

## Polish Youth Exchange Program Passed by House of Representatives

The U.S. House of Representatives approved a bill on September 5, 2007 to establish a United States - Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program, creating an exciting new opportunity for American and Polish secondary students to spend a year learning each other's common political and cultural values. While funding for the program is pending, the approved legislation is awaiting President Bush's action. Senator Richard Lugar (R-IN), a long-time proponent of international exchange programs, authored the bill based on the successful U.S.-Germany Congress-Bundestag program that provides full scholarships for American high school students to live with a host family and attend school in Germany for a year.

"This is great news," said U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe. "Real experience of another culture is the best education, and through this kind of exchange we will be helping to develop tomorrow's business and political leaders, teachers and thinkers in Poland and in the United States." □

## Missile Defense Negotiations Resume in Warsaw

U.S. and Polish negotiators are meeting September 6 and 7 in Warsaw in a third round of discussions regarding construction of a missile interceptor site in Poland as part of the Ballistic Missile Defense (BMD) system. The U.S. delegation is headed by Assistant Secretary of State John Rood, while the Polish side is led by Witold Waszczykowski, Undersecretary of State in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Earlier this year, the United States proposed building a site of ten missile interceptors in Poland as part of a European component for missile defense against the emerging threat of ballistic missiles launched from the Middle East. Formal negotiations between Poland and the U.S. began in May of this year. □

## U.S. Participation at International Defense Industry Exhibition in Kielce

The United States served as lead nation at the 15th International Defense Industry Exhibition (MSPO) in Kielce, Poland from 3-6 September 2007. The U.S. national exhibit was entitled "Developing Forces for Coalition Operations: Supporting Soldiers from Ground to Space."

The International Defense Industry Exhibition is one of the largest defense industry fair events in Europe; 24 American manufacturing firms were represented at this year's fair, including industry leaders such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin and Raytheon. □

## Ambassador Hosts Reception for U.S. Embassy Wardens

U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe hosted a reception at his residence on Tuesday night, September 5, for the U.S. Embassy Wardens. The group of U.S. citizen volunteer Wardens assists the Embassy in communicating with the American community of Poland, especially in the case of an emergency. The reception provided the opportunity for Ambassador Ashe to thank the Wardens for their service, and for the Wardens to meet with newly arrived Consul General Phillip Min and Regional Security Officer John Davis, as well as with other Embassy officers and staff. "Our growing American community in Warsaw thanks you for your service as Wardens; volunteering in this way provides a critical public service," said Ambassador Ashe. □

## U.S. Congressional Delegation and Embassy Honor Fallen in Lubin

On Friday, August 31, U.S. Representative Albio Sires (D-NJ), along with Representatives Lincoln Diaz-Balart (R-FL) and Mario Diaz-Balart (R-FL) and U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe flew with President Lech Kaczyński to Lubin in southwestern Poland to commemorate the 27th anniversary of the founding of Solidarity. While there, they attended a mass in honor of those who participated in the 1982 protest marches against the then communist government, and laid a wreath at the foot of the statue dedicated to the five people killed during the event. The delegation was accompanied by a group of ten Cuban-Americans currently in Poland to draw attention to the human rights situation in Cuba, and to encourage Poles to continue their support of efforts to promote a democratic transition in Cuba. □

## Congressman Franks Discusses Missile Defense in Warsaw

Congressman Trent Franks (R-AZ) visited Warsaw August 30-September 1 to meet with senior Polish officials and defense experts to discuss United States and European missile cooperation. Congressman Franks, a Member of the House Committee on Armed Services and co-founder of the Bipartisan House Missile Defense Caucus, met with Foreign Minister Anna Fotyga and Defense Minister Aleksander Szczygło to present U.S. congressional perspectives on U.S. and European missile defenses, as well as concerns regarding the growing ballistic missile threat. He also conferred with some of Poland's leading international relations experts on the subject. □

## Embassy in Warsaw Welcomes Sikorski Black Hawk to Poland

The Embassy's Foreign Commercial Service, Office of Defense Cooperation and Defense Attaché Office worked with United Technologies to highlight the arrival of the Sikorsky Black Hawk helicopter in Poland. On August 30, Ambassador Victor Ashe hosted a reception for several hundred Polish Government, military, and business officials at which the Black Hawk was showcased. A special guest, Sergei Sikorsky, the son of aviation pioneer Igor Sikorsky and retired Sikorsky Company executive, showed a short film "Memories of a Pioneer" about the birth of the helicopter. The Sikorsky Black Hawk will soon be produced in Mielec, Poland. The Black Hawk will also be on display at the 15th International Defense Industry Exhibition to be held in Kielce, Poland on September 3-6, 2007. The United States will serve as the Lead Nation for this year's event. □

## Assistant Secretary Fried to Speak On Missile Defense at the Krynica Economic Forum

Assistant Secretary Daniel Fried of the U.S. Department of State will attend the Economic Forum, which is being held from September 5-8th, 2007 in Krynica, Poland. Assistant Secretary Fried will participate in two panels at the forum: "Anti-Missile Shield - Common Security System or Area of Confrontation?" and "Security in the Southern Caucasus: Is Co-operation of USA, EU and Russia Possible?" The Krynica Economic Forum, the most prestigious event of its type in Central and Eastern Europe, will include more than 130 debates with a theme of: "Europe - crisis, changes or chance?" □

## Ambassador Ashe Visits Mazurian Lakes District

U.S. Ambassador to Poland Victor Ashe paid a visit to the Mayor of Ciechanów, Waldemar Wardziński, on Tuesday, August 28, when he began a multi-day trip around the Mazurian Lakes district of Poland. The two visited the Castle of the Mazovian Dukes before Ambassador Ashe continued on to Maków Mazowiecki, where he met with Major Janusz Jankowski. Ambassador Ashe continued his visit to the Lakes district on Wednesday with an early stop in Lidzbark Warmiński and a meeting with Mayor Artur Wajs. □

## Polish Art Collection Crucifix

An article in Reuters tells of an 800-year-old, gold-plated crucifix that went missing after being seized by the Nazis has been found in a rubbish skip in Austria per Josef Holzberger, an official of the Salzburg police.

The crucifix was part of a Polish art collection brought to Austria during Nazi rule. It is made of copper and enamel and was crafted in France.

It was found in 2004 in the lakeside winter resort of Zell am See by a woman combing through a skip filled with the discarded possessions of a neighbor who had just died. "The lady had a soft spot for old crockery and was rummaging for plates when she found the crucifix," said Holzberger. "She asked the deceased's family, and they said she could have it."

Last month the woman showed the crucifix to a friend who realized it might be something special and took it to a museum.

In the run-up to World War Two, the owners of the crucifix had hid it and other treasures by walling them inside the basement of a house in Warsaw.

The police said the treasures were discovered by the Nazis in 1941, brought to the Polish National Museum and later transferred to a castle in the Austrian village of Bruck an der Grossglocknerstrasse, near Zell am See.

"We lost track of what happened then -- we don't know how the crucifix ended up in Zell am See," Holzberger said.

The crucifix might be worth up to 400,000 euros (\$539,000) at auction. Poland's culture ministry has contacted the London-based Commission for Looted Art in Europe, which represents the heirs of former art collectors, Holzberger said. □

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