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## President Duda to strive for larger presence of NATO forces in Poland

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**Polish President Andrzej Duda on Thursday declared that he will strive for a greater presence of NATO forces in Poland and try to cooperate on this issue with Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak.**

The president took part in a ceremony of the change of the commander of the NATO Multinational Corps Northeast in Szczecin, north-west Poland. In the ceremony German Lt. Gen. Manfred Hofmann was taking command of the corps from Poland's Lt. Gen. Boguslaw Samol for a three-year term.

"In today's geopolitical situation, the presence of the Alliance, which collectively, together, with certainty is the world's largest military power, is very important not only for Poland but for all the countries of Central and Eastern Europe," said the president.

"Today, I think we all feel, surely all Poles feel that the presence of NATO forces in this part of Europe and in our country should have a real dimension and should in real terms support Poland's security," said Duda.

The president, who is head of the Polish Armed Forces, assessed that in recent times the question of NATO's presence has become an even more important issue than before when "it primarily had a symbolic rank."

He reminded that before taking up the presidency he envisaged that he will want, in cooperation with Polish Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak, to "achieve a greater NATO presence in Poland and thus obtain greater guarantees for Poland and Central and Eastern Europe." I trust that our political partners with whom we will soon have talks will reach an agreement with us on this matter, stressed the president.

Defence Minister Tomasz Siemoniak stressed that "Poland sees in the corps one of the most important allied projects to serve the security of Central and Eastern Europe."

"The corps has become so important that it has been the subject of a decision of the NATO summit in Newport and surely the next NATO summit in Warsaw will devote a lot of attention to development of the corps in Szczecin," said the defence minister.

The Northeast Corps, which started to operate in a new structure as of June 1 is being upgraded to a high readiness force in tune with a decision taken during the Wales NATO summit.



After raising the unit's level of combat readiness one of its tasks is to be the synchronisation of operations by NATO Force Integration Units or liaison units which coordinate exercises and are involved in joint planning.

Before the upcoming Warsaw NATO summit the corps is to prove its operational capability to command Very High Readiness Joint Task Force (VJTF) or "the NATO spearhead."



*Source: PAP*

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