

H. Res. 328

In the House of Representatives, U.S.,

July 18, 2005.

Whereas, although Victory in Europe on May 8, 1945, resulted in liberty and democracy in many nations, Poland and other countries of Central and Eastern Europe fell behind the repressive Iron Curtain of the Soviet Union;

Whereas for more than four decades Poland and the nations of the Soviet Bloc struggled under authoritarian rule;

Whereas in June 1979, Pope John Paul II, the former Cardinal Karol Wojtyła, returned to his homeland for the first time and exhorted his countrymen to “be not afraid” of the Communist regime;

Whereas in July and August of 1980, Polish workers in the shipyards of Gdansk and Szczecin went on strike to demand greater political freedom;

Whereas workers’ committees, led by electrician Lech Walesa, coordinated these strikes and ensured that the strikes were peaceful and orderly;

Whereas in August 1980, the Communist government of Poland yielded to the 21 demands of the striking workers, including the release of all political prisoners, the broadcasting of religious services on television and radio, and the right to establish independent trade unions;

Whereas the Communist government of Poland introduced martial law in December 1981 in an attempt to block the growing influence of the Solidarity movement;

Whereas the Solidarity Trade Union and its 10,000,000 members became a great social movement committed to promoting fundamental human rights, democracy, and Polish independence from the Soviet Union;

Whereas in February 1989, the Communist government of Poland agreed to conduct talks with the Solidarity Trade Union 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 the Solidarity Trade Union, and led soon after to the election of Poland's first non-Communist Prime Minister in the post-war era, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki;

Whereas the Solidarity movement ended communism in Poland without bloodshed, inspiring other nations under Soviet control to do the same and playing an important role in the fall of communism in Central and Eastern Europe;

Whereas on November 15, 1989, Lech Walesa gave an historic speech before a joint meeting of the United States Congress with the opening remarks "We the People. . .", which stirred a standing ovation from the Members of Congress;

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

Whereas the support of the United States and the Polish-American community was essential to the survival and success of the Solidarity movement; and

Whereas a bond of friendship exists between the United States and Poland, which is among the strongest allies of

the United States, a contributing partner in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a reliable partner in the Global War on Terrorism, and a key contributor in Iraq and Afghanistan: Now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the House of Representatives—

(1) recognizes the 25th anniversary of the workers' strikes in Poland that led to establishment of the Solidarity Trade Union;

(2) honors the struggle and sacrifice of the citizens of Poland who risked their lives to restore democracy to their country and to return Poland to the democratic community of nations; and

(3) offers Poland as a model for other nations struggling to emerge from authoritarian rule and establish a flourishing representative government.

Attest:

Clerk.