

National Security Bureau

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Commemoration of the 86th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II

President of the Republic of Poland Karol Nawrocki took part in the commemoration of the 86th anniversary of the outbreak of World War II.

Address of the President at Westerplatte:

It was the evil word, the evil word uttered by a German in relation to other nations and the Polish nation that led to this war. It was not only uttered but regularly repeated and written down in books and philosophical treatises in the second half of the 19th century. First, those great theorists created a world without God. A world in which God was to die. In the absence of God, man must become God – deciding about life and death in the process. They would decide who gets to live and who does not. In this godless world they created for themselves, God continued to exist, and they spun new theories and philosophies. The end of the 19th century saw the emergence of a whole body of significations and theoretical mechanisms created to support German National Socialism. Yes, at the end of the 19th century, that evil word of a German became resonant. Anti-Polish, anti-Slavic and anti-Semitic theories emerged, along with chauvinism and contempt. Nazism was born. Theories of 'Lebensraum' emerged. And all the others that we only know from the events of the 20th century. One of their proponents, Paul de Lagarde, died in 1891. Adolf Hitler had not yet come to power in Germany.

Concurrently, the term „a Pole” assumed connotations of inferiority in German dictionaries. Poland was regarded as something substandard and inferior, a sentiment that fuelled feelings of disdain. The Poles would not deserve the same treatment that would be accorded to civilized nations. These are historical facts that have been recorded in treaties. Towards the close of the 19th century, Polish patriotism was viewed as a potential threat to the German state. It was expected that religiosity would be directed against the interests of the German state.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

One must be ignorant or ill-intentioned not to see that the Third Reich could have come to life without the Austrian Hitler. Given the emotions of the time, the Third Reich could have been established without the Austrian Adolf Hitler. These are not merely my own words. These are the words of Polish professors, including one who would certainly not be pleased about my becoming President of Poland. It is a fact that Adolf Hitler was not a coincidence or an accident. He was a consequence of the words reiterated by a German in the face of the Poles and other nations. Only in the aftermath did Adolf Hitler's briefing with Wehrmacht officers in Obersalzberg take place. Only in the aftermath the German people had elected him. The German people who supported him throughout World War II, until the serious setbacks on the front line. With some exceptions, of course, with some glorious exceptions that we remember. In Obersalzberg on August 22, 1939, Adolf Hitler thundered at the Wehrmacht officers: “Be ruthless, be brutal. The destruction of Poland is your first task.”



Then came September 1, 1939 – and an attack from water, land, and air on the enclave of Polishness in the German-dominated Free City of Gdańsk, on the Military Transit

Depot here at Westerplatte, defended by over 200 soldiers.

Faced with 4,000 German soldiers advancing from land, faced with Schleswig–Holstein and dive bombers, they persevered, fought, and forged the archetype of Polish attitudes during World War II, namely the willingness to fight even in the face of a superior enemy. Four hundred Germans were killed and – only, or perhaps as many as – 15 Poles.

Among them was the first Pole to lose his life on the front lines of World War II, something that we often forget, Konstanty Jezierski. But killed in action were also Adolf Petzelt, who was torn to pieces, and Zygmunt Zięba, who defended the “Prom” outpost, – wounded, transferred to the barracks and killed there by a shrapnel.



These last two and seven other soldiers from Westerplatte were found by archaeologists from the Museum of the Second World War in Gdańsk when I had the honour of being the director of that museum. Our heroes, whom we have officially commemorated here every year, were found only 80 years after the outbreak of World War II – thanks to the persistence and faith of the archaeologists whom I have decorated a moment ago.

Here at Westerplatte in 1987, the Polish Pope Saint John Paul II said that we must find people who know and comprehend history well enough to be able to fight for it. Filip Kuczma, Adam Dziewanowski, Wojciech Samul, Piotr Kalka, and all those who joined the team of archaeologists knew history well enough to be able to fight for it and restore the dignity of the Polish soldiers from Westerplatte. We restored it when people laughed at us implying that we were only looking for shell casings at Westerplatte, and that nobody would ever be found there.

Yes, they had to be found, because the dignity of the Polish state requires that we never leave any soldier behind. I believe that together with the Minister of National Defence, the Prime Minister, and the entire Polish Government, we will lead Poland to a time without war. However, we must be aware that a Poland without war requires investment in the Polish Armed Forces, investment in Polish soldiers, solicitude for Polish soldiers who carry on the tradition of Westerplatte. What Polish soldiers must also know today is that if God decides otherwise and they have to die for the Country, the President of Poland, the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, and the Polish state will always come back for them, not leaving them behind. And that it will not happen after 80 years, but without delay, so that he can be buried – just like our soldiers from Westerplatte – in a military cemetery and so that we can pay tribute to him. The dignity of the Polish state requires that we came back – not to leave one of us behind.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Excellencies, Officers, Prime Minister, Minister, Mayor of Gdańsk, Patriots, Veterans, Scouts!

Today, yet another message must be sent from Westerplatte. Another truth must be told about what was unleashed on September 1, 1939, here at Westerplatte. We are confronted with challenges of a truly immense nature; major challenges posed by the resurgence of neo-imperialism in the post-Soviet Russian Federation. We are also facing the tasks of building the European Union and the North Atlantic Alliance. We are carrying out these tasks in collaboration with our trading partner and neighbour – Germany, the perpetrator of World War II. The perpetrators of World War II, who, in collaboration with the Soviets and Stalin, brought about the outbreak of that war and launched an attack on Westerplatte.



In order to be able to build a partnership with our western neighbour based on the foundations of truth and good relations, we must finally settle the issue of reparations from the German state, which, as President of Poland, I unequivocally demand for the common good!

In the name of our future! Reparations will not be an alternative to historical amnesia. In fact, Poland, as a frontline state, Poland, as the most important state on NATO's eastern flank, needs justice, truth, and clear relations with Germany, but it also needs reparations from the German state.

Because only the wealth that is not sinful is good. And the wealth that is built, indeed, on the hard work of successive generations of Germans, and built on Germany's support after 1945, is also built on the violation of the Ten Commandments, which say, "Thou shalt not kill" and "Thou shalt not steal." And if you have killed and stolen, you must confess your guilt, you must apologize, and you must make amends. For the sake of our common future, for the sake of the security of our alliances, we are awaiting compensation from the German state.



And I believe that the Prime Minister and the Polish government will strengthen the voice of the Polish President on the international stage and that we will build our true, secure future together with our western neighbours.

Because everyone has their own Westerplatte. Our Westerplatte, our duty, our common cause is to seek truth and honesty from our western neighbours.

Long live the heroes of Westerplatte!

Eternal shame on the German and Soviet murderers!

Long live Poland!



