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"Poland will press for stronger eastern flank of NATO"

Poland will demand a strengthening of NATO's eastern flank and increased military spending by NATO members, said President Bronislaw Komorowski in a speech on Polish Armed Forces Day. He and other officials watched a military parade in Warsaw Friday.

"We will go on demanding that NATO's eastern flank be strengthened by stationing of troops from other (NATO) countries and forward basing of their equipment and logistics," the president declared in the speech before the parade.

Poland will continue to press for "drawing strategic conclusions" for the planning of NATO's collective defense, frequency of exercises and readiness and potential of rapid reaction forces, he added.

"We will develop infrastructure that is necessary for effective absorption of (NATO) reinforcements in cases of increased threat to Poland," Komorowski went on. Poland will present its position at the NATO summit in Wales next month, he added.

Also at the summit he plans to raise the issue of military spending by NATO members, he said. "Things cannot go on as they are now when our mighty neighbour in the East has been increasing its military hardware financing for eight years while NATO has been reducing" such spending.

"The Russian-Ukrainian conflict reminds us that not all nations in our region can live in security, not everyone can live in stable freedom," the president declared. "(...) armed conflict is still a brutal reality in Eastern Europe, not just in exotic places in distant continents," he noted. "(...) the annexation of Crimea, armed support for separatists, and shooting down of a civilian plane with children on board all took place in Europe."

"We want peace, good relations with all our neighbours, including Russia, but we also want security," president Komorowski declared. We must be ready to defend Poland because "nothing emboldens a potential aggressor more than the weakness of a victim" and "nothing discourages more than a strong state and its bold citizens."

Some 1,200 soldiers, 120 military vehicles and over 50 planes and helicopters took part in the parade. Among them were US and Canadian soldiers now training in Poland. The parade was watched by PM Donald Tusk, Sejm Speaker Ewa Kopacz, and Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak.

Earlier Friday President Komorowski handed promotion papers to 13 new generals and admirals.

Source: *prezydent.pl*; PAP

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