

111TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

H. RES. 504

Recognizing and congratulating the Republic of Poland on the 20th anniversary of the Polish parliamentary elections on June 4, 1989.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

JUNE 4, 2009

Mr. SMITH of New Jersey (for himself, Mr. LIPINSKI, Mr. WOLF, Mr. KANJORSKI, Mr. PITTS, Mr. HASTINGS of Florida, Mr. MARIO DIAZ-BALART of Florida, Ms. KAPTUR, Mr. MCCOTTER, Mr. DINGELL, Mr. COHEN, Mr. KIND, Mr. GUTIERREZ, Mr. QUIGLEY, Mr. MCGOVERN, Mr. MCMAHON, and Mr. COURTNEY) submitted the following resolution; which was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs

RESOLUTION

Recognizing and congratulating the Republic of Poland on the 20th anniversary of the Polish parliamentary elections on June 4, 1989.

Whereas the Soviet Union and the Republic of Poland's Communist Party used the Polish elections of 1947, in which they brutally persecuted non-Communist candidates and grossly falsified voting returns, to impose a Communist government on Poland;

Whereas after 1947, Poland's Communist government did not permit genuine opposition candidates to campaign for election or to appear on election ballots;

Whereas Poland's Communist government was not an independent national government but was subservient to the Soviet Union, to which it formally ceded approximately one-third of Poland's territory;

Whereas the Polish people never accepted the legitimacy of the Communist government, but repeatedly challenged its totalitarian rule, including in the revolutionary strike movements of 1956, 1970, and 1976;

Whereas in 1956 and 1970, the Communist government responded to these challenges by firing on assembled strikers, killing large numbers of workers, and by manipulating social prejudices to set against each other industrial workers, farmers, and intellectuals;

Whereas the Soviet Union responded to powerful anti-Communist movements in eastern Europe with armed force, most notably in the 1944–1945 crushing of the Polish Home Army, the 1956 invasion of Hungary, and the 1968 invasion of Czechoslovakia;

Whereas in 1979, Pope John Paul II visited his native Poland and inspired millions of Poles with the ideals of social solidarity and respect for human dignity, and urged them to, "Be not afraid";

Whereas in 1980, shipyard workers in Gdansk responded to government-ordered price hikes with a strike calling for the legalization of independent labor unions, freedom of expression, and economic reforms;

Whereas the Gdansk strike movement quickly spread throughout Poland, establishing itself as the Solidarity labor union, the first independent labor union in a Communist country, with a membership of approximately 80 percent of the Polish labor force;

Whereas the Solidarity labor union became a broad social movement, uniting industrial workers, farmers, intellectuals, and students, and demanding respect for human rights;

Whereas from 1981 to 1983, Poland's Communist government imposed martial law and arrested thousands of Solidarity leaders but failed to completely suppress Solidarity;

Whereas in 1988, new waves of Solidarity-led strikes compelled Poland's Communist government to negotiate with Solidarity;

Whereas from February to April 1989, Solidarity leaders and the Communist government negotiated an agreement for a free election in which Solidarity would run candidates for 100 percent of seats in the Polish Senate and 35 percent of seats in the Polish Sejm;

Whereas Poland's Communist government controlled the major media, and observers and public opinion polls predicted that Poland's Communist Party would decisively win the election; and

Whereas the Polish parliamentary election of June 4, 1989, was a landslide victory for Solidarity, which won 160 of the 161 seats it competed for: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

2 (1) congratulates the Republic of Poland on the
3 20th anniversary of the Polish parliamentary elec-
4 tions, the first free and democratic election in a
5 Communist-bloc country;

1 (2) recognizes that the June 4, 1989, election
2 enabled Solidarity to form the first non-Communist
3 and democratic government in eastern Europe since
4 1948;

5 (3) recognizes that the June 4, 1989, election,
6 by showing the strength of citizens united in soli-
7 darity against totalitarianism, inaugurated a series
8 of democratic revolutions that within 6 months
9 ended Communist rule in Hungary, East Germany,
10 Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria, and Romania, and after-
11 ward in Yugoslavia, Albania, and the Soviet Union;

12 (4) commends the Solidarity labor union for re-
13 jecting the ideology of class struggle to make an
14 original proposal of the solidarity of citizens from
15 different social groups in a common struggle for
16 freedom, human dignity, and justice against totali-
17 tarianism; and

18 (5) commends the Polish people for the remark-
19 able courage and commitment to freedom, human
20 dignity, and justice which it showed in freeing itself
21 from Communism, which greatly contributed to
22 other peoples doing the same, and recalls the his-
23 toric Polish motto, “for your freedom and ours”.

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