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Solidarity Day

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Solidarnosc, the Polish free trade union Solidarity Movement, was born not only of the failure of the Polish Government to meet the needs of its people but also from a tradition of freedom preserved and nourished by the proud Polish people through two centuries of foreign and domestic tyranny.

Solidarity symbolizes the battle of real workers in a so-called workers' state to sustain the fundamental human and economic rights they began to win in Gdansk in 1980—the right to work and reap the fruits of one's labor, the right to assemble, the right to strike, and the right to freedom of expression. Solidarity sought to address and to resolve Poland's deep-rooted economic ills; it acted in good faith and pursued a path of constructive dialogue with the Polish Government.

Despite these peaceful efforts on the part of Solidarity, a brutal wave of repression has descended on Poland. The imposition of martial law has stripped away all vestiges of newborn freedom. Authorities have resorted to arbitrary detentions, and the use of force, resulting in violence and loss of life; the free flow of people, ideas and information has been suppressed; the human rights clock in Poland has been turned back more than 30 years. The target of this repression is the Solidarity Movement but in attacking Solidarity its enemies attack an entire people. Ten million of Poland's thirty-six million citizens are members of Solidarity. Taken together with their families, they account for the overwhelming majority of the Polish nation. By persecuting Solidarity, the Polish military government wages war against its own people.

History shows us that stability in Europe is threatened when Poland is suppressed. The hearts and minds of free people everywhere stand in Solidarity with the people of Poland in the hour of their suffering.

We hold in high esteem the leadership and objectives of Lech Walesa, the head of Solidarity, and we express our grave concern for his present well-being. As Americans we feel a special affinity with Solidarity and the basic human values it seeks to uphold, in keeping with the long tradition of Polish-American friendship and freedom. President Wilson's advocacy of self-determination for the Polish people helped to bring about a rebirth of the Polish nation earlier in this century. America stands ready today to provide generous support and assistance to a Poland which has returned to a path of genuine internal reconciliation.

There is a spirit of Solidarity abroad in the world today that no physical force can crush. It crosses national boundaries and enters into the hearts of men and women everywhere. In factories, farms and schools, in cities and towns around the globe, we the people of the Free World stand as one with our Polish brothers and sisters. Their cause is ours.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby designate January 30, 1982, as Solidarity Day. I urge the people of the United States, and free peoples everywhere, to observe this day in meetings, demonstrations, rallies, worship services and all other appropriate expressions of support. We will show our Solidarity with the courageous people of Poland and call for an end to their repression, the release of all those arbitrarily detained, the restoration of the internationally recognized rights of the Polish people, and the resumption of internal dialogue and reconciliation in keeping with fundamental human rights.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-two and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and sixth.

Ronald Reagan