

## **Speech of the Minister of National Defence of the Republic of Poland**

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Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you very much for inviting me to CEPA Forum again. Last year I could only be here for a short time and my speech about saving the West was delivered by one of my advisors. This time I am supposed to talk about changing NATO for the 21st century. This topic is also very much about saving the West, as NATO remains the most important pillar of our security. And many things around NATO have changed for worse since then.

I am convinced that we started reforming NATO at the Summit in Warsaw at the very last moment. We handled some challenges but there are still some that we failed to manage. Crimea remains under Russian occupation and the war in Ukraine is still going on. Kremlin supported terrorists control Donetsk and Luhansk. The same applies to the puppet states of Abkhazia and South Ossetia in Georgia. We will have to reconstitute international order and their territorial integrity if we want to bring back peace. Situation in Iraq may be heading in the right direction but it is not the case in Syria. Because of Russia's destructive involvement, even defeating the ISIL on the ground will not bring us closer to the end. And the ISIL itself is already moving away - to Afghanistan and other places.

Back in Warsaw we welcomed the establishment of the NATO enhanced Forward Presence on the Eastern Flank with great satisfaction. But as ZAPAD 17 showed, what seemed enough then is not enough today. All of us agree that it was much more than just regular practice of Russian army. One of the main

objectives of its scenario was to destroy the eFP forces. Maneuvers took place everywhere from the Arctic to the Caucasus. The claims about 13 thousand participating soldiers are a pure disinformation. The true number was at least ten times bigger and likely even more. It was an entire western front of Russia preparing for an offensive war with possible use of nuclear weapons. Yesterday, Russians conducted an ICBM test, second one in just a week.

In just a year, North Korea managed to develop three dangerous technologies: hydrogen bomb, scaling it down to fit a ballistic missile and greatly increase its range. For the first time in history, a part of American territory lies within the range of North Korean nuclear weapons. Terrorism and extremism resurge around the world: in Afghanistan, Middle East, Latin America, Africa and other places. Quite rightly, President Trump told this Monday about the rouge states destabilizing the global security: North Korea, Iran and Venezuela.

However, none of these countries is powerful enough on its own. They would not be so aggressive without a powerful ally. The source of all these problems is Kremlin with its policy of destabilizing the free world. It makes not much sense to talk about Eastern and Southern flanks of NATO anymore. The concept of 360 degrees defense becomes reality.

How should NATO face these new threats? Part of the solution was given in Donald Trump's historical speech in Warsaw and again in the UN on Monday. We have to face Evil because as Edmund Burke said „the only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing”. We must remain a community of free , sovereign nations respecting each and defend our values and civilization. This is what the Preamble to the North Atlantic Treaty says: „we desire to live in peace with all peoples and all governments but we are determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilisation

of our peoples". We must be ready to fulfill Article 5 of the Treaty whenever it is necessary.

Some other recommendations are obvious and we already adopted them in Warsaw. We need to fulfill the Defense Spending Pledge in the first place. 2% GDP spent on defense and at least 20% of it on modernization would greatly increase our capabilities. Yet, individual countries should be sovereign in deciding which capabilities they choose to develop. Moreover, we will have to increase our armies and mobilize them faster. As ZAPAD 17 showed, Russia could launch a full scale invasion very quickly. Neither eFP nor VJTF could match it. It would take months to move American forces through the Atlantic and slowly reconquer lost territories. This is one of the reasons why we need more US involvement in Europe, more US troops on the ground. Moreover, this is why we conducted the Strategic Defense Review and decided to build an army capable of defending Poland for at least a few months.

Another example of our collective efforts should be the reform of the NATO Command Structure. We need to move NATO Headquarters closer to possible theaters of war. Forces affiliated to them must be real and capable of conducting joint operations of all scales. The chain of command must be clear. We can already draw some conclusions from our eFP experience. We need a good coordination between all battlegroups, and we propose our Multinational Division North East Headquarters in Elbląg to play that role.

There is a broad scope of issues related to the current situation within the Alliance. With Brexit, more than 80% of NATO defense spendings remains outside of the European Union. There is only one nuclear power left in the EU and its potential is by far not sufficient to match the Russian nuclear triad. In the light of the above, the idea of European strategic autonomy in the field of

defense is an illusion that serves only Russia's interests. Reforms of the Common Security and Defense Policy and creating the Permanent Structural Cooperation must not be competitive to NATO but complementary.

We must care for the Transatlantic bond even more than we did in the past. This includes both technical-military issues like securing the transportation routes through the ocean, facilitating the freedom of movement on land as well as political ones. We need to avoid misunderstandings and demonstrate our unity, be it Article 5, sanctions against Russia or policy towards North Korea. As it has always been, we must be one for all and all for one. And finally, the Alliance has to make a strategic decision: is it going to try to westernize Russia or to defend against its expansion. The experience of the last 300 years proves that westernization attempts are unsuccessful. Its only effect is transfer of technologies that Russia is unable to develop but eagerly uses against the West. As Lenin said: the capitalists will sell us the rope on which we will hang them. And sometimes we even give it them for free. On the other hand, every time we determined to defend ourselves, Russia was in trouble. The collapse of the Soviet Union is a good example here. The choice is ours to make.

Thank you.