

*I am pleased to join all those celebrating the 30th anniversary of the Solidarity Movement.*

*Thirty years ago at the Gdansk shipyard, brave men and women won the right to strike and to form an independent trade union. This victory, and the work of individuals like Lech Wałęsa, Anna Walentynowicz, and Jacek Kuroń, gave birth to Solidarity – a trade union that quickly became a mass movement. This movement sparked peaceful, democratic change in Poland, and served as a source of inspiration in Central Europe and around the world.*

*Through the Solidarity movement, the people of Poland reminded us of the power each of us has to write our own destiny. In the face of tyranny and oppression, they chose freedom and democracy and, in so doing, changed their country and the course of history.*

*Today Poland is free. A proud member of the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Poland has taken its rightful place in the community of democratic nations, advancing the cause of freedom and human dignity around the world. The United States and Poland are bound together by our solemn obligations to one another as NATO allies, and we stand shoulder to shoulder in addressing global challenges, such as our effort to promote stability, security and prosperity in Afghanistan. The*

*Polish people have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to liberty through their many contributions to promoting democracy and security around the world.*

*As we commemorate the 30th anniversary of the Solidarity movement we are reminded of the vision, sacrifice, and struggle of those courageous men and women who risked everything to stand up to oppression. Today, there are still those who live under tyranny and are denied human rights. The Solidarity Movement is a source of inspiration in the fight for liberty for all the world's citizens. Together, let us renew our commitment to keep the light of freedom burning bright for all who currently endure the darkness of tyranny.*

*On behalf of the American people, I offer my congratulations on this important anniversary.*

*Barack Obama*

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