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Sent: Saturday, April 10, 2010 9:51 AM
To: H
Subject: Sign off

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Statement by the Secretary

The Death of Polish President Kaczynski and His Delegation

I join President Obama in offering my deepest condolences to the people of Poland, to the Kaczynski family, and to the families of all those killed in this tragedy. Lost alongside President Kaczynski and his wife were Polish leaders from across the political spectrum, men and women who shaped and sped Poland's post-1989 democratic transformation and were leading Poland into its promising future. The tragedy of these lives cut short will be felt deeply across the world, but their legacy will live on in a free and flourishing Poland.

The United States stands with the Polish people in this difficult hour. Like the country he led, President Kaczynski was one of America's most valued and trusted allies. He was well known in the United States as a champion for democracy against an oppressive regime, a man whose journey took him from the Gdańsk Shipyards to the presidency of a free people. President Kaczynski was an unstinting advocate for freedom and human rights not just in Poland, but around the world. He will be long remembered and sorely missed.

The Polish people have endured more than their share of sorrow, but they have always shown resilience and resolve in the face of adversity -- and I know they will pull together in solidarity to grieve this loss.

My thoughts and prayers are with all the people of Poland today.