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President: Binding decisions on increased US military presence soon

President Andrzej Duda speaking after Warsaw Wednesday talks with US Vice-President Mike Pence said that first binding decisions on increasing US military presence in Poland should be expected soon.

"I hope that our joint efforts aimed at increasing the presence of U.S. Armed Forces in Poland are going to bring effects soon. In the nearest future, first, planning decisions are going to be taken in this respect. This is what we should expect," President Duda told a joint press conference following the talks.



Andrzej Duda said that one of the topics discussed during the meeting with Mike Pence was energy cooperation. "Energy cooperation is a very important subject in our mutual relations, today we have signed a number of contracts for the import of liquefied gas to our terminal in Świnoujście, said the President who added work is underway to increase the terminal's capacity to over 7 billion cubic meters of gas per year.

The talks also concerned the development of a network of gas connectors in this part of Europe, as well as energy security regarding electricity. During the talks, the President signalled March talks to be held in the US by Minister Piotr Naimski, the Polish government's commissioner for strategic energy infrastructure with US Energy Secretary Rick Perry. "The talks will focus on cyber security and cooperation covering gas and electricity energy," said Andrzej Duda.

Andrzej Duda and Mike Pence also referred to Polish-US general business cooperation. "Right now, Poland is developing at a good pace, economic results were better than we expected, better than the analysts predicted, including those representing various world agencies, so the situation is very good" said the Polish President.



Vice-President Mike Pence on his part noted that thanks to close Polish-US cooperation, relations between the United States and Poland are stronger than ever.

"Our countries are friends because we share the same values — a point that you and I reflected on in all of our conversations today. And in a world that's growing more unpredictable — and, in many ways, more dangerous

since the fall of the Soviet Union — our alliance has grown more vital and more important than ever before. That's why, as you and I just discussed, our countries are working more closely together on a wide range of issues, and we will continue to. And thanks to your leadership, Mr. President, and that of President Trump, today the United States-Poland alliance is stronger than ever before, stressed the Vice-President.

Noting that in the last two years, both countries have made unprecedented investments in common defence and "shown the world that our commitment to the NATO Alliance is unwavering," Pence stressed that "Poland is one of only eight NATO allies who currently meet the commitment to spend at least 2 percent of your gross domestic product on defence (...) and now, our two countries are discussing the parameters for increased United States military presence in Poland. And I'll be carrying back your strong convictions regarding that to President Trump and to our leaders in the Defence Department when I return to the United States," assured Mike Pence.

The Vice-President noted the importance of both countries' economic security and Polish-US dialogue on energy which is to ensure "that neither of our countries, nor any country in Europe, becomes dependent on Russia for its energy needs." He added that since last October, Poland has signed three separate agreements with US energy companies, which, in four years' time, will allow Poland to import more than 7 billion cubic meters of natural gas a year.



"Now we look forward to working with you as you develop other energy sources, including nuclear power, as we discussed today. And President Trump and I, and our administration, are truly grateful for your bold stand in opposition to Nord Stream 2," stressed Mike Pence.

The US official also noted that his country welcomes Poland's partnership "as we work to protect the telecommunications sector from China. The recent action that your government has taken against a Huawei executive and a Polish national accused of cooperating with him demonstrate your government's commitment to ensure our telecommunications sector is not compromised in a way that threatens our national security," said Mike Pence.

The Vice-President went on to say that the US also "stands behind Poland as it has stepped up and taken a leadership role as well in the Three Seas Initiative. As President Trump said not long ago, 'with the expanded trade and new infrastructure' between our two countries, we (can) unleash incredible energy innovation that's safe, responsible, and environmentally friendly."



"And these actions, the relationship between our two nations, will continue to grow stronger, and the future of security in Europe will grow brighter," stressed the US Vice-President.

He added that in recent years, "Poland has become one of our most crucial allies and a major player in world affairs. Poland sent one of the largest contingents of troops to our allied operations in Iraq and was a valued member of our 79-partner-strong coalition to defeat ISIS." "This week, Poland is taking another leading role of

worldwide significance, Mr. President, as your nation hosts the very first-ever 'Ministerial to Promote a Future of Peace and Security in the Middle East'," concluded the Vice-President.

Source: PAP

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