JBANC held its fourth biannual conference March 8-10 in Washington, D.C. and its suburbs. This year’s theme was, “Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: The Next Ten Years”. Over 200 persons from the United States and Europe attended the three-day event. On the first day, at the U.S. Department of Commerce, speakers chosen by the Embassies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania presented to an invited business audience a program on the business environment and prospects in the three Baltic countries. The U.S. Commerce Department, which sponsored this session, the Baltic American Enterprise Fund, the Export Import Bank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation and other public agencies also, talked about their respective services available in the Baltics. Judging from the slide presentations and discussions, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania offer some excellent opportunities for investment and trade. On Friday, March 9, JBANC hosted a working brunch at the Capitol. Senate staffers Sue Hardesty, Mike Russell, and Ian Brzezinski (respectively with the offices of Senator Durbin (D-IL), Senator Campbell (R-CO), and the Senate Foreign Relations Committee), spoke about the issue of NATO enlargement and prospects of Baltic membership. They reminded the audience of Senator Helms’ (R-NC) support for Baltic membership and of the recently held Foreign Relations Committee hearings on NATO, chaired by Senator Gordon Smith (R-OR). At the hearings, former NATO commander Wesley Clark, former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Dr. Ron Asmus and Dr. Jeffrey Gedmin, resident scholar at the American Enterprise Institute, testified in favor of NATO enlargement to include all qualified applicants. The staffers described how and when decisions would be made regarding NATO enlargement. If the United States were to exercise a leadership role in forging an Alliance consensus on admitting new members at the next NATO Summit in 2002, the Administration would be expected to clarify its position by the early summer of this year. A large Congressional delegation is scheduled to travel to Vilnius at the end of May to participate in a session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly. The Vilnius meeting is expected to highlight the readiness of the Baltic countries to join. Other topics included a discussion of Congressional funding of programs that are of interest to the Baltics and the work of the Helsinki Commission. The conference participants indicated their readiness to press the Administration to actively support Baltic membership in NATO and to encourage a large Congressional turn-out at the Vilnius NATO Parliamentary Assembly session. The briefing was followed up with numerous constituent visits to Senators and Representatives. That afternoon, over 70 JBANC conference participants attended a briefing at the State Department on United
States policy regarding the three Baltic countries. Cameron Munter, Director for Central and East Europe at the National Security Council, conducted the session. The conference concluded with a daylong seminar on March 10 at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Crystal City, VA. Vygaudas Usackas, Lithuania’s newly appointed Ambassador to the United States made his first public presentation since his arrival in Washington. He spoke on a panel together with his colleagues, Sven Jurgenson, Ambassador of Estonia and Aivis Ronis, Ambassador of Latvia. Each of the Ambassadors stressed the importance of NATO enlargement to their countries.

Another panel examined issues of regional cooperation. Algirdas Medalisnka, Chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee of Lithuania’s Parliament (Seimas) discussed the mutual goals of the Baltic countries and described the various regional projects aimed to fulfills these goals. Martin Butora, Ambassador of Slovakia, talked about Central and East European integration, and the lessons of the Visegrad process. Conrad Trible, Coordinator of the Northern Europe Initiative (NEI) program at the Department of State, spoke of the contributions of NEI in bringing about a more stable, secure and prosperous Northern Europe and encouraging Russian cooperation in this undertaking. Jens Eikaas, Minister of the Embassy of Norway, gave a brief historical overview of Baltic-Nordic cooperation, from the Hanseatic League to the Nordic Council. He said that Norway supports Baltic efforts to join NATO and that the eventual extension of the European Union into Poland and the Baltics will shift the EU’s center of gravity into Northern Europe.

Keith Smith, former U.S. Ambassador in Lithuania, led off the third panel entitled security and stability within a NATO framework. He noted the increased hardening of Russian policy toward the Baltics, Russia’s resistance to Baltic membership in NATO and the weak support for Baltic entry among large western European countries. Despite this, Ambassador Smith concluded that Russia could not derail NATO enlargement to the Baltics and counseled confidence-building measures to allay suspicions. Bruce Jackson, a leading advocate for enlargement on the U.S. Committee on NATO, gave a dazzling slide presentation on the strategic implications of enlargement.

Dr. Ron Asmus, who has been with the Council on Foreign Relations since leaving the State Department, pointed out that since regaining their independence, the Baltics had undergone a successful transformation and the question is not whether they will get into NATO but when. Their admission into NATO is inevitable. They qualify on moral, political and strategic grounds. The United States would already defend the Baltic countries from aggression if that were to occur. He thought that Russian objections to Baltic NATO membership would be lifted once new facts are created on the ground, reminding that the first round of enlargement had not produced any dire consequences.

Mr. Maris Rikitins, Latvia’s Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, concluded the panel with remarks. Mr. Rikitins reviewed cooperation among the three Baltic countries and dwelt on the need to include the Baltic countries in NATO.

A fourth panel, on the media, stunned the audience with news by Paul Goble of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, that the Russian Duma had appropriated $50 million for a propaganda campaign in the U.S. aimed in part to discourage the enlargement of NATO. According to Goble, part of this funding will be aimed specifically to blacken the reputation of the Baltic countries in NATO.

He pointed out that the NATO doctrine requires its members to be able to assemble, transport and sustain their forces at a location designated by NATO. The Baltic militaries therefore must be able to project their forces for future peacekeeping or other activities outside their borders. He also showed how the location of the Baltics, in strategic terms, is similar to that of Norway, and just as defensible.

Col. Janusz Bojarski, the Polish military attaché in Washington, discussed the several programs of the Polish government for cooperating with its NATO allies and the Baltic militaries. Col. Grant Hayden, of the Maryland National Guard, described the partnership program between the Maryland Guard and the Estonian armed forces. He indicated how the program went beyond military cooperation into areas of educational and even commercial development.

Ms. Lisa Bronson, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Defense for European and NATO Affairs, was the guest of honor at the conference luncheon. She talked about requirements for NATO membership, saying that each of the aspirant countries would be judged on their particular merits. In general, each would have to be a working democracy, have a free market system, and be governed by the rule of law. It is also critically important that an aspirant reaches the level of military preparedness required by NATO and shares the burdens required of NATO members.

“An enlargement without the Baltic dimension would be perceived by Moscow as a signal that their “red lines” are accepted by NATO and could thus be a source of instability for the whole region”, said Juris Luik, Minister of Defense of Estonia and the keynote speaker of the conference. He noted that the Baltic countries are defendable and described the efforts being made by the Estonian defense forces to create a broad-based program for the defense of its homeland. Speaking at the conference gala dinner, Minister Luik concluded that the
Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania must be admitted into NATO. The conference also presented an occasion for discussions among leaders of Baltic-American organizations. All support the enlargement of NATO in 2002 to extend to all qualified applicants, including the three Baltic countries.

The conference program was conducted by the then president of JBANC, Janis Kuikainis, president of the American Latvian Association (ALA) and assisted by Mati Koiva, President of the Estonia American National Council, Inc., Saulius Kuprys, President of the Lithuanian American Council, Inc., and the JBANC Chairman, Janis Bolsteins. Other JBANC Board members served as panel moderators. JBANC’s Managing Director, Karl Altau, his program assistant, Simonas Girdzijauskas and the manager of the web site, expandnato.org, Rojs Dauburs, made the necessary administrative arrangements for the conference. All speakers were awarded a specially designed JBANC coffee mug bearing an inscription to expand NATO to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

According to JBANC’s practice of rotating leadership positions among its three member organizations, Mr. Kuprys took over as JBANC president following the conference.

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A Message From The New Chairman of JBANC

April 26, 2001 will mark the fortieth anniversary of the founding of JBANC. The year when JBANC was born, 1961 belongs to a long-gone, but hardly forgotten era of the Cold War. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, victims of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and Yalta, were occupied then by the Soviet Union. To more detached observers of the time, the Soviet empire looked unshakable. The United States, to its great credit, never recognized the forcible annexation of the Baltic countries. By taking its principled stand, the United States gave hope to the Baltic peoples that one day, their freedom and liberty would be restored.

Americans of Baltic heritage never gave up hope for the liberation of our ancestral lands. In 1961 some of our leading organizations, the Estonian American National Council, Inc., the American Latvian Association, Inc., and the Lithuanian American Council, Inc., joined forces in JBANC to press more vocally for the restoration of Baltic independence. The cause was just but the odds of victory appeared remote.

The steadfast quest for the restoration of Baltic sovereignty was fulfilled with the collapse of the Soviet empire in the tumultuous last decade of the 20th century. JBANC and the million Americans of Baltic descent have contributed millions to achieve this progress.

The United States has been a major contributor to the constructive development of the Baltic Republics. Initiatives like the United States Charter of Partnership with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, the Northern Europe Initiative, and projects such as the Baltic American Enterprise Fund and the Baltic American Partnership Fund have been landmarks in the excellent relations between the United States and the Baltic States. This year, 2001, forms an additional milestone in this rich and fruitful relationship.

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Continued on page 11
Remarks by Mr. Juri Luik, Minister of Defense of the Republic of Estonia, at the JBANC Conference "Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania: The Next Ten Years"

First of all, I would like to thank the Joint Baltic American National Committee for inviting me to speak here today. JBANC has for forty years played an enormous role in keeping the voice of freedom of Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians loud and clear. You did it so when your homelands were occupied and for the past ten years you have also helped to promote the foreign policy goals of independent Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the United States. And believe me, you have done an excellent job on this.

It is time to concentrate our efforts to make sure that the Baltic States will be invited to join the Alliance. It is clear that the Baltic States have the right to join the Alliance:

OSCE principle endorsed by the Helsinki Final Act determines the right of every state to freely choose its security arrangements. This principle has been recognized and officially accepted by all the OSCE member states, including Russia.

NATO-Russia Founding Act on Mutual Relations, Cooperation and Security of 1997 also states that every country has an "inherent right to choose the means to ensure their own security". NATO has declared that geography and history are not determining factors in deciding membership, reconfirmed at the two last NATO Summits in Madrid 1997 and Washington 1999.

The US-Baltic Charter signed in 1998 declares that "The USA has a real, profound and enduring interest in the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity and security of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania" and "The United States of America welcomes the aspirations and supports the efforts of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to join NATO".

The membership of the Baltic States would affirm the credibility of NATO's statement that Russia does not have a veto on enlargement decisions. It would lend substance to the principle that performance will be rewarded, not ignored, enhancing thus NATO's credibility. It would support the continuing successful reform effort of the Baltic countries in the economic, political and military spheres.

I would like to quote the Secretary of State at his confirmation hearing in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on January 17th: "the value of NATO can be seen by the fact that ten years after the Cold War, nations are still seeking to join the Alliance and not to leave the Alliance. The Alliance is as relevant for the future as it was in the past. It did not threaten Russia in the past and will not in the future".

First, and foremost - it is important finally to conclude the idea of "Europe whole and free". We want to join NATO because our membership would right old wrongs, because acts of totalitarian dictators in the 20th century should not determine policy in the 21st century. We believe that our membership would signal that the century-long quest of these European countries for stability and security has come to an end.

NATO membership would bolster current stability in Northern Europe, it would prevent the emergence of a "gray zone" in the Baltic region, thus preempting a possible cause for future friction between Russia and the West and guarding against possible regional instability. Condoleezza Rice has pointed out in her article in the Chicago Tribune on December 29, 2000 that if the small new states around Russia can become stronger, they will be less tempting to Russia. I cannot agree more with this analysis.

As Ron Asmus so eloquently pointed out today, the United States President could hardly afford to ignore a conflict in the Baltics. NATO membership to the Baltic States would be the best option to make sure that this kind of involvement, if need arises, will be collective and well prepared. Furthermore, it is my perception that Baltic membership would ensure that such an involvement would never be actually needed.

Baltic membership would [...] significantly enhance NATO's future strategic and operational air defense, air surveillance and monitoring capabilities.

Membership would increase flexibility in implementing non-traditional military missions: NATO does not only need large states, but also small countries to ensure regional stability. In a crisis, various historical ties with peacekeeping nations, as well as ethnic and religious factors gain significance and small nations tend to be less "loaded" in this respect.

We are working to create military capabilities that would add real value to the Alliance's future. The Baltic states are already participating on an equal footing with the
NATO troops in Kosovo and Bosnia, our interoperable units are ready to participate also in future missions. 

Membership would signal NATO’s rejection of Cold War era spheres of influence that Russia still seems to adhere to.

Through Baltic membership the Alliance would make clear to Russia that expansion of its sphere of influence is not an option. Clarity on the Baltic integration with the West is a precondition for the overall normalization of the Baltic-Russian relations. It would also settle an ongoing domestic debate within Russia by giving Russia one issue less to worry about. 

An enlargement without the Baltic dimension would be perceived by Moscow as a signal that their “red lines” are accepted by NATO and could thus be a source of instability for the whole region.

I hope that everybody will have enough focus and determination to carry this policy through and take the Baltic States into the Alliance. Then we can all say, and let me paraphrase Winston Churchill: "even if NATO lasts for a thousand years, let everybody say that this was one of their finest moments".

Thank you

Address by H.E. Vygaudas Usackas, Ambassador of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America

at the Joint Baltic American National Committee Conference

We [three Baltic Ambassadors] trust and respect each other and share a common vision about the most important foreign policy priority we will all be working on for the next two years - invitations to join NATO at the Prague Summit in 2002. I expect a new level of cooperation and coordination between the three of us and challenge all of the groups represented in this audience to do the same.

Let me commend all of you for the work you did during last year’s Presidential campaign to move this agenda ahead. In part, because of your involvement, both the Democratic and Republican platforms contained language about the importance of NATO enlargement and “the open door policy”. The candidates made even stronger statements during the campaign because of the importance of the domestic constituency groups each of you represents. My message to you and your members of numerous organizations of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians in the US today is that this campaign must continue. We hope that you shall continue actively engage your Governors, Mayors, Senators and Congressman. You need to project a strong unified voice. You need to help shape public opinion and to give credit to those elected officials making public statements supportive of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania being invited to join NATO in Prague in 2002. As you support our efforts to join NATO, it is very important that the new Administration and elected public officials hear from you that this is the primary issue in your communities. You all need to work more closely together, to coordinate your activities, to share information. This is not an issue about one individual country. And this is not just about the Baltics. This is about a broader vision of Europe, about where we are going as we reshape the contours of a Europe whole and free.

This is why the process that began in Vilnius last May with all of the countries aspiring to NATO membership working together in an unprecedented way is so important. This is an "historic chance" to create a Europe whole and free through integration of our countries into the central structures of the Euro-Atlantic community, NATO and the European Union on the one hand and buttressing relations with our neighbors, including Russia, on the other. We will look to the U.S. Government to provide the leadership to fulfill this historic opportunity.

I am happy to report on some of the many positive developments at home:

Strong economic outlook. We have created conditions for improved economic growth in 2001 and onwards. Lithuania’s strict fiscal policy and structural reforms carried out by the government brought significant results in 2000. Inflation remained low, if not the lowest, in the whole region, financial markets were stable, the current account deficit dropped, the export increased almost by 30 per cent and the economy was put back on a steady growth.

Readiness to join NATO. Lithuania continues to develop its armed forces based on Western model that insures an independent functioning of the forces as
well as a possibility to integrate them into NATO. This process is backed by necessary resources - while last year we spent 1.79 per cent of GDP for defense needs, this year defense expenditures will be increased to 1.95 per cent, and in 2002 it will reach 2 per cent of GDP. Lithuania is also active in peacekeeping operations in Balkans. As noted by the latest reports from Kosovo, together with Americans, Poles, and Ukrainians, Lithuanian peacekeepers have been engaged in practical situations when there was a need to stop ethnic cleansing and promote peace in the region. Our current engagement with NATO and future plans supported with necessary funding demonstrate that NATO may count on Lithuania’s contribution to the collective defense of the Alliance commensurate to the level of contribution of similar current NATO member-countries.

Policy of regional cooperation. Finally, our immediate strength lies within our ability to project confidence and stability across the Baltic Sea region. Lithuania’s experience of good relations in theory and practice with Russia, particularly Kalinin-grad region, will enrich the Alliance’s relationship with Russia. From Lithuania’s perspective, the Kalinin-grad enclave of the Russian Federation provides a challenge in transforming a potential problem into universal opportunity.

In conclusion, let me re-emphasize how important it is that we take advantage of this window of opportunity by working together in an unprecedented way, by cooperating with each other and sharing information in a way never done before. I am sure that my colleagues Aivis, Sven and myself will lead by example. We look forward to your help in helping us achieve our future.

Address by Mr. Maris Riekstins
Secretary of State, Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia

CSIS/SIIA Conference “Enlargement – a Priority for the European Union”
Washington, D.C., March 7, 2001

The time when assertion of statehood was perceived as the sole reason for membership aspirations of new European democracies has passed. In the year 2001 the countries of the Central and Eastern Europe have raised their level of self-confidence and, in most cases, graduated the level of “new” to become mature or at least rapidly maturing democracies. For Latvia, membership has become a clear issue of national interest that has its political, economic, security, social and cultural dimensions. It is also Latvia’s vital interest that the process of completing Europe whole and free is a success and results in a closely integrated and effective European Union supported by a strong transatlantic link through a further enlarged NATO. Over the past years there have been all signs that a similar reassessment has happened in our EU and NATO partner countries and that

enlargement is dictated by both - ideals, moral values and real interests that arise from consolidating the area of stability, security and prosperity in Europe.

Today’s discussion falls into an important period for the enlargement of the EU. Although, the issue of further institutional reforms is yet to be solved and some have pointed to a certain ambivalence of the results of the EU Council meeting in Nice last December, it fulfilled a major task of confirming the reality of enlargement. Provided there exists strong commitment and leadership, there is a real opportunity for speeding up and deepening the negotiation process with all qualified candidate countries that would allow accession of first new members in 2004. Encouragement, incentive and realistic perspective for everyone are the components that should see to its success. In this respect I would like to commend the Swedish Presidency that has defined enlargement as one of its clear priorities and has provided further momentum for the efforts of candidate countries. It is equally important that this process remains transparent and the principle of differentiation and individual treatment of candidates is observed. At the same time, any pre-commitments, grouping or singling out of candidates at this stage may harm the quality and effectiveness of this process. In this respect I should note that Latvia has been trying to make maximum use of the “catch-up facility” in order to bridge the gap that initially separated it from the first group of candidates and will be internally ready for the accession by the end of 2002 as one of the first in the Central and Eastern Europe. 17 negotiating chapters out of 29 are currently opened for Latvia. During the upcoming months of the Swedish Presidency, we look forward to opening all of the remaining chapters, including the ones on Agriculture and Regional policy, which may become the real
determining factors for assessing the progress of each of 11 negotiating states.

Our confidence is based on our progress over the past years. Latvia has produced impressive economic and social reforms. We can be particularly proud of the results given the less advantageous point of departure compared to many other Central and Eastern European countries. Today, we target ourselves not just as ones aspiring to Eastern European countries. Today, we

Although enlargement of the EU itself will set new institutional borders of the Union, the process of European integration need not be seen as something that has a pre-defined final result as long as geographical borders are concerned. Countries further down the road of the European path have an opportunity benefit greatly from the accession efforts of the current candidates. European integration serves as encouragement to pursue democratic development based of Western values, traditions and openness to increasing co-operation with Europe. To use or decline this opportunity

(Continued on page 17)
Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus' Dear Colleague Letter

March 20, 2001

JOIN THE BALTIC FREEDOM CAUCUS!

Dear Colleague:

We are writing to invite you to join the Baltic Freedom Caucus.

The Caucus exists to support Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia in their efforts to build strong democracies and continue to recover from 50 years of Soviet occupation, which ended just a little more than a decade ago. There are more than one million Americans of Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian descent who care deeply about the freedom and success of the Baltic countries and strong U.S.-Baltic relations. The Caucus will continue to work closely with the Baltic-American groups across the country.

In 1998, the Presidents of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia signed the Baltic Charter that defined the political, economic and security relations between the United States and the Baltic nations. We will address a wide range of issues, including security concerns and the Baltic countries’ aspirations for NATO membership, economic reform, development assistance and trade.

If you would like to become a member of the Baltic Freedom Caucus, please ask your staff to contact Sue Hardesty with Senator Durbin at x42152, or Ian Brzezinski with Senator Gordon Smith at the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on European Affairs at x46451. We look forward to working with you.

Sincerely,

Richard J. Durbin
United States Senator
Co-Chair, Baltic Freedom Caucus

Gordon Smith
United States Senator
Co-Chair, Baltic Freedom Caucus
Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus

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*As of April 10, 2001
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Hon. Member Rep. Gerald B.H. Solomon (R-New York)

*As of April 10, 2001
Chairman’s Corner by Algirdas Rimæ

Continued from page 3

and the Baltics. They have also assisted the Baltic countries in becoming integral partners in efforts at international cooperation and responsible members of the international community of nations. The Baltic countries are seeking further integration in the Transatlantic community. They are applying to join the European Union and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO). Baltic Americans and JBANC strongly support their goals. As the United States is a leading NATO member with a strong security interest in stability and democracy in Europe, we support the enlargement of NATO and urge the admission of the three Baltic countries into the Alliance. JBANC believes that Baltic membership in NATO will not only make the Baltics more secure and safeguard their sovereignty, but that it will make the United States safer, NATO stronger and all Europe more secure.

NATO membership for the Baltics will settle outdated notions that Europe may still be governed according to spheres of influence where alliances of freely associating European democracies are prevented from crossing arbitrary lines drawn by Russia. Enlarging NATO to cover all qualified countries that wish to join will bring stability to Europe and remove occasions for political and military miscalculations. An enlarged NATO will not threaten Russia but will make it safer by guaranteeing a stable frontier of law-abiding states. That new reality will make the United States also safer.

NATO membership for the Baltics will make NATO a stronger organization because the Baltic countries will be net contributors, not consumers of security. Each of the Baltic countries are motivated to increase their security spending to 2 percent of the respective GNP’s and to fulfill their NATO accepted Membership Action Programs. The Baltic countries are already providing their fair share of assistance to NATO peacekeeping in the Balkans.

NATO membership for the Balts will make Europe more secure for the reasons outlined above and for the simple fact that they are responsible Europeans, future members of the European Union, and in mind and spirit already members of the Transatlantic community. The alternative to enlargement with a Baltic dimension would vindicate those negative forces seeking to redivide Europe into competing zones of influence and bring back the fears and terrors of the 20th century. JBANC believes it is time to move on to a better future, that of the 21st century.

~~~~~~~~ Algirdas Rimæ

Helms honored with BALTIC DEMOCRACY AWARD

Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC), Chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, was awarded the Baltic Democracy Award by JBANC in recognition of his outstanding contribution in Congress to peace, stability and democracy in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The reward will be officially presented to him on April 26th, 2001 during a reception on Capitol Hill. The event is being sponsored by Senators Richard J. Durbin and Gordon Smith, on behalf of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, to celebrate the visit of Vaira Vike-Freiberga, the President of the Republic of Latvia. The ceremony will also commemorate JBANC’s 40th anniversary.

~~~~~~~~~~~JBANC Board of Directors

Senator Jesse Helms (R-NC)

Vaira Vike-Freiberga

In 2000-2001, JBANC’s activities can be divided into four major areas: NATO Enlargement and Grassroots development, Relations with Congress and the Administration; Coalition-building and the 2000 Elections

NATO Enlargement, Grassroots

JBANC springtime 2001 strategy involves coordinating letter-writing campaigns to Congress and President, questionnaires, petition drive, increased media focus, and coordination of visits to Congress, etc.

Beginning in the spring of 2000, under the initiative of the American Latvian Association, a series of grassroots meetings were held – eventually reaching 16 locations in the Midwest and Northeast by the end of the year. The purpose of the visits was to help re-establish or call together existing local Baltic-American organizations and individuals to discuss the upcoming NATO enlargement campaign and effective methods of educating Congress and the Administration on this issue. In conjunction with the visits on the road, JBANC took over publication of a NATO Enlargement handbook, which was distributed at the meetings and mailed to constituents. The NATO Handbook was updated in September and the internet version, a “NATO e-book”, was published on JBANC’s website. Updates for the handbook are underway for 2001 and more grassroots visits are being planned for the coming year with increased focus on Western and Southern states.

JBANC is continuing to work with local organizations in promoting Baltic NATO resolutions in State legislatures. Following the lead of the Minnesota state legislature in 1998, are Michigan in 2000 and Iowa in 2001. There are similar efforts currently underway in the New York and Illinois.

Within the framework of the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), JBANC is helping to refocus a NATO enlargement working group, which will in turn reach out to local and other organizations.

JBANC’s cooperation with the “expandNATO.org” website began in March 2000. The JBANC webpage was completely overhauled in August last year. There has been a steady increase in the number of visitors to the website, averaging about 50 visitors daily since then. In February 2001, detailed NATO-related news also begins appearing under the NATO Enlargement Daily Brief banner. These updates are available at: http://expandnato.org/nedb.html.

Congress/Administration/Legislation

In 2001, Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR) agreed to co-chair Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus, replacing Slade Gorton, who was narrowly defeated in his Senate re-election bid. Although both the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus (the other co-chair is Sen. Richard Durbin) and the House Baltic Caucus, co-chaired by Representatives John Shimkus and Dennis Kucinich, both lost members in the November elections, prospects are excellent for increasing membership in the coming crucial months.

During the second session of the 106th Congress, JBANC helped in the drafting process of two resolutions congratulating Lithuania and Latvia on the 10th anniversary of their re-establishment of independence from the USSR. A resolution commemorating the 60th anniversary of the United States’ Non-recognition Policy with regard to the takeover by the Soviet Union was introduced in June, 2000.

JBANC also worked for the passage of a resolution on Cross-Border Cooperation and Environmental Clean-up – the so-called Northern Europe Initiative resolution.

In the summer, there was great consternation over the Bingaman and Waters amendments, which were introduced in the Senate and House,
The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc., representing more than a million Americans of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian descent, emphasizes that its top priority is to help Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania achieve membership in the NATO alliance in 2002. It is as essential to the security and independence of the three Baltic countries as it is in the vital interest of the United States.

The security of the United States is indivisible from the security of Europe. A viable Euro-Atlantic community of democratic states and a Europe that is undivided and free should not exclude any European democracy. Therefore, NATO enlargement must continue expeditiously, with all applicants eligible to join.

NATO’s "open door" policy must not remain declaratory. Since the first round of enlargement in 1998, expectations of a new round have been created that cannot be ignored. In fact, leaving the Baltic countries out of a new round will send a wrong and dangerous message to both the peoples of the three countries as well as Russia. It will create a power vacuum, a "gray zone," that will be an invitation to Russia to fill.

NATO, and an American presence in NATO, is as essential to the Baltic countries as it is essential to all of Europe. It is also essential to the security of the United States.

NATO and U.S. officials have reiterated that history and geography have no bearing on NATO membership and that each country has the right to decide its own security arrangements. Therefore, the process of integrating Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into the West’s most important and effective security arrangement must continue at full speed.

JBANC stresses that there is no turning back. Any backtracking from promises real or implied will inflict irreparable harm to the credibility of NATO as well as the United States. Exclusion of the Baltic countries from the world’s most viable security structure will create dangers that we may seriously regret.

The Baltic region and central and eastern Europe have seen the dynamic growth of increasingly prosperous market economies. Most importantly, it is a community of states committed to democratic values, stability and security. Of those, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania stand out.

The inclusion of Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic has already demonstrated a stronger NATO and strengthened the political, economic, military and social structures of the new members. The Baltic countries derive strength from that and are as able to show their willingness and ability to enhance NATO’s military capabilities, as they have in numerous Partnership for Peace activities and keeping peace in Bosnia and Kosovo. They share the values of NATO members, defining their interests in a manner consistent with the North Atlantic Charter.

JBANC believes that any slowdown of Baltic membership in NATO will encourage Russia’s still-prevalent imperial inclinations and vindicate its claims to a "red line" that includes former Soviet conquered territory. JBANC warns against any secret agreements that evoke memories of Yalta or any "oral understandings" that would harm Estonia’s, Latvia’s and Lithuania’s independence in any way.

JBANC believes that the inclusion of the Baltic countries in NATO will actually enhance Russia’s security of its Western borders. NATO, as a defensive alliance, does not threaten Russia.

With the collapse of the USSR, the line dividing Eastern and Western Europe has disappeared. We must avoid a new line: that of NATO members and non-members. This will create new dangers, rather than solutions.

Both recent and long-term history shows that uncertainties and divisions in Europe can be dangerously destabilizing. Indeed, the divisions have drawn the U.S. into two World Wars and seriously contributed to the Cold War. It is historically accurate to state that countries excluded from a collective security arrangement create power vacuums that destabilize security and therefore, will be inherently dangerous to the national interest of the U.S.

It is in America’s political and economic interest to be firmly committed to the goal of promoting Europe that is undivided, free and secure. This arrangement will actually prevent American soldiers from dying in Europe again. It can only be achieved through United States involvement in Europe and collective security through NATO.

JBANC firmly believes that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania must be invited to become NATO members expeditiously, during the next NATO Summit in Prague in 2002. It will guarantee a Europe whole and free, as it will guarantee a peaceful democratic Euro-Atlantic Community that includes the United States.
Summary of the 2001 JBANC Conference Panel “Security and Stability Within the NATO Framework” by Lya Karm

Ambassador Keith Smith, former U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania, discussed Russian attitudes regarding NATO enlargement and the Baltic countries. Russia, under the direction of President Putin, will continue to put both political and economic pressure on the Baltics regarding their desire to join NATO. There is some concern that Russia believes there should be a political and economic price to pay for the Baltics entering NATO, to the Baltics as well as to their allies. While support for NATO entry is strong in the Nordic countries it is not as strong in other European nations and Russia will use this to their advantage. Russia has not yet accepted the Baltics into NATO question. The Northern European Initiative has failed to improve Russian attitudes in this regard, as it was hoped it would. While some believe the efforts of the Baltics to join NATO is draining energy from their quest to join the European Union, Ambassador Smith does not agree. Now is the time to keep up the pressure regarding NATO membership.

Bruce Jackson, President, U.S. Committee on NATO, discussed the issue of enlargement in the context of the Euro-Atlantic Agenda, and how it fits into other Security issues in Europe. In 1989 the foundation of the new Europe had not yet been established. Since then, it is clear that the new European community does indeed include the Baltics as well as Southeastern Europe. A Europe “whole and free” will need to include these dimensions. Although some view Russia as belonging to the European community others see their interest as being only imperialistic. The argument for Baltic inclusion in NATO is both historic and moral. Goals for the short term include assuring that all are aware of the success of the first round of enlargement. The coinciding security issues in Europe at this time are NATO enlargement, The European Union, Russia as it relates to the New Europe, the Southeastern Europe question and the National Missile Defense debate.

Ron Asmus, Council on Foreign Relations, discussed that 10 years ago U.S. strategy on the Baltics was in part about being protector to these nations. But now The Baltics are viewed as the most impressive of the post-Soviet Era success stories. Actions should now be aimed not at getting the Baltics ready for NATO but at getting the Baltics into NATO. There is a moral, political and strategic case for the Baltics to join NATO. While the Baltics were discriminated against in the past, they should not be discriminated against in the future.

Politically, the U.S. has supplied both perspective and motivation to the Baltics. To remove this support now would be a mistake, and undermine future security efforts. Strategically, NATO membership would serve as a deterrent and remove Russian temptation. Russia will change its attitudes when the facts are on the ground, not before; Poland’s entry into NATO is an example of this. We are coming to the crucial phase when we need to double our efforts. It will require the U.S. President to lead.

Maris Riekstins, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, Latvia, discussed that NATO has been instrumental in preserving peace and security in Europe, and that the majority of Latvians support NATO membership. He discussed Latvia’s progress towards membership, including reaching the goal of 2% of GDP defense spending in 2003. Latvia is also investing in its people with Western style military education. Defense strategy is in line with NATO principles and NATO interoperable communication systems are in use. NATO interoperable units are already functional in peacekeeping efforts, and inter-baltic cooperation is evident by participation in institutions such as BaltBat. Latvia has common values with NATO nations and is fully committed to do all that is necessary for membership.

Summary of the 2001 JBANC Conference Panel “Regional Cooperation: Achievement and Prospects” by Janis Gramatins

Alvydas Medalinskas, Chairman of Foreign Relations Committee, Lithuanian Parliament:
Mr Medalinskas discussed current regional activities that Lithuania is involved. These include defense cooperation with Poland, the Scandinavian countries and others as they prepare to enter NATO. Other activities they are involved with are economic ties and agreements with a number of countries, not the least of which are the other two Baltic countries. He painted a positive picture of future cooperation between the Baltic States and Europe.

H.E. Martin Butora, Embassy of Slovakia, actively discussed the activities his government has been involved in, as well as contacts and relations with the Baltic States. Slovakia has been involved with the Visegrad group, made up of Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland and Hungary. This framework operates to coordinate defense, economic, health care and other common interests.

Mr Butora discussed relations with the Baltic States, and was quite positive on expanded relations and cooperation in the future.

Conrad Tribble, Northern Europe Initiative Coordinator, U.S. State Department, discussed the programs that NEI supports. These include social and economic development programs supporting various intergovernmental efforts. He briefly described their activities to date and welcomed new contacts from those present to expand further their activities.

Jens Eikaas, Minister, Embassy of Norway, discussed the numerous programs that Norway has underway in the Baltic States. Several major health support programs show particular promise, and he sees a number of additional ones in the future. Economic and defense issues are also quite important to Norway, and their activity both in and benefitting the Baltic States is continually increasing.

Janis Gramatins, JBANC

Coalition-building

Along with its three parent organizations, JBANC is a member of the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), an umbrella organization representing 18 different national groups. The hard work of Baltic-Americans during the 106th Congress will hopefully heighten awareness and vigilance during the current 107th Congress.

In 2000-2001, JBANC’s activities can be divided into four major areas: NATO Enlargement and Grassroots development, Relations with Congress and the Administration; Coalition-building and the 2000 Elections.

In addition, the CEEC demonstrated actively against cuts in International Broadcasting, namely at the Voice of America. This battle is not yet over, and it is hoped the new Administration and Congress can work to rectify damage already done.

A meeting with members of the new National Security Council, including Dan Fried, the new director of the Europe-Eurasia bureau was held in February, 2001. Prior to the 2000 election, the CEEC was able to meet...
JBANC Annual Report

Continued from Page 15

with both Al Gore’s NSC advisor Leon Fuerth (October) and leading Republican strategists, including Sen. Mitch McConnell, Paul Wolfowitz, Robert Zoellick and Stephen Hadley (July).

The CEEC is currently meeting with staff members of House Caucuses which focus on the region – the Baltics, Armenia, Romania, Ukraine and Central Europe.

Elections 2000
Leading up to the November elections, JBANC prepared by sending out presidential questionnaires in February. JBANC Managing Director Karl Altau met with the Republican National Committee Platform committee, including Chairman Jim Nicholson and Sen. Bill Frist, at a breakfast in June. In July, Altau testified before the Democratic National Committee Platform Drafting committee in St. Louis, an event covered live by C-Span.

JBANC sent letters to Presidential debate moderators prior to the debates in October. Members of JBANC participated in conference calls with high-level campaign officials from both Republican and Democratic parties on four occasions in October and November.

Miscellaneous
JBANC is currently preparing for its 40th anniversary reception (April 26, 2001), being held in conjunction with the 50th anniversary Congress of the American Latvian Association and the visit of Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga to the Nation’s Capital.

JBANC continues to be in contact with the Maryland National Guard, which has been instrumental in promoting increased ties between the State of Maryland and the Republic of Estonia. JBANC also supports efforts to increase cooperation with the States of Michigan and Pennsylvania and their respective National Guards and the programs they have with Latvia and Lithuania.

JBANC has also tracked the Forced/Slave Labor and German compensation issue and most recently participated in a February Congressional briefing by the International Organization on Migration (IOM), the central organization responsible for information and collecting applications.

JBANC was also in regular contact with the Baltic Assembly and its secretariat in Riga.

JBANC also participated in the following events and meetings:
- Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation annual dinner (November);
- 2000 Conference on Central and Eastern Europe organized by the Council on Foreign Relations (October);
- Met with State Dept./Nordic and Baltic Affairs officials (May and October);

- JBANC promoted informational meetings between Baltic-American organizations and the embassies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania (May and October, 2000 and April, 2001);
- Met with U.S. Lithuanian ambassador-designate John Tefft and swearing-in ceremony (July)
- AABS conference - Karl Altau presents paper on Baltic lobbying effort (June)
- Meeting between Sandy Berger/NSC officials and Baltic-Americans and Congressional reception with President of Estonia Lennart Meri, both organized by the Baltic American Freedom League (June)
- Campaign to Preserve U.S. Global Leadership Lobby Day. JBANC is a member organization of the Campaign, which supports funding a strong Foreign Affairs Budget. During the May Lobby Day, over 200 activists made approximately 70 congressional visits;
- Siim Läänelaid was JBANC’s summer intern for 2000;

Continued from Page 15
A major factor in shaping the relationship between them and co-operation within a larger transatlantic community. Both organizations have their own requirements for membership and different internal decision-making processes. Yet enlargement of both requires continued and strong political commitment of their member states as well as the candidate countries. As a representative of Latvia I am delighted to note an overwhelming understanding of the importance of the Baltic dimension of the next enlargement of NATO, and my country is doing its best to meet the necessary membership obligations, facilitated by the MAP process.

Finally, I would like to address a question, which is so often posed by the debates here in Washington, namely, about the future progress of those who may not be the first to join the EU, especially, in case NATO delays its decision in 2002. Let me stress that Latvia does not see this as a logical or realistic outcome, and that we are confident in the success of both. It is clear that opinions of Central and Eastern Europeans may differ on this issue. As far as my country is concerned - if we are indeed made to face such a hypothetical situation, I do not see it as threatening the progress that our country has made. I wish to make myself clear - we would certainly see a continuation as an encouragement for us. Yet, I rather believe that it would not so much be a setback for aspirants than an impediment to the process itself, resulting in a loss of momentum for achieving what is in the common interests for everyone concerned with the future of the transatlantic community.
THE VOICE OF AMERICA IN DANGER

As the great majority of Baltic Americans and Americans of East European descent have known for decades, the Voice of America radio station broadcast factual information to countless listeners behind the Iron Curtain. To put it simply, its weapon was the truth. The station went on the air in 1942. The announcer’s first words were: “The news may be good or bad. We will tell you the truth.” The famed correspondent, Edward R. Murrow, when he was President Kennedy’s Director of the U.S. Information Agency, the parent agency of VOA, used these immortal words before a Congressional committee: “To be persuasive, we must be believable; to be believable, we must be credible; to be credible, we must be truthful.”

The other U.S. international radios, Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty, had a different role. They were surrogate radios, playing the role of free stations in countries where information was not free. The VOA, on the other hand, concentrated on information about the U.S., its policies and the values and life of the American people. While the role of RFE/RL has changed, the role of VOA has not. About two years ago, the USIA was merged into the State Department, in the opinion of this writer undermining public diplomacy functions. To explain, traditional diplomacy has always meant relations between governments. Public diplomacy has directed its efforts toward the people at large, the media and nongovernmental institutions. This is especially important in this information and internet age. The world has become a village. Village mayors are no longer all powerful, able to keep or manipulate information in the era of human rights.

With the USIA merger, VOA became a separate entity, under the direction of a politically appointed Board of Broadcasting Governors. The BBG claims to be independent, even though all of them, as well as VOA employees, are paid with U.S. taxpayers’ money. If the BBG and the now-departing Clinton-era VOA director adhered to the simple reasons for VOA’s existence, there would be no problem. But they have embarked on a path of destruction of VOA in general and the European language services in particular, viewing VOA as if it is a commercial enterprise. It is not.

Why not? Because even in this post-Cold War era, American presence remains essential on the airwaves and information outlets of the world. The European services have been gradually taken off the air to be replaced, if at all, by the “new tools” of the internet and television. The only problem is, that internet is only minimally accessible, depending on ownership of expensive computers. And television, as we all know, deals with “soundbites” that may or may not convey anything beyond bare-bone news. Radio, however, has not disappeared. It is omnipresent, ready to provide information throughout the day in whatever language. That is what is being wantonly destroyed.

JBANC and the Central and East European Coalition strongly believe that the Voice of America remains an essential tool of American foreign policy. It remains a conduit of American values and interests to areas that are important to the U.S. America is a guide to their struggle to establish strong democracies. Therefore, VOA must remain strong and viable. Anything less will harm U.S. national interests.

~~~~Vello Ederma
17 U.S. SENATORS URGE PRESIDENT BUSH TO CONTINUE NATO ENLARGEMENT

On April 5, seventeen U.S. Senators sent a letter to President George W. Bush advocating further NATO enlargement by asking him to invite more qualified European democracies to join the Alliance at the Prague Summit in 2002.

Following is the full text of the letter.

April 5, 2001

The Honorable George W. Bush
The President
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Dear Mr. President:

No foreign policy priority is more important than fulfilling the vision of a Europe whole and free. This goal has served as a reliable guide for U.S. policy for well over fifty years. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union over a decade ago, the cornerstone of our policy has been the premise that the extension of the NATO Alliance to new democracies of Europe is fundamental to the strategic and moral objectives of the United States.

We note that during the 2000 Presidential campaign, you promised that you “will lead our European allies to advance the process of NATO enlargement at the next Alliance summit in 2002.” We applaud this statement and urge you to make NATO enlargement an early priority of your Administration. We agree that the United States must work to ensure that NATO invites qualified European democracies to begin accession negotiations at the 2002 Summit in Prague.

After the fall of the Berlin Wall, it was a bipartisan initiative in the Senate that led the effort to bring Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic into NATO. As members of NATO, Poland, Hungary and the Czech Republic have strengthened the Alliance and expanded the zone of peace and stability in Europe.

It is in America’s strategic interest that the process of NATO enlargement continue. The integration of Europe’s new democracies into the Alliance would pave the way for a truly constructive and stable relationship with Russia. It would eliminate a major source of potential danger in European affairs. A Europe that is whole, free and secure would be a Europe inherently less inward looking and more capable and willing to serve as a strong partner of the United States in addressing global challenges and opportunities.

Continuing the process of NATO enlargement will require strong and effective leadership on the part of the United States. We are confident that your Administration will provide that leadership.

Sincerely,

Gordon H. Smith
Joseph R. Biden, Jr.
Richard G. Lugar
Joseph I. Lieberman
Jon Kyl
Jesse Helms
Richard Durbin
Hillary Rodham Clinton

George V. Voinovich
George Allen
Mitch McConnell
Mike DeWine
John McCain
Barbara A. Mikulski
Sam Brownback
Russell D. Feingold
Jean Carnahan
ASK PRESIDENT BUSH TO SUPPORT NATO ENLARGEMENT

April 10, 2001  
**JBANC ACTION ALERT**  
contact: Karl Altau  
tel. 301-340-1954

**Washington, DC (JBANC)** – The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) is intensifying its campaign to inform the Administration and Congress about the importance of including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in the next round of NATO enlargement. JBANC is addressing the issue through letters, petitions and visits to Congressional offices.

President Bush is expected to make a more pronounced statement on NATO enlargement in the coming months, so it is important to contact him as soon as possible. Letters can also be sent the Vice-President Dick Cheney and Secretary of State Colin Powell (The Honorable Secretary of State, U.S. Department of State, 2201 C. Street, Washington, D.C. 20520).

In addition, a petition is posted at: http://jbanc.org/petition.html (also, see page 22)  
Copies of letters and petitions can be requested from JBANC.

The Honorable George W. Bush  
The President  
The White House  
Washington, D.C. 20500

(letter 1) Dear Mr. President:

I am an American of (Estonian, Latvian or Lithuanian) descent and I write to let you know how important it is for me to see my ancestral country (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania) be invited to join NATO. During your Presidential campaign you indicated that you would support taking up NATO enlargement at the next NATO Summit meeting in 2002. I trust you will do so. The enlargement of NATO is in the interest of the United States in securing Trans-Atlantic peace and stability.

Hopefully, the U.S. will lead its NATO allies at the next NATO Summit in inviting all qualified applicants to become members. I especially urge that the Baltic countries be invited. They made great progress since regaining their independence and they can contribute significantly to the Alliance.

(letter 2) Dear Mr. President:

I urge you to take a leadership role in enlarging NATO and inviting the Baltic countries to become members. Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are working democracies with free market economies and the rule of law. They are also doing all they can to meet the established standards of NATO membership and they can be expected to contribute their fair share of resources to the Alliance. The enlargement of NATO is in the interest of the United States in securing peace and stability.

(letter 3) Dear Mr. President:

Please support the enlargement of NATO and lead our NATO allies in inviting at the next NATO Summit meeting all qualified aspirants to become members. The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are prepared to join and should be invited. Please do not permit Russian objections to result in the Baltics being denied NATO membership.
The panel on “A View of the Baltics - the Media” included Helle Bering, the editorial page editor of the Washington Times; Gintas Alksninis, Washington correspondent of the Lithuanian daily, Lietuvos Rytas; and Paul Goble, Director of Communications for RFE/RL.

Ms. Bering said coverage of the Baltic countries has increased across the U.S., especially because of the approaching NATO summit next year, when the second round of enlargement will be decided. Mr. Alksninis described the Lithuanian media and how he covers the news from the U.S.

Perhaps the big news item of the panel day was dropped by Paul Goble. He said that Russia’s President Putin had asked the Duma for 50-100 million dollars for a propaganda effort over the next few months in the American media to refine how Americans see Russia and fight NATO enlargement. The latter, of course, in Mr. Goble’s opinion, would be directed to blackening the reputations of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. This, because these countries are the most discussed as possible new members of NATO. Despite the smear campaign, Mr. Goble predicted that the three countries will get into NATO in 3-4 years.

Mr. Goble said that a decade ago, the Russians were expected to lie, but they are believed more now, even though the lies may continue. He asserted that countries that were strong once, but became weak, can be most dangerous. He said the mudslinging from Moscow, via bribing low-paid reporters, could begin with the Estonian presidential elections in the fall. He said the more damage that can be done to Baltic reputations, the easier it will be to convince Washington and European NATO capitals not to accept them in NATO.

He said the “game” for Moscow is not whether the Baltics will get into NATO, but whether NATO will play the same role as now in linking the U.S. to Europe. He said Russia will accept the three countries in NATO if the cost is that NATO no longer has the same meaning it has had. He said that is what the Russian media campaign to blacken Baltic reputations is going to be about.

Mr. Goble urged Baltic Americans to be alert to what looks like Russian mudslinging and do what they did during the Soviet occupation - write letters to straighten out the editors. But he cautioned to do it carefully and factually, without emotion. Because, he said, emotion can be turned against you. But he also said that the main battleground for NATO enlargement will be Europe, not the U.S. He said Balts living in Europe and the three governments must make extra efforts to counter Russian anti-Baltic propaganda there.

He said the Baltic Americans did what was right and have a lot of friends in the media and in American politics. But he cautioned that the Balts in the U.S. and the Baltic governments are in a deadly serious competition. Do not assume, he said, that you can depend in being right again. He said Balts must be more clever, more sophisticated and more attentive now. Mr. Goble asserted that the tide of history in Eastern Europe is not necessarily on our side anymore.

He quoted Stalin as having said that class struggle will become most intense when it is almost at its end. He said that is why most effort to prevent the Baltics from joining NATO will be put on the table over the next nine months.

Nevertheless, Mr. Goble, a longtime scholar and expert on Russia, predicted that he will look forward to attending the installation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as NATO members.

~~~~~ Vello Ederma
Americans for NATO Enlargement

The President of the United States
The White House
Washington, D.C. 20500

Since it has been established that the enlargement of NATO is in the interest of the United States in securing peace and stability; and since the United States has consistently supported the enlargement of NATO as a national policy and has supported the quest of the aspiring nations that have signed a joint resolution in Vilnius May 2000 to that effect;

Therefore, we now urge you, Mr. President, to activate the above stated policy of these United States and invite such aspiring nations to NATO membership and that the Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania be included in such invitation at the NATO summit in 2002.

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Please feel free to distribute this petition to other individuals or organizations. The return address can be changed if needed, to facilitate widest possible response.

Please return all completed petitions to JBANC by June 1. The petitions will be presented to President Bush at this time, prior to his European trip.

Return to: JBANC,
400 Hurley Av., Rockville, MD, 20850
NATO Enlargement Daily Brief

ExpandNATO.org, is monitoring the NATO enlargement debate and has helped launch a new information product - NATO Enlargement Daily Brief (NEDB). It is a collection of world press articles, news reports, press releases, and transcripts. Based on keyword searches of Internet news sources, as well as contributions from list members, it is a useful tool for professionals interested in NATO enlargement and related issues. NEDB can be delivered free of charge into your mailbox. To subscribe send a blank email to nato-subscribe@topica.com or visit: http://www.expandNATO.org/nedb.html

Rojis Dauburs
Editor
expandNATO.org

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J o i n t  B a l t i c  A m e r i c a n  N a t i o n a l  C o m m i t t e e  I n c.

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) was founded in 1961 to support restoration of independence, human rights and democracy to the Baltic Countries by uniting the efforts of the Estonian American National Council, Inc., the American Latvian Association, Inc. and the Lithuanian American Council, Inc.

Today, JBANC has adapted to the changing needs of the Baltic peoples and the Baltic communities in the United States. JBANC acts in a dual capacity as the liaison of the Baltic communities with Capitol Hill and the White House as well as the information agent to the parent organizations.

State Baltic Resolution Discussed with Virginia Gubernatorial Candidate

Karl Altan of JBANC meets with Mark Warner (left) Virginia’s likely Democratic gubernatorial candidate, and Ed Breithaupt (right) of Waynesboro, father-in-law of Virginia Attorney General Mark Earley, Warner’s possible Republican opponent in the fall election. With Warner, Altan discussed introducing Baltic NATO enlargement resolutions in the Virginia legislature and JBANC’s recent conference held in Northern Virginia. Warner was stumping in the Shenandoah Valley on March 13.

Photo By Kevin Blackburn, the News-Virginian (Waynesboro, Virginia)