

109TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. RES. 198

Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 1980 worker's strike in Poland and the birth of the Solidarity Trade Union, the first free and independent trade union established in the Soviet-dominated countries of Europe.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

JULY 18, 2005

Ms. MIKULSKI (for herself, Mr. VOINOVICH, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. SARBANES, Mr. LUGAR, Mr. DODD, Mr. FEINGOLD, Mr. KERRY, Mr. BIDEN, Mr. INOUE, Mr. TALENT, Mrs. DOLE, Mr. CRAPO, Mr. SANTORUM, Mr. COBURN, Mr. BROWNBACK, Mr. OBAMA, Mrs. BOXER, and Mr. NELSON of Florida) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

RESOLUTION

Commemorating the 25th anniversary of the 1980 worker's strike in Poland and the birth of the Solidarity Trade Union, the first free and independent trade union established in the Soviet-dominated countries of Europe.

Whereas, on May 9, 1945, Europe declared victory over the oppression of the Nazi regime;

Whereas, Poland and other countries in Central, Eastern, and Southern Europe soon fell under the oppressive control of the Soviet Union;

Whereas for decades the people of Poland struggled heroically for freedom and democracy against that oppression;

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

Whereas, in 1980, the Solidarity Trade Union (known in Poland as “NSZZ Solidarność”) was formed in Poland under the leadership of Lech Wałęsa and during the 1980s the actions of its leadership and members sparked a great social movement committed to promoting fundamental human rights, democracy, and the independence of Poland from the Soviet Union (known as the “Solidarity Movement”);

Whereas, in July and August of 1980, workers in Poland in the shipyards of Gdansk and Szczecin, led by Lech Wałęsa and other leaders of the Solidarity Trade Union, went on strike to demand greater political freedom;

Whereas that strike was carried out in a peaceful and orderly manner;

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 support of the Polish-American community was essential and crucial for the Solidarity Movement to survive and remain active during that difficult time;

Whereas the people of the United States were greatly supportive of the efforts of the people of Poland to rid them-

selves of an oppressive government and people in the United States lit candles in their homes on Christmas Eve 1981, to show their solidarity with the people of Poland who were suffering under martial law;

Whereas Lech Walesa was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 1983 for continuing his struggle for freedom in Poland;

Whereas the Solidarity Movement persisted underground during the period when martial law was imposed in Poland and emerged in April 1989 as a powerful national movement;

Whereas, in February 1989, the Communist Government of Poland agreed to conduct roundtable talks with leaders of the Solidarity Movement;

Whereas such talks led to the holding of elections for the National Assembly of Poland in June 1989 in which nearly all open seats were won by candidates supported by the Solidarity Movement, and led to the election of Poland's first Prime Minister during the post-war era who was not a member of the Communist party, Mr. Tadeusz Mazowiecki;

Whereas, the Solidarity Movement ended communism in Poland without bloodshed and inspired Hungary, Czechoslovakia, and other nations to do the same, and the activities of its leaders and members were part of the historic series of events that led to the fall of the Berlin Wall on November 9, 1989;

Whereas, on November 15, 1989, Lech Walesa's historic speech before a joint session of Congress, beginning with the words "We the people", stirred a standing ovation from the Members of Congress;

Whereas, on December 9, 1989, Lech Walesa was elected President of Poland; and

Whereas there is a bond of friendship between the United States and Poland, which is a close and invaluable United States ally, a contributing partner in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), a reliable partner in the war on terrorism, and a key contributor to international efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan: Now, therefore, let it be

1 *Resolved*, That the Senate—

2 (1) declares August 31, 2005, to be Solidarity
3 Day in the United States to recognize the 25th anni-
4 versary of the establishment in Poland of the Soli-
5 darity Trade Union (known in Poland as the “NSZZ
6 Solidarnosc”), the first free and independent trade
7 union established in the Soviet-dominated countries
8 of Europe;

9 (2) honors the people of Poland who risked
10 their lives to restore liberty in Poland and to return
11 Poland to the democratic community of nations; and

12 (3) calls on the people of the United States to
13 remember the struggle and sacrifice of the people of
14 Poland and that the results of that struggle contrib-
15 uted to the fall of communism and the ultimate end
16 of the Cold War.

○