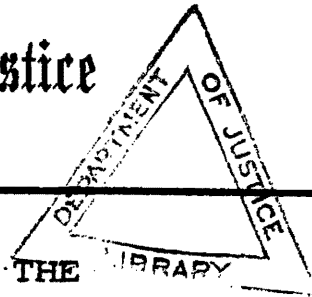




Department of Justice

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EXCERPTS OF REMARKS BY THE
HONORABLE ROBERT F. KENNEDY, ATTORNEY GENERAL
OF THE UNITED STATES AT THE POLISH CONSTITUTION
DAY OBSERVANCE, CHICAGO, ILLINOIS,
MAY 7, 1961

I want to express my deep appreciation and gratitude to all of you for inviting me here today because I know I am among people who are dedicated forever to love of country and liberty. It is a great honor to join with you in celebrating the 170th anniversary of Poland's adoption of a Constitution which gave meaning and noble expression to liberty and the fundamental rights of man.

The history of Poland goes back many years -- many more than that of the United States, but almost since the day the Declaration of Independence was drafted in Philadelphia, the history of Poland and the United States have been entwined. These close ties have existed between the Poles and the Americans because of mutual respect for each other.

Casimir Pulaski was 29 years old when he came to America as a volunteer to serve in the Continental Army. He participated with distinction in the Battle of Brandywine and formed his own cavalry unit which was known as Pulaski's Legion. Pulaski was with the ragged American Army during the cruel winter at Valley Forge and lost his life leading an attack against the British defenses at Savannah, Georgia.

Though he died fighting for America's freedom, I cannot help but believe that he also was fighting for Poland's freedom.

Thaddeus Kosciusko, another Polish volunteer, was one of the most popular officers in the Continental Army -- by all accounts. He was Washington's adjutant, built the fortifications at West Point and later served as a strategist and fighting officer in the recapture of Charleston, S. C.

After the United States had won its independence, Congress awarded him American citizenship, the rank of brigadier general and a large land grant. But Kosciusko returned to Poland and a few years later fought to defend the constitution which we honor today. In 1794, when Polish patriots again sought to win their freedom by fighting, Kosciusko returned from exile to lead them -- and again distinguished himself -- only to be overwhelmed by vastly superior forces.

Kosciusko still was pleading the cause of Polish independence in 1814 -- at the Congress of Vienna. He was then 68 years old, but the same democratic spirit which burned brightly in Jefferson and Lafayette -- also was unquenchable in him.

And down through the years to the Second World War -- Poles and Americans have stood steadfast for the cause of liberty. The Poles, under Lieutenant General Wladyslaw Anders, had the distinction of capturing Cassino and its historic abbey which blocked the Allied advance in Italy for so many months. I visited Monte Cassino several years ago and climbed up the steep, rocky hillside where the Polish soldiers fought

their way forward. I will never forget the inscription on the memorial to the Polish soldiers who are buried there:

"We Polish soldiers, for our freedom and yours, have given ourselves to God, our bodies to the soil of Italy and our hearts to Poland."

The challenge which international communism hurls against our nation is very great. For the past two weeks I have been engaged for a good part of my time, in working with General Taylor, Admiral Burke and Mr. Dulles, to assess the recent events in Cuba and determine what lessons we can learn for the future.

It already has become crystal clear in our study that as the President has stated so graphically, we must reexamine and reorient our forces of every kind. Not just our military forces, but all our techniques and outlook here in the United States.

We must come forward with the answer of how a nation, devoted to freedom and individual rights and respect for the law, can stand effectively against an implacable enemy who plays by different rules and knows only the law of the jungle. With the answer to this rests our future -- our destiny -- as a nation and as a people.

And, as we turn to meet our enemy, to look him full in the face, let us remember the gallant Polish soldiers who fought at Cassino and let us act with their spirit.

I might add that on this same trip in 1955, I visited Poland, too, and after traveling through the Soviet Union, it was inspiring to see that

the people of Poland still stand and yearn for the principles of freedom and meaningful democracy.

So, the ties between our countries, beginning with Pulaski and Kosciusko, go to the present time and it wasn't a coincidence that the President, in his State of the Union message, mentioned one country -- Poland -- because he has the same admiration and affection of the Poles that I do.

We continue to be interested in and have concern for the welfare of the Polish people and we have attempted to maintain our close ties with them. In doing this, we have developed cultural relations and exchanges. We have developed economic programs which are of assistance to the Polish people.

What we need are:

1. More flexibility in giving assistance to Poland and other countries behind the Iron Curtain.
2. Strengthen the economic and cultural ties between Poland and the United States.
3. Increase the exchange of students, teachers and technicians.
4. Explore with the Polish Government the possibility of using our frozen Polish funds on projects of peace that will demonstrate our abiding friendship for and interest in the people of Poland.

Recently, we have been disturbed by a number of hostile statements made by Polish leaders. However, we believe that the Poles favor, as we do, the continuing development of constructive relations

between the two countries and we hope that they will avoid words and actions which would impede such development.

The Polish people will know that the American people and the American government will continue to seek friendly relations. They also will know that we will work unceasingly to defend freedom and individual rights as heirs of a noble heritage -- in the spirit of 1791 as well as in the spirit of 1776.