

THE WHITE HOUSE
Office of the Press Secretary

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 28, 2011

Fact Sheet: U.S.-Poland Bilateral Defense Cooperation

The United States and Poland have forged an exceptional bilateral defense partnership, firmly rooted in the enduring NATO alliance. Poland and the United States work together in the Euro-Atlantic region and globally with shared values and shared democratic principles. In Afghanistan, U.S. and Polish soldiers fight bravely to advance security and stability and deny violent extremists safe haven. Committed to each other's defense through NATO, the United States and Poland have undertaken contingency planning, joint exercises and Polish basing upgrades in support of Article 5 commitments under the North-Atlantic Treaty. Strengthening their partnership, the United States and Poland are building on the August 2008 Declaration on Strategic Cooperation through collaboration in military training and modernization, missile defense, information sharing, and defense/industrial research. Key joint actions include:

Aviation Detachment: During his visit to Warsaw, President Obama and President Komorowski welcomed the conclusion of a bilateral Memorandum of Understanding, a key step toward the establishment of a U.S. Air Force Aviation Detachment in Poland. The Aviation Detachment will strengthen joint interoperability through regular training exercise rotations in Poland, largely with U.S. F-16 or C-130 aircraft, beginning in 2013. F-16s from the California Air National Guard will also participate in the July 2011 SAFE SKIES training exercise with Polish F-16s as part of Poland's security preparations for the EURO 2012 soccer tournament.

Missile Defense: President Obama discussed with President Komorowski and Prime Minister Tusk next steps in the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) to missile defense, including recent progress in implementing Phases I and II of the new missile defense architecture. The United States welcomes Poland's May 2011 ratification of our Missile Defense Agreement, and the U.S. European Command and Polish military leaders will jointly inaugurate a series of consultations to take necessary actions to implement this agreement, leading to the deployment of the EPAA's land-based interceptor site in Poland in 2018.

Preparation for Deployments to Afghanistan: The United States and Poland jointly train before each Polish ISAF deployment (which now totals 2,600), with support from the U.S. Army Europe, Special Operations Command, and the Illinois National Guard. Members of the Illinois National Guard proudly serve shoulder-to-shoulder with Polish

forces in Afghanistan. The U.S. supports Polish operations with loans of armored vehicles and other combat equipment and services.

Special Operations: In the wake of the February 2009 signing of the Memorandum of Understanding establishing a strategic partnership between the U.S. and Polish Special Operations commands, the United States continues to assist Poland in becoming a fully interoperable Special Operations Forces partner nation by 2014.

Air Defense Training: In May 2010, the United States began quarterly rotations of a Patriot battery to Poland. Four rotations have already been completed and there are plans for seven more. These rotations and other military cooperation are possible because the United States and Poland negotiated a supplemental Status of Forces Agreement that entered into force in early 2010.

Reciprocal Defense Procurement Agreement: The United States and Poland have concluded negotiations and will soon sign a Reciprocal Defense Procurement MOU that will facilitate defense cooperation by greatly reducing barriers to trade in defense articles.

In addition to close cooperation within NATO, the United States and Poland continue regular, high-level consultations between our governments. The State Department and Ministry of Foreign Affairs hold annual Strategic Dialogue and Strategic Cooperation Consultative Group meetings. The Department of Defense leads annual High Level Defense Group meetings with the Polish Ministry of Defense. These dialogues span transatlantic, European, and NATO security issues, ranging from Afghanistan to missile defense to non-proliferation and arms control.