

Poland Unveils US Patriot Missile Battery

By [Global Research](#)

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UPDATE - Defence Minister Bogdan Klich was among the dignitaries officially welcoming the US Patriot missile battery in Poland, Wednesday, along with around 100 American troops, stationed in the northern town of Morąg.

The ceremony, at 13.00 CET, Wednesday, was attended by U.S. Ambassador to Poland, Lee Feinstein and director of U.S. Army logistics operations in Europe, Brigadier General Mark Bellini.

“Placing the Patriot batteries in Poland makes the country more secure and contributes to Poland’s cooperation with the U.S,” Minister Klich told the delegates at the ceremony. Klich said that it is important that American troops will be deployed in Poland. “The more America and Europe in Poland, the more Poland in American and European politics,” he said.

The US 5th Battalion arrived from the U.S. base in Germany at the weekend. Since then troops have been unloading and assembling the Patriots, the stationing of which in Poland was initially agreed between Warsaw and Washington during the previous Bush administration. The details were finalized when the two sides signed the Supplemental Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) in February this year.

Strengthening short-and medium-range air defense was a condition put on the negotiations on Poland’s participation in the US central European missile defense program, subsequently cancelled by Barack Obama in September last year.

Russian protest

The missile battery, just 60 kilometers from the Russian Kaliningrad border, has brought strong condemnation from Moscow.

According to sources at the Foreign Affairs Ministry in the Kremlin, cited by today’s Russian media, the placement of the American missile battery in Morąg, “does not serve the strengthening of the region’s general security or the development of mutual trust and predictability in the region”.

Russia’s Foreign Ministry also repeats that it finds it difficult to understand the reasoning behind the cooperation between the United States and Poland on this issue.

“We regret to say that our questions towards the Polish and American sides have been left unanswered. As have our arguments for moving the region of the temporary placement of the battery farther away from the Russian border,” stress the sources in the information department at the Russian Foreign Ministry.

A spokesman from Russia's foreign ministry, again unnamed, told Bloomberg: "It's not clear why they need Patriot missiles]. This is an anti-aircraft system. There's an element of anti-missile defense, but not very big."

Poland defence minister tried to reassure Russian opinion at the ceremony in northern Poland today, however.

"Patriot batteries are not a threat to our neighbours. Poland does not treat Russia as a threat. We have good relations with each of our neighbors. We are modernizing our air defense system and other systems in the Polish Army because we are a member of NATO and the European Union," said Minister Klich.

A delegation from Russia's foreign affairs committee will be in Warsaw, Thursday, for talks with acting president Bronislaw Komorowski. "Of course, we will discuss key issues of Russian-Polish relations, including the Patriot problem," head of the committee, Konstantin Kosachev told the Russia 24 TV news channel. (pg/di)

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