

**Remarks of Ambassador Przemyslaw Grudzinski of Poland on the occasion of signing of  
the Agreement Between the Government of the United States and the Government of the  
Republic of Poland on the Protection of Certain Cultural Properties  
May 11, 2004 the Indian Treaty Room, The White House**

The Honorable Deputy Secretary of State, Mr. Richard Armitage  
The Honorable Chairman of the US Commission for Preservation of America's  
Heritage Abroad, Mr. Warren Miller  
Distinguished Guests  
Friends

The relations between Poland and the United States have never been better than today. The cooperation between both countries has never been deeper than today. Its scope, ranging from the fronts of the war against global terrorism, most notably in Iraq, to cultural and scientific exchange, has never been wider than today. The agreement on "The Protection of Certain Cultural Properties" between Poland and the United States is yet another example that the Polish-American ties are rich and multidimensional. It also demonstrates that they are founded on the values of human rights, tolerance and respect for the heritage of our ancestors.

The current level of the Polish-American relations is an achievement of the leaders of both countries and a group of professionals, who have given them its current shape. Deputy Secretary of State, Richard Armitage is one the architects of these relations. His vision and leadership have continued to forge a strategic link between Poland and the United States. His recent proposal to establish a new form of cooperation: the Polish-American strategic dialog, leads to opening new vistas in

our mutual relations. Mr. Secretary - Poland I am grateful for your contribution to this alliance. I thank you, Mr. Secretary, for joining us in the ceremony.

I am happy to acknowledge the presence of assistant secretary of state Beth Jones and deputy assistant secretary of state, Heather Conley, who, with her always friendly attitude and smiling face has been. It is such a pleasure to be here among good friends.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The United States Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad is comprised by a group of dedicated individuals, who have committed their skills and valuable time to the preservation of cemeteries, monuments and historical landmarks of these ethnic groups that have formed the great American nation. It is my privilege to work closely with one of those outstanding leaders, Chairman Warren Miller.

Warren Miller has worked tirelessly to make this agreement a reality. His leadership and unparalleled diplomatic skills have proven to be of the highest quality, combining the efficiency of a competent manager with the understanding of a good friend. Most of all, it has been the authentic dedication in service to the community of the Americans whose roots stem from the Central and Eastern Europe which

influenced his excellent work during the negotiations. The Government of United States has found in Chairman Miller its exemplary representative.

What makes the agreement, which we have just signed, unusual is that it does not start cooperation between the countries but rather provides it with a new framework to widen and intensify the good work we have done so far. The Commission chaired by Mr. Miller is a good and tested partner of the Polish authorities on both central and local levels. Let me just mention few of the projects that the Commission has played an important role in. These are: the restoration of the Jewish cemeteries in Wyszaków and Gliwice as well as the synagogue Lomdei Mishnayot in Oświęcim. Chairman Miller was instrumental in preparing the American edition of the five-volume study entitled “Auschwitz 1940-1945” written by the researchers of the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum, which is the most extensive scientific analysis devoted to the most notorious place of the genocide during the World War II.

Dear Friends,

For centuries, Poland had been a multi-ethnic and multi-religious country. Unfortunately, tragedies of the 20<sup>th</sup> century abruptly changed Poland’s cultural and geographical landscape, taking lives of millions of the country’s population and leaving much of its heritage in ruins. An unspeakable disaster affected the Jewish community. My country sees it as an important task and moral obligation to

preserve places connected to the Jewish long lasting presence. It is an effort to pay tribute to the victims of the Holocaust and save the legacy of this inherent part of the history of Poland. A dedication of the monument to the victims of the death camp in Bełżec, scheduled for the next month, will demonstrate the success of a genuine partnership between Poland and Jewish organizations, especially in the United States. I believe that the Bełżec project, accomplished with the leadership of the American Jewish Committee and cooperation with U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, will set a model for future undertakings in this field.

A memory of the common heroes has put the Polish – American relations in a deep historical context. Had not the Polish generals: Tadeusz Kościuszko and Kazimierz Pułaski joined the American Revolution to fight for the freedom of the American people, we would have probably seen the Polish-American alliance differently. Had not the group of American pilots fought for the independence of Poland against the Bolsheviks army in 1920, the alliance might not have been the same. These are just a couple of examples of Poles and Americans striving “for our freedom and yours”. I hope that this agreement provides us also with new instruments to preserve the memory of this struggle and to commemorate its heroes in Poland and the United States and beyond, wherever the sites of this heritage are located.

Thank You.