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## B9 and Nordic Countries Summit

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*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

I would like to start by thanking my friend, President of Lithuania Gitanas Nausėda, for organizing this year's Bucharest Nine Summit in the wonderful city of Vilnius. I am also very pleased that NATO Secretary General, Mark Rutte, and the President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, participated in our deliberations. Moreover, I am glad to emphasize the involvement of representatives from the Nordic countries in our discussions. This is indeed an important step towards building an integrated North-Eastern NATO security space.

The upcoming NATO Summit in The Hague will take place in only three weeks, so this is an excellent moment to discuss our expectations ahead of this very important gathering.

*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

We all know too well that we are facing critical threats and challenges from Russia. In response, we have to make NATO stronger, but also fairer.

Having in mind Russian full-scale invasion of Ukraine and its aggressive attitude towards the West, we must do everything to develop appropriate instruments that will deter the Kremlin's neo-imperial ambitions, especially here on the eastern flank. That is why our talks focused primarily on the urgent need to increase defense spending and on developing the production capabilities of national defense industries.

I would like to recall, even before last year's NATO summit in Washington, I proposed to raise the defense spending by NATO members to the minimum level of 3% of GDP. Three months ago I submitted to Secretary General Mark Rutte a request to raise this issue in The Hague. And today I am glad to see that we all agree on that and that our ambitions are even higher, up to 5% of GDP on defense. We hope that the Allies will follow into our footsteps.

Another key element of our discussions was strengthening the transatlantic relations and the strategic alliance with the USA. Among our partners in the region, there is a widespread understanding that Europe must take greater responsibility for its own security. But it is critically important to do it not by following mirages of European autonomy but in close cooperation with the United States.

We also had an opportunity to exchange information with President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelenskyy. During our conversation, we addressed very important issues regarding further support for Ukraine in its fight against Russia. Continuing our assistance to Ukraine in various domains – military, political, and humanitarian – is critical to security in Europe, as is Ukraine's integration with European and Euro-atlantic structures, including NATO.

*Ladies and Gentlemen!*

For me, today's meeting had a special significance and it was my last opportunity to speak at this forum as President of the Republic of Poland. I have to emphasise that co-creating, and later co-developing this format has been one of the most important and valuable aspects of my presidency. Over the past 10 years, the B9 has been an effective tool strengthening the voice of the eastern flank countries within NATO and helping us shape the Alliance's deterrence and defense policy.

I am convinced that even after my term as President of Poland, Bucharest Nine will remain the best platform for coordinating security positions of our countries, allowing us to better manage the threats and challenges we face.

*Thank you!*



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