National Security Bureau

In a letter to NATO, the leaders of Lithuania, Poland and Latvia warn about the threat posed by developments in Belarus

We are writing as NATO Allies bordering Russia and Belarus. The cooperation of the two states has deteriorated the security of our region and that of the entire Euro–Atlantic area. The Belarussian territory and its resources have been used by Russia in its illegal and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine.

Heads of State and Government
Secretary General
of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

Your Excellencies,

We are writing as NATO Allies bordering Russia and Belarus. The cooperation of the two states has deteriorated the security of our region and that of the entire Euro–Atlantic area. The Belarussian territory and its resources have been used by Russia in its illegal and brutal war of aggression against Ukraine. This has been possible as a result of the ever closer military integration of these two states. Its recent manifestation has been the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons on the territory of Belarus. It presents an escalatory move in the context of the war in Ukraine and a direct threat to the security of our community. This is yet another flagrant violation of the NATO–Russia Founding Act and a living proof that this document is no longer in force.

A matter of our grave concern and the one which we should monitor closely is the presence of Wagner Group mercenaries and their leader Y. Prigozhin in Belarus. It generates risks for political stability in Belarus and in consequence a potential loss of control over conventional and nuclear weapons in Belarus. Moreover, Y. Prigozhin's failed coup proves an increasingly disruptive potential of private military companies in Russia. They have long been destabilizing Africa and the Middle East and may act in a similar vein in Russia thus making it even less predictable. A. Lukashenko, supported by V. Putin, has been intensifying his hybrid operation designed to provoke a humanitarian crisis on the borders of Belarus, Poland, Lithuania and Latvia. For over 2 years Belarusian regime has been encouraging massive migrant flows from Africa and Asia, luring migrants with a promise of an easy and illegal entry into the EU. This is a road of no return for them, as those willing to withdraw are beaten and tortured by the Belarussian security forces. The failure of Prigozhin's attempted mutiny may be compensated by further fueling the migrant crisis and aggravating human suffering.

Today, ahead of the NATO summit in Vilnius, we need solidarity and unity to counter all threats in line with the 360–degree principle. Including those brought about by recent developments in Belarus. We must show Russia that we see and understand them and that we are ready to use all possible means to counter them. The Belarussian nation needs our reassurance, namely they need to know that a democratic, stable and prosperous Belarus is important to us. And that it will not be possible with Belarus being subdued by Russia and exploited by the Kremlin's infighting. Therefore, the actions that we propose will not only improve Allied security, but will also

correspond with the democratic aspirations of the Belarussian nation.

Our course of actions should comprise: 1) review of nuclear deterrence and its adaptation to new realities, 2) inclusion in the military adaptation of conventional threats emanating from Belarus, 3) filling army prepositioned stocks on the Eastern Flank, 4) raising defence spending beyond 2 percent of GDP and aligning it with NATO priorities, 5) increasing Allied resilience against hybrid threats.

We hope that our bilateral and regional cooperation will contribute to NATO taking those objectives forward.

Andrzej Duda, President of the Republic of Poland

Gitanas Nausėda, President of the Republic of Lithuania

Egils Levits, President of the Republic of Latvia

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