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THE WHITE HOUSE

EXCHANGE OF REMARKS  
BETWEEN THE PRESIDENT  
AND  
EDWARD GIEREK  
FIRST SECRETARY OF THE  
CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF THE POLISH UNITED WORKERS

THE SOUTH GROUNDS

10:43 A.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Mr. First Secretary, it is a very distinct pleasure for me to welcome you and Mrs. Gierek to the United States. As you know, Mr. First Secretary, the family ties that bind our two peoples together in a very special way are very, very old, indeed, older actually than the United States itself.

You have already visited Jamestown, Virginia, where the first Poles arrived in 1608, only one year after it was first settled. From that day to this day, large numbers of your countrymen have helped to build this country and to mold our great American traditions.

America treasures these contributions to our growth, to our culture and to our history. During your stay in this country, Mr. First Secretary, you and Mrs. Gierek will be able to see for yourselves the character of our country and the role that men and women from Poland have played in America's history.

Our two nations have thus a fine foundation upon which to build. I have watched with very great interest the substantial growth of our bilateral trade in the last two years since the establishment of the joint Polish-American Trade Commission and continuing expansion of contacts between officials and private citizens.

In the fields of such activities as science, technology and the arts is another evidence of the dynamic development of Polish-American relations.

You, Mr. First Secretary, will surely agree with me that we must not allow our satisfaction with past progress to slow our pace or slacken our efforts in the future. We must use the opportunity your visit affords to seek new avenues of bilateral cooperation in many, many fields, including energy and environmental areas.

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In many other areas of common interest, for example, our participation in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe and our participation in the force reduction talks, we are engaged in common endeavors for peace.

Today, economic problems almost everywhere are very, very severe. That stability of the world is in danger and almost everywhere it develops, as well as in developing countries. The welfare of people on a global basis unfortunately is actually threatened.

Mr. First Secretary, Poland knows too well, perhaps better than any other nation, the fearful experience of war and its very painful consequences. A thorough review of all the dangers to peace for ourselves and the world must surely be a matter of highest priority.

We seek a peaceful world and a more prosperous world. Poland is a world leader in coal production and coal research. Poland has a very major role, a role to play in contributing solutions to the world energy problem and you, Mr. First Secretary, with a lifetime of expertise, are able to make a very important personal contribution in this specific area. I look forward to exchanging views with you on the energy problem.

Mr. First Secretary, we, all of us in America, are pleased that you and Mrs. Gierek are here. I am very confident, Mr. First Secretary, that our meetings will deepen the friendship of our two peoples and broaden the cooperation of our two nations.

Thank you very much.

FIRST SECRETARY GIEREK: I wish to thank you for your words of cordiality which you, Mr. President, have addressed to me, to Mrs. Gierek and to members of my delegation. I take these words of yours as being directed to the people of Poland and to the Polish state on behalf of which and upon your invitation I am visiting the United States.

I am pleased to have made this visit, as it adds new testimony to the friendly ties that have linked our two nations since the times of George Washington and Padeusz Tosciuszko.

I rest assured that it is the desire of both our peoples, not only to preserve these traditional relations, but also to strengthen them through closer and broader cooperation in the world of today.

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Indeed, Socialist Poland, dynamically developing her new potential and creating as she does new living conditions for her people is vitally interested in this. I trust that the talks which will hold and agreements which will conclude will greatly contribute towards this end, that they will open up a broader prospect for cooperation between our countries.

I am pleased to have made this visit, also, because it represents yet another reaffirmation of international detente which my country views as extremely significant and to which we try to make our utmost contribution.

That process which originates from the very essence of the contemporary world, from the need for and necessity of peaceful coexistence of the United States with differing political systems has been considerably enhanced in recent years.

We of Poland can only welcome it in our profound conviction that it is in the interest of all nations to make that process further extend universal and irreversible. Precisely for this reason there is wide appreciation today that it is you, Mr. President, who is steering the United States policy towards this direction.

I am pleased to have made this visit, as it will enable me to get to know the United States, to acquaint myself with the outstanding accomplishments of the progress of civilization of the American people, whose history and achievements have since the very outset been and continue to be so much enriched by the Americans of Polish extraction.

Mr. President, I am profoundly convinced of the propitious conditions today and the right time for expunction of Polish-American cooperation in its new dimensions and in all fields of endeavor.

Mine is also a firm belief that we can work closer together for the great cause of peace. That is the purpose of my visit here, and I am happy that you too share these aspirations of ours.

Please accept, Mr. President, the best wishes from Poland to the United States, from the Polish people to the American people.

END (AT 10:59 A.M. EDT)