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F-35 fighter jets for the Polish army

The supreme commander of the Polish Armed Forces President Andrzej Duda took part in the ceremony of signing the agreement on the purchase for Poland of 32 fifth-generation F-35 fighter planes from the USA, which was signed by Defence Minister Mariusz Blaszczak.



Also present at the signing ceremony were Prime Minister Mateusz Morawiecki, as well as US Ambassador to Poland Georgette Mosbacher.



The F-35 is defined as a fifth-generation fighter due to its multi-task nature, reduced radar detectability thanks to its special fuselage design, enclosed weapon housing, wings and tailfin, and built-in capability for sending and receiving information of other weapons systems.

The value of the contract is USD 4.6 billion. Poland is buying 32 aircraft, as well as a training and logistics package. According to the producer, Lockheed Martin, the first planes will serve for training purposes in the USA and will reach Poland in 2026. Poland is buying version 'A' of the aircraft with conventional take-off and landing.

"This is an important day for Poland's Air Force, the Republic's security, but also for the security of our region of Europe. We were able to buy these aircraft and make them part of the Polish armed forces' (...) state-of-the-art equipment primarily thanks to the fact that we are (...) a member of the North Atlantic Alliance, which is a reliable, good ally," Andrzej Duda said in his address at the signing.

The president said the purchase of the F-35s signified one of the major phases in the modernisation of the Polish armed forces, and observed that the deal will also serve to tighten Polish-US relations.



"This is a great day for the Republic and a great day for the Polish Air Force. A great day for us all. The day on which these aircraft will begin to rule our skies will also be the day on which the security of the Republic and our part of the world will be very significantly reinforced," Duda said.

Morawiecki said the F-35s will "cause the shadow of Russian domination to steadily move away from the Republic," and raise Poland's capabilities in ensuring security and peace, together with the other NATO countries.

Morawiecki described the F-35s as "airborne armour," and said they will prove especially useful in protecting NATO's eastern flank. He added that he was sure the Polish Air Force will cope well with their introduction into its arsenal.

Błaszczak said the F-35 deal brought the Polish Air Force into a new development phase and placed Poland among the "elite group of countries" which possessed them. He added that the purchase will have a "major impact" on Poland.

"We are going into 2020 with a big bang. Already in four years' time the Polish army will get 5th-generation F-35s," Błaszczak said. He also thanked Duda for his support of the deal and stressed that without it, it would never have been concluded.

Mosbacher said the deal proved the firmness of Polish-US ties, and voiced pride at what both countries were achieving together. In this context she pointed out that US troops were stationed in Poland to help protect the eastern NATO flank, and stressed that partnership based on security was important.

Mosbacher also called Poland a model example of military modernisation, and thanked Duda for his leading role in securing the deal.

US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on Friday in Ukraine, voiced contentment over the F-35 deal with Poland, and called the F-35 the most advanced air fighter in the world.

Besides the US, F-35s are in service in Australia, Belgium, Israel, Japan and Britain.

Source: own information, PAP

