

Remarks at the Welcoming Ceremony in Warsaw

July 9, 1989

Well, thank you, Mr. Chairman, for your hospitable and gracious words of welcome. To you and to the people of Poland, friends and cousins of so many in my homeland, we extend the heartfelt best wishes of the American people. And here in the heart of Europe, the American people have a fervent wish -- that Europe be whole and free.

In my first moments as President, I told my countrymen that a new breeze was blowing across the world. And the winds of change have surely touched the land here, where so much has happened since my last visit. It is wonderful to be back at such an exciting time. History, which has so often conspired with geography to deny the Polish people their freedom, now offers up a new and brighter future for Poland.

I listened carefully, sir, to your words of welcome, and yes, Poland has started along an ascending path of change -- democratic change. And this climb is exhilarating, but not always easy, and will require further sacrifices. But, if followed, it will lead to a renaissance for this remarkable nation.

These are great days for Poland. Solidarity is legal. The beginnings of a free press now exist. A new Parliament is in place. The Polish Senate has been restored through free and fair elections. And Poland is making its own history -- and America, and the whole world, is watching. The Government of Poland and you, Mr. Chairman, have shown wisdom and courage in taking the path of those roundtable accords. And the world is inspired by what is happening here.

Mr. Chairman, we do look forward to our talks with you and other representatives of the Polish Government, with the democratic opposition as well. While in your country, I want to hear the many voices of the people of Poland.

And as we begin these discussions, I carry with me many happy memories of my first visit to Poland. And my thoughts turn on this Sunday to the memory of another Sunday outside Warsaw, when we attended morning Mass at St. Margaret's Church in Lomianki. The cracks of her historic walls were filled with flowers, and the church itself was filled to overflowing with your countrymen, their devoted faces touched by tears of joy. And it reminds me of other churches that I've visited since that morning at St. Margaret's, churches like St. Adalbert's in Philadelphia, St. Hyacinth's in Chicago, churches built by Polish hands and nurtured by Polish dreams. In America and in Poland those dreams are as ancient and as fundamental as the courageous spirit of the Polish people.

And as we meet this evening in Warsaw, the Sun still shines on those churches across the sea. It's still Sunday afternoon there, and America's churches are filled with people in prayer. And as we begin these discussions -- and as your country continues its hard journey up the path it has chosen -- my prayers and the prayers of the American people remain with Poland, as they have throughout its long struggle. And, yes, there is a good

deal of work to be done, and we will work together to gain new ground, to expand our common ground and U.S.-Polish ties.

So, thank you again, sir, for this warm welcome. Rest well on this Sunday night. And long live Poland! Thank you very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:25 p.m. on the tarmac at Okecie Airport. In his remarks, the President referred to Wojciech Jaruzelski, Chairman of Poland's Council of State. Following his remarks, the President and Mrs. Bush went to the Parkowa Guest House.