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Editors: Sławomir Dębski (PISM Director) • Katarzyna Staniewska (Managing Editor)
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NATO in Defence of Peace

President of the Republic of Poland

Andrzej Duda

Address to the Warsaw Summit Experts' Forum

Two years ago, Russia's aggression against Ukraine devastated the international order as we knew it. In an effort once again to force upon the world the notions of "spheres of influence" and "concert of Europe," the principle of the inviolability of Europe's frontiers was infringed. Armed aggression was applied anew as a foreign policy instrument. The world was expected to accept the thesis that international law did not apply on the territory of the former Soviet Union, rather that the law of the jungle ruled there.

The international community condemned the aggression and it does not recognise its outcome. But as long as the *status quo ante* is not restored, we have to cope with threats to peace emerging from the efforts to divide the world into buffer zones.

That is precisely why we need collective action for common security so that the past, when democratic states perished one after another at the hands of authoritarian invaders, is never repeated. This is precisely why the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation was founded – to defend peace.

Today, we face a number of new threats: hybrid warfare, rivalry in cyberspace, international terrorism. Each requires a new perspective and even better coordination of efforts. Each requires collective security.

NATO is the most effective defence alliance in history. Over the past quarter of a century, it has expanded to include nations successively connected by the same aspiration: to guarantee peace to their own people and those among their allies by joining the Alliance. This idea has always been close to the hearts of the Poles. Indeed, what could better

express NATO values than the banners borne by Polish soldiers in the past that proclaimed: "For Your Freedom and Ours."

That this year's NATO summit will be held in Warsaw, the capital of my country, symbolises the fact that the Alliance has not given up on the aim for which it was founded. The countries of NATO's Eastern Flank are full-fledged members, partaking in the rights and obligations of collective defence. The deployment of multinational NATO units to the Alliance's eastern borders signifies that. Along with the other Allies, Poland will defend peace with determination. A lasting peace in Europe depends today on a permanent NATO presence in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

This presence also represents higher efficiency of NATO as a whole, improved further by joint manoeuvres. This was evident, for example, during the recent *Anakonda 16* military exercise. On this occasion, I had the pleasure to meet and talk to generals from several NATO member states. One of them, an American, said: "I would have no problem at all putting my boys under the command of a Polish officer. I have complete trust in you."

To me, his words have great value, as they are a sign of true partnership and brotherhood in arms. The kind we could only dream of 30 years ago when we were divided by the Iron Curtain. Today, Polish soldiers are ready to defend their Allies. They may have Americans under their command and they may serve under British or German command. It is difficult to imagine a more powerful symbol of the Allied bond.

However, we need to cherish this partnership all of the time. The motto "one for all, and all for one" must not apply to politicians and commanders only. What we need is not merely brotherhood in arms but also brotherhood in vision, values and principles. We need an alliance of states and peoples, not only an alliance of presidents, prime ministers and ministers.

It is my firm belief that the Warsaw NATO Summit will come as a breakthrough in this respect – that the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation will regain its vigour. For there is no better guarantee of peace in Europe than a strong and united NATO.