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Today's Zaman: Poland and Turkey: challenges for security and solidarity in action by Stanislaw Koziej

Thursday issue of Turkish daily news paper „Today's Zaman” will feature article written by the Head of the NSB Stanislaw Koziej who is now paying an official visit to Ankara.

[Full article here](#)

TODAY'S ZAMAN

The 600th anniversary of Polish-Turkish diplomatic relations will be celebrated in 2014 under the patronage of the presidents of our two countries.

Such a long period of bilateral relations is exceptional in our region and provides a solid foundation for today's cooperation. Since the treaty of Karlowitz of 1699 our relations have been excellent, based on mutual respect and trust. It is worth remembering that Turkey did not acknowledge the partitions of Poland in the 18th century. Moreover, during all of the 19th century, the country was a refuge and a safe haven for Poles fighting against our invaders. In Poland, there is a popular legend, according to which the Turks declined to acknowledge the demise of Poland, and therefore during every presentation of ambassadors and diplomats at the court of the Sultan, they announced: "The envoy of Lechistan has not come yet."

The coming anniversary is not only the moment to evoke the past, but also an impulse to look into the future and to reflect on opportunities to deepen the dialogue on broadly-conceived security issues, tighten cooperation and further develop the alliance and political partnership between the two countries. The anniversary is also the occasion to think about the best ways to confront together the complex security challenges of the 21st century, which emerge from the changing world around us. I would like to stress that good relations with our NATO ally, Turkey, constitute one of Poland's foreign and security policy priorities. It will also be essential for us to cooperate with Turkey in the framework of the European Union, which is why we firmly support Ankara in its EU accession process.

Challenges of the contemporary world - a chance to deepen cooperation

The post-Cold-War period has brought about a global wave of asymmetric threats stemming from states or non-state actors, including above all, the proliferation of terrorism, nuclear weapons and missile technologies. For meeting these challenges and heading off these threats, intensified cooperation between the countries is needed. In this I see the possibility to tighten cooperation between Poland and Turkey. Together we should look for innovative, unconventional and flexible forms of formulating responses to threats to Euro-Atlantic and global security.

In this context, one of the key tasks is the stability of Afghanistan. Turkey and Poland take part in the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) mission; the contingents of our countries have comparable numbers of soldiers there (Poland and Turkey have 2,580 and 1,840 men, respectively). The Polish Task Forces are conducting a stabilizing, advisory and training mission aimed at maintaining the security and stability of Ghazni Province, they help reconstruct Afghanistan and support the Afghan authorities and local administration through development programs and assistance in rebuilding the civilian infrastructure. We provide training to the Afghan Security Forces, as well as render necessary support to the inhabitants of the province, assisting them in meeting their basic needs. Turkey has also been training Afghan security forces and the police and has been involved in nation-building efforts. Turkey has provided development aid to the Afghans, too. Predestined to this role as the only Muslim member of NATO and due to its historical and cultural links with Afghanistan, Turkey has been active not only on Afghan territory but has also taken actions to promote regional initiatives stabilizing the Afghan state. One can refer in this regard, e.g., to the organization of a Central Asian Foreign Affairs Ministers' conference in İstanbul in November, which focused on regional cooperation for Afghanistan.

Poland is ready to conclude an agreement with Afghanistan concerning supporting the process of creating a modern Afghan state beyond the year 2014.

I hope that thanks to the further involvement and cooperation of Turkey, it will be possible, inter alia, to prevent the regional isolation of Afghanistan and elaborate multilateral solutions ensuring its security and stability. Our common goal should be to guarantee that Afghan territory will no longer become the base of attacks against the others.

Moving to broader security issues, it is worth stressing that the center of gravity is shifting from the military to non-military problems. The latest events and processes in the Middle East and North Africa have shown that chaos and destabilization in the states of the region could lead to a dramatic growth of asymmetrical threats in the proliferation triad of terrorism, weapons of mass destruction and missile technologies. The "Arab Spring" has called into question the future of a region, which has a strategic value for the West, and at the same time is one of the most insecure in the world. Turkey, implementing its policy of "zero problems with neighbors," has not been indifferent to the processes that have been going on since the end of the last year. I follow with profound interest the growing involvement of Turkey in this region and the declarations of regional leaders to use the Turkish model of state building. I am convinced that due to its geo-strategic location, global position and regional involvement, Turkey will come to be a more and more important partner for Poland, as well as countries in the Middle East and North Africa.

Poland is also committed to help societies that have risen up against dictators. We are ready to share our experience of the transformation period in the 1990s. The Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the National Electoral Commission invited delegations from Egypt, Libya and Tunisia to observe Polish parliament elections, which took place on Oct. 9. We are involved in providing humanitarian and medical aid for Libya. The Minister of Foreign Affairs, Radosław Sikorski, was the first foreign politician who visited Tripoli and Benghazi after the transition authorities announced the definite liberation of the country on Oct. 23.

Turkey's cultural affinity with the states of the region, combined with excellent Turkish-Polish relations, can become a foundation of cooperation and further involvement - not only of our states, but also of the European Union - in the reconstruction of the Middle East and North African states, which should assist societies in the region in following the path of democracy and economic development.

Finally, I would like to mention an important strategic program, which brings together Turkey and Poland. I have in mind cooperation in developing much-needed missile defense capabilities. I welcomed with satisfaction the agreement of the authorities in Ankara to station on their territory an AN/TPY-2 transportable radar (giving

precise information for SM-3 intercept missiles), which is a part of the European missile defense system EPAA (European Phased Adaptive Approach). A day after this announcement, Poland and the United States announced that the accord to deploy on the territory of Poland the SM-3 intercept missiles (also being part of the EPAA system) had entered into force. These two developments show the similarity of our approaches. To paraphrase Mustafa Kemal Atatürk's words, there is no defense line, there is defense of area, and this defense area covers not only our home countries, but also the whole Euro-Atlantic community. The necessity of its use in defense against our common threats creates opportunities to strengthen cooperation, inter alia, in the framework of NATO.

In recent days Turkey has suffered from tragic earthquakes. More than 600 people have perished. I would like to offer my condolences to the victims' families. I wish a quick recovery to the wounded. I assure you that Poland is ready to help in line with a popular Polish saying: "A friend in need is a friend indeed."

See also:

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