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Szef BBN dla Newsweek: Zależy nam na utrzymaniu jedności Zachodu wobec kryzysu

Polska zwiększając nakłady na obronność chce dawać przykład sojusznikom z NATO. Zależy nam także na utrzymywaniu jedności Zachodu wobec kryzysu bezpieczeństwa - mówił szef BBN minister Stanisław Koziej rozmowie z europejską edycją Newsweeka. Szef BBN odnosił się także do przygotowań Polski i NATO do nowych wyzwań, w tym konfliktów hybrydowych, walce informacyjnej z Rosją, a także współpracy obronnej ze wschodnioeuropejskimi partnerami.

The logo for Newsweek, featuring the word "Newsweek" in a bold, red, sans-serif font.

Poland Prepares for 'Hybrid War' Amidst Russian Threat

Poland is facing a security crisis in the wake of the war in neighbouring Ukraine, and has the potential to become embroiled in a "hybrid war" with Russia - involving propaganda and "information aggression" - according to one of Poland's most senior generals Stanisław Koziej.

General Koziej, who heads the Polish president's National Security Bureau has called on western allies to follow Warsaw's example and increase their security spending in a bid to reverse a dangerous downward decline, as Russia continues to add to its arsenal.

"In the past, defense budgets of most NATO countries have been decreasing, while Russia's army expenditures have been growing. This dangerous and alarming trend must be stopped," General Koziej says.

"During the last NATO summit in Newport we decided to enlarge our defence budget to at least two percent GDP since 2016, which of course is related to the security crisis we are facing now and the need to ensure realization of the most important programs of army modernization," Koziej adds.

According to the general, Poland has also become the target of "Russian information aggression and propaganda" with Russian state-broadcasts and information resources frequently accusing Poland of military intervention in Ukraine.

Meanwhile Russia has denied evidence that the Russian speaking militants in Ukraine's eastern Donbas region are backed by the Kremlin, despite mounting evidence of thousands of Russian soldiers based near the Ukrainian

border going missing since the summer, as Ukrainian reports of Russian military crossing into Ukrainian territory have continued.

“There is a negative image of Poland being created in Russian society,” General Koziej adds. “An example of such pressure was the recent declaration of moving Iskander rockets to Kaliningrad region, that is to the Polish borders. A few days ago a Russian document on annexation of Crimea stated that Poland backed up Maidan revolution by training Ukrainian fighters, which naturally is not true, but has built a certain image of Poland in Russian society.”

Although Koziej believes Poland’s membership to NATO since 1999 acts as a deterrent to Russia openly attacking the EU member state, the same is not true of the more underhand tactics of hybrid war, which combine public misinformation, propaganda and internal sabotage with conventional warfare.

“In case of an open, regular aggression on our territory I am positive that the defense would be made by NATO within article 5 of the Washington Treaty. We cannot be that certain in case of threats under the threshold of war - hidden aggression, diversion, which cannot be disregarded since Russian annexation of Crimea,” Koziej says, referring to the misinformation media campaign which surrounded Russia’s armed annexation of Crimea.

“That is why not only we prepare ourselves for such threats, but also we try to convince NATO to build the capacities to cope with them.”

Asked if such acts of “hybrid aggression” included Russian espionage, Koziej said that the nature of such information was “naturally secret” but added “I can say that espionage as a hybrid war element is a serious threat nowadays”.

Recently the former head of Czech military intelligence Andor Šándor said that Russia had “definitely” increased its espionage efforts in its former communist ally states since the start of the Ukraine conflict.

Over the last year Poland has announced measures to crackdown on possible threats to its security as \$42 billion will be spent on modernizing its military equipment over the next decade. A shift of units to its eastern territories, which border Russia’s Baltic Kaliningrad enclave, as well as Moscow-aligned Belarus and war-stricken Ukraine has been planned to begin in 2017.

Poland has also agreed the creation of a three way joint-military unit with former-Soviet Republics Lithuania and Ukraine, the official language of which will be English. The Polish Ministry of Defence have also offered to repair Soviet-era Bulgarian military equipment in a bid to avoid its NATO ally from sending it to Russia.

While the country is by far one of the biggest critics of Russia’s foreign policy, Koziej believes Warsaw has no interest in dictating security in eastern Europe but rather it simply wishes to lead by example.

“Poland does not want to take over the leadership in the Mid-Eastern Europe, but tries to show other countries on the eastern flank of NATO on its own example how to act to keep the unity of the West.”

As part of NATO’s eastern reinforcement strategy Poland will develop rapid response facilities as will five other eastern European states, while NATO’s main outpost behind the former-Iron Curtain is in Szczecin, western Poland.

“What is the most important for Poland is to keep the unity of the western countries towards the current crisis, and to strengthen European Union in the security field,” the general adds.

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