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## President: Poland always supported the free world

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### **President Andrzej Duda stressed during observances of the 76th anniversary of the WW2 that "Poland can be proud before its allies today and could have been proud then".**

The observances took place on Tuesday on the Westerplatte Peninsula in Gdansk, the site of the first clash between German and Polish forces. A small Polish garrison stationed on Westerplatte fought off fierce German attacks from land, sea and the air until September 7.

"Poland was always on the right side, Poland always supported the free world. Poland did not have a collaborating government. Polish soldiers were fighting on all WW2 fronts, they were fighting for Poland's freedom, for your freedom and ours, and they liberated other nations," the president stressed.

The Polish president added that on Sept. 17, 1939, the Ribbentrop-Molotov Pact came into effect and Poland was attacked from the other side by "other totalitarianism", by Stalinist totalitarianism, by the Red Army".

"The Red Army entered Poland. Hitler's and Stalin's soldiers shook their hands to confirm Poland's defeat and division. Poland was not the only one to suffer at that time. The similar fate was shared by Estonians, Finns, Lithuanians, Latvians and Romanians," he stressed.

The president stressed that the May 1945 victory marked the end of one and the onset of another occupation, as Poland did not become a free and sovereign country.

"Let me stress today that Poland has no perennial enemies," the Polish president said.

"Today, when we are looking at history, at time of pride and time of tragedy, we can say that the past explains the present day and makes it possible to build a better future. Let's look at our today's relations with Germany, at relations which are marked by friendship. (...) I believe that we can build such relations with all nations, but above all with our neighbours," President Duda stressed.

The Polish president added that "lasting peace cannot be built only on words but also on the firm and unyielding position in the defence of international order and fundamental principles which should be binding in relations between states and nations".

"One cannot accept any violations of borders. One cannot accept any violations of state sovereignty - such actions always demand a firm position and firm reaction, irrespective of whether it happens today or happened some time ago," President Duda said, stressing that the international community should defend the weak against the strong.

"I believe that today there are such strong alliances in the Euroatlantic space, for instance, NATO and the EU, which will be able to firmly oppose aggression and violations of international law. Such is our duty as NATO and EU members," president Duda said.

The president stressed that Poles' main task today was to build an efficient state and a strong and modern army, and to ensure security to the state and people.

President Duda added that Poland had to strengthen its presence in NATO. "Poland's security guarantees must be strengthened, allied ties must grow stronger. We must be striving for these goals together with other nations which lost their independence at the beginning of WW2. This is a great challenge for the future - and I am convinced that we will succeed," Andrzej Duda said.

*Source: president.pl; PAP*

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