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"We, the Poles, are extremely proud of our soldiers"

Speaking at ceremonies in Warsaw commemorating the 1920 Battle of Warsaw and celebrating Polish Armed Forces Day on Wednesday, Polish President Andrzej Duda said that "we, the Poles, are extremely proud of our soldiers."



Addressing the gathering before a military parade in Warsaw on the 98th anniversary of the Battle of Warsaw, President Duda stressed that 98 years ago in the fields near Warsaw the miracle of the Vistula occurred.

"There was certainly a miraculous element to the Battle of Warsaw, but the other element of the success was the genius of the commanders, the bravery of the soldiers and their skills - those factors decided Poland's victory," he declared.





"I don't remember such a momentous day as this, Polish Armed Forces Day, in a year that is so special, that the Mazurek Dąbrowskiego (Polish national anthem - PAP) was sung to the accompaniment of thunder. How special. A great parade and great forces of nature," the President commented during the Great Independence Parade.

"Yes, in all certainty there was an element of the miraculous. Faithful people will say: God stood in defence of Poland, supported Polish soldiers, the Holy Mother supported our boys, her children, so that they could defend against the Soviet red onslaught, so that they could defend freedom, defend independence but above all defend Christianity and life," Andrzej Duda stated.



He went on to say that that was only one element of the historic success at the Battle of Warsaw. The others, he highlighted, were: the genius of the commanders, the bravery of the soldiers, and above all their skills.

"These factors decided that Poland was victorious, that the bypass manoeuvre of the Red Army Soviet forces and the offensive at the Wieprz River succeeded, that information was not passed on or it was not believed that the Polish army planned such a wide-ranging and well prepared offensive," the President stressed.

"We won. Yes, we won, we Poles won. Today we look with pride at those times. Today we also look with pride at the graves of our grandfathers, who then bravely stood in defence of the Republic, because Poland had an army of a million, made up in large part of volunteers - of those who answered the challenge of Marshal Józef Piłsudski and Prime Minister Wincenty Witos," Andrzej Duda added.

The President underlined that the victory in the Battle of Warsaw was a history of great pride in the eyes of the entire world. "At that time Poles, Polish soldiers, Polish boys defended Europe against the red plague," he stressed, asking what could have happened if it were not for the bravery of Polish soldiers who stopped the Soviets on the outskirts of Warsaw.

"Where would the Red Army have stopped then? In Berlin, Paris or even in Madrid?" he asked, emphasising that the bravery of Polish soldiers, the current generation's great grandfathers, prevented a catastrophe.

Referring to Poland's NATO membership, the President stressed that the alliance led by the US "is a guarantee of security of its members."



The head of state said he was very glad that allied troops were stationed in Poland. "We are happy that in accordance with bilateral agreements there is a strong presence of the US army in Poland. But we want this presence to be permanent," he underlined, explaining that Poland needed it as the manifestation of the allied force and that unity "deters every potential aggressor."

President Duda also declared that it is Poland's ambition to have an army, which is as strong as possible, and

able to independently ensure the country's security, so that allied troops could only play the role of a supporter when needed.

Expressing his gratitude to Poles joining the Territorial Defence Force, President Duda stressed that the new force was strengthening the potential of the Polish Army. He also thanked career soldiers for "their difficult everyday service, performed also outside Poland and as part of NATO's forward presence on its eastern flank, in Latvia or Romania."

The President declared that "everything would be done to make the Polish Army better equipped, to implement modernisation plans and to increase defence spending."



According to the head of state, there is a big chance that Poland's economic situation will continue to improve and that Poland will be growing wealthier.

"I believe that in such a situation we should be increasing defence outlays faster than initially planned. If the economic situation makes it possible, the growth of defence spending to 2.5 percent of GDP should be completed by 2024 instead of 2030 as earlier planned."

"This is an ambitious goal but the Polish Army must be modernised. This is an urgent need and Polish soldiers deserve this modernisation," he went on to say, stressing that they deserved state-of-the-art weapons, "so that they could defend their homeland in the safest possible way as there is nothing more precious than the life of a soldier."



The Battle of Warsaw was one of the highlights of the Polish–Soviet War (February 1919 – March 1921) fought by Soviet Russia and Soviet Ukraine against the Second Polish Republic and the Ukrainian People's Republic for control over an area covering today's Ukraine and parts of Belarus. The Soviets also hoped to invade and occupy Poland. The unexpected but important victory over the Red Army in the Battle of Warsaw and the following Polish advance eastward made the Soviets sue for peace, and a ceasefire was sealed in October 1920.

Source: PAP

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