

DUDA-TRUMP DECLARATION. KEY CONCLUSIONS [ANALYSIS]

What is the meaning that the joint declaration on Polish-American defence collaboration, signed by Presidents Andrzej Duda and Donald Trump, has? The document contains a couple of very specific assumptions pertaining to the US military presence, organization and inventory based in Poland. The statement also lists specific numbers of soldiers who would be additionally deployed to Poland, along with MQ-9 Reaper UAV systems for instance.

The statement signed in DC on 12th June 2019 contains many words outlining the shape that the US support for the Polish national security is going to have, also mentioning the alliance commitments and military cooperation. Seven sections outlining the specific commitments constitute the key element of the document in question.

I. The United States plans to enhance its current military presence of approximately 4,500 rotational U.S. military personnel in Poland. This enduring presence is expected to grow by about 1,000 additional U.S. military personnel in the near-term, and would focus on providing additional defence and deterrence capabilities in Poland.

The above section reads most clearly. It directly refers to enhanced US military presence in Poland with extra 1,000 troops who would provide additional “defence and deterrence” capabilities in Poland. We shall hope that the above would actually translate into enhanced presence in Poland. 1.5 to 2 thousand US soldiers are already stationed in Poland. The remaining portion, mostly being a part of the Brigade Combat Team, is getting involved in exercises organized in other NATO Eastern Flank states, with their “homebase” located in Poland. Over the course of almost all Polish rotations a periodic exercise is organized, involving the brigade in its entirety.

Quantitatively enhanced US military presence in Poland is the key element of the document signed. It was also the main element that was desired by President Duda and his office. It is a step that is not taken lightly by the US Administration in case of international agreements. Thus it may be treated as an actual success. That success also entails some costs that can be found in the section II of the statement.

II. With the understanding that the increased U.S. force presence in Poland is made sustainable with Polish support, Poland plans to provide and sustain jointly determined infrastructure for the initial package of additional projects listed below, at no cost to the United States and taking into account the planned level of its use by U.S. forces. Poland also plans to provide additional support to U.S. forces, above the NATO host-nation standard.

The issue related to particular investments in the area of the US military presence is explained in

detail in subsections below. However, the above may be defined as follows: the “Fort Trump” cost is going to be incurred by Poland in its entirety. Washington would deploy its troops and armament, but it is Warsaw that is going to pay for construction works and the rent. The cost of creating and maintaining the infrastructure would be covered by Poland. However, Poland will also be allowed to use the newly created infrastructure jointly with the US Forces. The particular commitments made cover the following matters:

A. Establishment of a U.S. Division Headquarters (Forward) in Poland.

“Strengthening the Defence of NATO’s Eastern Frontier” report published back in March published by the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments (CSBA) states that considering the Russian rapid military action strategy, a US Division command shall be permanently based in Poland.

According to the suggestions made by CSBA and other think-tanks (such as the Atlantic Council) a Division Command would be established in Poland. Most probably an element as such would be stationed in Poznan, where a division-level Mission Command Element is already present. The job assigned to the aforesaid Element is to coordinate the operations for more than 6 thousand US Army soldiers involved in bilateral and multinational training in the eastern NATO Flank states: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Germany, Slovakia, Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria. The forward Division Command would become a permanent element of the command system that would be able to effectively coordinate the US forces across the theatre.

B. Establishment and joint use by the U.S. Armed Forces and Polish Armed Forces of the Combat Training Center (CTC) in Drawsko Pomorskie, and eventually in a few other locations in Poland. The United States intends to continue to provide U.S. advisors to support the Polish Armed Forces in the establishment of the CTC.

This section has a meaning that is relevant within the scope of training possibilities and cooperation with the US Army. Poland may become a place where a so called Combat Training Center could be established, allowing for full training of the US armoured brigades, certification included. The above should make it easier for the US forces to establish permanent presence in Poland, also within the scope of training and cooperation with the host nation. The training facilities in Poland are undergoing modernization now. This applies, in particular, to the Drawsko Pomorskie range which is intensely used for the purpose of training NATO forces, the US forces included. Procurement procedures have been launched with regards to digitalization of the training systems, setting up of laser training solutions and other hardware that would enhance the training realism and effectiveness.

At the moment the cooperation with the US may result in selection of systems that are used by the US Army, such as MILES CVTESS.

C. Establishment of a U.S. Air Force MQ-9 Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance squadron in Poland. The United States intends to share information derived from this squadron's operations, as appropriate, in support of our defense objectives.

The above may be put briefly: a squadron of MALE MQ-9 Reaper UAVs will be stationed permanently at the 12th Unmanned Aerial Vehicles Base in Miroslawiec. The gathered intelligence would be shared, but only within the scope defined by the Pentagon. The US-drones have been operating out of Miroslawiec since May 2018. This is a relevant fact, yet it is not mentioned too often.

It was in March 2019 when expansion of the infrastructure at the Miroslawiec base has been finalized, with the UAVs in mind. 52nd Expeditionary Operational Group of the USAF stationed there has reached the FOC (Full Operational Capability) status. Thus, one may expect that the 52nd Group

would become a seed for the UAV squadron mentioned in the statement. The squadron would be tasked with reconnaissance missions in the Kaliningrad area in particular. One should also note that the information gathered by the US Reaper drones would be shared with Poland, as appropriate. One should remember that the US military presence should not relieve Poland from acquiring smaller drones, including medium range tactical Gryf drones. Poland should also increase the UAV saturation in the military, especially when it comes to light systems that can be coupled with the existing command systems (FlyEye/Topaz combo).

D. Establishment of an aerial port of debarkation to support the movement of forces for training or contingency.

As the recent exercise involving deployment of a high number of soldiers to Europe has shown, the above is a rapid method that would allow for rapid and significant enhancement of presence in the region that could be facing a crisis. However, as the troops-carrying aircraft could land at any civil airport, heavier airlifters and unloading of the equipment require a proper infrastructure.

Creating an airbase hub is a logical solution, with consideration also given to the storage infrastructure that is planned to be established in Powidz, to meet the needs of the forces operating on the NATO Eastern Flank. Within that context, the Poznan region is the most probable location of such airport. It is possible that the above section refers to expansion of the facility in Powidz.

E. Establishment of an area support group to support current and future U.S. forces in Poland.

This section is related to the plans of expanding the storage infrastructure and planning of major US Army and NATO VJTF deployments in circumstances of a conflict with the potential adversary and also in situations requiring support to be provided for the US troops in the given area. The theater support group is a structure that would be tasked with planning, organizing and supporting the US presence activities within the given theater.

F. Establishment of U.S. special operations forces capability in Poland to support air, ground, and maritime operations.

This section actually refers to presence of the US special operations forces in Poland and joint training with the Polish units. The above also refers to development of potential scenario response plans and training conducted within the scope of scenarios embedded within the context of the NATO eastern flank. This may translate into deployment of some of the US special operations forces to Poland, or transfer of those units from Germany or the UK, along with the equipment - helicopters or CV-22 Osprey VTOL aircraft.

G. Establishment of infrastructure to support the presence of an armored brigade combat team, a combat aviation brigade, and a combat sustainment support battalion.

According to the above section, infrastructure would be established in Poland that would support the presence of an armoured combat team, a combat aviation brigade and a combat sustainment support battalion. The above would translate into establishment of barracks, vehicle parks or airbases that could accommodate and host the above elements in Poland. Brigade combat team, a US Army armoured brigade, is already present in Poland, on a rotational basis, also using the Orzysz or Drawsko Pomorskie training infrastructure. The above concerns more than 4 thousand troops using M1 Abrams MBTs, M2 Bradley IFVs, self-propelled artillery platforms and other accompanying elements.

Combat aviation brigade is a heavy aviation element of the US Army including 48 AH-64E Apache

gunships supported by 50 Black Hawks and a dozen of CH-47F Chinook helicopters. Its job would be to support the reconnaissance and strike activities of the land forces, also providing them with MEDEVAC support. Most of the combat aviation brigades are assigned to the specific US Army divisions, however an independent 12th Combat Aviation Brigade is stationed in Europe.

Along with a combat sustainment battalion these two units will most probably form the core of the US presence along the NATO Eastern Flank, treating Poland as the centre of activities and main base.

Summing it up, the statement sanctions some of the activities that have been already undertaken and guarantees further enhancement of the US presence in Poland. Politically and militarily speaking this further reinforces the Poland's position as the main partner of the USA on the Eastern NATO Flank. It also positions Poland as one of the key European allies. Poland, however, is going to pay a price for this, covering the cost of expanding and maintaining the presence-supporting infrastructure and other associated activities. Procurement of the US-made military equipment is one of the actions undertaken by Warsaw within that regard. This often happens without any procedures that would optimize cost-effectiveness of such activities, as the F-35 example has shown. It remains an open question however, to assess such dependence and the impact it may have on relations with other allies.