

National Security Bureau

<https://en.bbn.gov.pl/en/news/831,Speech-by-the-President-at-the-Verkhovna-Rada.html>

16.07.2025, 03:45

25.05.2022

Speech by the President at the Verkhovna Rada

President: I thank you today for defending Europe from the invasion of barbarity and new Russian imperialism, for showing tyrants their place, for proving that the spirit of a free nation is stronger!

Volodymyr,

Dear Friend,

How can I speak now when I am almost overcome with emotion?

Thank you from the bottom of my heart,

Volodymyr,

Let me thank you on behalf of Rzeszów, its inhabitants, on behalf of the Podkarpacie region, the entire borderland stretch with Ukraine, on behalf of the people of that region, on behalf of all Poles. Thank you so much for those wonderful words. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!

Shtshe ne vmerla Ukrainy y slava y vola,

Shtshe nam, bratchiya Ukraintsy, usmyhnetsiya dola.

Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła,

kiedy my żyjemy,

co nam obca przemoc wzięła,

szablą odbierzemy.

Distinguished President, Dear Friend, Volodymyr,

Honourable Chairman,

Ladies and Gentlemen of the Verkhovna Rada,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Dear Guests,

Dear Ukrainian Friends!

I am today in a beautiful proud city of Kyiv, the capital of free, independent, democratic Ukraine, which for almost 90 days has been putting up heroic resistance to barbaric aggression. I was here also on 23 February, just a few hours before Russian invasion began. I was there to support Ukraine and its people at an extremely difficult time, and to assure you that Poland would never leave Ukraine alone.

I was also here just over one month ago with the Presidents of the Baltic states – Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia – your country's friends of long standing, to discuss tangible means of assistance once to you.

But at the time of that visit in Kyiv in the first half of April, I also visited Borodyanka and Irpin. I saw the traces of crime with my own eyes. I saw the enormity of human misery. I saw suffering. I saw anguish, I saw houses

demolished, I saw unspeakable tragedy of your people. I know what atrocious deeds were perpetrated in Bucha, and in other places by barbaric invaders.

They must be held accountable for what they have done before international tribunals! This is an absolute must if the world is to be a just world! If the world is genuinely to be free!

But despite the widespread devastation, despite most horrible crimes, despite the great suffering that the Ukrainian people experience each day, the Russian invaders have never managed to break you. They have never succeeded. And, I trust, they will never succeed.

And I want to say it forcefully: the free world today has the face of Ukraine!

As President of the Republic of Poland, I have the honour of addressing you – representatives of Ukrainian people – in the Ukrainian Parliament, in the place where the heart of free, independent and democratic Ukraine beats. This is a distinct privilege and honour. I take it as a generous gesture of friendship towards Poland and the Polish people, something I appreciate wholeheartedly. Thank you, Friends.

Honourable Deputies,
Distinguished Guests,
but first, and foremost,
Volodymyr,
Distinguished President,
Honourable Chairman!

By the works of history Ukraine and Poland have a unique political opportunity ahead of them as two kindred nations from the same part of Europe.

Mr President, Volodymyr!

You have pointed out yourself that together we are more than 80 million people strong and that together we are more powerful. We must not waste this opportunity.

Dear Ukrainian Friends!

I would like to let you know that your loved Ones: spouses, parents, children, grandchildren, those millions of people who had to leave Ukraine, fleeing the tragedy of war, also to Poland – are not refugees in our country. They are our guests.

I assure you that they are safe in Polish homes while you are fighting with such bravery to defend your country's independence. They will be safe to return to their home country once you have defeated the Russian occupiers, I firmly believe this to be the case.

By a unique paradox, such a great evil that has been inflicted by the invaders on Ukraine – has unleashed on the other side such great good. I trust the goodness, the friendships made between millions of Poles and Ukrainians will mean we will be good neighbours forever now. This is a great historic opportunity and the great historic break-through.

Mr. President, Volodymyr
Mr Chairman of the Verkhovna Rada!

I am standing here before the Verkhovna Rada as the President of Poland to express our thanks, I stress: I stand

to express our thanks to you. So far you have been thanking us. You say that Poland has opened its borders for 3.5 million Ukrainian refugees and became home to more than 2 million. It is true. You say that Poland has supplied Ukraine with huge numbers of tanks, armoured vehicles, missile launchers, weapons, munitions worth almost US\$ 2 billion and that Poland keeps telling others that Ukraine must have the support of the free world. That is true.

You say that Poland comes to assistance and has not been intimidated by Russian threats from Moscow. It is also true. You say that Poland has opened its borders and has given Ukrainians the same rights as Poles and has admitted your children to its schools. This is also true.

However, we are not the heroes. It is You who are the heroes.

I am saying this with a sense of pride: Poland offered Ukraine support, because we believed in you, and we still believe in you. Many months ahead of the outbreak of the war I was sure that Ukraine would put up effective resistance to Russia; that it will be like a protagonist of the poem written by your illustrious Ivan Franko; 'dukh shtshylo rve do boyiu, rve za postup, shtshastyi voliu'.



I thank you today for defending Europe from the invasion of barbarity and new Russian imperialism, for showing tyrants their place, for proving that the spirit of a free nation is stronger!

You have shown, Ukraine, that you are – as your national anthem has it – of Cossack stock! You are magnificent!

Let me now address your soldiers – the Ukrainian soldiers serving in Ukrainian Armed Forces, in the National Guard, in Territorial Defence units, the heroic defenders of Mariupol, including those who are currently in Russian captivity, and those who fiercely resist the invaders all along the frontline.

You are Ukraine's heroes. But you are also heroes of Poland, of Europe and of the whole world.

We thank you wholeheartedly! Please accept our great respect. Profound respect, on behalf of the Polish people, I thank you wholeheartedly, I thank you for your resistance, for your dedication, for your courage, for your love of freedom and home country. This will be the source of your victory. We firmly believe in it.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Enemies on many occasions tried to play us off against each other, to turn us against one another. Also today they attempt to do so by scaring Poles with Ukrainians, and Ukrainians – with Poles. To this end, they exploit painful strains from our mutual past, from our history. But they will not achieve their goal! We have come to know such methods too well. We know that tensions in the Polish-Ukrainian relations serve foreign interests only. And act to our detriment: Poles' and Ukrainians' alike.

We have mutually committed numerous errors and we have a paid high price for it.

This was pointed out during his stay in Ukraine, in Lviv, by Pope John Paul II, an ardent advocate of peace and

Polish-Ukrainian reconciliation. Let me recall his memorable words:

“May the purification of historical memories lead everyone to work for the triumph of what unites over what divides, in order to build together a future of mutual respect, fraternal cooperation and true solidarity.”

So said John Paul II in Lviv.

Today more than ever we are living this message together. And we need to continue to do so on the basis of truth and mutual respect. During my recent visit to Vatican, not a long time ago, I laid two wreaths on the tomb of Saint John Paul II: one white and red, and another blue-and-yellow. I prayed together with my spouse with our colleagues, with Polish people happened to be in St Peter’s Basilica, and also with Ukrainians present there, in the intention of a free, independent and sovereign Ukraine which will live in friendship together with a free, sovereign and independent Poland, in the intention of happiness and mutual cooperation between our states and nations, in the intention of us all, of your families, in the intention of peace and friendship and a secure future.

Dear Friends,

It is for the sake of secure future that the Ukrainian people have been heroically fighting against the Russian invaders for three months now. Many countries, many experts, the world media predicted that it would be a quick and victorious war for Russia, that Kyiv would fall in a matter of three days. But they could not be more wrong. It did not fall in three, not in 33, nor in 53, nor in 83 days! And it will not fall! It will not fall! I have no doubts about it!

And when almost everyone else, persuaded that Kyiv would fall, evacuated their embassies from here, the Polish Ambassador Bartosz Cichocki, remained in Kyiv. He was here with you during the bombing and attack on Kyiv, and he is with me here now. Thank you Mr. Ambassador, thank you for representing the Republic of Poland with dignity where it is most needed. My wholehearted thanks!

Ladies and Gentlemen!

The victorious battle of Kyiv, the victorious battle of Kharkiv, the heroic defence of Mariupol have gone down the chapters of history, never to be erased. Ukraine has shown the whole world that it can stand up to imperial Russia. Nobody else believed it to be possible, but it has happened, and it is happening! Russia has failed to achieve any of its strategic objectives in full. It has suffered enormous losses and continues to do so. This is a great success for the Ukrainian state, a great success of the Ukrainian Armed Forces, and this is a great success of Ukrainian authorities, your great success, for the whole nation!

The western world has rallied around Ukraine. Much credit in this respect goes to the United States and the leadership of President Joe Biden. In a situation of real danger, it is confirmed that strong American leadership is needed in the world. Kyiv is a place from which one can clearly see that we need more America in Europe, equally in military and in economic terms. Unfortunately, also in Europe in recent days, now and then, one has been hearing disconcerting voices suggesting that Ukraine should give in to Putin’s demands.



Let me make it very clear: only Ukraine has the right to decide about its future. Only Ukraine has the right to decide for itself!

The world, the international community should demand from Russia to cease its aggression, to completely withdraw from the territory of Ukraine, to stop violating international law. Any negotiations and decisions taken the over Ukraine's head are out of question! Nothing about you without you! Absolutely! And this is an iron rule! It must be observed!

Today it is not you, it is the Western world that stands a test of its credibility and whether its values really mean anything. If for the sake of peace and quiet, economic gains or political ambitions, Ukraine is sacrificed in any dimension; be it an inch of its territory, a small piece of its sovereignty, this will be a huge blow not only to Ukrainian people, but the entire Western community. I have no slightest doubt about it!

Time and your future will tell whether the foundations of the Western world, values such as democracy, human rights, and solidarity, only sound beautiful but - when confronted with brutal reality - mean nothing, or whether they really mean something. We must not allow them to become empty words. We must not allow that to happen. This is the great responsibility of the West towards Ukraine. It is a great responsibility of the international community towards your people and your country. I have no doubt about this.



After Bucha, Borodyanka and Mariupol, there can be no return to business as usual with Russia, Honourable Presidents, Honourable Prime Ministers and Honourable Member of Parliaments around the world!

There can be no return to business as usual! An honest world cannot do so by choosing to overlook crimes, aggression, violations of fundamental principles.

Dear Friends!

As Poland, we have long warned Europe about the imperial inclinations of Russia and Putin - against the desire to restore the influence of the Soviet Union, and perhaps even of tsarist Russia. Also against dependence on Russian energy sources. We said that this is in fact a weapon that can be used against Europe, against nations. We kept saying so... Unfortunately, we were not heeded. Our warnings were downplayed. We were accused of Russophobia.



Today, the world quietly admits that we were right, but - believe me - this is an extremely bitter satisfaction.

The late President Lech Kaczyński spoke about the threat from Russia on many occasions. My professor, my teacher, my president and a great friend of Ukraine. I had a chance to closely follow his struggles for Ukraine and Georgia to be admitted to the North Atlantic Alliance.

Fourteen years have lapsed since the Bucharest Summit, where those historic decisions could have been made, giving Ukraine an action plan for NATO membership. If President Lech Kaczynski had been listened to back then, the aggression of 2014 probably would not have happened, there would not be the current war, there would not have been the massive destruction and human suffering. History would have turned out differently.

This should be a great remorse for some European leaders. That is why it is so important today not to repeat the same fatal mistakes that have led to so many misfortunes. This should never be allowed to happen.

Ladies and Gentlemen!

Dear Friends!

Poland has supported Ukraine and will continue to do so. I personally will not rest until Ukraine becomes a member of the European Union in the full sense of the word. It is my great desire and dream, both as the President of the Republic of Poland and simply as a person, that we can build a common future together. After all, it is very important not only for us, but above all for future generations, for our children, for our grandchildren – what our part of Europe will be like in the centuries to come, what living conditions will be for the people here. I trust, these will be free, happy, self-governing people, those who build a future, who develop, can fulfil their ambitions. I firmly believe this will be the case.

I would like to remind the fact that it was Poland that was the first country to recognise Ukraine's independence, in 1991. In 1992 our first presidents of the then fully independent countries signed a Treaty on Good Cooperation and Mutual Neighbourly Relations. Today, however, I think it is safe to say that this historical moment is reshaping our relations. These are the facts of which I spoke, and which I do not think anyone can deny.

The time has come today, and it is my profound conviction that the time has come for a new Polish-Ukrainian treaty on good neighbourliness, a treaty which will take account of all that we have built together in our relations, if only in recent months.

The current war has also illustrated how inadequate the network of road, rail and infrastructure links connecting our countries is. It is time to make up for these shortcomings. The Polish-Ukrainian border should unite, not divide. This should be our great objective at present. Let one of the lasting signs of our relations be a high-speed railway linking Kyiv with Warsaw. We will build it together. I believe that we will be able to achieve this already in the coming years.

As I assured you a moment ago, we, as Poland, will actively support Ukraine on its way to membership of the European Union – for the time being to candidate status. With all our might, Mr President. But also to EU membership, as I said, in the full sense of the word. For the place of a free and democratic Ukraine is in the united Europe. I know this well, but above all you know it well. I firmly believe that this will be the decision of your people, the Ukrainian people, in the future. That this is the decision that the Ukrainian people will take. That this is what they will say when the time comes.

I believe that together, we will try to bring that time as near as possible. Personally, I am also very keen for Ukraine to join the Three Seas Initiative, which brings together countries in our region which are members of the European Union. With Ukraine, this initiative will certainly be much stronger.

We want to support our energy independence and also to take an active part in rebuilding your home country from the devastation of war.

Special funds are needed, funds for reconstruction. I will be discussing this in the coming days with world leaders at the Davos Summit.



But let us remember that Ukraine must be rebuilt first and foremost at the expense of the aggressor – such are the demands of historical justice.

This means at the expense of the Russian Federation, which invaded Ukraine and is currently demolishing Ukrainian houses, destroying Ukrainian industry, taking away Ukrainian crops and killing Ukrainian people. It should be rebuilt primarily from war reparations. Russia's currency reserves, which are currently frozen in Western banks, should first be used for this purpose, and these reserves are ample. Enormous!

It was Russia that ruined Ukraine and it is Russia that must pay. I have no doubt about that. And I believe that no honest person in the world has any doubts either. It is clear who is the aggressor, who has been attacked and whose land is being destroyed.

Dear Friends!

During our talks with Volodymyr, with your President, we have often mentioned the Polish-Ukrainian EURO Championship 2012. Some will laugh, or perhaps be outraged that I am making this point today, here in the Verkhovna Rada. But recall those joyful days. Remember the great activity, the huge investments we made back then. Remember the joy that poured into our societies as we had succeeded. And that together we achieved a great project.

I firmly believe, Dear All, that there will be many more such projects ahead of us, and that we will continue to work together on the great European and the world projects, including sports ones, but also others.



Ukraine will win the war, will overcome its difficulties and be rebuilt even more beautiful than it was before Russian aggression. I am sure of this.

Long live free, sovereign, independent Ukraine!

Long live Poland!





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