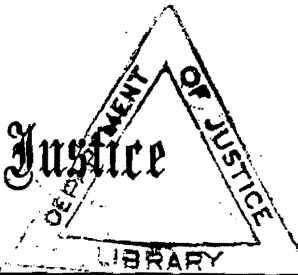




Department of Justice



PS
668
K 36

STATEMENT BY ATTORNEY GENERAL ROBERT F. KENNEDY

ON DEPARTURE FROM POLAND

July 1, 1964

My family and I are grateful for our memorable visit to Poland, and I want to thank the Polish government for the courtesies it extended. I also want to thank the Polish people for their warm reception and for the many moving things they have said of President Kennedy and the United States. They have given me, once again, a vivid impression of their courage and vitality and toughness of purpose. In the most striking way they have expressed anew the historic ties of affection that bind Poland and the United States together.

The bond that links our two countries is a reality of great potential. It puts Poland in a special position in the world for Poland has political ties with the Soviet Union and personal ties with the United States. Poland, therefore, has a unique opportunity to contribute to European security and the easing of tension between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Our objective is clear. It is to facilitate the reconciliation of Eastern and Western Europe in association with the United States. This is the only sure guarantee against nuclear war whether by design or by accident. It is also the surest means of fostering our common prosperity.

The task is not easy. Among many problems, Europe is now divided by a deep and unnatural division -- the division of Germany. That division is reinforced by a legacy of old hatreds. It is further reinforced by inertia born of uncertainty for no one now sees clearly the path ahead.

But as President Kennedy said in his inaugural address: "Let us begin." Just because we cannot see clearly the end of the road, that is no reason for not setting out on this most essential journey. On the contrary, great change dominates the world, and unless we move with change we will become its victims.

I believe that now is the time to work earnestly on the great problems ahead -- the security of Poland and of Eastern Europe; of Germany and Western Europe; of the Soviet Union and the United States. For these problems will not go away by themselves. Unless we move to meet them now they will grow more acute and more unmanageable.

This, then, is why I have come to Poland and why I visited Germany last week. I seek to promote understanding and to foster a determination to meet the challenges that face all of us in Europe. We need your help in building those open "bridges of reconciliation" that President Johnson called for last month. Together, I am confident we can succeed. Let us begin.