

## BRIEFING ROOM

# Remarks by Vice President Harris and President Andrzej Duda of Poland in Joint Press Conference

MARCH 10, 2022 • SPEECHES AND REMARKS

*Belweder Palace  
Warsaw, Poland*

12:57 P.M. CEST

PRESIDENT DUDA: (As interpreted.) Your Excellency and distinguished Madam Vice President of the United States of America, distinguished ladies and gentlemen: This is a very important moment in our relations. But, first and foremost, under these circumstances which we are facing right now in Europe, behind our Eastern border, in Ukraine — friendly to us and with us — where the Russian troops are carrying out a barbarious aggression and murdering innocent people, murdering civilians, bombing maternity hospitals from which, under dramatic circumstances, wounded women right before labor — are being carried out.

None of us has ever expected that we would be able to see such things in the 21st century.

Especially it is a great satisfaction to all of us here in Poland that Madam Vice President of the United States of America, Ms. Kamala Harris, is here with us in Warsaw, in our country.

And she's demonstrating that strength and depth of the atlantic — transatlantic and Allied bond, demonstrating decisive engagement and commitment of the United States to the security of NATO's eastern flank and to Europe as a whole.

Let me stress very forcefully: There is no doubt whatsoever that together with the United States and our other Allies within the framework of the North Atlantic Alliance, and along with the entire free and honest world, we stand with Ukraine. We stand with Ukraine, and we will try to do our best to make sure that Ukraine can be defended.

Thank you very much, Madam Vice President, for coming. Thank you for our meetings today, for the conversations that we have had.

We had a meeting just a couple of minutes ago. We had a private meeting, a tête-à-tête meeting. And we also met with Polish and American delegations. We discussed all the important topics. And I highlighted very forcefully how important it is, and I thanked also for the position of the President of the United States, Mr. Joe Biden. I thanked for the position of Madam Vice President and her team. But I also thanked for the position of the U.S. Congress.

I thanked for this necessity and, actually, the imposition of effective sanctions on the Russian Federation. The United States is in the vanguard of those sanctions, and, speaking honestly, these sanctions are working.

Above all, thank you also for all the support which is being provided to the fight in Ukraine — to Ukraine, which is defending itself.

Thank you for the humanitarian assistance, which is being supplied there.

And to you, Madam Vice President, I would like to thank for the involvement of all the organizations and of all the NGOs that are being involved in providing assistance — humanitarian assistance. Also, they're providing medical aid. They're providing equipment for children, for wounded, for the sick.

My wife Agata is involved in this as well. And I know that, in those respect, she is in cooperation with various institutions from the United States. She is in contact with the First Lady of the United States, Jill Biden.

I'm very happy that this Polish-American cooperation is developing. But I'm pleased that it serves to provide common aid to the fight in Ukraine and common aid to all those who are suffering, all those who need this assistance from us.

And today, I shared with Madam Vice President — I described the situation that we are facing. I said that, today, for a number of days actually, we have been receiving refugees from Ukraine in Poland. This number is close to 1.5 million persons who have come to us. And I'm addressing my compatriots right now. I was proud to tell Madam Vice President that all those people have not been sent to any camps and refugee camps. They have been accepted and received by Polish families in Polish homes. They are accommodated in Polish hotels, in Polish spa resorts, in Polish motels.

Most often, however, they're accommodated with private people. They have been received by

ordinary Polish people who feel in their hearts that they should extend a helping hand to the people in need.

And I thank you so much for this, to my fellow Polish people. This is a reason to be proud for us, for the Polish authorities. And I'm very, very much grateful to you for that.

At the same time, I asked Madam Vice President for support, as it is quite obvious that such a huge refugee crisis is a surprise for Poland. And it is a complicated situation for Poland, for the Polish authorities in the era of the crisis. The prices are growing — of fuel prices are growing; generally, the prices are growing. That is why we do need this support. And I'm going to be hugely grateful for any form of support because we have to survive this difficult time.

And we have to do that by helping our neighbors, because that is extremely important right now.

However, first and foremost, we discussed security issues.

The presence of Madam Vice President here in Poland is yet another demonstration of U.S. presidents — of U.S. presence in Poland, next to the U.S. troops that we have here, next to U.S. defensive systems that are protecting our skies today and our land.

We also have with us here today the political representation, the top-level political representation of the United States, led by Madam Vice President.

And this is a very clear political message where important — most important things are happening today on the global stage in Europe: We have to rescue Ukraine. All of us are acutely aware of that. All hands should be on board. Ukraine needs to be helped. And we have to stay united in that respect. We need to stand together in this respect within the North Atlantic Alliance, keeping solidarity, speaking absolutely with one voice, just as we have to stand together in the European Union and in all the other international communities. We have to impose more sanctions on Russia.

We cannot accept such military activities, which bear the characteristics of the features of a genocide, because I don't think that anybody is in any doubt if hospitals are bombed, if hospitals are bombed where pregnant women are staying, where children are staying, when ordinary people are killed, where bombs are dropped, when missiles are launched into residential houses where there are no military installations, then this is an act of barbarity bearing the features of a genocide. It aims at eliminating and destroying a nation. Hence, we

have to stand and present a very tough stance here as representatives of the free world.

And Poland stands here together with the United States of America, just like — I have no doubt about that — our Allies stand with Ukraine and all the honest authorities and states, especially democratic states.

And at the end of our conversation, I mentioned the fact that we want to boost our security also on our own here in Poland. Also, thanks to the purchase of American equipment for our armed forces, there are already ongoing programs such as Patriot programs, such as HIMARS program, the program of the purchase of F-35s, or the recently started program — the purchase of Abrams tanks for Poland.

I asked Madam Vice President that those programs should be accelerated as far as this as possible, because we want to provide this state-of-the-art equipment to our armed forces as soon as possible.

If there is such a need — I think everybody can see that. We do not need to comment on this situation. We are able to witness the dramatic scenes unfolding in Ukraine every day in the media. You can see those horrific — horrifying scenes.

But at the same time, we're able to witness the huge heroism and incredible determination of the Ukrainian people. And we stand at the side of the Ukrainian people. We're going to support them with all our strength, but at the same time providing the security of our countries which is of crucial importance to us.

Once again, thank you very much, Madam Vice President, for coming to Warsaw. Thank you for this demonstration that we stand together and that we are a huge Euro-Atlantic community of freedom and security. Thank you.

I'd like to give the floor to Madam Vice President of the United States of America. Madam Kamala Harris.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Thank you, President Duda, and for the warm welcome under unfortunate circumstances, given what is happening in Ukraine, our friend. But I thank you for the warm welcome and for the very constructive and productive conversations we had today as part of our ongoing dialogue and friendship that spans generations.

I would like to also speak directly to the Polish people. I have shared with your president that,

under his leadership — and your leadership has been extraordinary — the world has been watching Poland, Mr. President, your leadership and the leadership of the people of your country. And we've witnessed extraordinary acts of generosity and kindness. We have seen through images on the television — looking at images of ordinary people doing extraordinary things in support of the dignity and the wellbeing of perfect strangers.

So I, first and foremost, want to express the thanks for the people of the United States to you, Mr. President, on behalf of our President, Joe Biden, and to the people of Poland for what you are doing every day. It really represents the best of who we are.

We are here and I am here in Poland today as part of an enduring, longstanding friendship and commitment between the United States and Poland based on shared values and priorities.

I am here, standing here on the northern flank — on the eastern flank talking about what we have in terms of the eastern flank and our NATO Allies and what is at stake at this very moment. What is at stake this very moment are some of the guiding principles around the NATO Alliance and, in particular, the issue and the importance of defending sovereignty and territorial integrity, in this case, of Ukraine.

As President Duda has described, we have been witnessing for weeks — and certainly just in the last 24 hours — atrocities of unimaginable proportion. A maternity hospital, a children's hospital, where we have witnessed pregnant women who were there for care, for one reason — being taken out, because they required care because of an act of violence — unprovoked, unjustified.

I am here, in Poland, as an expression of the enduring and important relationship between the United States and Poland that, again, has been longstanding, but, in particular on the issue of Ukraine, is unified and is clear. We will do everything together, in partnership, in solidarity, to support what is necessary at this very moment in terms of the humanitarian and security needs of Ukraine and the Ukrainian people.

Today, we discussed, Mr. President, many issues that relate to our special bond also, because, I will say as a point of personal privilege, we have a substantial Polish American community in my hometown of Los Angeles but throughout the United States, who understands the relationship that we have on many levels, including the diplomatic but also cultural relationships that span generations.

And so, through all of that and in the spirit of those relationships and our shared commitments

— our shared commitment to the importance of international norms and rules — you and I discussed today many important topics, in particular as it relates to the eastern flank. And we talked specifically about what we cared deeply about in terms of our commitment — the United States commitment to Article 5.

I've said it many times; I will say it again: The United States commitment to Article 5 is ironclad. The United States is prepared to defend every inch of NATO territory. The United States takes seriously that an attack against one is an attack against all. We are here today to restate that commitment, but also do what we must do to reinforce our support of Poland and our Allies through the EU and NATO Alliance.

In particular, as it relates to troop deployment, we have recently deployed an additional 4,700 American troops to Poland. That's on top of the years of rotation of about 5,000 American troops in Poland.

We are pleased to have announced this week that we have directed two Patriot missile defense systems to Poland. And today, I can announce that we have delivered those Patriot systems to Poland. We do this as a reminder and as a demonstration of our commitment to the security of our Allies and our commitment, in particular, to Poland at this moment in time.

As it relates to the people of Ukraine: They have suffered immensely. When we talk about humanitarian aid, it is because, yes, the assistance is necessary, but what compels us also is the moral outrage that all civilized nations feel when we look at what is happening to innocent men, women, children, grandmothers, grandfathers who are fleeing everything they've known. Our outrage, which compels not only our security assistance but our humanitarian assistance, is rooted in the fact that also we support the people of Ukraine who have shown extraordinary courage and skill and their willingness and, yes, ability to fight against Putin's war and Russia's aggression.

So, today we are also announcing, in pursuit of what must happen, which is to provide humanitarian assistance, that we will give another \$50 million— the United States will — through the U.N.'s World Food Programme to assist with humanitarian aid.

The President and I also talked about the fact that, as he mentioned, Poland has taken, in just a very short period of time, in excess of one and a half million refugees in from Ukraine. And that has put an extraordinary burden on Poland and the people of Poland. And so, we will continue with the support that we can give you, Mr. President, in terms of the work that you and the people of Poland have been doing to bear this burden, but in a way that really has been

with such grace  
and such generosity.

We also are pleased to have shared with the President what our United States Congress has done, which is there is a commitment now of \$13.6 billion in human- — humanitarian and security assistance that will be then distributed and shared with Ukraine and the people of this region and Europe, all again understanding that this moment in time requires both a humanitarian response as well as security assistance.

And today, I'm also pleased to say that we are in ongoing discussions with Poland and our Allies about the effectiveness of sanctions thus far and going forward. As we have announced in the United States, we have, through the United States Department of Justice, started a task force to do what is required and necessary and appropriate in terms of investigations as it relates to any criminal activities and behaviors on behalf of institutions and individuals, including oligarchs.

We talked — the President and I — about the effectiveness of the sanctions we've seen thus far, in terms of the courage and the bold action that has been taken through the NATO Alliance to do what is necessary to send a clear signal that there will be, as we promised, severe cost and consequence for Russia's aggression to the point that we have now seen a freefall of the ruble, to the point that we have now seen that Russia's credit rating has been rated as junk, and what we know to be real economic consequence to Russia because of Putin's war.

As you know, the President of the United States also made the decision to do what was necessary in terms of the purchase of Russian oil in the United States.

Again, we will continue to focus on this issue, keeping in mind that this is a moment that requires severe and swift consequence for Russia's aggression against Ukraine.

And I'll close by saying what we say every day for these last weeks, which is we stand with the people of Ukraine, that we admire their courage, and that we are aligned in our support of their sovereignty and territorial integrity.

Thank you, Mr. President.

Q (As interpreted.) My name is Żaklina Skowrońska. I represent Polish Television. I would like to ask my question to both Madam Vice President and Mr. President. In what way has this brutal attack of Russia against Ukraine impacted Polish-American relations? Antony Blinken,

State Secretary, during his last visit to Poland was saying that the Polish-American friendship has never been so strong in history as it is now. Is it going to translate also on the permanent military presence of the United States in Poland? Thank you very much.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: It cannot be said too frequently or strongly enough: The relationship between the United States and Poland is a deep, enduring, and strong one and, dare I say, has become even stronger when we have been faced as a world with such adversity. I think we all know, even in our personal lives, adversity really, truly, can present the real measure of an individual or a relationship. And what we have seen without any doubt is that this friendship and relationship between the United States and Poland is a strong one.

PRESIDENT DUDA: (As interpreted.) Ladies and gentlemen, answering your question, I want to go a little bit back into history — or deeper into history. Let me put it in the following way: When I started my service as President of the Republic of Poland in 2015, I was perfectly aware of the fact that an aggressive Russia, like President Lech Kaczyński was saying in Georgia in 2008, would not stop only attacking Georgia in 2008 and attacking part of Ukraine in 2014. I knew that this appetite, this imperial appetite will grow.

And if the world does not react to that — if the world does not react, if the North Atlantic Alliance does not stand up, does not present a tough stance, then we will see more attacks from Russia — to which perhaps, sooner or later, also my country, Poland, would fall victim to.

And when I started as President of Poland, I knew that I had to do everything that I could to protect Poland from such a scenario. One has to use very clear and strong words here in the presence of Madam Vice President of the United States. Those who understood well what I was saying back then, speaking about the Russian threat, were precisely the representatives of the United States, were the representatives of Barack Obama administration and the President himself back then, the U.S. generals as well.

And precisely thanks to their support, we were able to obtain the North Atlantic Alliance presence on the eastern flank, were able to execute the strengthening of the eastern flank for the first time since we joined NATO in 1999.

It was precisely in NATO Summit in Warsaw, through, first and foremost, the decisions of the U.S. President and his team, but also through the decisions of other Allies whom we were able to convince, has led to putting this presence on the eastern flank of the Alliance and, symbolically, in Poland.



The United States is the framework nation. At the same time, the U.S. soldiers came here and started the rotational presence in Poland. It is a rotational but also a persistent presence, enduring presence. It is a back-to-back presence. Soldiers change, but the U.S. armed forces are present on our soil all the time. And that was a breakthrough.

If we recall the words of President Lech Kaczyński, which I quoted many times and who said those words to me back in 2008, he said, and I quote: “Andrzej, when U.S. soldiers are on our soil, when U.S. military installations are on our soil, when U.S. military equipment is put in our soil, then the whole world will be able to see that we are no longer a Russian sphere of influence.” This is a true friendship.

As Madam Vice President remarked today, “A friend in need is a friend indeed.” That is why I’m really happy that today, when we are in need and when the NATO eastern flank is in need, the United States, by the decision of President Joe Biden, has deployed additional troops. The U.S. is deploying more troops, and the U.S. is announcing the strengthening of this presence in our part of Europe and also in Poland, because this is precisely the understanding of the geopolitics of strategic goals that have to be achieved by this geopolitics and by the free world. This is the understanding of the security.

Is Polish American presence today, if we look at the last couple of years, stronger than ever? Yes, Polish-American friendship, for sure, over the last seven years of my presidency is stronger than ever before.

And today’s presence here today in Warsaw of Madam Vice President Kamala Harris is yet another strong evidence of that, just as the presence of all the representatives of Mr. President Joe Biden’s administration here recently on our soil.

And also, this is evidenced by the frequency of contacts that I have with the President of the United States. We frequently talk and discuss the most important security-related topics and our mutual relations.

Yes, of course, whenever we speak about great politics and friendship, this is this friendship and great politics. And this is the friendship between states for sure. This is the friendship between Poland and the United States of America. It is very strong right now — the strongest perhaps ever in history.

WHITE HOUSE AIDE: The next question will come from Nandita Bose of Reuters.

Q Hi, Madam Vice President. Thank you for — and President Duda. Thank you for taking my question.

President Zelenskyy has strongly asked for better air power in recent days. And my question is: What kind of alternative plans does the United States have to get materials to help Ukraine defend itself, especially now that you have declined Poland's offer on jets? Can you give us some specifics on what you discussed with the Polish leaders on this issue, Madam Vice President?

And one for President Duda. The United States says, Mr. President, it was not consulted before you made the offer to make your jets available to the United States. Is that accurate? And did Poland act unilaterally in making an offer? If yes, why? Especially now that you have spoken about the strong relationship that U.S. and Poland has shared over the years. Thank you.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: I want to be very clear: The United States and Poland are united in what we have done and are prepared to do to help Ukraine and the people of Ukraine, full stop.

In terms of the work that the United States has done thus far, we have, as you know, given military, humanitarian, and security assistance, and that is an ongoing process.

As I mentioned earlier, Congress — the United States Congress has now made a decision for 13-plus billion dollars of United States — of U.S. money to go to Ukraine and our European allies to assist in terms of both their security and humanitarian needs.

We have also, just this past week, given \$240 million in security assistance delivered to Ukraine, and that's on top of the \$1 billion in just the past year that we have sent to Ukraine.

I can tell you that the issue facing the Ukrainian people and our Allies in the eastern flank is something that occupies one of our highest priorities in terms of paying attention to the needs, understanding it is a dynamic situation and it requires us to be nimble and to be swift.

I mentioned being swift in terms of accountability and consequence. We also fully appreciate we must be swift in terms of providing assistance where we can be helpful. And we will continue to do that.

Q Can you (inaudible) plans, especially in light of the issue with Poland on jets?

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Well, we're making deliveries every day, in terms of what we can do in terms of assistance and, in particular, when you look at what we've been doing, as it relates to anti-tank and anti — defense systems. That is an ongoing process, and that's not going to stop to the extent that there is a need.

Thank you.

POLISH AIDE: (No translation provided.)

PRESIDENT DUDA: (As interpreted.) One moment. I need to give an answer as well.

Madam, that situation is extremely complicated, because we are all saying that there is a fight going on in Ukraine for independence, for sovereignty, for freedom, and for survival. And all of us support, with all the strength we have, the people of Ukraine.

It is not only the military. Also, the people of Ukraine have taken to arms to defend their homeland. It is not only men; it's also women who fight on the frontline shoulder-to-shoulder with men in order to defend their country. And we have no doubt whatsoever that they need help and assistance.

Let me say something more. We accept that they have the right to demand this assistance from the international community. They can demand this support from NATO. We are providing them humanitarian assistance and material assistance the best we can. We are trying to do our best.

Some expectations were addressed in a very strong and unequivocal way, also towards us — towards Poland. However, we are members of the North Atlantic Alliance. And as far as security-related issues are concerned, we have to look at these not only through our own lens — through the prism of the security of Poland — but we also have to adopt the perspective of the security of NATO as a whole.

So, in a nutshell, we have to be a responsible member of the North Atlantic Alliance. That is why there were requests addressed to us. Those requests were addressed to us by the Ukrainian side and also, to a certain extent, by the media.

We behaved in such a way as a reliable member of NATO should behave — a member of NATO who does not want to expose NATO to any difficult situation. On the other hand, we, as members of NATO, also wanted and want to look for ways of support for the fight in Ukraine.

And that is why we formulated statements, together with the Polish government — so myself as president, together with the Polish government.

And this statement or this declaration was announced by the Polish Minister of Foreign Affairs. It talked about the Polish possibilities — military possibilities of assisting Ukraine. Simply, we decided to put those jets at the disposal of NATO, not expecting anything in return, because we stressed very clearly that, as a gap filler for the donated equipment, we were able to buy something that we would need as a replacement. And we, ourselves, we're ready to provide our equipment free of charge.

But we wanted NATO as a whole to make a common decision so that Poland remains a credible member of NATO, not a country who decides on its own on important issues which impact the security of NATO as a whole — which would impact the security of all members of NATO — also our neighbors who are part of NATO — members of NATO.

Thank you.

Another question?

POLISH AIDE: Maja Wójcikowska, TVN24.

Q Madam Vice President, each day we can see death and unimaginable suffering of the Ukraine people caused by decisions made by Vladimir Putin. My question is: Will the U.S. support an international investigation into war crimes committed by Russia in Ukraine? And can you see any political future for Putin?

(As interpreted.) This is also the question to the Polish President.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Okay, I'll go.

PRESIDENT DUDA: (Points to himself.)

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: You go this time, please. (Laughs.)

Q (Inaudible) I will start with Madam Vice President.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: (Laughs.) Okay.

PRESIDENT DUDA: (Points to Vice President Harris.)

Q Thank you. I appreciate that. (Laughter.)

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Not at all. I — we are very clear: The NATO Alliance is stronger and Russia is weaker because of what Putin has done. That is very clear to us.

And when it comes to crimes and violations of international norms and rules, we are also very clear that any intentional attack on innocent civilians is a violation. The U.N. has set up a process by which there will be a review and investigations, and we will of course participate as appropriate and necessary.

But we all watched the television coverage of just yesterday. That's on top of everything else that we know and don't know yet, based on what we've just been able to see. And because we've seen it or not doesn't mean it hasn't happened.

But just limited to what we have seen: Pregnant women going for healthcare being injured by — I don't know — a missile, a bomb in an unprovoked, unjustified war, where a powerful country is trying to take over another country — violate its sovereignty, its territorial integrity, for the sake of what? Nothing that is justified or provoked. Absolutely there should be an investigation, and we should all be watching. And I have no question the eyes of the world are on this war and what Russia has done in terms of this aggression and these atrocities. I have no doubt.

PRESIDENT DUDA: (As interpreted.) It is obvious to us that in Ukraine, Russians are committing war crimes. I hope that also in the future it will be obvious for a court investigating those issues who bears responsibility for that.

Now, please remember that the refugees from Ukraine are coming to us right now. And right now, as we speak, there are people crossing our border who witnessed their houses destroyed, who saw their neighbors being killed, who saw hospitals being bombed, who saw civilians being shot at, children being shot at. These are proofs. These are the reports of witnesses, and they also have those proofs on their smartphones. If you look at those footages, it just makes your blood curl. Such scenes are happening today, and they have been happening over the last days in Ukraine, and their perpetrators are Russians.

A group of prosecutors has come to us delegated by the court to look at the facts of this case. They are collecting evidence. We, as Poland, try as much as we can to give them best — the

best possible conditions for work and then to fulfill this very difficult task.

Let us remember, the witnesses are here. There is a lot of evidence — the footages as I mentioned. We have those proofs and the evidence. All of that is being collected. The work is ongoing. And I do believe that it is going to result in very serious indictment acts.

And I do believe that the war crimes — criminals will be sentenced — those responsible for the war that is happening in Ukraine right now as a result of this (inaudible) Russian assault.

WHITE HOUSE AIDE: And the final question will be from Asma Khalid of NPR.

Q Thank you. Thank you, Madam Vice President. I wanted to ask you about some reporting that my colleague here in Poland noticed. He recently spoke with the mayor of the largest border town, who told him that the refugee system is essentially not set up for this, that it will collapse. It's an improvised system that can work for maybe two weeks, but not indefinitely. And I'm wondering what the United States is going to do more specifically to set up a permanent infrastructure. And relatedly, is the United States willing to make a specific allocation for Ukrainian refugees?

And for President Duda, I wanted to know if you think and if you asked the United States to specifically accept more refugees.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Okay. (Laughs.) A friend in need is a friend indeed. (Laughter.)

PRESIDENT DUDA: Okay. I'll go first. Okay, so this time — (as interpreted) — Madam, the situation is very complex. This is what I was saying today and I discussed this at length with Madam Vice President Kamala Harris. I said, in a very blunt way, that today we are seeing a refugee crisis. It is unfolding because Poland is still able to receive — it is all the time able to find the accommodation for those people who are coming to us all the time.

But we have got almost 1,500,000 people who have come to us over the last couple of days. So it's been 10 days. We have received more than 1 million people within 10 days. Never before have we witnessed such a situation. So this is something totally new to us, and we are grappling with this huge challenge. Our entire society is facing up to this challenge. I have already expressed my gratitude to the Polish people for their wonderful position in this very difficult situation — that they are so openhearted.

But we are aware that the problem is growing and that this problem is increasing. We have to

somehow handle it, and we do not have the experience. Therefore, yesterday, I had a long conversation with Mr. António Guterres, Secretary General of the United Nations organization. And I flagged out that problem to him. I described to him the situation — how it looks, how it develops. I described to him the reaction of the Polish society, of the Polish authorities, how we have been handling with this problem. But I told him that unless we receive international assistance, then, given further influx of refugees to Poland on this scale, this will end up in a refugee disaster. And I asked for help — both the material assistance, financial assistance — so that we are able to solve this in Poland.

I also asked for expertise, for the know-how, because the U.N. has got experts who have seen a multitude crisis of this dimension, and I'm sure that they have worked out methods of how to handle it. And I'm sure they know how to solve the problems, which ensue due to such a crisis situation.

And this is something that I described in detail also today to Madam Vice President. I said that the assistance of the United States in this respect is invaluable to us, and we would be very much grateful if we could use this assistance as soon as possible.

Furthermore, we discussed the refugees from Ukraine who have got relatives and families in the United States, and who would be willing — at least for the time when the war is still waging, they would like to visit those families, to stay with their families in the United States, and to wait there until the war is over and then come back to their homes.

I asked to speed up and simplify the procedures for such people — the consular procedures to be simplified for those people who would like to leave for the United States, to give the opportunity to these people to see their families as soon as possible, to be reunited with their families, to help them to survive this time.

So we are acting, and we are looking for international support because, indeed, the vast majority of Ukrainian refugees are coming to our country. Frankly speaking, that is because, first of all, we are a big country. And also, the material status of an ordinary citizen of Poland is for sure much better than the material status, the living conditions of an ordinary Ukrainian citizen, although we are not among those wealthy countries of Western Europe, but our living standards have increased over the last couple of years in Poland.

But they are coming because I believe that also the — it is their belief that thanks to the presence of NATO armed forces, thanks to the presence of our Allies from NATO — from Canada, from the UK, from Romania, and from other countries whose soldiers are deployed in

Poland — they believe that Poland, due to that presence, is a safe country, a country which is not going to be attacked, a country where you can safely wait out this difficult situation.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: As the President said, we did discuss this issue. And I started by thanking the President in Poland and the people of Poland for what they have done. And I will restate what I said earlier this afternoon: They've shown extraordinary generosity and kindness and courage. And they have — there have been some here who have relatives who have arrived from Ukraine, but I think there are many more who are taking in perfect strangers with barely a lot to give but giving a lot nonetheless.

So, we recognize that, and we recognize the burden that it places on the government of Poland, on the president, and the infrastructure of this country; when you look at — as the President said, over one and a half million people coming within two weeks, virtually. Unprecedented if you track and look at refugee flows over the history of time from regions of conflict.

So the United States is absolutely prepared to do what we can and what we must to support Poland in terms of the burden that they have taken on that I think all of us who understand the moral obligation we should feel to help people who are fleeing harm and seeking refuge; the burden we should all be prepared to take on to support those people who are fleeing their home when they don't want to leave.

In terms of what we are doing in the United States, we will then take this in terms of what we can do to support and look at those Ukrainians who want to come to the United States. What we're seeing thus far is large parts of that population who are fleeing Ukraine, who desire to stay in Europe.

You probably know that we have made a decision as it relates to TPS — the Temporary Protected Status. So for Ukrainians that are in the United States whose visa may expire or has expired: If they were in the United States before — I believe it's March; I don't have the exact date — they will be able to stay; they won't be required to leave, even though their visa has expired because, of course, we would not send them back to what is a warzone.

And the bottom line is that I have stated the position to the President this afternoon. As we have said many times through our work collectively in the U.N., through NATO, we will support Poland in terms of the burden it is facing and our collective responsibility to ensure the safety and wellbeing of these refugees.

POLISH AIDE: (As interpreted.) This concludes our press conference. Thank you very much



for your participation, ladies and gentlemen.

VICE PRESIDENT HARRIS: Thank you.

END 1:43 P.M. CET