

— STRENGTHENING —

# FLANK

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*Poland updates its defense strategy and reconfirms its role in NATO*

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POLISH NATIONAL SECURITY BUREAU

Polish soldiers  
participate in NATO  
Noble Jump 2015  
exercises in Zagan,  
Poland, in June 2015,  
to test and train the  
Very High Readiness  
Joint Task Force.

GETTY IMAGES





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trengthening the eastern flank of NATO within the framework of consolidating the Alliance's collective defense and increasing its own national defense potential are priorities for Poland's security policy and defense strategy.

Aiming to defend not only its own territory but also that of other NATO countries, Poland is determined to counter complex military threats, including the recent emergence of hybrid warfare.

In the allied dimension, Poland continues to struggle to implement the Readiness Action Plan (RAP) approved at the September 2014 NATO summit in Wales to cope with new security dangers posed by the Russian Federation. By enhancing NATO's military posture and readiness, Warsaw acts to ensure a continuous rotational military presence on the eastern edge of the Alliance. This takes the form of joint and combined exercises, the assembly of a new quick reaction "spearhead force" (Very High Readiness Joint Task Force, VJTF) with forward deployed multinational commands enabling its activation and employment, as well as raising the readiness of the Multinational Corps Northeast Headquarters in Szczecin to lead NATO operations on the eastern flank of Europe.

In the internal dimension, Warsaw continues to improve a system of managing and directing defense, strengthening deterrence and vigilance, integrating civil-military efforts to build up the system of strategic resilience against military aggression, and pushing for increased defense spending to the level of 2 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) in 2016.

Russia's annexation of Crimea in March 2014 and its subsequent concealed combat support of pro-Russian separatists in Donbas with the intention of destabilizing the Ukrainian state and establishing favorable conditions for a secession of Ukraine's eastern areas represented clear evidence of Moscow's violations of international law and its desire to fundamentally reshape the security order in Europe.

Since that time, Russia has continued a confrontational policy against the West. With an intention to intimidate, it has conducted unprecedented psychological warfare and manipulation of information against nations, performed aggressive and provocative sorties in European airspace and sponsored ground exercises on a scale comparable to the largest Soviet Army maneuvers. By doing so, Russia has undermined the foundations of the post-Cold War order and security systems governing relations between European states. What is more, by massing military potential along Ukraine's eastern border and permanently supplying pro-Russian separatists with military hardware, logistics, training and intelligence, Moscow has posed a challenge to the European states' defense systems as well as to international security institutions. These strategic changes have led to a fundamental shift in national security philosophy. In Central Europe and the Baltic region in particular, this has meant moving from a less-military-oriented security strategy to a defense-centric one.

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#### THE INTERNAL DIMENSION

In Poland, unpredictable and confrontational Russian policy has caused a rapid increase in a sense of insecurity. Among a wide range of military challenges associated with Russian behavior is the possibility of a politically unclear and militarily blurred threat below the threshold of regular war. Such a scenario creates a risk that Poland might not achieve a political-military consensus on how to respond collectively within NATO.

Residents of Bialystok, Poland, greet units of the U.S. 2nd Cavalry Regiment in March 2015, during a stop in the Operation Dragoon Ride convoy from Estonia to Germany, designed to show NATO's readiness to defend its eastern members.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

All of these challenges, including different types of hybrid approaches, resulted in an intensification of Polish pro-defense activities in domestic and foreign affairs. Most have been aimed at strengthening national defense capabilities as well as international crisis response mechanisms. All undertakings have been framed in the Strategic Plan to Strengthening Polish Security and approved by the National Security Council in December 2014. Most of the urgent activities, both military and nonmilitary, have been associated with directions provided by the National Security Strategy signed in November 2014.

## STRENGTHENING THE EASTERN FLANK

An essential component of Polish security policy is to consolidate NATO members around collective defense. A strategic decision made by NATO at the Wales summit in 2014, especially regarding strengthening the eastern flank of the Alliance, to some extent eased security uncertainty among Central European countries, including Poland. At the next NATO summit in Warsaw in 2016, Poland will seek to implement the arrangements covered in the RAP described in Wales. The Polish view is that implementation will reduce NATO's response time to military threats, including hybrid ones.

Another priority step for the government in Warsaw is to ensure a continuous rotational NATO military presence in Eastern Europe in the form of joint and combined exercises. In 2014, multinational exercises in Poland attracted about 7,000 soldiers from NATO countries. In 2015, that number will grow to nearly 10,000. However, due to the increasing degradation of security at Poland's eastern border, as well as Russia's rejection of restrictions from the treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe, Poland wants to make NATO's military presence on the eastern flank permanent.

At the Wales summit, the Alliance also decided to change its long-term military posture and capabilities. In developing the NATO Response Force (NRF), the Alliance decided to set up a VJTF to make the NRF more responsive and capable. The creation of this new quick reaction spearhead force, consisting of several thousand ground troops supported by air, maritime and special forces, was fundamental to Poland. Poland's ambition is to declare VJTF readiness at the upcoming Warsaw summit.

Currently, a NATO Force Integration Unit is being created in the city of Bydgoszcz. It will be responsible for reinforcing allied units on Polish territory. Along with similar units created in Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Romania, the unit in Bydgoszcz will be charged with coordinating exercises, joint planning and, if necessary, synchronization and reception of the VJTF as part of a strengthened allied response.

Proper functioning of the spearhead force requires necessary preparations in organization, training and doctrine. Warsaw is keen to use the VJTF preventively, rather than

reactively during a crisis. To properly deal with this issue, Poland wants the Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin to be responsible for commanding the VJTF and leading defensive operations on NATO's eastern flank. Starting in June 2015, the corps adopted a new command and control structure and is going to reach high readiness force status. The corps will also be enforced by incoming soldiers from France, Greece, the Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

Poland also intends to build robust national military capabilities in the eastern and northeastern parts of the country. In coming years, units near the borders with Ukraine, Belarus and Russia are expected to be systematically enforced by increasing the number of troops, providing them with new equipment and weapon systems, and investing in infrastructure. The first effects of this process should be visible by 2016-17.

In terms of strategy, Poland will also seek to upgrade NATO contingency plans into permanent defense plans. In addition, at the next summit, Warsaw wants to engage its partners to start work on a new NATO strategic concept encompassing changed circumstances in European security.

## CLASSIC MILITARY DETERRENCE

In Poland, development of reliable, classic military deterrence capabilities was deemed a major priority for defense policy and military strategy. In 2013, the process was labeled "Polish Fangs." The transformation and modernization efforts in defense systems have been aimed at improving select military skills in the realms of land, air, sea and cyberspace. The goal is to deter an adversary and dissuade it from conducting military actions against Poland. The essence of the classic military deterrence is to be achieved — as pointed out in the National Security Strategy — by developing military forces capable of precisely striking selected strategic targets at long distances and by properly dealing with a broad spectrum of asymmetric threats.

On land, the ability to deter potential enemy actions is to be achieved by maintaining ready and capable special operations forces (SOF). In 2013, Polish SOF achieved command status within NATO. In 2015, Polish units formed a component command of allied SOF as an element of the NRF. Plans call for equipping land forces with highly mobile long-range rocket systems. Deliveries of the first modules are scheduled for 2017. By the end of 2015, the Polish Armor Branch will receive the last 42 Leopard 2A5 tanks from the total number of 119 (versions 2A5 and 2A4) as part of a contract signed with the Bundeswehr in 2013. Between 2014 and 2019, the Army is also expected to get 307 wheeled Rosomak armored personnel carriers. The Ministry of Defense also intends to buy 30 attack helicopters through 2022.

In the air, deterrence will be pursued by lethal unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) MALE class (Medium Altitude Long Endurance). Owing to the deterioration in eastern Ukraine, the Defense Ministry decided to accelerate the purchase of

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Polish and U.S. troops train together in Operation Atlantic Resolve in February 2015. After the annexation of Crimea, Poland has focused increasingly on military preparedness. SGT. OSCAR GOLLAZ/U.S. ARMY



these drones (Zefir program) and equip troops with them in 2017. In 2015, it also began to integrate and equip F-16 multipurpose fighters with long-range (about 370 kilometers) air-to-ground missiles (AGM-158 JASSM). The fighters are scheduled to achieve initial operational capabilities in the first half of 2017. The ministry has also asked the U.S. government about acquiring weapons that are able to strike targets 1,000 kilometers away.

At sea, three new submarines with long-distance cruise missile launching capabilities will provide deterrence starting around 2022 (Orca program). A naval deterrence capacity will also be expanded by setting up a second Coastal Missile Squadron of the Naval Missile Unit. The squadron will be armed with Naval Strike Missiles with a range of 200 kilometers. In cyberspace, forces plan to carry out deterrence actions as well as conduct national and coordinated operations with allies.

## ELIMINATING STRATEGIC SURPRISES

Poland has consistently expanded its ability to eliminate strategic surprise. These capabilities ensure the ability to protect the public and defend critical infrastructure against military threats, including ones characterized as selective, limited and of unknown authorship, resulting in politically vague situations that may hinder an international security consensus.

The process began in Poland in 2012 with the release of the Report from the National Security Strategic Review. Based on its conclusions, the country plans to improve three strategic capabilities within the Armed Forces Modernization Plan for 2013-2022: air defense, including missile systems; C4ISR (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance) systems and mobility of land forces, especially through the use of helicopters.

In terms of air defense, the plan would equip forces with six medium-range anti-aircraft batteries with the ability to combat ballistic and cruise missiles (Wisla program) and 11 anti-aircraft batteries with short ranges (the Narew program). Poland has preselected an upgraded Patriot system (Patriot Next Generation) for Wisla. Capabilities will be strengthened by setting up an American anti-missile base that is part of the European Phased Adaptive Approach program. An Aegis Ashore system consisting of three modules equipped with 24 SM-3 IIA missile interceptors will be installed in Redzikowo. In 2018, the base will achieve full operational capability and will expand airborne protection over northern Europe

against medium-range and intermediate-range ballistic missiles from the Middle East.

In 2015, the Ministry of Defense planned to conclude a tender to acquire 50 multipurpose combat support helicopters. First deliveries are scheduled for 2017.

The National Security Strategy assumes that the capacity needed to eliminate strategic surprise will be strengthened through the computerization of combat and support systems. The Armed Forces Modernization Plan envisions implementation of an integrated, network-centric battlefield management system. It will ensure comprehensive information awareness at all levels of command and control in national and allied operations in time of peace, crisis and war.

## THE STRATEGIC RESISTANCE SYSTEM

Another means of leveraging the country's defense capabilities is by improving strategic resistance against military aggression. The concept of anti-access/area denial strategy is aimed at thwarting a potential enemy's armed incursion into the territory of the state, or — in the case of a successful incursion — to make the adversary's operations highly unprofitable. This strategy envisions preparing an appropriate system of armed forces and anti-access defenses to prevent the enemy from paralyzing state functions by indirectly applying political, military, economic and psychological pressure. Special Forces will be the core of the strategic denial system, undertaking defense missions and also irregular operations in areas overrun by the enemy.

National Reserve Forces will perform an important resistance function. The National Security Strategy supports reforms to create consistent reserve units that can reinforce regular combat and security forces. During war, reserve units would focus on both regular and irregular defense tasks and, in time of crisis, on supporting local administration and emergency response operations.

Finally, the system assumes an improvement in civil protection formations (including National Civil Defense) and activation of paramilitary organizations to ensure the safety of citizens and state structures as well as to disseminate security knowledge and defense awareness among society.

## IMPROVING SECURITY MANAGEMENT

The ability to respond quickly and effectively to emerging military threats, including hybrid ones, requires a properly organized security management and defense administration system. In Poland, these structures are

still the subject of fundamental modifications. In January 2014, the Armed Forces implemented a new command and control structure. The catalyst was the need to plan and conduct joint and combined operations. As the result of the reform, two strategic commands have been established: the General and Operational Commands of the Armed Forces. Along with the General Staff of the Polish Armed Forces, these three structures ensure appropriate strategic and operational leadership, command and control of the forces and effective coordination and synchronization of national efforts with allied efforts.

The next stage includes introduction of legislative amendments to the rules and procedures to defend the state in time of war. The new regulations define, among others, the war time frame and specify the competencies of defense institutions and responsibilities of the supreme commander of the armed forces. The new rules will be verified during a Country-2015 exercise. To test functionality of the system, participants will include the most important state authorities and military leaders. Emphasis will be on execution of state power under political-military pressure and hybrid threats occurring below the threshold of open and regular war.

#### ESSENTIAL PLANNING

The National Security Strategy also outlines development of a Political and Strategic Defense Directive. On July 16, 2015, this key planning document was put into action. It describes specific operational tasks for all state structures. It instructs security and defense leaders how to act during time of crisis, the threat of armed aggression and war. And as previously declared by national security leaders, it likely incorporates operational conclusions from the Russian and Ukrainian conflict and new forms of hybrid threats that may make collective response ineffective.

In 2015, the Ministry of Defense is going to issue the Main Directions of Development of the Armed Forces for the years 2017-2026. It will provide essential guidance for modernization and transformation. It's likely the planning process will be aimed at achieving the "Third Wave of Modernization" characterized by obtaining a technological leap in the field of information. Therefore, plans will emphasize development of Armed Forces capabilities in cyberspace through the creation of cyber military structures to conduct both offensive and defensive operations. Other improvements include increasing robotics proficiency by equipping troops with adequate unmanned combat and support systems and precision weapons systems supported by satellite defense technology.

#### INCREASED SPENDING

During the NATO summit in Wales, national leaders agreed to stop reductions in defense spending and use their financial resources more efficiently. The first step is stopping cuts in defense spending, followed by a gradual increase in defense budgets to reach levels of 2 percent of GDP in the next decade.

In Poland, defense spending will amount to 33.024 billion zloty (8 billion euros). This sum equals 1.95 percent of GDP. However, this total will increase to 2.27 percent of GDP with additional funding of 5.363 billion zloty (1.3 billion euros) as a repayment for acquisition of the F-16s.

Additional increases in defense spending are expected next year. In July, the new budget regulation was implemented raising defense spending to levels no lower than 2 percent of GDP starting in 2016.

#### CONCLUSION

Strengthening the Alliance's collective defense and developing its own defense capabilities is the essence of the Poland's security policy and defense strategy. These efforts are based on the country's strategic foundation that assumes a shift away from out-of-state engagement to defense of the homeland and NATO tasks.

Until Russia's annexation of Crimea, development of Polish defense capabilities was driven by a long-term vision aimed at responding to classic military aggression. The hybrid armed conflict in eastern Ukraine, with its application of asymmetrical methods, irregular forces and tactics, information warfare, economic blackmail and psychological intimidation, reshaped and extended the Polish security and defense approach. The selective, limited, irregular and masked military threats, below the threshold of regular war, that hinder NATO's collective response became the nation's key security concern.

To deal with a full spectrum of threats, including hybrid ones, Poland set up security measures to strengthen the eastern flank of NATO, increase its military deterrence posture, resist strategic and tactical surprise and improve the security management and defense administration system. Poland's adaptation to the new security situation has brought some short-term positive effects, resulting in an easing of security concerns. However, this huge endeavor is a long-term and complex process requiring strong political will, determination to follow the strategy, adequate defense budgets and necessary investments in industry, military research and development to succeed. □