

**AMB Ashe's remarks for General Kosciusko Days, West Point, New York.**

General Bojarski; General Soczewica; General Wojtan; General Cwojdzinski; General Nasiadka; General Bartniak, General Bronowicz; Sergeant Major of the Army Piwonski; Mr. Anthony Bajdek.

Friends of General Kosciusko: I wish I could be here today to participate in a celebration that honors a great American hero, a great Polish hero, a citizen of the world and a defender of democratic principles – General Thaddeus Kosciuszko!

Kosciuszko has been immortalized as the Chief Engineer of the fortifications at West Point and the man who helped to fortify Philadelphia and Saratoga. But I would postulate to you that while he was indeed an engineer, he was an engineer in a much broader sense.

It is said that Kosciuszko was moved to tears when he read the Declaration of Independence and found in it a concise summation of his own personal principles. It is said that he personally met with Thomas Jefferson to discuss the document. It is said that Kosciuszko even gave Jefferson the coat which the statue of the author of the Declaration of Independence is portrayed as wearing inside the Jefferson Memorial. It is said, that Kosciuszko inspired General Washington to build permanent military academy which today we are now standing upon. Kosciuszko truly left a lasting legacy.

The results of this engineer's work, like the results of the efforts of his colleague, General Kazimierz Pulaski, and of our Founding Fathers, stretch for thousands of miles, between two great oceans. Our United States, themselves, serve as a monument to Kosciuszko and these great men. Moreover, the results of their efforts are in one sense boundless in that the concepts of freedom and liberty that Kosciuszko fought for have, for over two centuries, continued to spread and liberate Men around the world.

Truly, Thaddeus Kosciuszko was an engineer of many projects beyond West Point. The great principles in Kosciuszko believed in and for which he fought for are evident around the world. It is not simply by some quirk of history that Kosciuszko is revered in both the United States and in Poland. In America, the principles that he and our Founding Fathers fought for were largely realized over 200 years ago. But history was less kind to his native land. In Poland – especially during the last century – freedom had to be defended, fought for, and rekindled once the darkness of communism left the land.

But while free men celebrate Kosciuszko in Poland and here in his "second home," let us remember that his engineering plans have not all been completed. Even as we stand here today, Polish soldiers continue defending and fighting for freedom, shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. soldiers in the Global War on Terror. Poland takes security commitments seriously and has sacrificed its own blood and treasure alongside the U.S. and our coalition partners to

make the world safer. In 2003, in the spirit of Kosciusko, when the U.S. needed a friend to lead the Multi-National Division in Iraq, only one nation stepped forward offering its leadership, POLAND. In fact, Poland with its elite Special Operations Forces was one of only 3 allied partners which showed up with the United States on day-1 of the second Gulf War. Now, for 5 years, Poland has led the Multinational Division to which among you stands today, General Ireneusz Bartniak who just returned home from commanding. Poland is now increasing its contribution to Afghanistan to 1600 troops and has had soldiers deployed for many years supporting several other NATO, EU and international operations. Poland is taking delivery of 48 U.S. Air Force F-16 multi-role fighters and soon beginning receipt of 5 U.S. Air force C-130s, programs which are helping to transform Poland's military. Poland continues transforming military structures with an emphasis on the human elements of transformation. What better example of this than the presence here in Poland's delegation of Lieutenant Colonel Tomasz Kowalik, Special Staff, General Staff, who is a West Point graduate of 1999!

Poland continues Missile Defense negotiations with the United States for potential basing of a Ground Based Intercept site in Poland which would enhance European and U.S. security.

Of course Poland and the U.S. cooperate in numerous other economic, political and cultural areas which would take too long to enumerate in these remarks. Sufficeth to say, Kosciusko has left us a wonderful legacy of friendship and cooperation. We of today's and tomorrow's generation of Poles and Americans should be proud of this fact and continue to work together closely bolstered by General Kosciusko's legacy of freedom, democracy and love of country!

May God continue to bless Poland and the United States of America.

Ambassador Victor Ashe, Ambassador to the Republic of Poland.