



**Republic of Poland**  
**Minister of Foreign Affairs**  
Radosław Sikorski

October 14<sup>th</sup>, 2009

*Ladies & Gentlemen, dear friends,*

I wish to convey my warm thanks to the leadership of the Polish American Congress, led by President Frank Spula, for inviting me to this year's National Convention. Unfortunately, numerous official duties prevent me from coming to Chicago. I regret that I am unable to be with you in person.

The Polish-American Congress, one of the oldest and most distinguished Polonia organizations in the United States, has for over sixty years maintained the spirit of Poland among millions of our compatriots. It has represented the interests of the Polish people and campaigned for Poland in the international arena. It was also thanks to your patriotic and courageous attitude that the cause of Polish sovereignty, lost after 1945, constantly remained in the minds of US policymakers. After 1990, American Polonia was steadfast in its efforts to ensure that Poland could join the NATO defensive alliance, affiliating free and democratic states on both sides of the Atlantic.

The Government of the Republic of Poland attaches special importance to cooperation with American Polonia. This reflects both the role of the US in the world, the size of the Polish American community, and its strong ties with the Old Country, as well as its enormous political, intellectual and social potential. It is highly symbolic that an American descendant of Polish immigrants was this year awarded the Nobel Prize for Medicine.

I am convinced that the joint efforts of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Polish American Congress to promote Polish achievements in the United States and enhance the position of the Polish American community will continue to produce spectacular results.

It is my hope that the views of American Polonia can become even more prominent, and have a profound impact on US policy towards Poland. You are working to make this happen. It is the common wish of all of us to see the day when the multi-million American Polonia speaks with one resounding and harmonious voice.

I am happy to note that the Polish American Congress – a mature social and political organization – is becoming more open to dialogue on a wide range of difficult issues, and seeks to counter negative stereotypes. I am convinced that the direction you have taken will serve our common good. I am filled with genuine respect for your efforts and achievements.

The promotion of Poland as an open, modern and dynamically developing country is one of the crucial tasks facing Polish diplomacy today. It is a difficult challenge, requiring Poland's presence in the influential US media. It also requires the existence of a long-term, consistently implemented promotional strategy. For this, we depend on your assistance. We have an opportunity that may well determine our place in the 21<sup>st</sup> century world: let us not let it go to waste.

I wish every success to the organizers and participants in this Convention and Conference, as well as to the Polish American Congress and all its members in their wise endeavors for the good of Polonia, of the United States and of Poland.

Cordially,

Schanski