
WHY IS POLAND WASHINGTON'S CHOICE FOR ITS IRAN-FOCUSED GLOBAL SUMMIT?

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US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, on his eight-country tour of the Middle East, announced a global summit to address the threat posed by the Iranian regime, bringing together countries from across the world. But the gathering will take place in a less high-profile location than usual □ Warsaw.

Poland's capital will be the place where dozens of countries are to gather at the February 13-14 meeting to focus on Middle East stability and peace and freedom and security here in this region, Mr Pompeo said on Friday.

But why Poland and not traditional US allies such as Britain, France or Germany?

Poland, led by a right-wing populist government, is a long-standing American ally that has better relations with US President Donald Trump than other European powers such as Germany and France.

Mr Trump has criticised a series of European leaders and Washington even moved to downgrade the EU's missions diplomatic status in the US last week, without informing Brussels.

A State Department spokesman acknowledged that Poland, like other European nations, supports the international accord which Mr Trump abandoned last year on ending Iran's nuclear programme.

The Warsaw meeting "sends an important signal that countries with differing views on the nuclear deal can come together to address other critical issues in the region," the spokesman said.

Iran poured scorn on the meeting and pointed out that the country, then impoverished after invasion by Britain and the Soviet Union, welcomed more than 100,000 Polish refugees during World War II.

"Polish Govt can't wash the shame: while Iran saved Poles in WWII, it now hosts a desperate anti-Iran circus," Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif tweeted.

Polish Foreign Minister Jacek Czaputowicz appeared unfazed by the backlash from Tehran, saying that while his country supported the EU's efforts to maintain the nuclear deal, the agreement "does not stop Iran from activities destabilising the region". He said he hoped the conference would bring the EU and US positions closer together.

He also said more than 70 countries were invited to the conference, including all EU members.

It appears that Warsaw has hedged its bets by siding with Washington. The US has 900 troops in Poland on a Nato rotation and Warsaw has requested that America establish a permanent military base as a bulwark against Russia.

Polish President Andrzej Duda joked at a news conference with the American leader that the base could be called Fort Trump. The US president has since ordered a review of the costs of American troops being stationed in Germany, a sign that he may pivot to eastern Europe.

So, by hosting this summit on behalf of the US, Poland looks like it stands to gain in more ways than one as long as Mr Trump remains in office.

Kaynak/Source: