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President says threat of armed conflict is real

President Andrzej Duda has warned that the spectre of conflict is haunting Europe for the first time in decades. Speaking at the Lithuanian National Security Conference in Vilnius Andrzej Duda also said that Russian aggression meant that the presence of Nato troops on the alliance's eastern border must be maintained.

"Since the time of Russian aggression against Ukraine, the real spectre of a conventional armed conflict has returned to our part of Europe for the first time in decades," he said. "This is a relatively new situation, which forces us to take a different approach to security issues in our region.

"Unfortunately, Russia continues to regularly demonstrate its strength and increase tensions in the region, as it did during this year's ZAPAD 2021 exercises, when military manoeuvres by the Russian army took place, among others, at Belarusian training grounds near the Polish and Lithuanian borders," the president added.

According to Duda, "the response to the growing threat posed by our eastern neighbour must focus on the further development of the structures of allied institutions."

"This includes the maintenance on the eastern flank of the presence of troops from Nato countries, as well as in the fulfilment of financial obligations by each of the allies," Andrzej Duda said.

The president also warned of the dangers of hybrid threats, saying that "illegal attacks on political and economic systems and on democratic values are aimed at disorganising our societies."

"These actions are manifested especially through hostile acts in cyberspace" said Andrzej Duda.

"The current events on the borders of Poland, Lithuania and Latvia are an unprecedented example of hybrid activities, which are in fact a hostile attack by the regime of Alexander Lukashenko while cynically exploiting people from the Middle East who hope for a better life in EU countries," continued the president.

(PAP)

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