

Letter to Members of Congress on the Visa Waiver Program and United States Visa Policy With Regard to Poland

May 27, 2011

Dear _____:

Thank you for your letter regarding my visit to Poland and your recent introduction of the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2011 (S. 497/H.R. 959) to restructure the Visa Waiver Program (VWP).

I write to express my strong support for the Secure Travel and Counterterrorism Partnership Program Act of 2011. I share your view that our counterterrorism and security partnerships have evolved and it makes sense to pursue a restructuring of the program. Countries that are willing to cooperate with the United States on our global priorities, including on counterterrorism initiatives, information sharing, and prevention of terrorist travel, deserve the opportunity to become part of our VWP.

I also share your support for Poland and disappointment that this close NATO ally has

been excluded from the VWP to date. Poland's strong and steadfast support during our missions in Iraq and Afghanistan demonstrates the deep alliance we have forged and the close partnership between our two countries.

It is my hope that my trip to Poland will help to strengthen the enduring bonds between the American and Polish people. Thank you again for your leadership on this important issue of interest to both countries.

Sincerely,

BARACK OBAMA

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Sens. Mark S. Kirk and Barbara A. Mikulski; and Reps. Brian Higgins, Daniel Lipinski, Mike Quigley, and Janice D. Schakowsky. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 28.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Bronislaw Komorowski of Poland in Warsaw, Poland

May 28, 2011

President Komorowski. Mr. President, I would like to express my satisfaction and my gratitude because of your presence at our summit of Central and Eastern European states. It was an important event for the leaders of my region of Europe—our region of Europe.

Your words were also very important, when you said that in the process of European integration, you can see an opportunity to reinforce the world of Western values. Other words were also very important: the words about keeping up an open character of both NATO and the European Union. I know that these words go very deeply to the hearts and minds of many of the leaders of this part of Europe.

This part of Europe has its successes; it also has its problems. And I am very glad that there was also a meeting directly between you and the President of Ukraine. I would like Ukraine

to be a country which consistently, perhaps not very spectacularly, but still consistently striving at deepening its relations with the Western world.

I am very happy that we could exchange our opinions about the engagement in the construction of democracy in the environment of Europe, both to the east, for example, in Belarus, where there was a dramatic collapse of democratic processes. So we are having to deal with the arrests and convictions of the combatants—[inaudible]—the opposition to the current Presidential elections, and there is also the harassment of the correspondent of the Polish press in Belarus. I'm also very glad that our views are absolutely identical as far as very firm presentation of problems of civil and human rights in Belarus.