



November 10, 2020

Consul General
of the Republic of Poland
in Los Angeles

Jarosław J. Łasiński

Good Evening Ladies and Gentlemen, Dobry Wieczór Państwu,

The past two years we celebrated our National Independence Day in the best possible way – by listening to a classical Polish music concert: Chopin, Paderewski – names irrevocably tied to our efforts to restore Poland’s freedom and independence. This year’s commemoration is markedly different due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The Coronavirus altered our lives by taking away an important part of our freedom – the possibility to meet in person. But it doesn’t mean that we cannot celebrate the rebirth of our Motherland that happened more than a 100 years ago the same way we did last year, or two years ago. And it doesn’t matter that we are gathered together only virtually. Now, we can go well beyond the spatial constraints of a traditional concert venue.

On November 11, 1918 Poland regained independence after 123 years of absence from the map of the World. Young statehood is always fragile, but in our case, we had to defend our young democracy almost immediately. This year we celebrate the 100th anniversary of the battle of Warsaw in the Polish–Soviet war, where Poland defeated the overwhelming forces of the Red army. We call it the Miracle of the Vistula – it not only saved our country, but ultimately defended all of Europe from the Bolshevik revolution.

But we were not alone in this fight. Thousands of young Polish immigrants from America joined the Blue Army of General Haller in France to fight for Poland’s independence. They then stayed in Poland to stop the Bolsheviks’ advance. There was also a Kosciuszko squadron composed of American volunteer fighter pilots – including Merian C. Cooper, who later directed and produced the original 1933 King Kong in Hollywood. There was Charles Sweeney from Spokane, who upon learning that Poland needed commissioned officers not only joined, but also recruited 200 former American officers. He was later promoted to the rank of Polish brigadier general.

Our Polish motto is “for our freedom and yours”. The Polish-American brotherhood of arms and friendship started with Kosciuszko and Pulaski during the Revolutionary War. It continued with Americans fighting by our side against the Red Army, and lasts to this day with our membership in the NATO alliance. And it allows us to jointly celebrate the National Independence Day of Poland right here in Los Angeles.

Thank you for joining us this evening.

JAROSŁAW J. ŁASIŃSKI
Consul General

12400 Wilshire Boulevard Suite 555
Los Angeles, California 90025

Phone: +1 310 442 8500 ext. 809
Fax: +1 310 442 8515
la.polishconsulate@msz.gov.pl
www.gov.pl/usa-en