



COALITION OF POLISH AMERICANS

PROMOTING THE INTERESTS OF POLISH AMERICANS

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April 30, 2018

President Donald J. Trump
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 90500

RE: Request to Veto the Act S. 447

Dear Mr. President,

I am writing to ask you to veto the Act S. 447 which was passed by a US Congress on April 24, 2018.

The Act S. 447 includes a provision on compensation for “heirless property” that is very ambiguous and could be used to pressure the government of the Republic of Poland to compensate organizations, who do not have a proper claim to the property of Holocaust survivors. In fact, Chairman Royce in his statement on the bill stated that the purpose of the legislation is to “name and shame” countries who do not comply with the requirements of the legislation.

Additionally, the issue of compensation for property nationalized, appropriated or otherwise taken by the Polish People’s Republic was settled with the U.S. government by the 1960 treaty with Poland, which provided for monetary compensation by the Polish government to any American citizen who had a claim to compensation. Because of that, treaty claims by U.S. citizens were successfully distributed to those individuals or organizations who had established valid claims and the U.S. government indemnified Poland from any further responsibility. The S. 447 Act would certainly violate the spirit of that treaty, and perhaps also the letter, by involving U.S in a dispute with Poland, which already has been settled via a bilateral agreement.

In your speech to Chancellor Merkel you have noted, Mr. President, that Poland is a close and staunch NATO ally, who dutifully fulfills its NATO obligations, Unlike many other NATO allies. You also have noted the importance of Poland as an ally to United States in the global war on terror. Please consider, that S. 447, if implemented, could lead to a growth of anti-American sentiment in Poland that could adversely affect that close relationship. At the time when relations with Russia are growing more tedious, it would be detrimental to the United States standing in Europe to endanger its close relationship with Poland.

The goals of S. 447 to establish a policy that would ultimately provide compensation to Holocaust survivors is a worthy and a just goal that we commend, but it neglects to recognize that it was Nazi Germany that conquered Poland and was chiefly responsible for the destruction of the Polish Jews and all the property changes that were a result of their invasion of Poland in September 1939. Poland was one of the main victims of the war and should not be forced to pay compensation for property changes for which it is not responsible.

The Act S. 447 was enacted under unanimous agreement in the Senate and under suspension of the rules in the House of Representatives. These procedures did not allow the Polish-American community to voice its concerns with the legislation. To us, it is a deeply controversial legislation that should have been considered under regular legislative procedures that would allow our community to provide input.

Consequently, we ask you to veto this legislation. Please stand with your close ally and allow our community voice in this process.

Very Respectfully yours,



Dr. Stanislaw Sliwowski
President,
Coalition of Polish Americans



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