

# National Security Bureau

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## Opening address by President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda at the 1st Session of the North Atlantic Council

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Mr. Secretary General,

Excellencies,

Distinguished Guests,

**It is my great honor and pleasure to welcome you all to Poland.** I am proud that Warsaw – the city that represents **vitality** and **creativity** of the Polish People but also the complicated history of my Homeland – is hosting us at this very special moment for the North Atlantic Alliance.

Since the end of the Cold War, we have come a long way, and secured peace and stability within our transatlantic community. We've been successful because we firmly believe that **every nation has the right to enjoy the benefits of democracy, liberty and economic growth**, based on **international law** and **mutual respect**. Today, those values are yet again being undermined by threats and challenges, some of which Europe has not seen for decades.

We are witnessing the policy of aggression and notorious lack of respect for international law, internal sovereignty and territorial integrity. Military conflicts generate regional instability, as well as new waves of threats, such as terrorism and hybrid warfare. **These challenges affect the citizens of every single member state.**

Today our people expect us to fulfill our commitments and obligations. That is why the Summit needs to bring **stability in times of uncertainty, demonstrate our unity in times of divisions** and **ensure security in times of threats.**

In order to meet those expectations, **the Alliance must once again focus on its core task, which is collective defense.** We have to stay united and demonstrate solidarity, while adapting a long-term changes in the security environment. We were successful in making the first step in that regard two years ago in Wales. At the time, the Readiness Action Plan was put in place to improve our response capabilities. **But now we have to find a proper answer to the current situation.**

This answer must build on the conviction, that **providing security to the Allies is not a single act. It is an ongoing process.** Today we need to make another step by establishing **multinational, enhanced forward presence** to **strengthen NATO's defense and deterrence at the eastern flank.** The Alliance must be able to fully confirm the principle of the indivisibility of its security.

As to the southern dimension of the Alliance, we need a **coherent strategy** that would allow us to effectively face the challenges at hand. Stability of the Euro-Atlantic region depends on security beyond our borders. While

we should stand by our defense commitments, **we must enhance cooperation with all our partners**, both in the eastern and southern neighborhood, supporting their resilience and defense capabilities. **NATO should maintain its open door policy** and I'm happy that the Prime Minister of Montenegro is here with us.

Having said that, we need to be mindful of the fact that it is not a particular state or a particular nation which poses a threat to our common security. **It is the policy of aggression and lack of respect for human dignity.**

**We are not surrounded by enemies. We are surrounded by challenges. We need to tackle them not only through defense and deterrence but also through dialogue.** Therefore, we remain ready to talk to anyone who shares this attitude. At the same time, we stand firmly by our values in a belief that the dialogue cannot compromise either peace, or principles of the international law.

Dear colleagues,

Today, as the leaders of democratic nations, we bear special responsibility before our people. **The responsibility to make sure that they can feel safe, that they can prosper, that they can live in peace.** My strong belief is that our efforts during the upcoming two days will produce the **necessary decisions** to fulfill this commitment.

Last but not least, let me thank you Mr. Secretary General, dear Jens, and the entire NATO team, for your leadership and determination in the run-up to our meeting.

**Let me wish all of us a fruitful and meaningful Summit.**

**Thank you very much.**

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