

# National Security Bureau

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## Vancouver. President: We are NATO! We are stronger together!

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### **Address by the President of the Republic of Poland Andrzej Duda at the seminar „Transatlantic Security in the Shadow of Russia’s Long War”.**

I am honored to speak in front of such an eminent audience. I appreciate the organization of this meeting and your initiative. I am also glad that the event is co-organized by the Polish Institute of International Affairs.

The title of the seminar - “Transatlantic Security in the Shadow of Russia’s Long War” is meaningful to me.

Unfortunately, the dark shadow of Russia’s aggression against Ukraine looms not just over the transatlantic security but also over the entire global security system. By starting its full-scale invasion of Ukraine, Russia did what Putin announced a very long time ago, including in his speech before Western leaders in Munich seventeen years ago.

Indeed, Ladies and Gentlemen, already seventeen years ago Vladimir Putin told us who he really was and precisely what plans he had. Unfortunately, no one in the West took his words seriously at the time. Let us recall that in February 2007 Putin was standing in Munich’s Bayerischer Hof hotel for half an hour and accused the United States and countries of the West of creating a unipolar world “in which there is just one master, one sovereign”. He claimed that “at the end of the day, it is destructive”. The culmination point of his speech was the conclusion that the Free World, had no importance or value for Russia.

It was exactly then that Vladimir Putin publicly questioned the whole security architecture established after the Cold War and announced its destruction.

That’s what he did on February 24, 2022 by starting an invasion of Ukraine. He did exactly what he had announced in Munich. That moment came as a shock to many leaders, who had put a lot of cooperative effort, in order to include Russia into the post-Cold-War global security system. For years Russia had not only been treated as a “normal” country, but much had been done to ensure that it holds an honorable place in the numerous international bodies that decide the future fate of the world.

It is with very bitter satisfaction for me to say that Poland was not among the countries who were shocked. We had been warning and predicting such a scenario for many years. When Georgia was facing Russian aggression in 2008, the late Lech Kaczyński - then President of Poland - said prophetic words at a rally in Tbilisi. He said: “today Georgia, tomorrow Ukraine, the day after tomorrow the Baltic States, and later maybe it's time for my country, Poland”, no one in the West listened to him. Today his words are gaining relevance. And it is ever more often that we hear key politicians of the Free World saying that the risk of a further imperial march towards countries on NATO’s eastern flank - including especially Poland and the Baltic States - is growing.

The prophetic nature of President Kaczyński’s words was not a coincidence. It resulted from very complex historical experiences of the Polish people.

We know Russia very well, the mentality of its authorities and their modus operandi. Moscow imperialism was

born in the 15th century and has not changed much since then. Russian imperialism at the time of tsars, in the Soviet era and today means the same thing. It has, at its core, permanent expansion of the territory at the cost of its neighbors – in the West, South and East – or possibly reducing them to serfdom and dominating them. It's a kind of a very brutal and intensive colonialism close to its borders. We have to realize that since this policy has lasted for hundreds of years, without interruption, it will probably not change after Vladimir Putin has left the Kremlin. The emergence of another “emperor” is just a matter of time.

For the true problem is not this or that ruler at the Kremlin, but the imperial mindset of the Russian people. And this is precisely why we must win at the frontline. If we hope for any kind of changes in Russia, we must bring about its clear military loss. Russians know exclusively the language of force and they understand exclusively this very language. Regrettably they don't care much for Western sanctions and for declining living standards. They have enough forces and resources in stock to continue a long war of attrition. This is one of the goals pursued by the Kremlin – to entangle the whole Western world in a very long war and exhaust our societies with inflation, new waves of refugees and sudden increases in energy prices.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The thesis presented above means only one thing for us – we must deliver weapons to Ukraine as soon as possible. Weapons which will realistically allow to force Russian occupiers out of Ukrainian land. Furthermore, we must consistently and swiftly boost our forces and the military potential of NATO as a whole. This is the only efficient way of deterring Russia and of prevention. For Russia never attacks those who are strong!

We must come to realize that the most realistic scenario to ensure victory to Ukraine in a long-lasting war is to provide it with combat-necessary capabilities in a well-thought-out and efficient way. An appropriate industrial base is indispensable for that – also the one connected with the production of arms and ammunition. The West has a lot of gaps to close in this respect. We need to ensure that our industrial base is mobilized as soon as possible and that our production capacities are increased.

I think that the West has started to perform “the operation of changing course” in its geopolitical strategy. However, as is the case with large vessels, such a movement takes time. Now we must accelerate and develop an efficient strategy of action. In this context, the results of the upcoming anniversary NATO summit in Washington are going to be very important. The summit must clearly demonstrate the Alliance's readiness to carry out collective defense. At the same time, it should produce a visible progress in the development of NATO-Ukraine relations. NATO should play a significantly bigger role in supporting Ukraine. We also expect the Alliance to start working on creating a new strategy on Russia – one that will aim to contain it. We will discuss it at the Washington summit and I hope that concrete decisions will be made in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Having said that, I wish to stress that Poland believes in NATO as the main security pillar globally, as a community of free nations founded on universal values. We believe that, in spite of the grave situation in Ukraine and the resulting global security changes, nothing is settled yet. We also believe in the fundamental principle of the North Atlantic Treaty – in the principle of solidarity and unity: „one for all and all for one”.



*Global changes are happening right now, before our eyes. The North Atlantic Alliance cannot afford to be a passive bystander. We must all*



*individually, but collectively, build powerful armed forces, as this will result in the collective security of the Alliance.*

Therefore, during my visit to Washington, in March, I proposed that all NATO members make a joint decision to increase their defense spending from 2% to 3% of GDP, as it was a victorious strategy of the West during the Cold War. I am convinced that nowadays this fundamental step will also ensure our security across the entire Euro-Atlantic area. I believe that this issue should be discussed at the NATO summit in Washington in July. I am pleased by positive reactions to my proposals so far.

Let us remember that the Kremlin has switched its economy to the war-time mode, while the Middle East and the Pacific region are experiencing tensions. That is why today we must be bold and uncompromising. Poland, like few countries in the world, knows that security comes at a price, which is why it allocates more than 4 percent of GDP to maintaining and modernizing its armed forces. In 2014, Alliance members pledged to raise their military spending to 2% of GDP. It was enough 10 years ago, but it is no longer enough today.

We are NATO! We are stronger together!

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