

US ARMY PATRIOT MISSILES IN POLAND

US Army soldiers, along with a Patriot anti-aircraft system, are going to take part in an air defence exercise involving the members of the Polish military. 35th Air Defence Missile Squadron is going to represent the Polish Armed Forces, throughout the course of the operation.

According to the press officer of the General Command of the Armed Forces, Lt. Col. Szczepan Głuszczyk, the aforementioned joint training exercise is planned to be executed between 12th and 16th January. The operation is going to cover the area of planning and executing anti-aircraft and missile defence tasks, related to the military infrastructure, and defending it from the airborne threats.

Moreover, changing the firing positions and handling operations pertaining the launchers are also going to be carried out, along with protection of own forces and the early warning procedures. Deployment of the air defence component in question also constitutes a part of the exercise. On behalf of the Polish Army, the exercise will involve the 35th Air Defence Missile Squadron equipped with the S-125 Neva-SC (SA-3 Goa) SAM system, while the US Army is going to have its Patriot system of the battery, coming from the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery unit, deployed. The above unit is the only element of this type permanently stationed in Germany, acting under the command of the 10th Air and Missile Command.

As Lt. Col. Głuszczyk claims, the exercise has solely a defensive character, no firing training is planned throughout its course. Last year a similar training, involving the Patriot system of the 5th Battalion, 7th Air Defense Artillery element, was organized in Poland. 37th Air Defence Missile Squadron from Sochaczew was representing the Polish Army, during the aforementioned operation.

The US Army units equipped with the Patriot systems had also been involved in rotational training initiatives in Poland within the period between 2010 and 2012. They also had been taking part in the Victory Strike exercise, organized right after Poland became a NATO member state. The aforementioned exercise, between 2000 and 2002, involved the US Stinger and Avenger systems, MLRS multiple rocket launch systems or AH-64 Apache gunships. "Panther Assurance" exercise is being currently organized, within the scope of expanded US Army presence in the Central-Eastern European region. According to Lt. Col. Głuszczyk: "The exercise is a prelude to a cycle of intensive training initiatives in an international dimension, all preceding the Warsaw NATO Summit".