

Speech and Transcripts

1 August 2004

Remarks By Secretary Of State Colin L. Powell on the 60th Anniversary of the Warsaw Uprising



In his speech at the Warsaw Uprising ceremony, Sec. Powell tells Poles "Poland will never be alone again."

Mr. President, Mr. Prime Minister, Mr. Mayor, Chancellor Schroeder, Deputy Prime Minister Prescott, Veterans of the Warsaw Uprising, citizens of Warsaw, ladies and gentlemen assembled from around the world; on behalf of President Bush and the American people, I am proud to join you in commemorating the Warsaw Uprising.

Together tonight, we honor the men, women and children who died here sixty years ago defending their freedom, and the freedom of future generations. The patriots young and old of the Polish Home Army who selflessly gave their lives here knew that their beloved Warsaw stood at the frontline of freedom. That frontline was drawn across this very square and across countless courtyards, in the stairwells of apartment buildings and in the labyrinth of sewers under the streets.

And every citizen of Warsaw stood and fought on that frontline of freedom. They fought without hope for themselves, but with undying hope for their country. Here, in this place, in the grim face of death, defeat and destruction, there triumphed the God-given glory of the human spirit that no tyranny can ever extinguish. What courage, what determination, what sacrifice, as they fought a relentless enemy who showed no mercy.

I'm a military man, not a diplomat. I'm a soldier. I served in war and I have lost close friends in combat; and therefore I do not use the word hero lightly.

But I say to you tonight that everyone who fought during those dark 63 days was a hero; a hero for Poland, a hero for freedom. Their sacrifice sustained the hope of freedom through the horrors of Hitler and Stalin's terror. From the heroic history of the Uprising, the people of Poland drew strength to resist decades of Soviet domination and communist dictatorship.

Our shared hero, Jan Nowak, is beloved by us all. He remembered his fallen countrymen of the Warsaw Uprising, with these prophetic

words: He said, "Their sacrifice was not in vain. Our day of victory will also come. One day the sun will shine on crowds of singing and dancing people . . . in the streets of Warsaw. The free soul of Poland will survive until that day." The free soul of Poland did survive. That joyful day did come.

Warsaw has risen from the ashes to become, at last, the proud capital of an independent Poland-an independent Poland in a Europe that is whole, free and at peace. Today - for perhaps the first time in its history - is no longer the pawn of great powers or the prey of vast tyrannies.

Poland is a sovereign country, embraced by the European union, secured by NATO, and reconciled in peace and partnership with its former enemies. All who cherish freedom owe the heroes of the Warsaw Uprising an eternal debt of gratitude. But our deep gratitude is not enough. Together, we must work to build a world of freedom for all of God's children, for a world of freedom is a world of hope where tyrants and terrorists cannot thrive.

Today, Poland, which for centuries fought for her own liberty and for the liberty of others, once again stands on freedom's frontline, in the Balkans, in Afghanistan and in Iraq, supporting people who, like our forefathers, yearn to be free. And in the hopeful decades ahead, America will be proud to advance freedom's cause with Poland, America's ally and America's friend. Poland will never be alone again.

The souls of those who perished in the Warsaw uprising abide in God's peace. Now, with our deeds, let us honor them so that future generations can live the dream they fought and died for. We will always, always remember their sacrifice. Veterans of the Home Army, citizens of Warsaw - I salute you.