as usual will not continue as long as the suppression of civil society, the opposition to independent media continue, and demonstrators are detained, tried and sentenced, which in our view makes them political prisoners. We call on the government of Belarus to release those detainees now.

We were also gratified that Poland recently hosted a very successful Donors Conference in Warsaw that raised 87 million euros. At that conference the United States increased its assistance to civil society in Belarus by more than a third in order to support civil society, media freedom, and political competition. We feel strongly that we not only need to send a message to the government of Belarus that there are negative consequences to its actions, but we need to stand by the people of Belarus and support them in all ways that we can.

In addition to these steps the leaders of the region have spoken out consistently and strongly for reform in countries like Belarus, and we will continue to join you in voicing our support for democracy in Belarus and elsewhere in the region.

Poland has also shown leadership on energy security issues, another priority for the Obama administration. Last week Poland and the United States signed an agreement to expand cooperation on clean energy issues. Poland is also a member of the Global Shale Gas Initiative and we recently signed an agreement on civil nuclear cooperation, too. Secretary Clinton puts a very high priority on promoting energy diversity in Europe which we believe is essential for ensuring the security of supplies, competitive prices, and political independence. This and other initiatives will expand opportunities for both our countries and reduce Poland's and Europe's dependence on any one source of energy.

Poland and the United States also contribute to global stability through NATO, something that was underscored again at the recently concluded NATO Summit in Lisbon. Lisbon marked a watershed in the alliance's evolution and achieved progress in three crucial areas. First, we revitalized the alliance and prepared it to meet the threats of the 21st Century. We did so by adopting a new strategic concept

defining new capabilities for the alliance and initiating important reforms in the structure of the alliance. And we reaffirmed our unwavering Article 5 commitment to Poland and to all NATO allies.

Second, we positioned the NATO ISAF mission in Afghanistan for success by pursuing a strategy that will allow Afghans to gradually take lead responsibility for security in their country while maintaining a strong partnership with NATO. And we greatly honor Poland's sacrifices and appreciate its steadfastness and thank Poland for the very strong contributions it has made to the fight against extremism in Poland.

At Lisbon allies recognized that the defense of Europe can no longer be achieved by just tanks or bombers. Now we need defenses against a new and very serious set of threats, in particular ballistic missiles in the hands of dangerous regimes, particularly if potentially combined with nuclear weapons.

Our aim as an alliance is to develop a missile defense capability that will provide full coverage and protection from missile threats for all NATO territory populations and forces in Europe. This capability will be a tangible expression of NATO's core mission of collective defense. At the Lisbon Summit allies also welcomed the U.S. missile defense system in Europe known as the European Phased Adaptive Approach, as a valuable national contribution to the overall effort. And Secretary Clinton last week underlined our commitment to move ahead with building missile defense here.

Lisbon marked the first NATO-Russia Council Summit since 2008. We agreed on a NATO-Russia Joint Review of 21st Century common security challenges which include terrorism, piracy, natural and manmade disasters, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and ballistic missiles.

Let me add, and let me be particularly clear, however, that these efforts at cooperation with Russia will in no way limit the United States or NATO's capacity to deploy missile defense or other collective defense capabilities. Moreover, none of this progress and none of the progress we have made with Russia comes at the expense of our principles including our commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of all nations in Europe and NATO's open door. Both the United States and NATO continue to have differences with Russia and we have expressed those regularly and clearly but we have not allowed them to prevent NATO and Russia from advancing cooperation that ultimately will enhance stability throughout Europe and Eurasia.

To sum up, Poland and America are united in wanting a stronger Europe. We believe that good things happen because of our cooperation. Our countries play a unique and special role in forging transatlantic solidarity in Europe, and on the global challenges we face in this century.

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.