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## NATO Chief backs 5% defense spending, Hails US Strikes on Iran



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NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte expressed confidence on Wednesday that alliance members will agree to a new defense spending target of 5% of GDP, aligning with U.S. calls for greater European responsibility in collective defense.

Speaking ahead of a NATO leaders' summit in The Hague, Rutte acknowledged that the proposed target poses political challenges but emphasized it is essential given the rising threats from Russia and global instability. He highlighted that the U.S. remains fully committed to NATO and Article 5, and stressed the need for Canada and European nations to match the defense contributions made by Washington.

“There is absolute clarity on U.S. commitment to NATO and Article Five,” Rutte said. “There is also an expectation one that will be met that Europeans and Canadians step up defense spending to ensure we can defend ourselves against Russia and other threats.”

Addressing concerns raised by Spain, Rutte dismissed any suggestion that these would block a consensus at the summit.

Rutte also commented on a recent controversy surrounding a private text message he sent, later made public by former U.S. President Donald Trump. Rutte said he had no objection to its disclosure, describing it simply as a “statement of fact.”

Turning to the U.S. airstrikes on Iranian nuclear facilities, Rutte defended the operation as a necessary measure to prevent Tehran from acquiring nuclear weapons.

“The 14 large bombs dropped on Iran's nuclear site were crucial. NATO has always maintained that Iran must not obtain nuclear capability,” he stated.

