

106TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

S. CON. RES. 131

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

OCTOBER 12, 2000

Referred to the Committee on International Relations

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 20th anniversary of the workers' strikes in Poland that led to the creation of the independent trade union Solidarność, and for other purposes.

Whereas, in July and August of 1980, Polish workers went on strike to protest communist oppression and demand greater political freedom;

Whereas, in the shipyards of Gdansk and Szczecin, workers' committees coordinated these strikes and ensured that the strikes were peaceful and orderly and did not promote acts of violence;

Whereas workers' protests against the communist authorities in Poland were supported by the Polish people and the international community of democracies;

Whereas, on August 30 and 31 of 1980, the communist government of the People's Republic of Poland yielded to the 21 demands of the striking workers, including the release of all political prisoners, including Jacek Kuron and

Adam Michnik, the broadcasting of religious services on television and radio, and the right to establish independent trade unions;

Whereas from these agreements emerged Solidarnosc, the first independent trade union in the communist bloc, led by Lech Walesa, an electrician from Gdansk;

Whereas Solidarnosc and its 10,000,000 members became a great social movement in Poland that was committed to promoting fundamental human rights, democracy, and Polish independence;

Whereas, during its first congress in 1981, Solidarnosc issued a proclamation urging workers in Soviet-bloc countries to resist their communist governments and to struggle for freedom and democracy;

Whereas the communist government of Poland introduced martial law in December 1981 in an attempt to block the growing political and social influence of the Solidarnosc movement;

Whereas Solidarnosc remained a powerful and political force that resisted the efforts of Poland's communist government to suppress the desire of the Polish people for freedom, democracy, and independence from the Soviet Union;

Whereas, in February 1989, the communist government of Poland agreed to conduct roundtable talks with Solidarnosc that led to elections to the National Assembly in June of that year, in which nearly all open seats were won by candidates supported by Solidarnosc;

Whereas, on August 19, 1989, Solidarity leader Tadeusz Mazowiecki was asked to serve as Prime Minister of Poland and on September 12, 1989, the Polish Sejm voted

to approve Prime Minister Mazowiecki and his cabinet,
Poland's first noncommunist government in 4 decades;

Whereas, on December 9, 1990, Lech Walesa was elected
President of Poland;

Whereas the Solidarnosc^{''} movement, by its courage and exam-
ple, initiated political transformations in other countries
in Central and Eastern Europe and thereby initiated the
collapse of the Soviet Bloc in 1989; and

Whereas, since the time Poland freed itself from communist
domination, Polish-American relations have transformed
from partnership to alliance, a transition marked by Po-
land's historic accession to the North Atlantic Treaty Or-
ganization in March 1999: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the Senate (the House of Representatives*
2 *concurring), That Congress—*

3 (1) commemorates the 20th anniversary of the work-
4 ers' strikes in Poland that led to the creation of the inde-
5 pendent trade union Solidarnosc^{''}; and

6 (2) honors the leaders of Poland who risked and lost
7 their lives in attempting to restore democracy in their
8 country and to return Poland to the democratic commu-
9 nity of nations.

Passed the Senate October 11 (legislative day, Sep-
tember 22), 2000.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,
Secretary.