

How can Security for the Three Baltic States be best achieved ?

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“Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honour by their contribution to the common cause.”

Winston S. Churchill, Zurich, Sept.9.1946

U.S. Ambassador to NATO, Alexander Vershbow opened his statement at the Vilnius Conference 3 - 4 September 1998 by saying: “As foreign policy analysts, we are trained to think in terms of the most likely scenarios.” If in reality scenarios turns out to be of the less or least likely kind, those analysts and diplomats tend to turn to the military men, expecting that they are prepared to think in terms of such different scenarios. What follows are thoughts of a (former) military man.

The security of a state has domestic and external aspects. Modern jargon distinguishes in both areas between soft and hard-core security, some analysts add a third dimension: semi-soft security (e.g. Robert Dalsjö of the Swedish Defense Research Establishment (FOA) in Stockholm). Soft security domestically is a by-product of some key capabilities like political, legal and social stability, economic prosperity and ecological balancing whereas externally soft security can result from intense political cooperation and integration, trade and cultural relations with neighboring states and with the regional and global environment. Soft security implicitly assumes that the state is not exposed to existential, in particular military threats from outside. Semi-soft security is defined as being provided by well-functioning administration, police, customs and border guards. Hard security is mainly of external significance. It is provided by capabilities of a state to deter any external threats to the country and should this fail to defend the country’s territorial integrity successfully. The notion of hard security of course assumes the possibility not necessarily the probability of a serious risk.

Some see the Baltics as a security vacuum in Northeastern Europe. This notion is certainly misleading. Since the break-up of the communist empire the Baltic Sea Region has become a densely interwoven network of political, social, legal, economic and cultural relations between the littoral states and outside participants including the USA which are showing an increasing interest in north-eastern European affairs. Regional organizations like the CBSS, a new “Hanseatic League”, the Nordic Council, the Baltic Council as well as the U.S. Northern European Initiative form the structural framework for these activities. International organizations like the European Union, the OSCE and the Council of Europe are involved as well. All of these activities do provide that kind of soft and semi-soft security to the Baltics.

With a high degree of euphemism this is often regarded as sufficient given the present security environment in which allegedly soft security has even replaced the need for hard-core security. But all international organizations active in the region, with the exception of NATO have by their charter or declared intent expressly declined to deal with matters of hard security, deterrence and defense. None of them and no single state have ever openly pledged to come to the assistance of the Baltic States should they ever be exposed to severe outside pressure or threats to their existence. NATO-membership of Denmark and Germany, admission to NATO of Poland, the high state of Finish and Swedish national defense preparedness and Russian national defense precautions, although conventionally in a dire state, make the considerable lack of hard security for the Baltic States even more obvious. They do not enjoy equal security with all other European democracies, old and new.

Immediately EU and WEU as possible providers for hard security may spring to ones mind. In this respect, key elements are said to be a CFSP of the European Union members and the Brussels-treaty of the WEU, in particular its article V. Without going into any detail it needs to be

kept in mind, that an independent role of the EU/WEU- Europeans in security matters will for the foreseeable future be confined to crisis-management and not to defense proper. And it is agreed policy of both EU and NATO that any future European Security and Defense Identity (ESDI) should be developed within the Atlantic Alliance. The WEU is developing into an institutionalized hinge between EU and NATO. Since the collective and individual military means at the disposal of Europeans are limited in scope and effectiveness, main emphasis in improving the WEU's military capabilities is laid on increased cooperation with NATO in order to avoid duplication of structures. And there should be no illusions, achieving progress in military operational capabilities will be possible only in close cooperation with NATO, the CJTF concept designed to be the main instrument. So it is quite clear that as in the past NATO will remain the central anchor for Europe's security in future, although with an increased responsibility of the European countries. Of course, Baltic membership in EU and partnership in the WEU are important but for their own specific political and economic benefits, which for a long time to come will have nothing to do with hard-core security. Both cannot and do not intend to be an alternative to NATO. Therefore the Baltic States as a sub-region are not in a security vacuum but they are faced with a remarkable security gap. The Baltic States do enjoy the benefits of international political and economic relations and cooperation which can take care of some immanent security as long as the international environment remains relatively stable. There is also intense support for the Baltic States in matters of domestic, semi-soft security. But the Baltic States are devoid of any hard security precautions as an indispensable complement in case of crisis from outside not to speak of conflict.

But what crises or conflicts are about? NATO member-states from the London Summit in 1990 onward unanimously insisted on keeping NATO intact although in a revised mode under a totally changed strategy and with a much broadened understanding of security because the world has not become a safe place yet, and not because of any specific threat scenarios. It is worth remembering the very careful wording used in the Strategic Concept: "In contrast with the predominant threat of the past, the risks to Allied security that remain are multifaceted in nature and multidirectional, which makes them hard to predict and assess. NATO must be capable of responding to such risks if stability in Europe and the security of Alliance members are to be preserved. These risks can arise in various ways...rather from the consequences of instabilities that may arise from serious economic, social and political difficulties which are faced by many countries in central and eastern Europe."¹

While this concept is presently under review in NATO I do not believe such formulations will be changed in substance. The strong will of NATO-members to retain the Alliance as an insurance against such unforeseen future events together with the Alliance' ability to take on new tasks in the field of peace support and the continuing involvement of the United States in European Security induced the will of the new democracies to apply for membership in NATO. It was not NATO recruiting the new democracies in order to enlarge eastward, but it was the new democracies who exercised their newly won sovereign right to choose the Alliance of their liking in order to close ranks with the family of democratic states to which they feel to belong.

The Baltics are interested and working towards good relations with their Russian neighbor and as President Meri in June in Warsaw pointed out, "the security environment in the Baltic Sea Region has improved considerably." He added that threat is not a rational behind the enlargement of NATO.² This is of course an expression of high level political correctness. When being in the Baltic countries, however one can observe that for the Baltics, being small, militarily still weak and geographically exposed, the possible risks stemming from instabilities in their immediate geographical neighborhood are of great concern. They are worried about a poor and chaotic

¹ *The Alliance Strategic Concept* (Brussels), para 8 ff (November 1991).

² Lennart Meri. *Address to NATO 15th Workshop* (Vienna), 22 June 1998).

neighbor Russia with bumbling, partly corrupt and so far rather unproductive democratic and economic reforms, coupled with big-power brazenness and an inability to pronounce a moral judgment on 74 years of Communist rule and unrepentant of more than 50 years of suppression of the Baltic states. For the Baltics the Chechenian disaster is still a call for vigilance. The interplay one could observe in Russia this summer between President, Duma, oligarchs and governments bear much more resemblance to a bizarre Machiavellian carnival than to predictable, reliable and trustworthy democratic processes. And the gross overreaction of the Russian leadership including severance of any Russian-Latvian dialogue which followed the clash of ethnic Russian protesters with the police in Riga in March do not bode well for future Baltic-Russian relations. And Russia's insistence on voluntary accession of the Baltics to the Soviet Union in 1940 adds insult to insecurity.

Dmitri Trenin of the Carnegie Moscow Center pointed out in late 1997: "Although there is absolutely no chance of actual restoration of Soviet conditions domestically or in the near abroad, a reversal of the current benign set of policies cannot be ruled out completely." And further "A revisionist policy... may become possible only if reforms utterly fail and nationalism emerges as the principle slogan in the struggle for power."

Even if it means violating "political correctness," reforms have utterly failed. At present and for the foreseeable future developments in Russia have become totally unpredictable. With all due hope and serious efforts for a positive outcome of the present crisis, sudden and unexpected moves to the contrary should not be ruled out. So it is quite understandable that in particular the Baltics want to come under the NATO umbrella. This is exactly the same reason why members of the Alliance want to remain in NATO. In President Meri's words: "We wish to join the North Atlantic Treaty Organization for the same reason you wish to stay in: because through the Transatlantic link it provides the best hard-core security available in Europe today."³

Accession to NATO of Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary will be approved by NATO members next April and has been reluctantly taken as a fact of life by the Russian Federation. The real test comes with the question of the who, when and how of a second opening round and whether or not the Baltic States will be included.

The three sovereign and democratic Baltic States are of great importance to the Euro-Atlantic community. They are the only now independent parts of the former Soviet Union which have successfully established functioning parliamentary democracies and market economies. Politically all structures and processes constituting a democratic regime and the rule of law are in place, including free media. In this respect they are equal to the three Central European states already invited to join both EU and NATO. In their economies the development of all macro-economic data steadily point in a positive direction. The Baltic States contribute politically to the stability of the Baltic Sea Region as a whole. They constitute an important gateway to commerce with Russia, Belarus, Ukraine and even the Far East. They secure a democratic coast line opposite the Swedish and Finish shores. Together with Poland the Baltics can support democratic developments and market economic endeavors in the Kalinigrad Oblast. Together with Finland the Baltics form a peaceful zone of stability and modernness on Russia's north-western border with possibly positive spillovers into western Russia. Geopolitically they reduce the democracy gap between Finland and Poland. In case of a today unlikely but for the future not to be discarded return of a strong but revisionist Russia the Baltics provide a chance of forward defense for the community of democratic states. Thus they contribute geostrategically to securing the Eastern flank of the Baltic Sea region. As a space for implementing agreed Confidence and Security Building Measures the Baltics can contribute to giving Russia an increased feeling of stability and security at her western borders. In case of admission to NATO this multifaceted role of the Baltic states would greatly add to the

³Lennart Meri, "The Security of Estonia: Lecture by HE Mr. Lennart Meri, President of the Republic of Estonia, 3 March 1998, Royal United Services Institute, London" (Tallinn: Presidential Chancellery, 1998).

strength of the Alliance in the North-eastern European space. To them rightfully should apply what Winston Churchill said in his famous speech in Zurich on September 19, 1946: "Small nations will count as much as large ones and gain their honor by their contribution to the common cause."

From decades of occupation and isolation the Baltics emerged weakened and beset with soviet legacies but liberated and determined to return to the western community of democratic states, full of hope to be welcomed there. They seem to be welcomed in the European Union, time will show how long it will take for them to attain full membership. I am increasingly afraid it may be different with NATO. There are a couple of recurring arguments against admitting the Baltics to NATO: They are said not to be eligible yet; their acceptance would over saturate the Alliance; their territory is not defensible; there is no threat to the Baltics; entry into the EU should have precedence; under post-communist conditions reliance on soft security is sufficient. Above all to get the Baltics in NATO was initially seen as upsetting the reform-process in Russia. Now as the reform process is upset, there the same people are saying, taking the Baltic's on board would be detrimental to Russia's return to the reform process. Whatever is the situation in Russia, the Baltics seem to have to wait anyway.

Most of the arguments lack validity. Only three of them will be commented below.

Doubts in the eligibility of the Baltics, in this case Estonia and Latvia are based partly on allegations of discriminating the large Russian - speaking components of the population. This indeed is a serious and complex problem. Those in the West who support the Russian pressure for speedy integration of the Russian-speakers into Estonian and Latvian societies are often the ones who at the same time concede much, much more time for Russia to adjust to new circumstances. They should have the same patience with the Baltics, in particular since there are serious efforts in Estonia and Latvia to speed up integration. The following points are worth to be kept in mind: Those Russian-speakers still in the countries do not wish to return to Russia. There is an obvious attraction to stay in the Baltics. All have a residence permit connected with a labor permit (with exception of former soviet officers in critical appointments). All are included equally in the respective social security systems, all are eligible to citizenship after fulfillment of certain requirements, Baltic languages in the first place and finally there are no ethnically based conflicts nor violence. An additional problem is posed by the Russian speakers themselves, many do not apply for citizenship, be it that they wish to avoid national service or passing a language exam, or to retain visa-free travel to the Russian Federation.

The other allegation is indefensibility of the Baltic's territory. This is a hollow argument as well. To begin with, under prevailing circumstances and for the foreseeable future the requirement is not to defend against all-out coordinated military aggression but rather and more realistically about aversion of limited interventions during a crisis, encroachment of local armed forces under loose and uncontrolled leadership, armed destabilization, spillover of unrest or upheaval in the Russian Federation, or blackmail by threatening use of violence. Contingencies like these should be solvable with indigenous Baltic means and limited reinforcements from outside. More importantly, the indefensibility in military operational terms of West-Berlin, the Baltic Approaches, Bornholm or Northern Norway during the Cold War never became acute a problem because of membership in the Atlantic Alliance and uncertainty on the part of a possible aggressor about the Alliance' response. Defensibility is primarily a question of political will of individual states or Alliances and appropriate preparation. And if indeed any large scale military aggression is not the main risk the Baltics are confronted with, planning and preparations in NATO for Baltic contingencies could concentrate on AMF-size reinforcements tailored to the actual crisis, as foreseen for new Alliance-members in the NATO-Russia Founding Act.

Final a remark with regard to concerns NATO may become overburdened should too many new members are being taken on board too soon. Despite the fact that NATO for a while needs digesting the first group of new members the argument loses its powers of persuasion when recalling how well the Alliance did cope with all the forces of NATO- and Non-NATO-countries

participating in the operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina including the successful political coordination and cooperation in NATO HQs Brussels.

The fact, that these and other arguments are used so frequently in western quarters is indication, that part of NATO-members themselves are not without problems in view of opening up the Alliance too quickly and for too many new members. But by far the biggest obstacle to Baltic membership is the Russian opposition. Accession of the three Visegrad countries is seen in Russia as bad enough but as something that needs to be tolerated. However, to keep the NATO-door open for the Baltics meets with unabated resistance. Nobody of the Russian political elite, from whatever quarter fails using an opportunity to underline Russia's strong disapproval over NATO's possible intention to take the Baltics on board. There are still threats of counteractions to re-deploy Russian military forces including tactical nuclear weapons forward, or establishing the Baltic's western borders as "red lines" which NATO is not allowed to cross and if it does to cancel cooperation in the NATO Russian Permanent Joint Council. Nobody is more blunt and outspoken on this than the new Prime Minister Primakov. There are some non-governmental studies produced over the last couple of months in Moscow, recommending a more flexible Russian approach towards the Baltics. But there is also a book of 400 pages titled "Russia's Revenge, Overcoming" (Revanche Rossii, Preodolenie) by a certain Swyatoslav Rossich, published by Citadel in Moscow, 1997 which develops a frightening scenario how to regain the Baltics by force in the 1992 to 2006 timeframe as a "possible variant of a historic process that could take place in the coming 10 to 15 years." Such thoughts may fall on fertile ground one day.

The main reasons for the Russian intransigence is her obvious determination vis a vis the Baltic States to leave all future options open. This represents old imperialistic thinking of its purest kind. It shows Russia's inability to mentally and politically cope with independence of former Soviet Republics with all related consequences. Only the definitive fact of inclusion of the Baltic States into the NATO fold could make clear to the Russians, that there is no longer any opportunity to deal with independent neighboring states in terms of Russian domestic politics and that there is no danger to their security emanating from NATO. But this is not so obvious to all those in the West, for whom Russia and her problems are of higher concern than abiding by the OSCE-rules of the right of nations to freely choose their security arrangements. There is a clear danger that Russian opposition and western concerns, sometimes camouflaged with Russian arguments, combine to become a forceful impediment against the continuation of the accession process beyond the first round. Already in 1997 Flora Lewis, the famous American journalist, wrote in the IHT: "It is wrong, bad for all countries involved, to make the whole issue of NATO dependent on Russia's obsessions. Europe needs reliable collective security, which only NATO can provide, if it is to escape repetition of its tragic history. That would be true, even if Russia didn't exist. Russia does exist with terrible internal problems, but they are not reason to keep the rest of the continent from collective security."⁴

NATO has taken Russian concerns extremely serious. The accession process has been designed in a slow, gradual, well considered and transparent way. In parallel to the process of admitting new members NATO and Russia have forged a new kind of special partnership manifested in the Founding Act and in the establishment of the Permanent Joint Council. This meanwhile is meeting on all political and military levels of the Alliance' machinery with the inherent risk of giving Russia a chance to exercise a veto-power which was never conceded to her. Russia is also participating in all the new activities of NATO, from EAPC through PfP to the PCC, has a diplomatic representation at NATO HQs and is preserving peace in Bosnia alongside NATO. Contrary to allegations of Russia's exclusion, quite the contrary is the case.

On the other hand, however, NATO Heads of States and Governments at their Madrid meeting last year alluded to the "states in the Baltic region" as aspiring members. The new

⁴ Flora Lewis, "...," *International Herald Tribune*, 8-9 February, 1997.

mechanisms in NATO like the intensified dialogue, EAPC, PfP and PARP do offer opportunities to increase cooperation and improve preparation for the applicant countries not yet invited. President Clinton and his administration are staunch verbal supporters of the Baltics wish to accede to NATO as expressed in the U.S.-Baltic Charter. Through this charter the U.S. have declared their strategic interest in the independence of the Baltic States, creating a kind of counterweight to the Russian policy of keeping all options open. At the same time neither the president and his administration nor NATO have made any definitive promises as to when the Baltics will be invited to cross the threshold of the NATO-door.

So far to the gap in the present Baltic security status. For filling that gap one has to look at actors external and internal to the Baltic States. What should the Baltics themselves contribute to fill the hard security void.

All Baltic efforts made towards NATO in political and defense terms should be made in a tightly coordinated tri-Baltic way. The Baltics are being looked at in NATO as a sub-regional entity. Weak performance of one Baltic State has negative repercussions for all. Inter-Baltic cooperation and coordination, combined with inter-Baltic support by the strong for the weak is imperative for success in striving for NATO membership. Such cooperation and solidarity is imperative also for withstanding present and future attempts from outside to drive wedges between the Baltics as well as for future unforeseen crises and conflicts.

The Baltics need to foster western understanding for the need to give financial priorities to social, economic and legal developments in the Baltic states, which may slow the speed of increase in defense spending. All the more important will it be to prove, that available defense resources are spent in the most economic way, with emphasis on appropriate mid term development of defense budgets in the direction of approximately 2 percent of GDP, medium term financial forecasts to make rational longer term planning possible, most economic use of available funds concentrating on areas with force-multiplying effects. At the same time it should be made clear, that through National Service the human resource is fully committed including the best and the brightest of Baltic youth and that all efforts are made, to muster unquestionable public support.

All PfP related activities but also bi- and multilateral cooperation offers should be evaluated whether they contribute also to the development of national defense forces. An all-round trained light infantry company can easily be turned into a peacekeeping formation, but not the other way round. Each fully paid national peacekeeping unit costs several times more than a normal light infantry unit at home. Therefore contribution to SFOR-like operations should be kept to the politically affordable minimum. The Baltic states have convincingly shown their willingness and capability to support NATO in Bosnia. Continued unit level contribution should suffice also in future and not be increased.

That leads to the future role of the first rather successful example of practical inter-Baltic military cooperation, the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion, BALTBAT. At present it is positioned outside the normal Baltic defense forces mainly by having fully professional and excessively high paid personnel. Soldier have got used to the latter, resist transfer to normal Defense Force units and wait for the next well paid deployment. If employed otherwise many tend to leave the military, which is legally permitted. Therefore the Armed Forces cannot profit from their experience. Another problem is the future of this formation. For lack of imagination or political consensus no role for the Battalion within the Baltic States was foreseen but only one in peacekeeping "out of the Baltic area." The role of BALTBAT should be expanded to make it the nucleus of an all-Baltic Reaction Force. The size could over time be expanded to a Baltic Light Infantry Reaction Brigade. Personnel could then be the normal mix of 50 percent regulars (officers, NCO, specialists) and 50 percent national service men. The Battalion or Brigade could at the same time be home and support base for the small Baltic peacekeeping contingents to be provided to NATO, OSCE or United Nations as long and whenever the requirement occurs. In order to alleviate theses shortcomings changes in the conceptual and legal foundations should be made.

The Baltic States would be well advised if they establish a common Baltic military procurement agency. Based on a common weapons procurement concept, in line with common force development plans and NATO interoperability requirements such agency could carefully select what is really needed and financially affordable. Such a common approach could provide for most economic use of scarce resources and interoperability if not standardization.

To push the issue even a bit further, the most effective Baltic contribution to the development of hard security and preparation for NATO membership could be the set-up of a Baltic Defense Community. What proved unsuccessful between the Baltic Republics in the inter-war period should be possible under modern conditions of international relations governed by constant coordination, cooperation and integration as the basic rules of the game. With access to almost all NATO standards and procedures, with experience gained from participating in PfP and NATO peacekeeping, with western/north-western partners assistance it should be possible to develop a NATO compatible, higher degree of sub-regional defense cooperation, if not integration which is at the heart of NATO-life.

Some important pillars of integration are already in the making: BALTNET, BALTRON, BALTBAT and most importantly BALTDEFCOL. A Military Committee links the three Baltic Chiefs of Defense together. Baltic National Security Concepts and even National Defense concepts have very much in common and could easily be coordinated. Under the assumption of political will missing elements could well be developed like a common risk assessment, an integrated Baltic Crisis Management Center, coordinated operational plans and preparations for reinforcements. Such an integrated approach, with southward extensions toward Poland and possibly northward towards Sweden and Finland would give hard security credibility and deterrent impact. In particular it would enable the Baltics to lump their resources together, make maximum use of them and provide interoperability if not standardization through common planning, procedures, training, procurement and funding - all important prerequisites for NATO-membership.

Finally to Western contributions in filling the security gap in the Baltics.

In Foreign- and Security Policy perceptions are often more important than facts. Responsible political decision making has to take account of such perception even if they are misguided. This applies to present day Russia as well. NATO members and other western nations try this with unending forbearance. But if Russian perceptions are fully recognized, Baltic perceptions of their security environment should meet with the same understanding. If there are "legitimate" security concerns on the Russian side about the opening of NATO, Baltic apprehensions of things in Russia possibly going awry need also to be recognized.

The West should abandon wishful thinking about the time-span needed for Russia to develop into something that could at least resemble a democracy or market economy. One should face up to the fact, that this is a task for the next generation of the Russian people themselves and many setbacks are likely to occur on the way. Precautionary policy has to take such possibilities into account and specifically so for the Baltics, since they more than any other Russian neighbor would have to suffer from such setbacks. Let me underline: that need not be the case, but it cannot be totally ruled out. And if it does occur, the Baltics are the only ones in the Baltic Sea region with little to no means to withstand.

With the U.S.-Baltic Charter the U.S. made the politically most far-reaching bilateral offer of assistance to the Baltic States short of security guarantees or guaranteeing Baltic invitation to join NATO. Insofar the charter belongs to the realm of soft security as well. The in-depth assessment of the Baltic armed forces made this Spring by a group of Pentagon Officers is a very welcome outflow of the charter. It will hopefully be followed by increased support with military soft- and hardware. Insofar the charter may turn into a contribution to hard security. On the invitation issue there will obviously not be a particular U.S. leadership role in NATO. As Richard Holbrooke pointed out recently in the Wallstreet Journal: "The U.S. cannot bring the Baltic countries into NATO if our Allies object. All NATO members must be convinced that their inclusion serves the

overall strategic interests of the Alliance and the security of Europe.” Of course the U.S. could, as was proven on many instances in the past, when NATO’s strategic interests had been at stake. Bosnia is the most recent example. With the air of crisis surrounding the U.S. President however, the chances for drastic U.S. initiatives in favor of the Baltics may be slimmer at the moment than one would like. Therefore certainly the European NATO-members will have an important role to play in supporting the start of a second round with inclusion of the Baltics. And they should. Otherwise the Baltics need to be told. It cannot be in the Alliance’ interest to conduct a continuous discussion about opening the Alliance to them without giving them a clear perspective and getting used to an ambivalent situation instead. There is unending noncommittal talk of western and NATO officials along the lines: the door is kept open, you have come a long way, the Baltic Region is champion of integration, of course a lot remains to be done, everybody will be evaluated on his own merits, we will assist you to cross the threshold one day, but you must understand that Russia needs time to adjust and therefore (implicitly) you have to wait. Such talk must come to an end lest the Baltics should feel ridiculed and virtually rejected in their quest for equal security.

For the coming NATO summit one should not hope for an invitation to the Baltics. One should hope however, that at the minimum there is no new invitation at all to leave the chances of the Baltics equal to those of the other applicants. One should also hope for a favorable assessment of progress made in the Baltics in preparation for membership. And lastly one should urge for a declaration which moves the Madrid-language further and gives Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania a clear perspective of when an invitation can be expected. But the Baltics need true advocates among the Europeans who are willing to move the membership issue forward in NATO, those Europeans who are not deterred by Russian blackmail, those who are willing to support Russia but not unconditionally and at the expense of her neighbors security, those who recognize their own interest in a stable and secure northeastern Europe and those sensitive to the moral obligations incurred by all of us having lived in freedom and under the rule of law while our northeastern brothers had to bear the yoke of soviet suppression for many decades. The credibility of NATO as a value-based community of free nations is at stake.

In the meantime bilateral support rendered by many western countries, the Nordics in particular should continue and if at all possible be increased but also better coordinated. Unfortunately a separate coordinating body, BALTSEA has been established among donor states. So far not all too much of substantive coordination has occurred beyond a useful exchange of views. It would be much more effective for donors and recipients, if such coordination took place in the framework of the PfP using established clearing house structures in NATO-Hqs.

In conclusion: the Baltic States are not abandoned and do not live in a security vacuum. They are almost full-fledged members in the family of democratic states which enjoy both soft and hard core security. The crucial exception for the Baltics is: they alone suffer from a severe hard-core security gap. Accession to NATO is the only honest way, to fill that gap. It will take time mainly because of unfounded Russian concerns but also because NATO needs to digest new members. But western democracies should do their utmost to keep this timespan at a minimum. And in the meantime there is a lot to prepare for that moment, when Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia eventually will share with us equal security in the North Atlantic Alliance, which they so richly deserve already today.