

Insider View - Head of the Polish National Security Bureau Stanisław Koziej on Poland's Defense Modernization

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EUROPEAN DEFENSE MODERNIZATION: POLAND TAKES THE LEAD

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Central Europe Digest (CED) sits down with Head of the Polish National Security Bureau (BBN), Stanisław Koziej, for an exclusive interview, discussing Poland's ongoing defense modernization effort and its strategic importance for the transatlantic relationship and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

CED: In your role as Head of BBN, you have to continually evaluate Poland's changing security landscape and respond to pockets of instability on the horizon. What are the kinds of challenges that North-Central European members of NATO are likely to face over the next 5-10 year period?

Gen. Koziej: This opening question is the starting point for all strategic analyses, because the definition of threats and challenges that we come up with will determine our actions. The definition of threats and challenges will also determine our necessary preparations

and capacity building, which are indispensable for ensuring the security of the state. It was precisely this type of analyses that constituted the subject of the work of the Committee for Strategic National Security Review — a body appointed by the President of Poland and led by me. The Committee's work was carried out in the period of December 2010 to September 2012.

Based on the conducted analyses, we concluded that the center of Europe (i.e. the European part of NATO and the European Union (EU)) is an area characterized by a high level of stability, brought about by a number of integration-related linkages in different areas (political, economic, social and military). They have minimized the threat of a large-scale aggression aimed against Poland or other EU member states. Nevertheless, the possibility of selective military actions, in particular blackmail and political and strategic pressure to launch such attacks against Poland or

General Stanisław Koziej is Head of the Polish National Security Bureau (BBN).

other EU member states, should be deemed as somewhat more probable.

At the same time, we found that the peripheries of Europe remain unstable. That instability spills over and is reflected in such phenomena as illegal migration or transnational organized crime. This presents us with a serious challenge and we have to be prepared for it.

One can also list a plethora of other challenges that our people face. We will see growing problems resulting from demographic and climate changes, and increased competition for access to shrinking energy resources. The global financial crisis has also left its imprint on our systems.

An analysis of trans-sectoral challenges was an important feature of the agenda of the above mentioned Committee. What I am referring to is, first and foremost, cyber threats and international terrorism. The susceptibility of states to cyber threats is increasing and it will keep doing so every year. Such attacks may be ideologically, politically and economically motivated. Today, and most probably in the future as well, terrorists, criminal organizations and, under specific circumstances, sovereign states will seek to use the virtual space to achieve their strategic goals by means of “cyber-violence.”

Terrorism motivated by various factors will continue to be one of the major global threats. It will present a danger to the lives of populations, and the stability of democratic institutions and national infrastructure. It is up to us, up to all NATO and EU member states, to use opportunities, stand up to challenges, limit risks and counteract threats.

CED: Even as security challenges evolve, defense cutbacks are taking their toll on NATO’s future capabilities. Yet, Poland represents a counter-trend

in defense spending and has pledged \$45 billion over the next ten years to upgrade its defense posture. What are Poland’s priorities for this modernization program; and how does that fit into Poland’s long-term concept for national defense?

Gen. Koziej: Adapting the volume of defense spending to the needs and possibilities of individual states is understandable and logical. In Poland, we have developed and implemented a legislative mechanism which has proved to be effective in practice — it pegs defense spending to the economic situation of the state. A fixed defense spending rate has been set at the level of 1.95 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP). We believe such a mechanism to be an optimal solution. In case radical changes occur in the security environment or with regard to economic potential, it is always possible to adjust the value while maintaining in effect the principle of the fixed rate.

As far as modernization priorities are concerned, it should be stressed that in 2011, President Bronisław Komorowski, as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Poland, issued a decision on determining “*Main directions for the development of Polish Armed Forces as well as their preparation for defense of the state in the period 2013-2022.*” The President specified three major priorities in that document. These are as follows: improving air defense (which includes launching the construction of missile defense); strengthening the mobility, broadly understood, of land forces (especially helicopter mobility); and developing IT battle and support systems (UAVs, precision-guided munitions, radio electronic combat systems etc.). Now, the Ministry of National Defense is developing plans and programs for the improvement of the Polish Armed Forces, which means that the above mentioned directions are being crystallized.

An area that is acquiring equal importance to that of military security is cyber-security. Sooner or later, we will need to learn not only how to live in cyberspace, but also how to defend ourselves and how to fight with enemies who use cyberspace as a platform for hostile actions. Threats in cyberspace make us realize the huge strategic importance of IT systems, both today and in the future. We assume that in the next planning cycle, the development of cyber-defense capabilities will become a key priority.

CED: Just as Poland is embarking on a top-to-bottom modernization program, the U.S. Administration is crafting a set of foreign and security objectives for the early phase of President Obama's second term. How would you assess the prospects for deepening U.S.-Polish ties through closer defense cooperation?

Gen. Koziej: It is worth emphasizing that allied relations with the United States constitute one of the key external pillars of Poland's national security. Future defense cooperation will focus on three issues: 1) Joint development of NATO defense capabilities, which entails, first and foremost, the construction of an allied missile defense program, with American contribution in the form of the European Phased Adaptive Approach (EPAA) that includes plans to construct an SM-3 base on the territory of Poland in 2018; 2) Cooperation between Polish and American armed forces; and 3) Cooperation between Polish and American special forces.

Let us bear in mind the fact that despite the crisis, the United States remains the largest global military superpower with a defense budget bigger than those of the next 13 countries.

Moreover, Americans have at their disposal leading technologies in areas such as missile defense, mobility of armed forces and reconnaissance resources. It is also worthwhile to note that the F-16 fleet forms the core of the Polish Air Force, which is naturally conducive to fostering cooperation between the air forces of the two states.

Defense cooperation will be further supplemented by broader collaborative efforts such as democracy promotion — the European Endowment Fund (EED), an idea initiated by Poland, should be mentioned in this context — as well as cooperation on energy security (shale gas in particular) and cyber-security.

American assistance, especially in training our military personnel and providing the technical modernization of equipment that helped bring about the systemic transformation of the Polish Armed Forces, played a major role in the initial period of gaining strategic independence in the 1990s. We should be, and indeed are grateful to the Americans for that.

Poland in turn, given its political and emotional identification with and support for the United States, became involved both in Iraq and Afghanistan. One could even say that the last decade of Polish-American defense cooperation has developed under the banner of the Polish Armed Forces in the operations carried out in those countries. We are also jointly undertaking a number of defense projects such as the missile defense program and the deployment of a U.S. Air Force Unit in Łask. Further, the program aimed at providing Polish Air Forces with F-16 aircraft turned out to be hugely successful and prospective. We

ALLIED RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES CONSTITUTE ONE OF THE KEY EXTERNAL PILLARS OF POLAND'S NATIONAL SECURITY.

also highly appreciate U.S. assistance in human capital investments, which is vitally important in the context of Poland's decision to professionalize its Armed Forces and establish a fully voluntary, professional army. One notable outcome of the deepening of military cooperation is the change in the very nature of Polish-American relations: moving from a relationship where the United States provided assistance to Poland, to an equal partnership.

As military cooperation between our countries continues to deepen, new potential areas for collaboration, such as exchange of experiences and implementation of common strategic goals, have emerged. Cooperation among our special forces looks promising as well, and Poland has achieved a high degree of interoperability in this regard. We learn from the experiences gathered in joint operations, which allows us to identify those defense capabilities that still need to be improved. I can see an immense potential for joint high-tech projects, in particular with regard to threats, challenges and opportunities created by cyberspace. Finally, being members of NATO, several military cooperation projects between Poland and the United States naturally have an allied character.

Poland has been and will be interested in maintaining close ties with the United States. Americans have so many different global interests and objectives that they will always need partners to support their implementation. I believe that due to our geostrategic location and the role that we play in international organizations of import to the United States (especially NATO and the EU), we will

continue to be a key partner for Americans in many matters which they deem critical.

CED: Poland's commitment to a modern, capable defense posture signals a strategic vision missing in other quarters. How can Poland use this

opportunity to assume a greater leadership role within the NATO Alliance?

Gen. Koziej: I believe that already today Poland is an important member state of NATO. Our involvement in the most significant mission of the Alliance — the International Security

Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan — puts us in the position of a tested and reliable partner and ally.

Now, along with all other Alliance member states, we are thinking about what NATO should look like when the ISAF mission is completed. In this discussion, Poland has indicated the need for reconsolidating the Alliance around its core mission — that of collective defense. It is vital, especially now when the United States is shifting its strategic focus to Asia and the Pacific. Poland has confirmed its commitment to the defense function of the Alliance, among others through its fixed rate of defense spending (amounting to 1.95 percent of GDP). It is a level close to what NATO demands, and defense spending has not been cut despite the financial crisis.

Consolidating NATO around tasks pertaining to collective defense is indispensable in order to create the conditions which would allow the Alliance to fulfill all its core tasks, including strengthening its capacity to respond to crises unfolding far from its territory. In an era of globalization, the Alliance

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will have to surmount such challenges. And it will be capable of doing that effectively only if all its members feel equally secure and safe in their own territories. The function of collective defense plays a particularly critical role for NATO's border states, which include Poland and other Central European countries. We are also making an effort to ensure that political declarations concerning the defense function of NATO are accompanied by concrete practical projects. I am thinking, among others, about joint exercises with the participation of troops that take into account scenarios based on Article 5 of the Washington Treaty; the extension and even distribution of allied infrastructure in member states; and a permanent update of contingency plans.

CED: When NATO members convened in Chicago last year, they reiterated their commitment to protecting Europe against the threat of ballistic missile proliferation. How has Poland responded to that pledge; and where do you see Poland contributing to NATO's Ballistic Missile Defense capability?

Gen. Koziej: Let me remind you that the 2011 decision issued by the President of Poland on the main directions for the development of the Polish Armed Forces in the coming decade indicated missile defense as a key modernization priority. As a consequence, in order to support the attainment of such capabilities, the President proposed to introduce a legislative mechanism which would enable the financing of the missile defense system over the next ten years. On February 22, 2013 the law was adopted by the Polish Parliament.

This will allow Poland to become a shareholder in the construction of the allied missile defense system. The Polish system will be our contribution to the NATO project and it will act as its indispensable supplement. Due to its geostrategic

location as a border state of the Alliance, Poland has a particularly strong interest in the completion of the NATO missile defense system according to the adopted schedule. This is also the reason why Poland must be a member of the group of states and be a participant in the projects that will promote the fastest possible construction of the allied system.

Among the requirements that we would like the new missile defense system to meet, we stress in particular compatibility with the allied system, or to formulate it even more broadly: compatibility with the systems of our allies. We also believe that the American EPAA project constitutes an important building block of the allied missile defense system, and within the framework of this project, in 2018, Poland will host on its territory an anti-aircraft missile launcher. We want these projects, by virtue of being complementary, to exert significant influence on the development of missile defense capabilities in Europe.

Polish Defense Modernization in the Era of U.S. Strategic Rebalancing

By Tomasz Szatkowski

One of the leading U.S. experts on security issues in Central Europe, Dr. Andrew Michta, recently called on the Obama Administration to seriously “rethink” its approach to Poland — its biggest ally in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE) — in its second term. One of Dr. Michta’s main arguments is the fact, that Poland is “one of the few countries in Europe that remain serious military players” and should be valued as such by the United States. But does Poland really still matter in an era of U.S. rebalancing to Asia and the Pacific?

Compared to other CEE countries, Poland increasingly stands out as the only one that possesses any considerable defense potential. This cannot be attributed to its size alone. Centuries of titanic and often ill-fated struggle on the crossroads between the largest European and Eurasian powers have created a rich military tradition and strategic culture in Poland. This experience and an awareness of the need to preserve military force as one of the state’s key instruments and its ultimate guarantee for independence have also translated into a political willingness to support robust defense spending. A cross-party compromise from 2001 enforced a fixed formula stipulating that the basic defense budget should constitute at least 1.95 percent of the country’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Even

though actual spending reaches a level of 1.8-1.9 percent of GDP annually, it is still well above the EU average of 1.5-1.6 percent. While the real figures are not impressive (approximately \$10 billion in 2013: roughly between the Taiwanese and the Dutch defense budgets, and the equivalent of two thirds of the Israeli one) they are likely to grow steadily — as much as 50 percent by 2022. According to government plans, during the next decade Poland is going to spend around 130 billion PLN (approximately \$40 billion) solely on defense procurement.

POLAND INCREASINGLY STANDS OUT AS THE ONLY CEE STATE THAT POSSESSES ANY CONSIDERABLE DEFENSE POTENTIAL.

Current prospects for defense modernization, detailed in the December 2012 biennial edition of the rolling 10-year plan, focus on territorial defense rather than on out-of-area capabilities. Of the big ticket programs, only the helicopter and C4I procurement can be seen as serving all types of missions. The top priority (accounting for around 20 percent of the appropriations) is the plan for a complex upgrade of Poland’s air and missile defense capabilities. Another undertaking dealing with classic heavy capability (one that is sometimes seen as competing for priority in budgeting with missile defense) is the “armor program,” which envisions the upgrade and purchase of new tanks and modular tracked platforms rendering the Polish army the heaviest in Europe west of the Bug River. The

artillery is going to receive mobile automatic mortars, heavy long-range precise howitzers and powerful rocket artillery systems of the MLRS standard. Poland is also looking into options for conventional deterrence through a long-range precision strike. The plans to equip its F-16s with stealth AGM-158 JASSM cruise missiles have already been announced, and there is also an interest in purchasing ballistic tactical missiles for MRLS launchers. A discussion is underway on whether the most significant naval procurement program — conventional submarines with revolutionary air-independent propulsion — should also be equipped with tactical missiles.

These plans constitute a significant turn relative to the first decade after Poland's accession to NATO in March 1999, which was largely marked by the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Poland responded to those expeditionary contingencies to the extent it could, rotating altogether approximately 30,000 troops. The rationale behind the Polish involvement was not rooted in a concern about a terrorist threat to the Polish soil, but was rather defined as an investment in transatlantic relations. These missions have certainly served to positively transform some of the post-Warsaw Pact legacy of the Polish military and have geared it for becoming a more efficient ally of the U.S. Armed Forces in their counter-insurgency efforts. At the same time, however, the missions drained Poland's modernization budget.

Meanwhile, old threats have reemerged. Russia, with a defense budget growing manifold as a result of the boom in the fossil fuel market, has become increasingly assertive in its so called "near abroad." The 2008 war in Georgia, the openly confrontational joint Belarusian and Russian military exercises just across the Polish border in 2009, along with the realization that the effective range of the Russian tactical missiles covers at present most of Polish

territory, have undermined the assumption that the end of the Cold War also brought about the "end of history."

The U.S. plan to rebalance toward the Western Pacific and perceptions of decreasing U.S. strategic interest in the CEE region have only heightened Poland's insecurity. There is a fear that the new security concept of NATO, with its reassertion of collective defense and the new contingency plans, will remain only on paper. The security vacuum created by the perception of a U.S. withdrawal from Europe may be filled with new realignments resulting from the growing leadership role of Germany and the uncontested power assertions by Russia. For the United States, one way to retain its role and influence in Europe is to help assuage security concerns in Northern, and Central and Eastern Europe. The symbolic "visible assurances," such as the presence of the U.S. Air-Detachment in Poland and the permanent NATO Baltic Air Policing mission, may not suffice for that purpose. The augmentation of indigenous capabilities in the region remains the only other option.

The success of Poland's defense modernization and the country's ability to serve as a potential security provider in the region is key to such a concept. Ultimately, this lies at the core of Poland's role in European defense and within NATO at the time of the U.S. "rebalancing" toward Asia. The United States should therefore recognize the strategic value of the Polish modernization effort, and should support and encourage the attempt to improve high-intensity capabilities. The first area where Poland could benefit from U.S. assistance is in the improvement of its defense planning and resources management culture, which is currently suffering from deficiencies typical for CEE countries. Secondly, the Polish military would benefit from the transfer of war-fighting know-how from the world's most proficient armed forces through genuine

joint trainings. Last but not least, Washington is in a position to share several critical defense technologies with Poland. American decision-makers will, however, need to take into account the growing Polish appetite for industrial participation in foreign arms procurement, as well as for a more mature control over the acquired technologies (in particular over source codes, service, maintenance and prospective modernization). American companies should think creatively about how to maximize the prospects for U.S.-Polish defense industrial cooperation. So far, the U.S. industrial aerospace and defense presence in Poland has been a success story. The Polish government, in turn, should recognize that the defense economy of a small or medium state does not create the conditions for a comprehensive defense industrial base.

Going forward, it will be important to avoid creating expectations and demands that are not economically sustainable. While Poland needs to take into account its increasingly stronger European ties, it should also not forget that the purchase of U.S. technologies and equipment would strengthen the incentives for even deeper transatlantic defense cooperation in Washington. After all, the first permanent, even if only symbolic, presence of U.S. forces on Polish soil would not have been possible without American equipment — and political will.

Time to Bang the Drums for Steadfast Jazz

By Edward Lucas

NATO's most important exercises in more than 20 years will take place in early November this year. For the first time since the end of the Cold War, the Alliance will practice the territorial defense of its member states: once its sole task, but now one that many thought had become redundant.

NATO portrays the upcoming events rather differently. The official line is that “the primary purpose of the exercise is to certify command and control elements of the NATO Response Force 2014.” This go-anywhere, do-anything force is part of the Alliance’s evolution: conceived as a defensive military block which aimed to prevent a third World War starting in Europe, it now wants to be a flexible, nimble outfit with a wider scope.

But of course that go-anywhere, do-anything mission does not have to be in faraway wars. It could also include defending the Alliance’s Baltic members, who by virtue of their size and location are most vulnerable.

When we wrote about this fall’s exercise — codenamed SFJZ13, or Steadfast Jazz 2013 — in the *Economist* last year, a NATO spokeswoman was quick to [put the record straight](#). Steadfast Jazz is just part of a process, she averred. Seventeen NATO exercises, with elements in 14 different countries, have been held before this one. “The basis is always a fictional scenario involving a fictional opposing force from a fictional country. The goal is to make sure that NRF troops are ready to deal with any situation in any environment. Steadfast Jazz 2013

is not directed against any particular country, any more than its 17 predecessors were.”

From this point of view, it is just a coincidence that Steadfast Jazz is happening at the same time as another drill, Baltic Host, in which Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania rehearse their ability to accept friendly reinforcements. It is also just a coincidence that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are the only members of the Alliance to face a direct threat to their security. And it is a coincidence that Poland — which will provide the largest contingent of troops to SFZ13 — is the NATO member that, according to the Alliance’s secret Eagle Guardian contingency plans, would play the foremost role in reinforcing and defending the Baltic States in a time of crisis.

It is a coincidence too that SFJZ13 follows the sinister Russian-Belarusian joint exercises of 2009, Ladoga and Zapad, in which the Kremlin’s forces rehearsed a response to a notional attack by “Lithuanian nationalists” supported by Poland (an unlikely scenario, when you think about it). This response entailed isolating, invading and occupying the Baltic States, and included the use of battlefield nuclear weapons. To drive the point home, the exercises concluded with a separate Strategic Rocket Forces drill — involving the full might of the Kremlin’s nuclear arsenal — in which the notional target was Warsaw.

The message was clear. Russia is still on the military map of Europe and wants other countries to know it. That was a big wake-up call for NATO. It punctured much of the remaining optimism in

the Alliance about the scope for friendly post-Cold War relations with Russia. It might be an overstatement to say that this year's Steadfast Jazz is a direct response to the Kremlin's saber-rattling in 2009. But it is clear that SFJZ13 could have never happened without it. Had Russia stayed peaceful and friendly, nobody would have seen the need to rehearse a response to potential territorial aggression. Even the most dovish NATO members can no longer resist the idea that the new member states of the Alliance do need defending, and that a military threat from Russia, at least in principle, does exist. And so defense planners can get on with their jobs without being distracted by flocks of doves hovering nervously over their maps.

One more coincidence is that Russia is now planning another round of fall exercises in the region. Whereas SFJZ13 planners are painfully transparent with the Kremlin (too much so, mutter some), the gesture is not reciprocated. NATO's Secretary General, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, publicly bemoaned this on his recent visit to Lithuania.

It is hard even for insiders to make sense of all these supposed coincidences. If you search via NATO's home page, the only entry about Steadfast Jazz is in French, (a terse mention in the 2012 Chicago Summit communiqué). Google-savvy searchers will find the same text in English. Those who really know NATO well can try looking on the [website](#) of the Allied Joint Force Command Brunssum, which provides four more brief entries. But many politicians and officials seem highly reluctant to talk about the subject in any detail.

As a result, SFJZ13's public profile is vanishingly low. Although the information-management aspect of

the exercise is supposedly being discussed, nothing has come of it so far. The thinking seems to be that the public would not like any whiff of old Cold War-style military maneuvers. Public opinion in Europe has a pacifist tinge. And military exercises are costly. Overburdened tax-payers hard-hit by austerity might think that the cost of the exercise (still undisclosed) is too high. So, the thinking goes, let's pretend that nothing much is happening.

MANY POLITICIANS AND OFFICIALS SEEM HIGHLY RELUCTANT TO TALK ABOUT STEADFAST JAZZ IN ANY DETAIL. BUT KEEPING QUIET WOULD BE A MISTAKE.

Yet keeping quiet would be a mistake. For a start, portraying the timing, nature and location of SFJZ13 as a series of coincidences is implausible. But it also

misses an opportunity. The exercise offers a chance to make a number of points that the public in the United States, Europe and Russia needs to hear.

Perhaps the most important one is that America is still in the business of promoting and ensuring European security. Although the United States is withdrawing some of its forces from Europe, those that remain are a formidable force. Amid much talk of American weakness, of the damaging conflation of "partners" and "allies," of the toxic legacy of failure in Iraq and Afghanistan, of shrinking defense budgets, of the "pivot" to Asia, of impatience with European stinginess on military spending, of broken promises to allies on missile defense and other issues, and of all manner of other woes and whinges, real and imagined, SFJZ13 shows that the basis of the NATO Alliance is still strong. It is thanks to the Obama Administration that the Baltic States and the other new members have contingency plans. It is also thanks to the Obama Administration that those plans are now being rehearsed (which is what is happening, regardless of what NATO may claim in public). Whatever the gripes of the past

and worries about the future, SFJZ13 is a sign that the Alliance remains in good health.

Shyness about this is misplaced. The fundamental rationale for NATO is deterrence based on collective defense. The more aware potential aggressors are that if they pick on even the weakest member of the Alliance, they are also picking a fight with America, the less likely they are to try to engage in even the most minor mischief, let alone start a war.

STEADFAST JAZZ IS A SIGN THAT THE NATO ALLIANCE REMAINS IN GOOD HEALTH.

The second big point to make is that Russia now presents a serious problem. Part of this is internal. Russia's rulers regard NATO as an aggressive military alliance, which is sad. They waste their taxpayers' money on military preparedness against a mythical enemy. They believe that NATO expansion was a plot designed to encircle their country, and to restrict its influence in its own front yard. (That the countries of that "front yard" might have their own views and worries seemingly never crosses Russian officials' minds).

This confused mind-set is a problem chiefly for Russia. But it affects and damages neighboring countries too. The Kremlin clearly retains a desire to meddle in their affairs, whether through the injection of money into politics, through psychological warfare, through the abuse of energy and other trade ties, or even (as 2009 showed) through military saber-rattling. Russia's behavior has a particularly bad effect in the Baltic States. Kremlin mischief-making undermines the position of local Russian-speakers, who risk being treated

as a Fifth Column even if they engage in perfectly legitimate political bargaining. It rattles decision-makers and raises the likelihood that they say and do stupid things as a result. It creates an impression in other countries that the Baltic States are a "problem," and perhaps not fully integrated into the rest of the European and Atlantic world.

SFJZ13 draws attention to the problem stemming from Russia. But it also helps mitigate it. It shows that NATO is real and that the Baltic States are real members, for which allies are willing to make real sacrifices. That is a thoroughly helpful message.

The exercise will also have positive effects in Finland and Sweden. These countries are worried about Russia too. They know that their security starts not on their own borders, but on the Baltic States' borders with Russia and Belarus. Any threat to the Baltic States is a threat to all of Europe, and particularly to the countries in the immediate neighborhood. Steadfast Jazz offers a chance for Sweden and Finland to think about their own defense cooperation, and for politicians to explain to their voters that, sadly, it is time to take territorial defense seriously.

A third important message pertains to Poland's role. Some voices there worry about committing too much of the Polish armed forces to the defense of the Baltic States, when their core task is at home. A futile and corrosive row with Lithuania stoked such feelings. So does the lamentably low defense spending in both Latvia and Lithuania. (Estonia, alone among the new EU member states, commits a full two percent of its GDP to defense, putting it just ahead of Poland, which is the other serious spender). But SFJZ13 underlines Poland's new role as the regional heavyweight. Its strategic calculations should transcend the difficulties of bilateral relations with some of its neighbors. And this exercise demonstrates exactly that. Any

attempt to drive a wedge between Poland and its smaller and weaker neighbors will not succeed.

Many other points can be made too: about the significant contributions from some countries elsewhere in NATO (such as France); about the lamentably small ones from others (e.g. Germany); about the need to highlight the nature of the 2009 Russian and Belarusian exercises; about the scope for further integration of the EU and NATO, and the need for follow-up. But the central message is simple. SFJZ13 is neither secret nor shameful. It is commendable both in its notional and its practical objective. Those involved should stop mumbling and start celebrating it.

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