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"Courage and Freedom": Address at Warsaw University

*Remarks as Delivered by Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz, Warsaw, Poland, Tuesday, October 5, 2004.*

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Thank you, Mr. Rector. Actually, on a personal note, my father was born in Warsaw and he was a mathematician. He would say that the saddest part of that introduction is that I went from mathematics—which is a real science—to political science.

I'm going to—if you indulge me—make one try at a little bit of Polish, but I promise you I won't extend it: *Polska – to kraj, dla ktorego mam duzy szacunek i wielka sympatie.* [Poland is a country for which I have high respect and much affinity.] [Applause]

And indeed as I was thinking, if I had to give a title to these remarks, I think there is a theme and it just kind of emerges from the subject matter. The theme is: courage and freedom. And for me, most recently, it starts up at West Point, where the U.S. Military Academy is located.

I think for many of you, you know that one Polish hero has really become a legend in America, that's Tadeusz Kosciuszko. You may or may not know that he organized the defense of West Point, which George Washington said was "the key to the revolution." He wasn't the only Pole who was there in our revolution. Americans also remember General Casimir Pulaski who died from wounds he suffered in the Battle of Savannah in 1779. Two years before his death, Pulaski told Benjamin Franklin: "We Poles have a hatred for all forms of tyranny, especially foreign tyranny. So no matter where in this world someone is fighting for freedom, we feel it is a personal matter to us as well." That was a Polish general more than two hundred years ago.

But that tradition of courage in defense of freedom distinguished Poland in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as well. We remember the important role that Polish pilots played in the Battle of Britain and the daring of Polish soldiers who captured the seemingly impregnable fortress of Monte Cassino in Italy.

We remember the heroes of the Polish resistance, people like Jan Nowak, who risked his life to travel from Warsaw to Stockholm and London to try to enlist support to save Poland from Stalin's postwar designs. His 1982 memoir entitled "Courier from Warsaw" closes by recalling his friends who gave their lives in the Second World War. He concludes with a fervent expression of hope for the future of Poland;

he writes: "One day the sun will shine on crowds of singing and dancing people drunk with joy in the streets of Warsaw. The free soul of Poland will survive until that day." And I might add, on a personal note, we had a chance to see the heart of Warsaw on a beautiful, sunny day. And, indeed, his prediction has come true.

We Americans fondly remember Lech Walesa and Solidarity, who proved to the world 20 years ago that the free soul of Poland still survived. Their courage helped to bring about the extraordinarily peaceful collapse of the Soviet Empire.

And even non-Catholics in my country have the deepest respect for the Polish spiritual leader and peacemaker, Pope John Paul II. "Freedom is given to man by God," the Pope has said, "as a measure of his dignity." And, "as children of God we cannot be slaves."

This year, as you all know, marks the 60th anniversary of one of the 20th century's most courageous stands against the slavery of Nazi occupation. And today, we had a chance to lay a wreath at the monument to the Warsaw Uprising. We remember how Warsaw was burned and torn apart once again, brick by brick, because her people wanted to be free.

And even when Poland was overcome by the evil of Soviet totalitarianism, the cherished dream of freedom still burned in the hearts of the Polish people. Winston Churchill once said of Poland that, despite its long bondage over more than a century, occupying powers had been "unable," as he said, "to quench the spirit of the Polish nation. The heroic defense of Warsaw shows that the soul of Poland is indestructible and that she will rise again like a rock which may, for a time, be submerged by a tidal wave but which remains a rock."

Poles were rock-like in their conviction that freedom and justice would be theirs again one day. Today, Poles are free. And now, just as in the early days of my country, brave Americans and Poles are once again working and fighting side by side to bring freedom to nations where liberty has long been held captive.

Three years ago, President Bush came to this university and he spoke of the iron will of the Polish people. "Here you have proven," he said, "that communism need not be followed by chaos, that great oppression can end in true reconciliation, and that the promise of freedom is stronger than the habit of fear."

Indeed, Poland stands as a new leader of Europe. Poland's leadership is marked by courage and belief in freedom, and strengthened by painful lessons of history.

Poles understand, perhaps better than anyone, the consequences of making toothless warnings to brutal tyrants and terrorist regimes. And yes, I do include Saddam Hussein.

For Poland, September 1, 1939 is a date that lives in infamy. But, as you know, there was much that preceded Hitler's tanks into Poland's frontier.

In 1935, Britain and France acquiesced to Germany's abrogation of its disarmament obligations. In 1936,

Hitler ordered the remilitarization of the Rhineland, betting correctly that the world's hollow warnings formed weak defenses. When he annexed Austria in 1938, the world again sat by. When he marched into Prague later that same year, the world sat still once again. And finally when the world warned Hitler to stay out of Poland, he assumed that this warning was just as empty as all the ones that had come before. Poland and the world paid for it with the worst war in history.

But, Poland's ordeal did not end with the end of that war. For Poland, it began four decades of Soviet occupation. And yet despite all of that tragedy, democracy flourishes in Poland—after a journey of courage and determination whose difficulties only Poles can truly comprehend, but which Americans deeply admire.

Many people hoped that the Cold War's end would bring a long period of unbroken peace. But September 11, 2001 gave us another rude awakening. We were face to face once again with the ugly reality that evil didn't simply disappear with the demise of Hitler and Stalin. The cold-blooded murder of 3,000 innocent souls—from America and Poland and many other countries—on that September day once again put us in the middle of a war that we didn't look for. And once again, the target is freedom itself.

Fortunately, we confront these dangers with a new set of allies. And in response to the extraordinary threat posed by international terrorism, NATO has a new sense of purpose. In this global fight, NATO can rightly claim its own historic contributions. For the first time in NATO's history, Article V of the North Atlantic Treaty was invoked, of all things, to defend the United States. NATO AWACS airplanes patrolled American skies. NATO support for the International Security Force in Afghanistan helped ensure the stability and neutrality of that country's capital. And the NATO contribution to Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Afghanistan is enabling the Afghan government to expand its authority, making the country more peaceful, stable and secure.

And this Saturday, Afghans, for what I believe is the first time in their history, will hold a national election for their president—an election for which 10.6 million people have registered to vote, forty percent of them women, despite intimidation and threats from the Taliban. It is quite an achievement.

The NATO alliance remains as vital to our national security today as it was in the Cold War. It's true of Europe as well. The menace of terrorism, I believe, threatens all of us. No one can fight it alone. Only together can we defeat the challenge—the particularly dangerous challenge—posed by the intersection of weapons of mass terror, terrorist organizations, and state support for terrorism.

I remember I was working in the U.S. Defense Department for a Secretary of Defense named Richard Cheney when the Berlin Wall came down. Many questioned whether NATO was necessary anymore. I still remember the first press conference that President George H.W. Bush—we call him "41"; he was the forty-first president of the United States. In his first press conference after the Wall came down, he was asked why we need NATO, now that the threat had gone away. President Bush answered, the threat is "uncertainty," the threat is "instability." And some people laughed at that answer, but it was a wise answer.

The intervening years have demonstrated its wisdom. Indeed, new threats did emerge in Europe,

particularly in the Balkans—indeed, the worst crimes against humanity since the demise of Hitler. And ultimately NATO proved to be the only really effective instrument for dealing with this new threat to European stability and for opposing genocide and tyranny.

When Poland and other new democracies of Central Europe gained their freedom after more than four decades of Soviet tyranny, there were some who said it would be dangerous and destabilizing to welcome these newly-free countries into NATO.

I am personally proud of having worked for Dick Cheney when he was Secretary of Defense—he was probably the first senior American to recognize that bringing Poland and other Central European countries into NATO was in both the strategic and moral interests of the United States and Europe.

And indeed, Polish membership in NATO has provided your country with the assurances it deserves that Poland's hard-won freedom will be protected. But also, despite those predictions that it would cause instability or create a new dividing line down the center of Europe—remember those phrases—Polish membership in NATO instead has seen Poland take the lead in promoting stability and progress in Europe and helped lead the way for nine other new members in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

By remaining true to its founding vision of a Europe whole, free, and undivided, NATO has shown that an alliance based on a belief in freedom has more staying power than any alliance in history. And for this reason, the United States and Poland have worked hard together to modernize and strengthen NATO.

Some people are concerned that our attention might be totally absorbed by Afghanistan and Iraq. But that is not the case.

To the contrary, we have streamlined and modernized the Alliance's command structure to make it better prepared for the 21st century. We have established Allied Command Transformation in Norfolk to lead U. S. and European militaries into this new world. We have established the NATO Response Force, elements of which are already serving together in Afghanistan. And the recently established NATO Chemical Biological Nuclear and Radiological Battalion, CBNR, as we like to call it. The NATO CBNR Battalion led by the Czech Republic has contributed to real world operations assisting with security during the Athens Olympics.

It's particularly important to extend the values that NATO stands for to the whole of Europe. Our objective of a Europe whole and free will not be complete until Ukraine is a full-fledged member of Europe. As President Bush said here in Warsaw, "We must extend our hand to Ukraine, as Poland has done with such determination." And few countries have more to offer to assist reform in Ukraine than Poland. In the same way, we must continue trying to build a bridge to Belarus, whose people are denied freedom by an authoritarian dictator.

President Bush came to Warsaw in 2001, and it was here that he launched his campaign for helping ensure the Alliance's continuing vitality and relevancy—through further NATO enlargement.

With the addition of Hungary and the Czech Republic and Poland, NATO is enriched. And it's been

strengthened further by the addition of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania, and Bulgaria. These newly free countries understand the difficult journey to democracy. With Poland, they can stand as powerful beacons for emerging democracies—in Europe and now, hopefully, in the Middle East, and Central and South Asia.

Poland has quickly moved from being a new member of NATO to being an important NATO leader—a tribute to the courage and commitment that we Americans have long admired about our Polish friends.

And as President Bush has highlighted again and again, Poland is important in keeping a strong transatlantic link, as a member of the EU as well.

Freedom has been the glue of the world's strongest alliances and freedom has been the solvent that has dissolved tyrannical rule. It has held NATO allies together over the course of four decades of often-contentious debates. And it brought some 40 countries into the coalition effort in Afghanistan, some 30 countries into Iraq and 80 or 90 countries into the larger coalition against global terror.

After the tragedy of September 11th, President Bush recognized that the world could no longer live with ambiguity. Every country, he said, has to make a choice. We could no longer continue living with states that sponsor terrorism, states that have the potential to put the world's worst weapons in the hands of terrorists.

The Taliban, operating under the guise of religion, chose the terrorists. As a result, they have joined the Soviets and the Nazis on the ash heap of history.

Qaddafi was given a choice. He saw the success of the Coalition's military in the region and he chose to stop violating his international obligations and to peacefully dismantle his weapons programs.

Saddam Hussein also had a choice. As a matter of fact, it was a choice he had been confronted with in 17 successive U.N. resolutions over the course of 12 years: not to threaten his neighbors, not to support terrorism, not to commit genocide against his own people. He had been warned not to interfere with the flights that were monitoring his compliance. He had finally been warned to declare fully and completely all of his programs for weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems and to stop interfering with U.N. inspections.

U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441 was his 17<sup>th</sup>—and supposed to be his final—chance. Saddam Hussein chose defiance. He chose to continue to hide his activities from inspectors. He chose to continue to support terrorism. And he continued to torture his country and his people in a way that puts him among the most brutal tyrants of the last hundred years.

Perhaps Saddam Hussein hoped that we would turn a blind eye to his choices, just as other nations had done at other times in history, and most dramatically and tragically in the 1930's.

Maybe he wagered that what one writer has called "the density of evil" that permeated Iraq would go unnoticed. Or maybe he thought other nations just didn't care, or cared more about their commercial

interests. In any case, he chose wrong. And free nations said: the evil had to stop.

The depth of that evil is so alien to the experience of most people, it's necessary to talk about it—not simply to talk about the past or to explain why this war was necessary, but to talk about the present and the future and to understand what it is that Iraqis have to overcome.

They are now trying to cast off a smothering blanket of fear, a blanket of fear woven by 35 years of the most brutal kind of repression, where even the smallest mistake could mean torture or death, or punishments worse than death. Yes, there are punishments worse than death—like fathers or mothers being forced to watch their children tortured or killed.

Poles have an ability to appreciate far better than Americans how that kind of blanket of fear can distort the behavior of even perfectly decent human beings. Perhaps you also understand that that sort of fear is not something that can be cast off immediately and simply forgotten—particularly not when the people who inflicted that fear are still at large and killing people.

Saddam began weaving that terrible blanket from the very beginning. In 1979, one of his first acts as President of Iraq was to conduct a sweeping purge of top Baathist Party leaders. He held a meeting of the Iraqi National Assembly, and with pretend tears in his eyes, Saddam talked about how a senior party member had confessed his disloyalty. As he named other guilty colleagues, guards dragged them, one by one, out of the meeting. Saddam then asked his ministers and top party leaders for their first test of loyalty. He made them participate in the firing squads that executed their former colleagues.

But, that wasn't enough for Saddam—no. He had videotapes made of that event and sent to leaders throughout the Middle East, so that his neighbors would know just what kind of leader they were dealing with. Saddam was the head of an internationally recognized government, but he acted more like a vicious gangland boss.

Videotaped torture was, in fact, common. One American writer who recently viewed some of these tapes described Saddam's thugs chopping off hands, fingers and tongues, so-called Fedayeen Saddam ruthlessly breaking the arms of a comrade who failed to carry out orders. Of these images this American writer wrote: "They are the sort that no civilized person wants another to see."

On one of my trips to Iraq, I saw the forked trunk of a dead tree behind the police Academy in Baghdad. On each branch of the tree, the bark is permanently marked by what had been two sets of ropes: one set, high enough to tie up a man; the shorter set, to tie up a woman. Our guide told us about horrific things that happened to the men and women who were tied to that tree.

Just beyond the torture tree was a gate to the headquarters of the Iraqi Olympic Committee which, as some of you may know, was headed by Uday Hussein, Saddam's most evil son. Sometimes at night, Uday would come to personally torture and abuse prisoners. And while we were on a trip through Northern Iraq last year, one commander told us that workers had temporarily stopped the excavation of a newly discovered mass grave, after unearthing the remains of 80 women and children—some still with little dresses and toys.

Permit me one more: In the south, we visited a small village of the Marsh Arabs. We had to travel over a man-made desert the size of the state of New Jersey—a desert created by Saddam in order to exterminate these people. The Marsh Arabs are one of the oldest civilizations in the world going back several thousand years. But the marshes around which their whole livelihood and civilization have been based, had been destroyed. After 35 years of this kind of genocidal repression, a population of half a million has been reduced to somewhere between 40,000 and 200,000.

When we got to the small village, children came and greeted us with cheers of “Salaam Bush,” and in Arabic—which I don’t know, but was translated—“Down with Saddam.” And they reached out their hands, and they weren’t asking for candy, they weren’t asking for toys, just a single word: “Water?”

During the Cold War, some people argued about this part of the world that at least the Soviet Union provided stability. I think you and Poland had a phrase that correctly characterized that as “the stability of the graveyard.”

Well, the so-called stability that Saddam Hussein provided was something even worse. Beyond the genocidal murders, he systematically destroyed Iraq—building palaces, while the infrastructure decayed beyond repair, starving his people while stealing money from the UN’s Oil for Food program, and exporting terrorism, inciting terrorism and funding terrorism.

From the very first day of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Poland has fought side by side with America to halt these evil and horrific crimes against humanity.

The tragedy of World War II came about, in part, because people in my country believed that the Atlantic Ocean provided a wall behind which the United States could hide from the tragedy that was about to engulf Europe. Today I think there are some people who believe that they might escape the scourge of terrorism by building a high enough wall around their country—but that’s an illusion.

Just a couple of weeks ago, Poland’s Defense Minister Jerzy Szmajdzinski put it correctly. He said: “By taking part in this operation in Iraq we are proving that we properly understand the nature of modern threats and the philosophy of counteracting them. Now, thanks in part to us, the world is safer, we are safer. Today,” he said, “the war is never far away, and no one’s home is safe. We will not close ourselves off and we will not hide from danger behind any wall.”

Minister Szmajdzinski is right. We cannot hide behind walls. And no one is truly safe from the threat we face.

Our enemies know us by our love of life and democracy. We know them by their worship of death and their philosophy of despair. Earlier this year, we were given a window into that dark and hopeless world when we intercepted a letter from an al Qaeda associate in Iraq to his colleagues in Afghanistan. That letter from a man who’s, unfortunately, become very well-known to the world, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi, suggests how terrorists view the benefits of a free and open society in the Middle East. “Democracy” in Iraq “is coming,” Zarqawi wrote. That, he said, will mean “suffocation” for the terrorists.

He talks with contempt about Iraqis who, in his words, “look ahead to a sunny tomorrow, a prosperous future, a carefree life, comfort and favor.” His letter is available on the Internet. Read it. I think you will see that the contempt Zarqawi displays for whole groups of human beings—including Christians and Jews, but also Muslim Shia and Muslim Kurds—calls to mind the racism of the Nazis.

When Zarqawi claims credit for bombs that kill innocent civilians and innocent children, he doesn't care what religion they happen to be. You will see that his glorification of death and violence calls to mind the tyrannical movements of the last century. Zarqawi and bin Laden and others like them may claim the mantle of religion, but their rhetoric is more reminiscent of the death's head of Hitler's SS.

They may profess to be religious, but they teach that destruction is good, murder is noble, that killing innocents, even children, will earn the murderer paradise—despite the fact that Islam condemns murder and suicide. They use mosques as part of their terror campaign, and desecrate Muslim holy places. And they say that their ultimate goal is God's greater glory, but what they truly glorify is murder. Their ultimate goal is raw power. That is not religion. That is totalitarian ideology.

And that is the point where terrorists and Saddamists converge. Their long-term goals may differ, but their immediate goal is the same—to use fear and terror to prevent the emergence of a free Iraq. They have nothing positive to offer, only death and destruction. They play on fears of a population that has been terrorized for 35 years—and, in some cases, by the same people who are killing today.

That is the heart of the reason why this fight continues to be difficult. But it is also the great weakness of the enemies we are fighting. Because they offer nothing positive, most Iraqis would like to see them defeated. And more and more Iraqis are stepping up to fight them.

The majority of the Iraqis know that whether terrorists and Saddamists actively work together or not, the efforts of one support the other. With each life claimed by an indiscriminate attack, with each act of sabotage of Iraq's infrastructure, with each barbaric beheading, our enemies define themselves in vivid contrast to the goal of a free Iraq.

Our objective is to build up Iraq. Our enemies want to finish Saddam's work and tear Iraq down. Iraqis want to live in safety and freedom to pursue their own happiness. Terrorists target Iraqis who simply go about their daily lives. Iraqis want free and fair elections. Terrorists desperately target each step of that process. We build schools. They kill children.

But despite their savagery, Iraqis are moving forward with great courage. Even though they know they're risking their lives in doing so, thousands of Iraqis continue to join the army, the national guard and the police force. A fact that is not sufficiently known or appreciated is that more than 700 Iraqis in the police, in the army and national guard, have already given their lives in this fight for a free Iraq. And they are led by courageous leaders, who are no strangers to being targets of terror.

Prime Minister Allawi, who is known to all the world, knows what it's like to have a price on his head. Even in exile, he wasn't safe. In 1979, he was sleeping in his apartment in London when he woke just in



time to move his head out of the way of an ax wielded by one of Saddam's assassins. The ax nearly took his leg off. He spent a year in the hospital. He was the target of two or three more assassination attempts. He knows what it is to put your life on the line. His deputy prime minister has been the target of assassination attempts. Indeed, every senior official in the Iraqi government, every governor in Iraq, every police chief, and many, many others know they are risking their lives every day. But they continue to do so. And it's not just the leaders; it's ordinary citizens as well.

When we visited Fallujah this past June, I met a U.S. Marine whose life had been saved by five brave members of the Iraqi National Guard. Two of them had risked their own lives to pull him off the battlefield under enemy fire. They received the Navy commendation medal with valor for their actions.

And one that has really stuck with me was a young woman we met in Northern Iraq, who was working as an interpreter. Her sister had been murdered a few weeks before. A member of my party asked her, "Why do you continue to work with us?" And she said very simply, "My father said, 'You must never back down in the face of evil.'"

Iraqis are not backing down. And they have the support of extraordinarily brave coalition partners.

Indeed, Polish soldiers in Iraq have shown the same courage and commitment to freedom that Casimir Pulaski spoke about to Ben Franklin 200 years ago. We mourn with Poland the sacrifice of 17 soldiers and civilians in this noble fight for freedom. Every life lost in this cause is precious, and we can honor their memory by ensuring that their sacrifice is not in vain.

When the time came to take action in Iraq, 34 countries contributed troops, including nine of NATO's new members. But Poland stood out as one of the four countries that sent troops into combat on the very first day. Polish Special Forces helped to capture oil platforms in the Shatt al-Arab that had explosives onboard, but that had not been rigged to cause destruction.

And, as I think you are familiar with, Poland has taken command of one of the most diverse military units ever assembled: a 10,000-man division of soldiers from 21 countries who speak 17 different languages. On my visits to Iraq, I have been privileged to meet the first Polish commander of that multinational division, Maj. Gen. Tyszkiewicz, as well as his successor Maj. Gen. Bienek. They are both impressive officers, and I hear that the current commander, Maj. Gen. Ekiert, is so as well.

Last October, when I met Maj. Gen. Tyszkiewicz in Hilla, where he was responsible for an area called the Shia heartland, which is about one-quarter the size of your country—a huge area of responsibility, and a huge mission—he told me that when Iraqis come to him to complain about electricity shortages and unemployment, he tells them about the challenges that Poland faced after throwing off the Soviet yoke. I think what may be one of the reasons that Poles are doing so well in this delicate mission is that they understand better than most what Iraqis are facing. What they can also tell them, as Gen. Tyszkiewicz did, is that Poles did not lose heart, that you have made continuous progress, and that you are incomparably better off than you were under a tyrannical rule.

Poles have credibility when you say that it's possible to leave totalitarian oppression behind. And Iraqis

are listening.

Prime Minister Allawi recently visited the United States and gave us a window into the new Iraq. Let me read you his dramatic summary of how far Iraq has come in less than 18 months despite the predictions of the skeptics.

“At every step of the political process to date,” Allawi told a joint session of the U.S. Congress, “the courage and the resilience of the Iraqi people have proved the doubters wrong. They said we would miss the January deadline to pass the Interim Constitution. We proved them wrong. They warned that there could be no successful handover of sovereignty by the end of June. We proved them wrong. They doubted whether a national conference could be started this August. We proved them wrong. Despite intimidation and violence, over 1,400 citizens, a quarter of them women, from every religious, ethnic and political grouping in Iraq, elected a national council. And I pledge to you today,” the prime minister said, “we’ll prove them wrong again over the elections.”

I recently met an American who had helped to organize that Iraqi National Conference. She told us about the very open and vigorous debates that were held there. But the most remarkable thing she told us was that virtually every day the conference came under mortar attack. When one particular mortar attack came especially close, the Iraqis paused for a few minutes to be sure that everyone was safe, and then went back to debating and sipping tea. It’s hard for me to imagine a parliament anywhere else in the world that would continue meeting under that kind of pressure—but they did.

Afghans are also determined. As I mentioned earlier, there will be a national election in Afghanistan this Saturday—the first in its history.

I think this demonstrates vividly that, like Nazism and Communism, the terrorist brand of totalitarianism runs fundamentally counter to the love of life and the love of freedom that represent the deepest longings of most human beings. The terrorists’ doctrine contains within it the seeds of its own defeat, but it will not collapse simply of its own weight. We must remain on offense.

There are some people who wonder whether this possibility of democracy in countries that have never experienced it isn’t too great a challenge. I have been heavily influenced by my own experience over 20 years dealing primarily with East Asia. I was the assistant secretary of state in the first half of the 1980’s, and then the American ambassador to Indonesia, which some of you may know has the largest Muslim population of any country in the world. Back then, there was one democracy in the whole vast area of East Asia. It was Japan.

Back then, people said the Philippines couldn’t do any better than the dictator they had at the time, Ferdinand Marcos. They said the Koreans and Chinese didn’t care about freedom, or their Confucian heritage predisposed them to tyranny, or they were incapable of democracy because they had no historical experience with it. Those assertions ran counter to what President Reagan believed. As he put it in an historic address to the British Parliament in 1982, “It would be cultural condescension or even worse to say that any people prefer dictatorship to democracy.”

In the Philippines, we initiated a persistent effort to prod Marcos to embrace democratic change. And I think in part, as a result, the Philippine people finally forced Marcos to accept defeat in the elections of 1986—turning that country from dictatorship to democracy. The following year, we saw a similar development in South Korea. Not long after that, Taiwan began to demonstrate that Chinese people, too, crave freedom and democratic self-government. And you no longer hear people say that Asians are incapable of democratic self-rule. I believe the same is true of Arabs.

In 1982, President Ronald Reagan spoke to the British Parliament about the hope of democracy. It wasn't democracies, he noted, who invaded Afghanistan or suppressed Polish Solidarity. Today it is democracies who are actively helping in Afghanistan and Iraq.

Reagan told his British audience, "How we conduct ourselves here in the Western democracies will determine whether this trend continues. Democracy is not a fragile flower," he said, "but still, it needs cultivating."

It has been my experience that the majority of Iraqis are eager to be partners in this campaign for democracy. Despite all they have endured, all they must overcome, like their Polish allies, their own dream of freedom will not be vanquished.

Earlier this year, I met a young American soldier who had lost an arm and the sight in one eye fighting in Iraq last May. It's an enormous sacrifice, but he put it in perspective this way. He said, "We're fighting for everything we believe in. Saddam affected everything in that country and something had to be done."

Something, indeed, had to be done. And that young soldier's commitment has been mirrored in the brave Polish soldiers who have stood with us from the beginning.

There's a passage in Winston Churchill's memoirs of the Second World War that describes the soul of Poland during one of its darkest hours. He quotes from the last broadcast from beleaguered Warsaw in 1944, the last broadcast of the uprising. "Your heroes," the broadcast said, "are the soldiers whose only weapons against tanks were bottles filled with petrol, the women who tended the wounded and carried messages under fire, the children who went on quietly playing among the smoldering ruins. These are the people of Warsaw. Immortal is the nation that can muster such universal heroism. Poland lives when the Poles live."

And Churchill added this in his own words: "When the Russians entered the city three months later they found little but shattered streets and the unburied dead. Such was their liberation of Poland, where they now rule. But this," Churchill said, "cannot be the end of the story."

And Churchill was right. There was more to the story. Poles waged more than just a physical struggle against Soviet totalitarianism. It was a test of faith and spirit.

Poland, free at last, continues to lead with courage, with determination and faith. And Poland is a powerful example to the rest of the world.

We will not forget Poland's commitment. Just as you have stood with us, we will stand with you. Even as you offer encouragement to the Afghans and the Iraqis on their difficult road, we will help you, as our valued allies and partners.

As I mentioned, my late father was born in Warsaw 94 years ago. If he were alive today, I think he would be enormously pleased by the fact that, once again, Poles and Americans are united in fighting for freedom. He was a mathematician. And I think he'd be pleased that I am speaking here at Warsaw University, which has produced so many "real" scientists.

But speaking for myself—as an American—I am grateful that Poland is demonstrating to the American people that the sacrifices we have made to liberate others have come back to benefit us.

And so, in closing, I'd like to thank you for your kind reception and wish that our two nations may always be guided by words that have inspired Poles for generations: *Za wolnosc wasza i nasza*. [For your freedom and ours.] Thank you. [Applause.]

<http://www.defenselink.mil/speeches/2004/sp20041005-depsecdef0842.html>