

Lt. Gen. Tim Ray, U.S. European Command (As Delivered, 30 Jan 2017 Zagan, Poland)

Mr. President, Mr. Ambassador, Mr. Minister, Generals and other dignitaries, on behalf of General Curtis Scaparrotti, the Commander of U.S. European Command, thank you for the invitation to be here today.

We are humbled and honored to have such a great friendship with the Polish people. It was heart-warming to see the unity of our alliance during the pro-U.S.-Poland events these past few weeks. Our first response to Poland after Russia's invasion into Ukraine was to send a clear message to the region by rapidly bolstering the Aviation Detachment here with increased fighter aircraft. During my visit here last year, I was humbled at the clear sense of deep gratitude by the Polish people and their constant thanks and appreciation at how rapidly we responded.

Following the events in 2014, the Trans-Atlantic declarations from the Wales and Warsaw Summits, demonstrate the indivisibility and unity of the Alliance in light of Russia's invasion into Ukraine. These events forged a commitment, and a plan, to build our defense and deterrence posture in Europe.

We've increased the Naval, Air and Land efforts for Operation Atlantic Resolve across the region. Now, these Iron Soldiers of the Third Armored Brigade Combat Team send a clear signal of our commitment as they round out our joint team's capability in a very significant way as the beginning of our heel to toe presence going forward. It is very good to have armor back in Europe... Know that we heard you and we're here.

As our new Secretary of Defense said, the Alliance's defense of our shared values is important and always starts with Europe. Know that United States European Command is committed to ensuring regional responsiveness. The thousands of Iron Soldiers here are a key part of our joint land, naval, air, space and cyberspace team. Please be assured the full weight of the US military stands behind these sentinels of freedom.

This Alliance is the most successful defensive alliance in history and I'm glad we're on the same team. However, no single nation can combat global threats alone. We must collectively work together to share information, share experiences, and maintain regional stability. Know that our commitment to defense is rock-solid; and, we must maintain the territorial integrity of our Alliance and maintain a Europe that is whole, free, prosperous, and at peace.