Thank you, Al (Mazewski)

Your Eminence, Cardinal Krol

Senator Schweiker

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen
PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS TO POLISH-AMERICAN CONGRESS, PHILADELPHIA, SEPTEMBER 24, 1976
I am honored by your invitation to address this
Convention of the Polish-American Congress. I am proud

To be here -- not just as President -- but as a friend

of American Polonia (Pohn-ya).

It has been the policy of my administration to listen
carefully to the voice of Polish America.
WHEN IT COMES TO SACRIFICE AND ACHIEVEMENT, YOU HAVE GIVEN MORE THAN YOUR SHARE IN MAKING THIS THE GREATEST COUNTRY ON EARTH.

FIFTY-EIGHT YEARS AGO, ANOTHER POLISH-AMERICAN CONFERENCE WAS ADDRESSED BY THE GREAT PATRIOT JAN PADEREWSKI (YAHN PAH-DER-EFF-SKI).
HIS FEATS AS AN ORATOR WERE NO LESS STUNNING THAN HIS GENIUS AS A MUSICIAN AND AS THE LEADER OF THE POLISH PEOPLE. HE ADDRESSED HIS AUDIENCE --- IN POLISH --- FOR OVER TWO AND A HALF HOURS. I WILL NOT TRY TO EQUAL THAT PERFORMANCE.
HOWEVER, LET ME REPEAT A FEW OF PADEREWSKI'S (PAH-DER-EF-E-SKI'S) WORDS. HE SAID, "THE POLES IN AMERICA DO NOT NEED ANY AMERICANIZATION. IT IS SUPERFLUOUS TO EXPLAIN TO THEM WHAT ARE THE IDEALS OF AMERICA. THEY KNOW THEM WELL, FOR THEY HAVE BEEN THEIRS FOR A THOUSAND YEARS."
ANOTHER POLISH-AMERICAN LEADER PUT THE SAME THOUGHT THIS WAY: "I FEEL I AM 200 PER CENT AMERICAN BECAUSE I AM 100 PER CENT POLE." 

MUCH OF WHAT AMERICA CELEBRATES IN ITS BICENTENNIAL YEAR, WE OWE TO THE POLISH-AMERICANS.
BEFORE THE PILGRIMS EVEN LANDED AT PLYMOUTH, POLES HAD ALREADY BUILT THE FIRST FACTORY IN AMERICA, NEAR THE COLONY AT JAMESTOWN. POLES HAD ALREADY PIONEERED AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES -- DEMANDING AND RECEIVING FROM THE VIRGINIA COLONY A VOICE IN THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT.
FOR MORE THAN THREE AND A HALF CENTURIES,

POLISH-AMERICANS HAVE BEEN WORKING HARD TO BUILD BETTER LIVES FOR THEMSELVES AND THEIR CHILDREN. YOU HAVE BEEN SOLDIERS AND SETTLERS, TEACHERS AND CLERGYMEN, SCIENTISTS, CRAFTSMEN AND ARTISTS. YOU HAVE EARNED AS DISTINGUISHED A PLACE IN THE NEW WORLD, AS YOUR ANCESTORS DID IN THE OLD.
YET TODAY YOU ARE TROUBLED.

YOU LOOK ABROAD AND SEE FRIENDS AND RELATIVES WHO DO NOT FULLY SHARE YOUR FREEDOM.

YOU LOOK AT HOME AND SEE TOO MANY OF YOUR NEIGHBORHOODS DETERIORATING.

I SHARE YOUR CONCERN — I AM ALSO TROUBLED.
BUT THERE IS MUCH WE CAN DO AND MUCH WE HAVE BEEN DOING, BOTH AT HOME AND ABROAD.

IN THE FIRST TWO YEARS OF MY ADMINISTRATION, I HAVE WORKED TO BUILD A POSITIVE AND EXPANDING RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT OF POLAND.
A powerful motivation for that policy has been the knowledge that for many Americans, Poland is the home of ancestors and relatives.
I have sought to tie our countries closer, economically and culturally. In the last two years, trade between our countries has almost doubled.

For America that means more jobs and more production. For Poland that means a higher standard of living and greater exposure to the American way of life.
A VALUABLE WORKER IN THIS TASK HAS BEEN THE HEAD OF THE SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION -- MITCHELL KOBELINSKI.

MITCH WANTED TO BE HERE THIS WEEKEND. THIS VERY WEEK HE IS IN POLAND, DISCUSSING THE EXPANSION OF TRADE BETWEEN OUR TWO PEOPLES.
MY MEETINGS WITH POLISH OFFICIALS -- IN WASHINGTON IN 1974 AND IN WARSAW AND KRAKOW IN 1975 -- HAVE LED TO BETTER UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN OUR TWO COUNTRIES.

IN 1974, WE SIGNED A JOINT STATEMENT ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLISH-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IN THAT STATEMENT, WE REAFFIRMED FOR THE UNITED STATES THE IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO A SOVEREIGN AND INDEPENDENT POLAND.
THAT STATEMENT WAS PART OF A BROADER POLICY I HAVE

ADVOCATED THROUGHOUT MY PUBLIC LIFE. THE UNITED STATES

MUST CONTINUE TO SUPPORT -- BY EVERY PEACEFUL AND PROPER

MEANS -- THE ASPIRATIONS FOR FREEDOM AND NATIONAL

INDEPENDENCE OF THE PEOPLES OF EASTERN EUROPE.
AS I HAVE SAID MANY TIMES BEFORE

AS I TOLD A GROUP OF POLISH-AMERICAN LEADERS AT THE WHITE HOUSE

JUST TWO WEEKS AGO -- THE SO-CALLED SONNENFELDT DOCTRINE

NEVER DID EXIST AND DOES NOT EXIST.
THE UNITED STATES IS TOTALLY OPPOSED TO SPHERES OF INFLUENCE BELONGING TO ANY POWER. THAT POLICY IS FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH POLAND -- AND THAT POLICY WILL CONTINUE AS LONG AS I AM PRESIDENT.

IN MY MEETINGS WITH THE POLISH LEADERSHIP, I ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE ALL AMERICANS ATTACH TO HUMANITARIAN ISSUES.
PEOPLE EVERYWHERE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES FREELY. PEOPLE EVERYWHERE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO EMIGRATE AND TRAVEL FREELY. PEOPLE EVERYWHERE SHOULD HAVE THE RIGHT TO BE UNITED WITH THEIR FAMILIES.
I will continue to see that humanitarian matters are treated with the highest priority -- not only in our relationship with Poland, but with the rest of the world, as well.

If we are to keep the world's respect, we must keep America strong. We must make sure America has not only strong defenses -- but a strong heart.
POLISH-AMERICANS KNOW WHAT IT MEANS TO BE STRONG.

MANY OF YOUR FAMILIES CAME HERE WITHOUT MATERIAL WEALTH.

IN THE COUNTRYSIDE YOU CLEARED THE LAND AND MADE PRODUCTIVE FARMS.

IN THE CITIES YOU BUILT NEIGHBORHOODS YOU COULD BE PROUD OF.
YOU BUILT AND PAID FOR YOUR OWN CHURCHES --

YOU BUILT YOUR OWN SCHOOLS AND FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS --

YOU BUILT ORPHANAGES FOR THE YOUNG AND HOSPITALS FOR THE

AGED -- YOU BUILT YOUR OWN INSTITUTIONS, THE GREAT

FRATERNAL ORGANIZATIONS REPRESENTED HERE TODAY.
WE MUST ENSURE THAT WHAT YOU HAVE DONE - WHAT YOU HAVE EARNED - WHAT YOU HAVE BUILT - WILL BE HERE FOR YOUR CHILDREN TO ENJOY.

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A family needs a neighborhood that is safe.

A family needs a neighborhood that is stable.

A family needs a neighborhood with local churches, local shops, and local schools.
SOME OF THE HEALTHIEST NEIGHBORHOODS IN OUR CITIES ARE POLISH-AMERICAN NEIGHBORHOODS. BUT TODAY TOO MANY NEIGHBORHOODS ARE THREATENED BY URBAN DECAY.

YOU ARE PAYING A TERRIBLE PRICE IN LOST PROPERTY VALUES -- PROPERTY YOU WORKED HARD TO BUY AND MAINTAIN.

YOU ARE PAYING AN EVEN GREATER PRICE IN LOST FAMILY VALUES.
IN CITIES LIKE PHILADELPHIA, CHICAGO AND DETROIT -- TOO MANY YOUNG MEN AND WOMEN FIND IT IMPOSSIBLE TO REMAIN IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS WHERE THEY WERE RAISED. TOO MANY PARENTS ARE FORCED TO WATCH HELPLESSLY AS ALL THEY HAVED WORKED AND SAVED TO BUILD UP IS EATEN AWAY.

THIS DOES NOT HAVE TO HAPPEN. I WILL CONTINUE TO DO EVERYTHING IN MY POWER TO SEE IT DOES NOT HAPPEN.
ON THE FIRST OF THIS YEAR I SIGNED INTO LAW THE
MORTGAGE DISCLOSURE ACT -- TO PREVENT REDLINING AND
NEIGHBORHOOD DECLINE.

LAST MAY I MET WITH ETHNIC LEADERS TO SEE WHAT MORE
WE COULD DO.
AS A RESULT OF THAT MEETING, I CREATED THE PRESIDENT'S COMMITTEE ON URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND NEIGHBORHOOD REVITALIZATION. I CHARGED THE COMMITTEE WITH DEVELOPING A SOUND FEDERAL POLICY TO HELP PRESERVE OUR NEIGHBORHOODS. THAT POLICY WILL BE BASED ON LOCAL INITIATIVE AND LOCAL CONTROL.
REVITALIZING OUR NEIGHBORHOODS WILL HELP PRESERVE YOUR INVESTMENTS IN HOMES AND CHURCHES AND COMMUNITY FACILITIES. IT WILL HELP KEEP FAMILIES TOGETHER -- IT WILL HELP KEEP AMERICA TOGETHER.

AMERICA ITSELF IS A FAMILY WE MUST KEEP THAT FAMILY CLOSE.
As a boy in Grand Rapids, I was fortunate to have close friends Americans from many different backgrounds. In high school, I worked as part-time waiter and dishwasher in a restaurant owned by Bill Skougis, who was of Greek descent.
THAT WAS IN 1929 AND 1930, WHEN JOBS AND MONEY WEREN'T EASY TO COME BY. I EARNED TWO DOLLARS A WEEK AND MY LUNCHES -- AND BILL SKOUGIS EARNED MY ADMIRATION AND AFFECTION.
As a young congressman, my first administrative assistant was my good friend John Milanowski. John and I worked together for many years and later, on my recommendation, he became United States Attorney for Western Michigan.

THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

END OF TEXT