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"FLAG DAY AND THE UNITED NATIONS"

Address by

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Attorney General of the United States

(Not Delivered in Person)

Before the Flag Day Celebration of the
Central Council of Polish Organizations of Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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2:30 P.M. E.W.T.

(To be Read by Honorable Charles F. Uhl, United States Attorney for the
Western District of Pennsylvania)

I was deeply honored when the Central Council of Polish Organizations of Pittsburgh invited me to be present at your Flag Day ceremonies today. There is so close a tie both in blood and faith between the Polish and American peoples--each has given the other so much of its strength and national character--that a more fitting recognition of their common bond could scarcely be found than in this salute to the flag of freedom. It is only because of the press of my official duties in Washington that I am unable to be with you in person.

Several weeks ago a rather significant event occurred. A Senate committee investigating ways and means of overcoming our critical rubber shortage heard its most cheering report in weeks from a Pole. This gentleman, Wacław Szukiewicz, is a prominent scientist. His specialty, before the fall of Warsaw, was the production of synthetic rubber. The Germans, of course, have their rubber problem, too. So they induced this man to go to Italy, where it was hoped he would make his great technical knowledge available to the Axis.

But somewhere along the line, the supposedly infallible Gestapo slipped a cog. Their rubber scientist reached Italy but, mysteriously, he did not tarry long. Instead, he turned up in Rio de Janeiro two or three months later. Now he is in the United States and his genius for making synthetic rubber--genius which the Nazis need desperately--is devoted to the cause of the United Nations. Once again a Polish patriot has risked his life for the cause of freedom.

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To my mind this event symbolizes the intertwining destinies of Poland and America. Disparate though they may be in language, customs and national background, they share a likeness which transcends all other considerations--a fierce and determined love of freedom. Historically, the two countries have trod much the same path in their search for statehood. And historically, too, they have sprung to one another's aid when disaster threatened.

The Polish Constitution of 1791 came into being but four years after the American Constitution was framed. It was patterned in many respects upon its American counterpart, with modifications adapted to the cultural and national needs of the Poles. In essence, however, these were two of the great charters of man's declaration of rights. They were predicated upon the common man's insistence to be free of tyranny and the right to determine the manner of his national existence. They were the beginnings of what we call today the democratic way of life.

But the course of democracy in Poland has staggered under almost insuperable odds. Greedy despots have coveted and taken its lands. It has been divided and re-divided by warring nations. It has been bled of its wealth and culture. A race less gifted with courage would have vanished from the earth under the years of ravishment which Poland has suffered. Yet, the flame of freedom has never died. Through the dark, endless years of oppression, when the prospect of a free Poland seemed but the fragile dream of zealots, the one unextinguishable idea has persisted. Its symbol was Polish Constitution Day--May 3. Generations of your forbears--indeed, perhaps, many of you when you were younger

celebrated that anniversary under cloak of night, in prison dungeons, in darkened rooms, wherever you could be free of the prying eyes of your oppressors.

But the flame was kept alive. It brightened and grew and spread. Poland continued to breed her scholars, artists, statesmen and soldiers. When they could not wage war for freedom in Poland, they fought for freedom and enlightenment elsewhere in the world. Out of the depths of her suffering Poland gave the world a Kosciusko, a Pulaski, a Chopin, a Paderewski, a Malinowski. I shall not attempt to call the long roll of the great sons of Poland. Suffice it to say that when the day came, two decades ago, to re-create the Polish State, Poland was equal to her opportunity. That flame, so carefully nurtured through a century of oppression, was not a martyr's flame of faggots; it was the flame of the blast furnace which hardens and toughens but does not consume.

Now, today, the whole world is plunged in a bitter struggle to maintain those same principles of human decency for which Poland has traditionally stood. Shall men be free or shall they be slaves? Shall we have a world ordered for the common men or for self-appointed supermen? Are we to live our lives guided by the precepts of democracy or by the whims of bigotry?

You and I know the answer. And I believe that Berlin, Rome and Tokio know the answer, too. They cannot escape the tremendous implication of the powerful massing of force which is today the United Nations. The whole world of the thousand million people who despise tyranny has sworn that Nazism and its kindred doctrines shall be crushed. Old enmities,

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suspicious and prejudices have been swept aside to form one overwhelming united front.

The soldiers of Poland, some 200,000 strong, remembering the rape of their homeland, are in the battle today on a dozen fronts. Side by side with Russians, Czechs, Britons and Americans; in tanks, planes, afoot and at sea, they are fighting the battle of decent men everywhere, soldiers of the United Nations.

The Poles have not surrendered. They have signed no armistice. Their government, under General Sikorski, is in London where it directs the far-flung activities of the Polish army which is still fighting Hitler. The first Polish Corps, outfitted by the British, numbers some 42,000 officers and men. Fifteen thousand Poles are in the R.A.F., serving both as pilots and ground crews. Other large detachments serving with the British are to be found in Africa and the Near East.

Of equal, if not greater significance, is the fact that from six to eight Polish divisions, consisting of nearly 100,000 men, are preparing to fight side by side with their erstwhile enemies, the Russians. No other single fact has come out of this war, it seems to me, which so clearly demonstrates the solidarity of the forces which today are opposing Hitlerism.

Nor have the cruelties of the Nazi conquerors broken the spirit of the people still in Poland. It is estimated that more than 200,000 Poles perished in the defense of their homeland. A million have died of starvation, disease and the rigors of the concentration camp. Over a million have been delivered as slaves to German farmers and industrialists. Yet the Poles still resist. They publish more than 100 small "underground"

newspapers, the mere reading of which is punishable by death. Bands of Poles, armed with what crude weapons they can find, carry on a ceaseless guerilla warfare. Roads and bridges are destroyed every day, trains are wrecked, communication lines are crippled. Polish hostages are mowed down by Nazi firing squads. Yet the flame of freedom cannot be put out. The spirit of Poland cannot be conquered. The triumph of such a people is certain.

As we pay homage to the American flag today we pledge ourselves to the principles which we are in this war to defend. This flag is more than the emblem of our forty-eight states; it is the symbol of freedom, of decency, of the integrity of the common man the world over. Recognizing this, President Roosevelt, in his Flag Day Proclamation, directed that we should, at the same time, honor the flags of all those nations with which we are now associated. I should like to read you a part of this proclamation.

"We, as a nation, are not fighting alone. In this planetary war we are a part of a great whole: we are fighting shoulder to shoulder with the valiant peoples of the United Nations, the massed, angered forces of common humanity. Unless all triumph, all will fail.

"For these reasons it is fitting that on our traditional Flag Day we honor not only our own colors but also the flags of those who have, with us, signed the Declaration by United Nations, paying homage to those nations awaiting liberation from the tyranny we all oppose, to those whose lands have escaped the scars of battle, to those who have long been heroically fighting in the blaze and havoc of war."

Very truly, as the President has said, "Unless all triumph, all will fail." If by their combined might and determination, the United Nations

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cannot crush the Axis, the United Nations will, themselves, be crushed. Therefore, the first imperative is to win the war.

But after the war, we must win the peace. And that must be a peace built upon principles which will endure for ever. It must never again be possible for greed, the lust for power, the cosmic ambitions of a cunning madman to check mankind's ordained progress toward freedom and contentment. In order to flourish, such a peace must have a world in which the frictions and injustices which engender wars cannot thrive. And such a world cannot be built by one or two nations alone. It must be the labor of all.

The framework of that peace already has been drawn. It is proclaimed in the Atlantic Charter and endorsed in the Declaration by the United Nations. Here in substance are its cardinal points:

1. Force, aggression and territorial aggrandizement must be abandoned;
2. Self-determination by a people of their form of government;
3. Equal access of all people to the world's store of raw materials, full economic collaboration between nations, and freedom of the seas, and
4. The guaranteeing to every human being of freedom from want, freedom from fear and freedom to worship his own deity in his own way.

A world society built to such specifications as these may seem unattainable. Considered in the abstract, it seems an Utopian dream. But is it any more fantastic than the Declaration of Independence was more than

a century and a half ago? Is it any more tenuous than were the provisions of the Polish Constitution, when that document was written in 1791? Is it not but a description of the way of life for which man has been groping down the whole long corridor of history?

This is a war for the common man's way of life. It is no mere coincidence that Poland and the United States should find themselves shoulder to shoulder in such a struggle. The love of freedom runs deep within us. It is embedded in the tradition of both our people. We salute the flag today not only as a national emblem but as a symbol of those principles of human rights which Americans, Poles, and freedom loving people all over the world are pledged by war to defend, and by peace to preserve.