



REPUBLIC OF POLAND
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ADDRESS

of the

President of the Republic of Poland

H.E. Mr. Lech KACZYŃSKI

**during the General Debate of the sixty-first Session
of the General Assembly**

September 19th, 2006
United Nations, New York

Ms. President,
Mr. Secretary-General,
Excellencies,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin by extending my congratulations to Her Excellency Haya Rashed Al Khalifa from the Kingdom of Bahrain on the occasion of her election to the Presidency of the sixty-first session of the General Assembly. I wish you every success in carrying out this important mission.

To the former President, His Excellency Jan Eliasson Minister of Foreign Affairs from the Kingdom of Sweden, I convey my respect for his outstanding achievements in running the previous session.

I convey my best wishes to the Secretary-General, Mr. Kofi Annan. I would like to express my profound respect and full support for his efforts in continuing to reduce international tension and resolve conflicts.

The matters we have gathered here to discuss today are very important for the world, Europe, Poland and for me personally. I am saying this as President and as true man of "Solidarity" - the movement that completely changed my country. "Solidarity" gave Poland her freedom and sovereignty, and contributed to the fall of Communism in Europe. Thanks to "Solidarity", a wall dividing the world into two hostile camps was brought down. We, the Poles, perceive global partnership for development - the leading motive of this year's session of the United Nations - through the optics of our historical experiences, the experiences of the "Solidarity" movement.

The Polish "Solidarity" movement originated from an idea that is a universal value in various cultures, religions and traditions. Today this value should be rediscovered in order to help build a new world based on the right of all nations and all peoples to live in dignity.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland's heritage is inextricably connected with the heritage of Europe, one that is founded on a respect for human rights and love of freedom. Like many other countries over the course of history, we have experienced disasters that, unfortunately, still affect the everyday lives of millions of people on different continents. We have suffered because of wars and massive destruction thereafter. Because of poverty. Because of a lack of freedom and a loss of independence. Today, in a free country, where for over a decade now we have been implementing essential reforms - we are making up for lost time. We are actually sharing our experiences of deep transformation with others.

Poland's experience with shedding a totalitarian regime and taking up the task of modernising the country affords us a special comprehension of the needs of countries that follow a similar path and the essence of their transition. This is why, we are committed to efforts to extend the area of democracy and freedom around the world. Today Poland is a rapidly developing country. We are turning into a country that is able to donate to the global community, much to our satisfaction. Indeed, I would like Poland to become even more active in this respect.

Today, in the 21st century, Poland is a strong sovereign state and an active member of the European Union, as well as an ally of the United States of America. Overcoming painful historical experiences, after 1989, free Poland has opened a new chapter in its relations with Germany - as a friendly neighbour. We are guided here by the French-German reconciliation. We want the best possible relationship with Russia and look with hope towards their future.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Poland, a member of the European Union for over 2 years, supports the lines of EU cooperation with the United Nations. We are convinced that peace must be built through long-term and sustainable development. It is with this conviction that we act within the UN based on the Millennium Declaration and the Millennium Goals of Development. We support our eastern neighbours in their reform efforts. Poland, which in Central and Eastern Europe paved the way towards market economy, towards democratic rule of law, towards building a civic society, has extensive experience in these matters. We are prepared to share this

experience even further with countries that are transforming their economies and state institutions or that intended to embark upon the reform track.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With our European partners we are building the political, social and economic future of our continent. However, we remember that Europe itself is not the whole world, hence Poland's participation in stabilization and peacekeeping missions in many regions of the world, e.g. in Kosovo, Afghanistan, in the Democratic Republic of Congo as well as Lebanon and Iraq. We strongly advocate efforts to bring lasting peace to the Middle East. A few days ago I had the opportunity to express Poland's position in this respect. Poland supports Israel's right to security. At the same time Poland supports the aspirations of the Palestinian nation to build an independent state. We have been involved in the stabilization of the region for many years. We actively participate in the UNIFIL mission in Lebanon. A month ago, at the request of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, we declared that we would increase our military contingent.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

For Poland, the difficult and painful period of its history belongs to its past. Our experiences - I wish to stress it once again - leave us with a moral obligation to bring help to others. We want to repay our debt. We want to support others in the same way as we used to receive support in the past.

Speaking about help, seeking its most effective forms, the international community has to take into account the phenomenon of globalization, the phenomenon that has become the challenge of the 21st century. It gives rise to various emotions, provokes extreme judgements - nevertheless its significance can hardly be questioned. Globalization reveals the scale of problems that we previously did not fully realize. I am speaking about ever deepening inequalities and exclusion from civilisation progress, vast areas of poverty and instability that, on the one hand, cause moral resistance, and, on the other, increase the threat to peace and security.

It is also difficult to avoid fears over the negative effects of globalization, that is the division of the world into those countries that are becoming richer and richer and those condemned to an ever-deepening poverty. The answer to these fears must be global solidarity. It is hard not to see the dramatic dissonance between poverty and incredible scientific and technological progress.

What should solidarity be in the global dimension? Speaking very briefly, it is the joint counteraction against the emergence of new "Iron Curtains" and "Walls" - political, economic, cultural; at the same time it is the respect for the dignity of every human being, for his or her inalienable right to freedom.

Solidarity understood in this way is a rational fight against poverty - carried on by the stimulation of a broad stream of aid to the poorest countries, by properly planned economic support. Aid efforts must be undertaken in such a way that not only brings temporary relief, but, above all, creates the prospect of long-term development. Thus we should build a programme of reforms to permit such development.

At this point I would like to draw your attention to the question of energy security - increasingly important for many regions of the world. This security should be based on the diversification of supply sources and on building such energy connections that could not be used as a means of political pressure.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Aid in global solidarity has an economic dimension. Where there is no freedom, no respect for the rights of the individual, there are no conditions for building permanent welfare. This assistance should also mean support for societies striving towards freedom, towards democracy, and protection of human rights - support, which is wise and sensitive to the cultural uniqueness of the country as well as its traditions and needs.

I believe that where tensions and social conflicts are resolved through dialogue, where respect is promoted for different cultures and religions, where economic inequalities between societies and states are prevented - terrorism will not find soil to grow. In the long run global

solidarity is the most effective weapon against those who would like to see the world as a scene of unending fight.

Today the United Nations need programmes to carry out ambitious visions founded on global solidarity and global partnership for development. They must level development opportunities thus approximating living standards of the North and the South.

So, the UN is confronted with huge tasks, which require great commitment as well as reforms. We want changes, which would adapt the United Nations to the challenges of contemporary times. The world is changing dynamically. The UN must keep up with the speed of these changes. Only then will it preserve its necessity and multiply its achievements. Reforms must be focused on the human being - thus defending human rights and liberties, at the same time opening the road to welfare and spiritual development for all. These values lay at the foundation of the United Nations. Poland advocates such a reform of the Organization and is ready to participate in it. Poland also wishes to participate in such a restructuring of international relations that would be based on these principles of solidarity and in the growing assistance extended by wealthy nations to nations in need.

The great Pole, John Paul the Second, the Spiritual Father of Polish "Solidarity" uttered words, which can be our guiding beacon: "Man is great not through what he owns, but through what he is; not through what he has, but through what he shares with others."

We are facing tremendous challenges. One can only tackle them by acting in solidarity, in global partnership. May our efforts be inspired by solidarity - a principle defined by a word, which translates into all the world's languages.

Thank you for your attention.