

<https://en.bbn.gov.pl/en/news/450,President-in-Estonia-World-peace-impossible-without-respect-for-international-law.html>

06.05.2024, 09:15

23.08.2015

President in Estonia: World peace impossible without respect for international law

There cannot be peace in the world without respect for international law, President Andrzej Duda said in Tallinn on Sunday during the first foreign visit of his term in office.

"We must not consent when international law is violated, when borders are violated, when countries' sovereignty and independence is violated. Unfortunately this is happening again in Europe", Poland's president said at the Museum of Occupations in the Estonian capital where he gave a speech for the European Day of Remembrance for Victims of Totalitarian Regimes observed on August 23.

Duda added that arguments of economic or military potential should not be the only things determining international relations.

Efforts should be made to encourage, "calmly but firmly", a return to compliance with international law, in the Polish president's view.

"This is an enormous task. So far it has not been possible to fully perform it. I think that in future we need new solutions and these solutions will need to be discussed within the European Union but also within NATO", Duda said.

"We need wise diplomacy on the one hand, while on the other we need community and agreement on the most important issues; we have to work calmly for such agreement", the president argued. The road to agreement on the international arena consists in presenting arguments, hard facts, but above all in working together, Duda added.

"Within NATO structures we must take care of our security, to make sure it is guaranteed more strongly to our nations. The path to this is marked out, but we need to continue working all the time, consolidating the solutions that have been approved and are being implemented", according to the Polish president.

In Duda's view, cooperation in the Central and Eastern European region is extremely important. Referring to a peaceful demonstration in which a human chain was formed on August 23, 1989 across Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania which were Soviet republics at the time, President Duda said that he would "like this chain called the 'Chain of Freedom' ... one day to become a chain stretching from the Baltic Sea, from Tallinn across all of Central Europe, all the way to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean".

"It would be the fulfilment of a dream, of a great idea to create and build a community", he added.

"Remembrance and historical truth is extremely important, it is the only thing enabling good relations to be built between nations", Duda also said, referring to the August 23, 1939 Ribbentrop-Molotov non-aggression pact between the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany as having been "a clear and open violation of international law".

The pact included a secret protocol that divided territories of Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland and Romania between Germany and the Soviet Union.

Earlier, Estonian President Toomas Hendrik Ilves pointed out that Poland had been the first country to lose its freedom, attacked by the Germans on September 1, 1939 and by the Soviet Union on September 17.

Remarking that the war against Ukraine showed how fragile freedom was, President Ilves indicated Poland's very clear role in cooperation for security in the region and mentioned the NATO summit in Warsaw planned for 2016 as a key time to strengthen joint defence mechanisms.

After the countries of the region regained their independence and later joined NATO, the alliance's border shifted substantially, President Duda pointed out to reporters after leaving the Museum of Occupations.

The former eastern flank of NATO still has functioning NATO and U.S. military bases, the Polish president continued. "That is why we invite and expect these military units of friends and allies, or weapons from NATO countries, to be deployed in areas that today form the alliance's real eastern flank", Duda said.

In his view, this proposal is "absolutely logical and justified not only historically but also in contemporary terms".

"Everyone knows the situation: imperial tendencies are resurging and the presence of NATO forces is a guarantee for our countries", President Duda explained.

The Polish president's visit also included meetings with Estonian Prime Minister Taavi Roivas and Estonian Parliament Chairman Eiki Nestor.

Source: president.pl; PAP

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