

**Opening Statement of Mark Brzezinski**  
**Nominee to be the U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Poland**  
**Senate Foreign Relations Committee**  
**December 1, 2021**

Chairman Menendez, Ranking Member Risch, Members of the Committee -- thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today.

It is an extraordinary honor to be President Biden's nominee to become the next U.S. Ambassador to Poland.

Before I begin, I would like to take a moment to thank the staff of U.S. Embassy Warsaw, U.S. Consulate Krakow, and Consular Agency Poznan for generations of hard work. It is with genuine admiration and respect that I have witnessed their dedication since my first visit to Poland in 1990.

I last appeared before this committee in 2011. I am proud of what I accomplished as U.S. ambassador in Stockholm. The Embassy team advanced Sweden's partnership with NATO, including key counterterrorism goals. We cemented important partnerships on energy diversification and brokered Volvo's first-ever investment in the United States that brought thousands of high-paying manufacturing jobs to South Carolina. With the Swedes, we embraced the memory of Raoul Wallenberg and "the importance of not being indifferent" to the Jewish community.

I know Poland well. I am a child of parents cast on America's shores by World War II. My late father, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was born in Warsaw. He lived his first ten years in Przemysl, now located on the border of Poland and Ukraine. By luck, my grandfather was assigned to be Consul General in Montreal just before Nazi Germany invaded Poland in 1939. Had his family been caught in Warsaw, they likely would have suffered a similar fate of other Polish diplomats under the Nazis -- death.

My father did not speak fluent English until he was 15 years old. In our family, the words “Niech żyje Polska” [“Long Live Poland”] and “Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła” [“still Poland is not defeated”] meant something: Shared values and willingness to defend them.

My mother, the sculptor Emilie Benes, who is watching today, is a refugee from Czechoslovakia. The child of Czech diplomats, she made it to Berkeley, California, in the middle of World War II, her ship attacked by German U-boats on the way from London to the United States.

I am here before you today thanks truly to the grace of God.

As a Fulbright Scholar, I was assigned between 1991 and 1993 to research and write about Poland’s new Constitutional Tribunal. My book *“The Struggle for Constitutionalism in Poland,”* tells the successful story of Poland developing constitutional and rule of law institutions after the collapse of Communism. Respect for enduring constitutional arrangements became a central test of the effective operation and growth of free market democracy. It still is, and if confirmed, I will continue to promote our shared commitments to uphold fundamental freedoms and the rule of law as essential to democracy and central to the U.S.-Polish relationship. In particular, I will continue to underscore to Polish authorities the importance of an impartial judiciary, independent media, and respect for the human rights of all, including LGBTQI+ persons and members of other minorities.

The U.S. and Poland have an historic friendship, but we must also agree to share responsibilities for humanity’s future and the democratic principles of the West.

If confirmed, first and foremost, I will commit myself to the safety and security of everyone working for Mission Poland and to the safety and security of U.S. citizens living, working, and traveling in Poland.

I will also commit to continue and strengthen our security cooperation with our stalwart Ally Poland, where the enduring rotational presence of some 4,500 U.S. troops defends NATO's Eastern Flank. I will deepen and broaden the partnership between Poland and the United States to spearhead economic growth in the region, including through the Three Seas Initiative. If confirmed, I will work with Poland to support the government and people of a peaceful and whole Ukraine, as well as the aspirations of the Belarusian people for a democratic Belarus. I will partner with Poland to promote investment in clean energy, including renewable energy, hydrogen-based energy, and help to bring zero-emission nuclear energy to Poland.

If confirmed, I will commit myself to deepening U.S. bilateral cooperation and advancing U.S. policy priorities in Poland.

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today. I look forward to your questions.