

12 April 2010

His Excellency
Mr Andrzej Jaroszyński
Ambassador of Poland to Australia
7 Turrana Street
Yarralumla
Canberra ACT 2600

Your Excellency,

On behalf of the Australian Jewish community and personally, I write to express our most profound condolences to the people and government of Poland, to the family of President Lech Kaczynski and Mrs Maria Kaczynski and to the families of all the other Polish leaders who were lost in the terrible plane crash on Saturday morning. This is a tragedy for them, for Poland and for freedom-loving people everywhere. Our thoughts are with you at this time.

This calamity could not have occurred at a more poignant time. Only once before has Poland lost the flower of its leadership all at once, exactly 70 years ago in the Soviet massacre of 22,000 Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. President Kaczynski and the others aboard the aircraft that was lost had been on their way to Katyn for the memorial ceremony. We also recall with sadness the loss of another gifted Polish leader in a plane crash, Prime Minister Wladislaw Sikorski, in 1943.

President Kaczynski will be remembered as a hero in the struggle against totalitarianism and tyranny. By devoting his life to the cause of Polish freedom and independence, he lent great weight to the cause of democracy and liberty in all parts of the world. It is no coincidence that under his leadership Poland enjoyed warm and friendly relations with the State of Israel.

For Jewish people around the world, yesterday was Holocaust Remembrance Day, marking the beginning of a week in which we mourn the loss of our loved ones during the Nazi tyranny from 1933 to 1945. In our commemorations this year our thoughts will include President and Mrs Kaczynski and the other Polish leaders who have been so tragically lost.

Yours sincerely,

Robert Goot AM SC
President

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