

## U.S. - Baltic Partnership Commission Communique

Today in Tallinn on June 7, 2000, we reaffirm our common vision of a Europe whole and free and our goal jointly to create conditions to complete the integration of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into European and transatlantic political, economic, security, and defense institutions, as well as to enhance democracy, prosperity and security for all states in the Baltic Sea region.

- We welcome the progress made by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in integrating into European, transatlantic and international structures, and especially the decision of the EU summit in Helsinki to invite Latvia and Lithuania to begin accession negotiations with the European Union.
- We applaud the successful accession of Estonia to the World Trade Organization, Latvia's active role in it, and we reaffirm our strong support for Lithuania's accession to that body.
- The United States welcomes the progress made by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in preparing their candidacies for NATO membership, including the first cycle of MAP. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania reiterate their determination to use MAP to the fullest in the development and implementation of their Annual National Programs in preparation for NATO's review of further enlargement at its next summit, to be held not later than 2002.
- The Partners underscore the significance of the inclusive spirit of cooperation, solidarity and commitment to the creation of a Europe whole and free as expressed by NATO aspirant countries in Vilnius, on May 19, 2000. The United States believes this visionary declaration demonstrates the understanding of aspirants that NATO is a community of shared values, and underscores their commitment to work with all European democracies to advance security for the entire transatlantic community.
- The United States welcomes the progress made by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in approaching the goal of raising their defense budgets to 2% of their GDP.
- We welcome growing cooperation among the Baltic States in area of defense, particularly the establishment of the National Air Surveillance Centers in Estonia and Latvia, the Regional Air Surveillance Center (RASC) in Lithuania, and the Whole Baltic Air Surveillance Network (BALTNET). The Baltic Partners expressed their appreciation for the active assistance of the United States in the launching of the BALTNET project.
- The United States welcomes the practical contribution by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to European stability, in particular through participation in NATO-led peace operations, SFOR and KFOR. It also welcomes the decision by Estonia to move voluntarily from UN Peacekeeping assessment Category C to Category B, which illustrates their increased willingness to take on additional responsibility to serve peace and stability worldwide. The United States appreciates intentions of Latvia and Lithuania to consider to increase their contribution.
- The Baltic Partners welcome the resumption of NATO-Russia cooperation and consultation in the framework of the Permanent Joint Council, including the NATO-Russia work plan.
- The United States welcomes important steps by the Governments of Estonia and Latvia to advance the integration of minorities including the adoption of national integration programs.
- The Partners welcome the increase in mutual trade and investments including the expanded Government-Business Dialogue and in particular the conclusion of strategic U.S. investment in the Lithuanian energy sector.
- The Partners welcome the expansion of regional cooperative activities under the U.S. Northern Europe Initiative, including the Tuberculosis Center in Latvia, Lithuanian-Kaliningrad training programs, successful Latvian-U.S. scientific cooperation on the conversion of former military basis, environmental cooperation, the recent organized crime conference in Tallinn, and a regional FEV/AIDS strategy.
- The Partners welcome progress on economic issues, including implementing avoidance of double taxation treaties, the positive outcome of the May 2000 EBRD meeting in Riga, and the closer cooperation between major regional energy companies aimed at developing a strong, consolidated Baltic energy sector.

We agree to pursue the following areas of cooperation for the coming year.

- The Baltic Partners will intensify cooperation amongst themselves as well as with other NATO aspirant countries to become the strongest candidates possible for NATO membership.
- The Partners commit themselves to strengthening the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC) and Partnership for Peace (PfP) to enhance cooperation, transparency, and confidence among all the members of the EAPC.
- The United States reaffirms its commitment that NATO's door remains open, no country will be excluded from consideration by reason of geography, and that it is determined to work with the Baltic states through bilateral support and practical assistance to create the conditions under which Estonia, Lithuania and Latvia can walk through that door.
- The United States looks forward to working closely with Baltic Partners to update their 1998 Defense Assessments.
- The Partners agree to continue to promote cooperation in the fields of energy, biotechnology, laser technology and science, in particular in information technology (IT) and research and development (R&D).
- The Partners agree to increase cooperation among export control authorities of the United States and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The United States will review its export control policies toward Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to ensure that access to technology is not unnecessarily restricted.
- The Partners will continue their efforts to reduce trade barriers among their countries. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania reaffirm their strong support for increased direct investment from the United States and will continue working to create the best possible climate for increased trade and investment
- The Partners will further promote the newly re-energized Business-Government Dialogue conducted in conjunction with the Economic and Business Working Groups.
- The Partners agree on the importance of the social Integration of persons belonging to minorities and commit themselves to work together to implement legislation, integration policies, and programs to further that goal.
- The United States welcomes the progress in redressing the injustices of the historic past, including through the active work of the historians' commissions, education, restitution, and bringing to justice accused war criminals, regardless of ideology. The Baltic Partners reaffirm that their countries will continue the work in this field, and the United States renews its willingness to help in dealing with these issues.
- The Partners express their commitment to further advance regional cooperation, including with the Russian Federation, in the frameworks of the U.S. Northern European Initiative (NEI), the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS) and the European Union's Northern Dimension. The Baltic Partners welcome the active role of the United States as an observer in the CBSS and especially its participation in the organization's work in the fields of education, nuclear safety and the fight against organized crime. The partners express their support to Lithuania's efforts to involve the Kaliningrad region in active regional cooperation.

We express our appreciation to the Government of Estonia for hosting this meeting. We will convene the next U.S. Baltic Partnership Commission in 2001 in Lithuania.

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