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Defense Orientation Conference Association



June 2014

DOCA's Hungary & Poland Visit Overview

Sixteen DOCA members recently visited Hungary and Poland for a firsthand look at their contributions to NATO and their strategic relationship with the U.S. Included in the group were new member Sean Slatter from Layton, UT and prospective member Warren Luke from Honolulu, HI.

The program began in Budapest on 15 May with a visit to the U.S. Embassy to discuss U.S.-Hungary security and defense issues followed by meetings with the Hungarian Ministry of Defense and the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs. That evening, Chargé d' Affaires André Goodfriend hosted our group at his home for a reception and follow-on discussions.

The next morning, we continued our discussion with the Hungarian Institute of International Affairs along with the Center for Strategic and Defense Studies. Mr. Peter Kreko, Director of the Political Capital Institute, capped off the morning. Then it was back to the U.S. Embassy for a working lunch and in-depth discussions with the Defense Attaché, Office of Defense Cooperation and the Press Attaché. Our schedule allowed for a short visit late in the afternoon to the Budapest History Museum. On Saturday morning we flew to Warsaw, Poland where we spent the remainder of the weekend. Monday started with a visit to the Polish 1st Armored Brigade where we learned about their mission and were offered a close up look at their tanks and other equipment. In the afternoon, we visited with the U.S. Embassy where we discussed not only Poland's relationship with the U.S. but the ongoing crisis in Ukraine and implications for the broader region.

Tuesday morning we drove through the Polish countryside to the historic city of Krakow, which is well-preserved due to being spared from extensive bombing during the second World War. The next day was spent with the Polish 6th Airborne Brigade, the proud successor of the Polish 1st Airborne Division that participated in Operation Market Garden during World War II. The program involved briefings, lively Q&A, lunch with the brigade, demonstrations of their training and static displays of all of their equipment. That evening, a wrap-up dinner at a local restaurant provided an opportunity to compare notes on what we had learned throughout the trip.

Finally, on Thursday, most members of the group stayed to participate in optional guided tours of the famous Wieliczka Salt Mine and the Auschwitz Concentration Camp before flying home on Friday to observe the Memorial Day weekend.