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U.S. Base Will Turn Poland Into Potential Target, Russian Senator Warns

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Rafael Marchante / Reuters

A senior Russian senator has warned that Poland could become a prime target in a possible East-West conflict if it stationed a permanent NATO military base.

Poland has offered to pay the United States $2 billion to house a permanent military installation to deter "potential Russian aggression," according to a defense ministry proposal reported on by Poland's Onet.pl news portal. Poland has temporarily hosted more than 1,100 NATO soldiers, including U.S. troops, south of Russia's exclave of Kaliningrad for over a year as the Western military alliance shied away from deploying permanent military capabilities on the Russian frontier.

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"Poland becomes the object of a retaliatory strike by placing the base," Vladimir Dzhabarov,

first deputy head of the Federation Council's Foreign Affairs committee, told the RBC business portal Monday.

He warned that a permanent NATO installation "makes Poland one of the main targets in case of a possible conflict."

Analysts attributed the Polish defense ministry's proposal — reportedly sent to Washington without clearance from the foreign ministry or the president — to Poland's distrust of its European allies in a potential conflict with Russia, RBC reported.

"The closer they get to NATO, the more endangered Poland's very existence becomes," Senator Dzhabarov warned.

The Kremlin warned that the proposed U.S. base would pose a security risk to the region.

"When we see the gradual expansion of NATO military structures towards our borders..., this of course in no way creates security and stability on the continent," Dmitry Peskov told reporters on a conference call on Monday.

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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