

His Excellency
**Aleksander
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President of the
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Poland's Role in an Integrated Europe

It's a great pleasure for me to be here today and to share my affection concerning the role of my country in shaping international security. I'm very glad that the Polish point of view concerning the issues of global stability meets with such vivid interest on the part of our American friends. Let me start with a comment that is quite obvious: Poland is not a superpower; it will not play such a role in the world and we do not aspire to any such role. Nevertheless, we believe that every country can, and should, make its own contribution to the shaping of global security. Each country should live up to its capacities, ambitions and sense of responsibility. We all benefit from the fact that the nations of the world cooperate increasingly, that there are less and less barriers and borders, that people, information and goods move increasingly easier and ever faster. For the same reason, we must all share responsibility, on the basis of solidarity, for actions taken against threats, as these have also learned to cross borders.

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Today, there is no place on the globe that we could disregard in our thinking about our own security. After the attacks in New York, Moscow, Madrid and London, this truth has come to the awareness of people in most countries of the world. I can proudly claim that the Polish people have come to understand this very area. Without hesitation, immediately following the dramatic events of 9/11, we actively joined the coalition against terrorism. Poland organized one of the first conferences devoted to the war on international terrorism.

Through the principle of solidarity we met the obligation binding all our lives in combating such threats, and engaged ourselves in the intervention in Iraq. Just now my minister of defense informed me that a Polish helicopter crashed—thank God all are alive, though we have some injured soldiers. This is an example of our engagement and the price we pay and are ready to pay. Our soldiers made great efforts to have the people of Iraq bring normality back to their country, to establish the rule of law and peaceful existence.

Poland, it is important to underline, is also present in Afghanistan, participating in the coalition forces under American command, as well as providing charitable assistance at governmental and nongovernmental organization levels. Polish soldiers, more than 5,000—I know that in the United States this figure is not very special—but more than 5,000 Polish soldiers are today in many places of the world: in Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, Macedonia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Lebanon, Syria

and everywhere we try to realize our peacekeeping commitments.

Dear friends, Poland, my country, is well aware that victory in the war on terror waged against the proliferation of the weapons of mass destruction and organized international crime will not be easy to accomplish. If we wish to succeed we must all demonstrate consistent perseverance and capacity to cooperate with our allies. Poland intends to offer its allies as much support as it can. Such is the determination of my country. Such understanding of international security issues has become one of the main factors for establishing a close alliance between the United States and Poland in the last ten years. This decade was, for Polish-American relations, really exceptional. I am proud of this. In the history of our nations there are many magnificent moments. Poland and the United States are united today not only because of history but also because of sharing the same values and common vision of the future. Polish-American friendship is the best example that in international politics, trust in each other is even more important than the size of the country.

Ladies and gentlemen, one of the strongest traditions of my country consists of the sense of solidarity with other nations in their struggle in defense of liberty. In present-day conditions, the famous Polish call for your and our liberty implies also the commitment for your and our security. Such common responsibility for global stability and security is demonstrated by my country on several levels, starting from our immediate neighborhood through membership in the Eu-

European Union, transatlantic relations, to activities in the forum of the United Nations organization. At each of these levels, Poland strives to offer a constructive contribution to the building of the world order.

Peace and security are shaped starting from one's immediate neighbors. This thought has been orienting Poland's foreign policies since the early 1990s,

changed, so we wish to establish a partnership relationship based on the friendship and mutual confidence with all of them.

I would like to underline that during these 16 years, Poland exported stability, understanding dialogue, and good neighbors. That is a very important contribution and not very obvious, because if you see a European map not far away from our region is the Balkans. By plane from Warsaw to Sarajevo is one hour fifteen minutes, one hour twenty minutes, no more, and you can see the Balkans as a place of war, crime, nationalists, ethnic cleansing and all the dramas which we observed in the long decade of the '90s. So Poland was an exporter of stability, dialogue, mutual confidence, mutual understanding and good neighbors—and I think that is one of the reasons for the success of Poland and our very effective contribution to the world order.

in our own interests but also for the benefit of the entire region.

We are persistently interested in maintaining the stability of our region. We have stood up to this commitment by our engagement for the solution of the crises in the Ukraine, which shows after the attempted electoral manipulation there. The fact that it becomes possible to carry out fair elections without any bloodshed there was largely owed to efforts on the part of Poland. Under these circumstances, my country actively cooperated with other states in the region, above all with Lithuania and also with the remaining countries of the European Union. The Ukrainian Orange Revolution was an excellent example of how much can be achieved when a multitude of countries stand up in solidarity and defend democracy and civil rights. We believe that such consistent policies are also needed with respect to Belarus. This society still lacks ability to freely express its convictions, and its citizens, including those of Polish nationality, are deprived of fundamental rights.

NATO and the European Union constitute the broader forum of Polish activities in the domain of global security. We should always remember with gratitude the determination with which the United States has supported our efforts for membership in NATO. We are most grateful to our American friends for always regarding Poland as an integral part of Europe.

For my country, transatlantic relations continue to provide the best guarantees of peace and stability both in Europe and on the global level. This is why Poland has always been convinced that European integration could not be regarded as an alternative to close transatlantic bonds. Just as Europe needs partnership with the United States, the United States equally needs a strong and congruent Europe.



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when my country regained full sovereignty. Extraordinary changes took place in and around Poland at that time. In 1989 we neighbored with just three countries; today, we have seven neighbor states and not one of them bears the same name as 15 years ago—that's unbelievable. Poland didn't change any borders during the last 16 years even by one centimeter but we changed all our neighbors. Sixteen years ago Poland was surrounded by Czechoslovakia, GDR (German Democratic Republic) and the Soviet Union—not one exists now. Today, we have Germany, the Czech Republic, Slovakia on various sides of our borders, the Ukraine, Belarus, Lithuania and Russia. Nevertheless, the nations that are our neighbors have remained un-

grievances, resentments and historical dramas. Over the past 15 years, the area surrounding Poland has become a zone of reconciliation, of peace, thanks to the efforts of my own country. In the context of the reconciliation with Germany and the Ukraine, we have not only managed to overcome the dark chapters of history in our relations, we have succeeded in building true partnership and friendship. Today after 1,000 years of being neighbors, Poland and Germany are allies within NATO and partners within the European Union. Poland and the Ukraine serve as positive models of good neighbors as well. My country was instrumental in the development of numerous local initiatives such as the initiative that was mentioned by Mr. Eckert. We act not only

For over a year Poland has been a member of the European Community. We endured a long and difficult way in order to join it. The course started in 1980 when the Solidarity Movement stood up for liberty and human dignity. Thanks to the democratic changes initiated in the early 1990s, we were able, together with other countries of the region, to join the process of integration of Europe. Thanks to that, the unjust post-war division of our continent was overcome. Owing to its historical experiences, Poland is, and shall continue to be an advocate of an open door policy in the European Union. We believe that the Union should continue to be enlarged by embracing those countries which meet the conditions of membership. There is no alternative to the unification of Europe. It is our wish that the old continent should never again become a source of instability and upheavals. We wish it to be able to cope with problems of self-confidence and solidarity, with due respect to the rights of all nations that inhabit it. That is why Poland is concerned about the problems we have recently suffered in the European Union. The rejection of the proposed European constitution, the referendum, the lack of agreement concerning the new budget give reason for skepticism. Nevertheless, we believe that these problems are just temporary. A secure world awaits a unified and strong Europe, a Europe capable of giant action, perhaps this time together with the United States and with the whole community of democratic states, in efforts for the assurance of global order.

Dear friends, global security seen from the Polish perspective rests on three pillars. The third one, apart from NATO and the European Union consists of the United Nations. The commitment of Po-

land to the initiatives of the international community is most strongly demonstrated by the participation of thousands of our soldiers in peacekeeping missions all over the world. Poland supports the quest towards such reform for the United Nations organization, which we need today, and enhancement of its capacity for effective action. Evidence of this is pro-

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vided by the new political arc put forward by us. It is not a proposal to change the U.N. charter but to supplement into it new principles and modes of action, such as responsibility for protection, solidarity and subsidiary cooperation of the U.N. with other institutions and regional organizations. We count on their universal acceptance.

Poland also supports the objectives of sustainable growth. The best prevention of terrorism consists of depriving it of its social base, which it mercilessly exploits. This is why the combating of poverty, of the deficit of water and food, the shortage of education and jobs is not only a matter of morality, of good will and charity, it is also an important factor of global security. We cannot allow the frustration of poverty and the lack of prospects in life to drive people to become the objects of manipulation by funda-

mentalists of any color. The policy of sustainable growth is an important investment for the benefit of security.

Ladies and gentlemen, our country perceives the process of integration in a broader context. We are proud of the fact that we are able to participate in the process of the unification of Europe. We believe that the more cooperation between countries from different continents exists, the more cooperation there will be among the different continents and the more secure our world shall be. It seems fairly obvious that the multitude of centers around which states and nations gather has always existed and will continue to exist. Today, however, it is of far more importance to answer the question of how to bring such centers to positively collaborate with one another. Global security does not need to have a single and uniform structure. It is rather so that various processes of integration tighten the stabilizing network and safeguard us against breakage. Such variety serves well for the cause of global order. Particular nations have their own local roadways leading to liberty. As we stay the course along this road, however, we must learn to serve the cause of worldwide liberty and solidarity and I'm sure that in this wide context of international problems, close cooperation and friendship between our nations, between Poland and the United States, is really not only an alliance between our armies and good contacts between politicians, but real friendship between our nations—that we serve as an excellent example of collaboration for the benefit of peace, liberty and solidarity in the world.

Thank you, dear friends, for your attention.

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