

First NATO Warplanes Land in Estonia



Tallinn, May 1 (RHC)-- Four Danish F-16 warplanes have touched down in Estonia, marking the first time NATO aircraft are stationed in one of Russia's neighboring countries. The aircraft, accompanied by a 60-strong supporting team, landed on Wednesday in the Amari air base in the west of the Baltic state.

During a welcoming ceremony for the warplanes, Estonian Prime Minister Taavi said he is convincing NATO allies to "stay in Estonia" as the "work on the security of Estonia and Europe is far from over."

Estonian defense forces spokesman Roland Murof said that before the arrival of the Danish warplanes NATO's sole Baltic air base was in northern Lithuania. Earlier this week, 150 US troops arrived in Estonia.

Poland has sent four MiG-29 aircraft to Lithuania, Britain contributed four Typhoon fighter jets and France deployed four Rafale jets to Poland. The deployment of NATO forces is part of the military alliance's bid to strengthen its presence in Eastern Europe.

NATO also plans to augment its air defenses and carry out military exercises in East European countries. NATO's expanded military presence comes against the backdrop of the crisis in Ukraine.



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