

JBANC Chronicle

An Overview of Baltic Events With a Washington Perspective

JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE INC.



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Algirdas Rimas
1941—2002



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JBANC Legislative Update – Fall 2002

358-9 Vote on H.Res.468

Gallegly and Shimkus NATO Resolutions Pass by Wide Margins



Rep. John Shimkus

Washington, DC (JBANC) - On the evening of October 7, 2002 the U.S. House of Representatives passed resolutions reaffirming continued American commitment to NATO, and supporting the candidacies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to join the Alliance.

The resolution introduced by Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-CA) passed by the wide margin of

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Rep. Elton Gallegly



New Members Helping to Expand Congressional Baltic Caucuses



In recent months, lists of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus and House Baltic Caucus have been rewritten several times to welcome increasing numbers of new members. Since the summer, Senators from Nebraska, Utah and California, along with four Representatives from California have added positive Baltic support in Congress.

The Caucuses are composed of Members of Congress who take an active interest in issues related to the Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania and who are interested in promoting good U.S. relations with those countries.

Presently, the Senate Baltic Caucus is composed of 13 Senators, and is co-chaired by Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Gordon Smith (R-OR).

Ben Nelson, Nebraska Democrat and former Governor of that State, announced on August 9 that he would join the Caucus. "The new democracies of the Baltic Region and the United States have built a solid relationship", said Nelson. "The Baltic Freedom Caucus is committed to reinforcing those ties and helping these young democracies grow stronger."

Senator Nelson, a member of the Senate Armed Services committee, was asked to join

the Caucus by a group of his constituents in July. Prospects of NATO enlargement and the issue of U.S.-Baltic relations and cooperation were discussed during the meeting with local Baltic-American leaders in Omaha. That meeting followed the senator's trip to Riga, Latvia earlier in the month.

On October 1, Utah Republican Robert Bennett joined to become the twelfth member of the Senate Caucus. Sen. Bennett is a member of the Senate Appropriations Committee Foreign Operations subcommittee. That subcommittee oversees Foreign Military Financing, International Mili-

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Chairman's Corner By Vello Ederma

Close to the Finish Line

So near and yet so far! Baltic Americans, our colleagues in the Central and East European Coalition and our friends in Washington and across the United States, have worked hard for some eight years to bring about NATO membership for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We hope that the security the three Baltic countries need, will come to fruition with invitations at the Prague NATO Summit in November.

JBANC thanks all who have taken part in the effort. There are so many who deserve to be recognized. However, outside the Baltic American community, the Polish American Congress and the U.S. NATO Committee deserve a very special round of applause.

At this point in time, almost all persons in authority have indicated that invitations will be handed to seven candidates: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovenia, Slovakia, Romania and Bulgaria.

Membership of the Seven will go a long way toward creating a Europe whole and free in a Euro-Atlantic Community. The inclusion of the three Baltic countries will eliminate the danger of a gray zone of instability

along the eastern Baltic.

We recognize that invitations at Prague are not the end of the process. The Membership Action Plans will continue, not just for the invitees, but also for current members. There is always a chance for a setback. The invitees must guard against that. They must make sure that all expected criteria are met; that values are understood and capabilities are fulfilled.

At Prague, invitations to new members will be just one of the items on the agenda. Among others: NATO capabilities and parameters of future missions. In essence, what will be the face of the "new NATO?"

Russia will have a chance to voice its opinions through the new NATO-Russia Council, but will have no say in internal NATO issues, membership, or decisions. This is as it should be, as excluding or isolating Russia in the new European architecture can be dangerous.

The new NATO members, including the Baltics, will have a chance to voice their opinions, expectations and suggestions in the creation of a NATO of the future. As equal partners, it is a responsibility they must take seriously.

"Phase Two" for Baltic Americans

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. still has a lot of work to do. For JBANC, for all Baltic Americans and their friends, it is just the end of Phase One and the beginning of Phase Two.

That's the ratification process in the U.S. Senate. Two-thirds of the Senate, or 67 votes, are needed to amend the NATO Treaty. JBANC hopes that Baltic Americans and their friends across the fifty states will help in informing their Senators of the need to create a secure Europe.

When the 2004 NATO Summit meets, we hope that the flags of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will be flying next to all the other NATO members, new and old. Only then can we truly say that the consequences of World War Two have been eradicated.

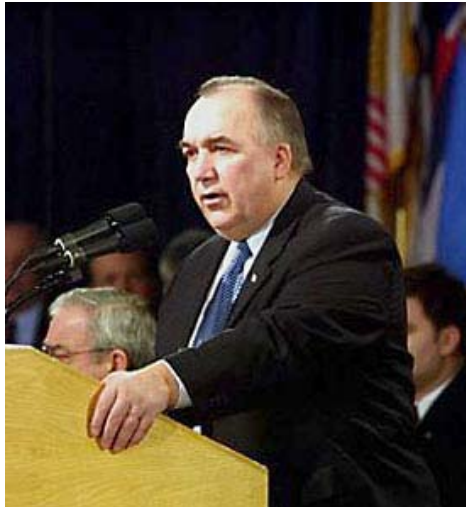
*Vello Ederma,
JBANC Chairman*

Michigan Governor Engler Visits Latvia

The trip to Latvia by Michigan Governor John Engler in September came on the eve of the tenth anniversary of the State Partnership Program signed between Michigan and the government of Latvia. A strong friendship, developed to help Latvia to reach rigorous military qualification standards to qualify for NATO enlargement, has highly contributed in helping Latvia to finish needed military reforms before the NATO Summit in Prague in November. Latvia, together with its sister-countries Estonia and Lithuania, is considered to be leading the pack of ten aspirant countries and is highly favored to receive invitations to join the transatlantic defense alliance.

In Latvia, Gov. Engler received the highest award issued by the Latvian Gov-

ernment - the Order of Three Stars, during his meeting with Vaira Vike-Freiberga, the President of the Republic of Latvia. In addition, Gov.



Michigan Gov. John Engler

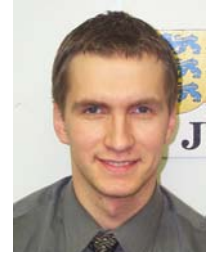
Engler met with Latvian Defense Minister Girts Valdis Kristovskis. The minister, in further signaling the government's appreciation for the successful cooperation between Latvia and

Michigan and for Engler's personal efforts to help Latvia to rebuild its military, awarded the governor with the Medal of Merit.

"It was an honor to travel to Latvia, where I received the Order of Three Stars and the Medal of Merit," said the Michigan Governor. "It was a wonderful experience that I will always cherish. The relationship between Michigan and Latvia has grown and solidified over the years, and I expect our friendship to continue well into the future."

Similar to the Latvia and Michigan program, Estonia and Lithuania also share relationships with, respectively, the States of Maryland and Pennsylvania.

*Simonas Girdzijauskas
JBANC*



Simonas Girdzijauskas



"The relationship between Michigan and Latvia has grown and solidified over the years"

Governor Engler

Algirdas Rimas – In Memoriam

The Board of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) lost on October 19 a dear and close friend. Algirdas Rimas succumbed to cancer and his passing has left something hollow in our hearts. He was one of our very best, most informed, productive and enthusiastic members. As the representative of the Lithuanian American Council, Inc., he dedicated himself to working hard to help his native Lithuania

achieve NATO membership. He was very close to crossing this finish line. In his typically diplomatic and non-partisan style, he worked just as hard for Estonia and Latvia; and for other countries seeking NATO membership.

His counsel was always thoughtful, intelligent and carefully balanced, reflecting his prior experience as a State Department negotiator. Algis

invariably had a hand in the final decision on any issue considered and passed by the Board.

Algis was never angry or abrupt; he had this uncanny, even-tempered ability to guide others to a conclusion that was always the right one.

As the current Chairman, who took over the rotating chairmanship from him just last

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"The Baltic Freedom Caucus is committed to reinforcing those ties and helping these young democracies grow stronger."

Sen. Ben Nelson

New Members Helping to Expand Congressional Baltic Caucuses

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tary Education Training and Support for East European Democracy funding to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and other countries, including other NATO aspirant countries.

Sen. Bennett also visited Riga in July during the Summit of NATO aspirant countries - "Riga 2002- the Bridge to Prague." Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott (R-MS), along with Senators Craig Thomas (R-WY) and Jim Bunning (R-KY) were also in the five member Senate delegation to visit the Latvian capital. While there, the Senators met with the presidents of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania to discuss the ramifications of NATO enlargement and the future impact of NATO for the East European allies, along with cooperation including but not limited to Ukraine and Russia.

California Democrat Barbara Boxer, a Member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, announced her intention to become the 13th member of the

Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus on October 15. Senator Boxer chairs the key Subcommittee on International Operations and Terrorism within the Foreign Relations committee.

"I welcome the new Senate members of the Baltic Freedom Caucus. The growth of the Caucus reflects the bipartisan support for and understanding of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia's place in the heart of Europe and in Western institutions," said Sen. Durbin upon the addition of the new members. Durbin further noted "I hope and expect that will include an invitation to join NATO in Prague next month, and I look forward to working with my colleagues as the Senate considers NATO enlargement in the next session of Congress."

House Baltic Caucus Welcomes Representatives from California

On September 4, Rep. Elton Gallegly (R Ca) and House Baltic Caucus co-chairman



Sen. Robert Bennett (R-UT)

John Shimkus (R-IL) spoke at a September 4 reception in the United States Capitol for visiting Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas. Rep. Gallegly, who is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe in the International Relations Committee, utilized the occasion to announce his intention to join the House Baltic Caucus. The congressman from California visited Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in August. The trip turned out to be the key factor in Gallegly's decision to become a Caucus member.

On October 7, two resolutions introduced by Rep. Gallegly and Rep. Shimkus supporting the importance of NATO and its enlargement and support for Baltic NATO membership, were adopted by the House with overwhelming support. The "Transatlantic Security and NATO Enhancement Resolution of 2002" (H.R. 468), sponsored by Rep. Gallegly, received 98% support of the voting body by passing with 358 votes for and nine against. H.R. 116, which recommends the integration of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia

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Sen. Boxer chairing a hearing of the Subcommittee on International Operations and Terrorism.

www.senate.org/~boxer

New Members Helping to Expand Congressional Baltic Caucuses

(Continued from page 4)

into NATO, was sponsored by Rep. Shimkus, and passed the floor by voice vote.

A visit to Latvia and Estonia in August helped to convince Rep. David Dreier, an eleventh term Republican from California's 28th District, to join the Caucus in September. Congressman Dreier chairs the powerful House Rules Committee. Rep. Dreier has been an outstanding spokesman for strong U.S. global leadership, Social Security, international trade, national security, economy and other vital issues on the contemporary political agenda.

Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard, the fifth term democrat from Cali-



Rep. David Dreier



Rep. Elton Gallegly (R-CA) addresses guests during the September 4 reception in the United States Capitol

fornia's 33rd District in Los Angeles, joined the House Baltic Caucus in early October. The Congresswoman was also a member of the eight-person Congressional delegation to visit Latvia and Estonia this past summer. Besides Roybal-Allard and Dreier, other members of that delegation included Ander Crenshaw (R-FL), Johnny Isakson (R-GA), Grace Napolitano (D-CA), Pete Sessions (R-TX), E. Clay Shaw, Jr. (R-FL), and Rick Boucher (D-VA).

In 1992, Congresswoman Lucille Roybal-Allard became the first Mexican-American woman to be elected to Congress. In 1999, she became the first Latina in U.S. history to be appointed to the House Appropriations Committee, one of the most powerful and distinguished committees in Congress. Congresswoman Roybal-Allard was also the first woman ever elected Chair of the 17-member Congressional His-



Rep. Lucille Roybal-Allard

panic Caucus (*Official Biography*).

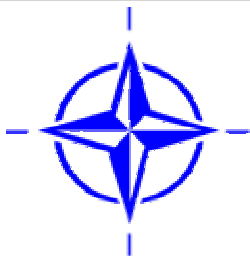
The Caucus received its latest addition when another member of the House International Relations Committee (HIRC), Rep. Brad Sherman (D-CA), joined the Caucus. Congressman Sherman is a *Magnum Cum Laude* of the Harvard Law School J. D. of the class of

(Continued on page 20)



"The growth of the Caucus reflects the bipartisan support for and understanding of [the Baltics]"

Senator Durbin



Meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in Warsaw

New Challenges for the Alliance

Defense Ministers of NATO countries who met at the end of September in Warsaw discussed new threats and how NATO should react to them.

As NATO Secretary General George Robertson noted, the two-day meeting was of an informal nature, with no set program, and did not serve [to make] any decisions. However, he assured that the ministers had given their support for anti-terrorist actions. In his opinion, the most important task for the Alliance is to adjust its actions to the new threats.

"The attacks of 11 September, 2001 showed that the Alliance cannot be defended along borders alone. We must identify the threat where it exists," said George Robertson after the meeting of ministers. He informed that the member countries would pledge to make up deficiencies, especially in capabilities to combat weapons of mass destruction, modernization of communication and command systems as well as expansion of transport facilities.

"Before the Summit in Prague we must reflect upon

the role of the Alliance in the future. We must think about the protection of our citizens against criminal terrorism and other crimes of states, especially if they have at their disposal weapons of mass destruction. Our common goal should be to preserve the capabilities of NATO to prevent such dangers." Robertson emphasized.

The United States proposed to create NATO rapid reaction forces. They would number 20-25 thousand men and be able to move to the place of a conflict within 5

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NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson (front center), with Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and other NATO defense ministers during their September meeting in Warsaw

Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas in Washington, DC



Prime Minister of Estonia Siim Kallas (right) joined by Estonian Ambassador Sven Jürgenson during Congressional reception on September 4.

emphasizing the importance of Estonian readiness for entry into NATO.

Vello Ederma, who is also the current chairman of the JBANC, stressed that there are still major questions after the expected invitations in Prague, most notably the ratification of the protocols of accession, which is expected to occur in the Senate in 2003. Karl Altai reflected about the work of JBANC, and of recent information trips

around the U.S. to assist in getting local Baltic groups to contact their Members of Congress.

Prime Minister Kallas spoke about Foreign Policy issues,

(Continued on page 18)



***Kallas met earlier
in the day with
President Bush,
who confirmed
strong U.S. support
for Estonia's
accession to
NATO.***

(Washington, DC) – The leadership of the Estonian American National Council, Inc. (EANC) met with Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas at a breakfast on September 4 to discuss issues of common interest. Advisors to Kallas also participated, along with Estonian Ambassador to the United States Sven Jürgenson. The breakfast was organized by the Estonian Embassy.

EANC Board members participating were President Mati Kõiva, Vice-Presidents Marju Rink-Abel and Vello Ederma, representative to JBANC Lya Karm, plus Major General (ret.) Tiiu Kera. JBANC Managing Director Karl Altai also participated.

Topics discussed covered a wide range of issues, including funding for assistance programs in Estonia and

within the U.S. for the Estonian-American community, the current demographic situation of Estonians in the U.S., along with education and health-related concerns. Different perspectives on security issues were raised,



Prime Minister Kallas with members of Estonian American National Council and JBANC following September 4 breakfast meeting.



Karl Altai



With the November 21-22 Prague Summit upon us, there seems to be no pause to the momentum in soon seeing a host of new invitees to the Alliance.

JBANC Fall 2002 Report

Based on the successful passage in the House of both the Gallegly (H.Res. 468) and Shimkus (HCR116) resolutions, and the enactment of the Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act in the spring, support in Congress for NATO and its enlargement is running high. There is also unabated confidence that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will be among up to seven aspirant countries to receive invitations to join the Alliance. With the November 21-22 Prague Summit upon us, there seems to be no pause to the momentum in soon seeing a host of new invitees to the Alliance.

Following a brief respite for elections and a shortened Holiday recess, the Senate will begin to focus next year on the ratification of the NATO accession protocols. 18 other NATO allies will begin the same process. But before then, control of the Senate is up for grabs with the 34 Senate elections held on November 5th. With the additions of Walter Mondale in Minnesota, following the tragic death of Sen. Paul Wellstone, and Frank Lautenberg in New Jersey, who replaces Sen. Robert Torricelli, there is a bit of the "old guard" in this year's elections. Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus co-chairmen Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Gordon Smith (R-OR) both faced re-election bids, along with all members of the House, including House Baltic Caucus co-chairs John Shimkus (R-IL) and Dennis Kucinich (D-OH).

The steady growth of Baltic Caucus membership in the House and Senate (*see related article*) over the past few months is another positive sign. This indicates increased activism on the part of Baltic-American constituents in communicating with



their Members of Congress and likewise shows added interest on the Hill in U.S.-Baltic relations. A steady stream of congressional and governmental delegations continues to travel to the Baltics. House International Relations European subcommittee chairman Elton Gallegly (R-CA) recently spent a week there. House Rules Committee chairman David Dreier (R-CA) led an eight-member House delegation to Latvia and Estonia. Sen. Richard Shelby (R-AL), the vice-chair of the Select Intelligence Committee, also visited all three Baltic capitals in mid-October. State Department and Pentagon officials have kept up a regular presence. Even more significantly, President George W. Bush is expected to stop in Vilnius, Lithuania following the Prague Summit.

Once new committee assignments are made for the 108th Congress in early 2003, plans for NATO enlargement ratification will begin to take shape in the Senate. The Senate NATO Observer Group (SNOG), made up of 34 members, will pay particular attention to this process during the next Congress. JBANC will work to disseminate relevant information regarding the candidacies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, and to encourage additional travel to those countries by congressional offices. The NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the inter-parliamentary organization of legislators from NATO member countries and 17 Associate member nations including the Baltics, will meet in Istanbul from November 15-19.

It is expected that Nebraska congressman Doug Bereuter (R-NE), a great supporter of a strong NATO, will become the next President of that Assembly. Eleven U.S. House members currently serve with the Assembly, including Congressmen John Shimkus and Porter Goss (R-FL).

JBANC and its three constituent organizations are members of the Central and East European Coalition (CEEC), which combines the voices of over 20 million Americans. Representatives from the CEEC met with White House National Security Council senior officials on September 19 to discuss matters of common interest, including NATO enlargement. Participants at the meeting included EANC and JBANC President Mati Kõiva, JBANC chairman Vello Ederma and JBANC Managing Director Karl Altai. The CEEC and NSC have held regular meetings and plan to again discuss the status of NATO enlargement and other issues at a meeting in mid-November. In addition, the CEEC is working with the Congressional Caucus on Central Europe, co-chaired by Representatives William Lipinski (D-IL) and Jack Quinn (R-NY). Staff members from the two offices met with the Coalition on October 16 to exchange information and share hopes that a series of regular briefings and meetings between the CEEC and congressional staffers will commence in 2003. Interaction with other related Caucuses, including the Baltic Caucus, is being planned.

Besides coalition building with friends on Capitol Hill and elsewhere, JBANC continues to help organize informational meetings with constituents across the

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Gallegly and Shimkus NATO Resolutions Pass by Wide Margins

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358-9, while the resolution introduced by Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) passed by voice vote, which is by at least a two-thirds margin.

The Gallegly resolution, H.Res.468, was amended to endorse member candidacies of seven aspirant countries, including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The margin of support of those who voted was nearly 98%, which is even more than the highly successful passage of the Solomon Freedom Consolidation Act. One representative voted "present" and 63 members did not vote. Gallegly, who recently spent a week visiting the Baltics, is the Chairman of the Subcommittee on Europe in the International Relations Committee.

Final vote results on H.Res.468 are available at: <http://jbanc.org/vote02.html>

Additional supporting comments on the House floor were given by Rep. Diane Watson (D-CA), Rep. Tom Lantos (D-CA), and Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-NE), all members of the House International Relations Committee. Credit was given to both the Committee chairman, Rep. Henry Hyde (R-IL) and Ranking Member Lantos for helping move the debate and vote on the measure. There were 20 co-sponsors of the Gallegly bill, with Lantos, Bereuter and Rep. Christopher Cox (R-CA) as original co-sponsors.

The Shimkus resolution,

HCR116, supporting membership of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania was originally introduced in April 2001 and eventually garnered 56 co-sponsors. Supporting voices on the House floor were Rep. Chris Smith (R-NJ), Rep. Diane Watson (D-CA), Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-OH), Rep. Gallegly, Rep. Lee Terry (R-NE) and Shimkus, who added that it is "important for the House of Representatives to send a message to NATO leaders before the 2002 summit that the United States stands firmly behind the Baltics' candidacy."

Shimkus and Kucinich are co-chairs of the House Baltic Caucus, currently with 75 members.

Karl Altau
JBANC



*The resolution
introduced by Rep.
Elton Gallegly
(R-CA) passed by
the wide margin of
358-9*

Meeting of NATO Defense Ministers in Warsaw

(Continued from page 6)

days. These units should be able to achieve operational readiness in two to four years. After the meeting Defense Minister of the Republic of Poland Jerzy Szmajdzinski assured that the American idea has been positively received, and no minister regarded this proposal as a duplication of the European defense forces. The NATO defense ministers also discussed the situation in Iraq. From United States Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld and the Deputy

Director of the CIA they received a new report on the situation in that country, including its capacity to produce and use weapons of mass destruction. A possible international strike on Iraq was not discussed.

Russian Defense Minister Sergei Ivanov participated in the second day of the meeting. The situation in Georgia was also discussed. Jerzy Szmajdzinski, Polish Defense Minister, proposed that the anti-terrorist coalition think

about how to help Georgia in resolving the problem of armed groups on the border with Russia.

The participants of the meeting approved the general idea of joint NATO-Russia peacekeeping operations. Secretary General Robertson praised the development of relations in the NATO-Russia Council.

Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs
CLARIS NR: 1487
October 2002



*Since 2000,
JBANC has
helped organize
and has taken part
in nearly 30
informational
meetings in over
20 states.*

JBANC Fall 2002 Report

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United States. Such meetings were held in Atlanta, Georgia on September 13 and Knoxville, Tennessee on September 14. About 50 individuals participated in the Atlanta meeting, some coming from as far as Savannah. Presenters included Renatas Norkus from the Embassy of Lithuania, Janis Eichmanis from the Embassy of Latvia, Karl Altai from JBANC and Roberts Kukainis, President of the American Latvian Youth Association, from Greenville, South Carolina. An informative slide-show presentation detailed the background of NATO enlargement, while the embassy representatives gave specific Baltic perspectives. As at similar information meetings, JBANC disseminated copies of the "Handbook on Activities in Support of NATO Enlargement", with information on contacting and informing legislators and opinion-makers, which is especially critical in an election year. The Handbook has been regularly updated since being first issued in 2000. On its website, a



Vis Kimenis of Sharpsburg, Georgia, addresses question to panelists at NATO enlargement informational meeting in Atlanta on September 13.

corresponding "NATO E-book" has been published by JBANC. Since 2000, JBANC has helped organize and has taken part in nearly 30 informational meetings in over 20 states.

On March 6-8, 2003, JBANC is organizing its Fifth Baltic Conference. The event will take place at the Washington Marriott hotel on 22nd street,

NW in Washington, DC. More detailed information will be made available beginning in December. As at previous conferences, events are being planned on Capitol Hill and with the Administration and other governmental organizations.

Reported by Karl Altai

Help Needed: NATO Documentary Funding

Soon, ten Eastern European countries could be granted the potential to send American soldiers to war. On November 21-22 in Prague, leaders of NATO member states will decide whether to admit ten aspirant states to join its ranks and share NATO's Article V guarantee, that "armed attack against one or more... shall be considered an attack against them all." We propose producing a broadcast news documentary entitled "The Road to Prague: NATO at a Crossroads" to bring attention to this historic event.

The project would be produced by Megan Towey, a news producer for NBC in Dallas, and Matt Kovalick, a writer for English language newspapers in Lithuania. We are both former Fulbright scholars to Lithuania.

We request immediate funding for this project. The documentary would address questions pertaining to the admission of new members and how NATO might evolve to face the challenges of a post September 11th world.

"The Road to Prague" would profile the leading aspirant countries and what each of these young democracies could add to the Alliance. Also, we would look at the transformation of NATO as an Organization one trying to redefine its mission to counter terrorism and in building stronger bonds with Russia.

We have already been working to make this documentary a reality. In July, we attended the Summit of the NATO aspirants in Riga, Latvia. There, we obtained interviews with the Bulgarian, Romanian, Slovakian and Slovenian Prime Ministers, the Presidents of Estonia and Latvia, NATO experts and Senator Trent Lott. Despite the work we have already done, additional funding is needed to complete the project. If you have an interest in providing funding for this project, please contact me. Thank you.

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Lithuanian American Community Holds Its Board of Directors Meeting in Washington, D.C.

The Lithuanian American Community, Inc., held its annual Board of Directors meeting from September 20-22, 2002, in Washington, D.C. In addition to normal administrative activities, participants took part in briefings and visits with U.S. Senators and members of the House of Representative to insure their continued support for Baltic expansion in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Prospects continue to look bright for invitations to be offered to all three Baltic countries in the near future.

Highlight of the annual gathering was the Lithuanian American Community Gala Awards Dinner, held at the Washington Marriott Hotel, on Saturday, September 21. This event was hosted by Regina F. Narusis, J.D., Chairman of the National Board of Directors and S. Algimantas Gecys, President of the National Executive Committee.

The Invocation was provided by Bishop Paul Baltakis, Bishop for Spiritual Assistance of Lithuanian Catholics Outside of Lithuania, a Special Greeting by Ambassador Vygaudas Usackas, Lithuania's Ambassador to the United States, and an address by Major General John Kronkaitis, Chief of the Lithuanian Armed Forces.

Individuals honored during the dinner included the Honorable Daniel Fried, National Security Council and Special Assistant to the President George W. Bush, who received the Lithuanian American Community Amber Award for his continued service to Lithuania; Marija Remiene, Chairperson of the Lithuanian American Community Cultural Council, who received the Knight's Cross of the Lithuanian Order of Gediminas for her long service to Lithuania; and Colonel Al Garsys, U.S. Marine Corps Retired, who received the Lithuanian Armed

Forces Medal for Distinguished Service for his contribution to the Lithuanian military. All attendees were extremely happy to hear Major General Kronkaitis remarks that the armed forces of Lithuanian and the other Baltic States were totally ready and able to honor all commitments to NATO. He also noted that the three Baltic nations currently have soldiers serving alongside NATO units in Bosnia and Kosovo. In addition, the three Baltic nations have now committed forces that will soon be serving in the Afghanistan mission as part of the War on Terrorism.

JBANC congratulates the Lithuanian American Community on another highly successful event that has clearly contributed to the Baltic NATO expansion cause.

Henry Gaidis
JBANC



Henry Gaidis



"Prospects continue to look bright for invitations to be offered to all three Baltic countries"



House Baltic Caucus

Co-chairs:

Rep. John SHIMKUS (R-IL)

Rep. Dennis KUCINICH (D-OH)

Arizona

Jim Kolbe

California

Xavier Becerra
Ken Calvert
Christopher Cox
David Dreier
Elton Gallegly
Stephen Horn
Tom Lantos
Gary Miller
Nancy Pelosi
Dana Rohrabacher
Lucille Roybal-Allard
Edward Royce
Loretta Sanchez
Brad Sherman
Henry Waxman

Colorado

Bob Schaffer

Connecticut

John Larson

Florida

Porter Goss

Illinois

John Shimkus
Judy Biggert
Rod Blagojevich
Jerry Costello
Luis Gutierrez
William Lipinski
Bobby Rush

Maryland

Connie Morella

Mass.

James McGovern

Michigan

James Barcia
David Bonior
Dave Camp
Vernon Ehlers
Peter Hoekstra
Dale Kildee
Carolyn Kilpatrick
Joe Knollenberg
Sander Levin
Lynn Rivers
Michael Rogers
Nick Smith
Bart Stupak
Fred Upton

Nebraska

Doug Bereuter
Lee Terry

New Jersey

Robert Andrews
Robert Menendez
Frank Pallone
Bill Pascrell
Steve Rothman
Chris Smith

New York

Gary Ackerman
Joseph Crowley
Sue Kelly
Peter King
Carolyn Maloney
Michael McNulty
Anthony Weiner
Louise Slaughter

N. Carolina

David Price

Ohio

Dennis Kucinich
Sherrod Brown
David Hobson
Marcy Kaptur

Penn.

Robert Brady
Robert Borski
Phil English
Joseph Hoeffel
Tim Holden
John Peterson
Joseph Pitts
Curt Weldon

Tennessee

Van Hilleary

Texas

Lloyd Doggett
Martin Frost

Wisconsin

Thomas Barrett

75 Representatives Total (as of October 29, 2002)

Party Breakdown:

31 Republicans

44 Democrats

Top Five States (52 Members):

California	15
Michigan	14
New York/Pennsylvania	8/8
Illinois	7

Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus

Co - Chairs



Sen. Richard Durbin (D)



Sen. Gordon Smith (R)

Caucus Members



Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D)



Sen. Charles Grassley (R)



Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D)



Sen. Peter Fitzgerald (R)



Sen. George Voinovich (R)



Sen. George Allen (R)



Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D)



Sen. Barbara Mikulski (D)



Sen. Ben Nelson (D)



Sen. Barbara Boxer (D)



Sen. Robert Bennett (R)

Report from Our Member—Organizations

**Saulius Kuprys**

The Lithuanian American Council, founded in

1941, has represented the interests of the Lithuanian Americans since that time. One of its early achievements was meeting with President Roosevelt, with the U.S. policy of non-recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries being elicited. This policy was the fundamental principle of international law which fueled the five decade long struggle for Baltic freedom. The Lithuanian American Council presently encompasses 15 national organizations and besides underwriting the activities of JBANC it also maintains a national office in Chicago.

ADOPTING TECHNOLOGY

Over the last year, the Lithuanian American Council has increased its computer capability and web page accessibility. It has expanded its database to 20,000 addresses, now covering all fifty states. Its webpage allows direct communication with members of Congress through a series of interactive links. The webpage www.ALTCenter.org is also accessible through JBANC's webpage and other community webpages.

ENTERING THE PUBLIC FORUM

During the last year, the Lithuanian American Council hosted a number of luncheons at the prestigious Chicago Athletic Association

facility. The five major public figures from Lithuania honored at the lunches were former Prime Minister and member of Parliament Andrius Kubilius, Ambassador to the United States Vygaudas Usackas, Commander of Lithuania's armed forces General Jonas Kronkaitis, Lithuania's President Valdas Adamkus, and most recently Prof. Vytautas Landsbergis. The Lithuanian American Council has likewise expanded its activities to include cultural programs, such as the sponsoring of a musical presentation at Chicago's municipal plaza where under a huge Lithuanian flag, some 2000 spectators were introduced to Lithuanian and Baltic culture.

NATO ACTION

In promoting the case for NATO enlargement, the Lithuanian American Council has generated some 50,000 pieces of mail and has activated its member organizations to participate energetically in this national campaign. The Lithuanian American Council has been active in generating grassroots support for enactment of congressional resolutions promoting NATO enlargement. Its component organizations have made a targeted effort to promote the Shimkus resolution, emphasizing Baltic readiness for NATO membership. The LAC has also printed and distributed thousands of bumper stickers throughout the United States.

VILNIUS CONTACTS

The Lithuanian American Council has maintained close contact with members of Lithuania's parliament. This summer LAC President Saulius Kuprys went to Vilnius to discuss NATO enlargement with, among others, President Adamkus and his advisors, members of parliament, Vytautas Landsbergis, Andrius Kubilius, the head of the parliamentary NATO commission, and former LAC president and current parliamentarian Dr. Kazys Bobelis. Two other members of the LAC Board, Algis Kazlauskas and Valentinas Krumplis were also recently in Lithuania, promoting a traveling exhibit project emphasizing Lithuania's recent history, struggle for freedom, and genocide.

FUTURE EXPANSION

One of the activities being energetically promoted by the LAC is the expansion of its membership base to include and integrate the younger generation into its future ranks. It has revitalized the Lithuanian Students Association of North America, a longtime LAC stalwart. Jointly, they will be promoting the Lithuanian American University Network, designed to be an interactive cyber community of Lithuanian students and faculty at U.S. universities. There are a large number of highly qualified and motivated students from Lithuania currently studying in the United States.

The LAC is emphasizing

(Continued on page 18)

Report from Our Member-Organizations

ALA Board Meets to Discuss Strategies for the Fall Months

Board members brainstorm organization's strengths and weaknesses

The American Latvian Association's Board of Directors met in Rockville, Maryland on September 7-8, 2002 to discuss the organization's accomplishments over the summer months, to decide on the projects for the fall and to talk about ALA's strengths and weaknesses. This was the second Board meeting chaired by recently-elected ALA president, Mrs. Dace Copeland, who asked the meeting's participants to "brainstorm" in order to single out ALA's strengths and weaknesses.



The American Latvian Association's Board of Directors, headed by President Dace Copeland, during their September meeting in Rockville, MD.

While pointing out the association's strengths, Board members emphasized that ALA is an organization with a stable and time-tested structure, well-invested capital funds that allow it to support its projects, as well as many activities involving the Latvian community in the United States. They said that with its 6000 dues paying members, and 170 member organizations representing another 95,000 Latvian-Americans, ALA is the largest Latvian organization in the world, a considerable political influence that is recognized by the community as the central Latvian organization in the United States. ALA coordinates the Latvian educational system in the United States and supports welfare projects in Latvia.

"We can see that our organization has a strong and good foundation," Copeland said. "It is a proof that ALA can have a future, however, we should always think about how to make those foundations stronger and better."

The Board also admitted that ALA has its weaknesses. "We must see

them, we must admit them and we should look for ways to overcome them," Copeland said.

Among the weaknesses, the Board mentioned that ALA lacks support from mid- and younger generation Latvians, that membership numbers are stagnant, and also that it has difficulty to attract those who have assimilated into their local American communities. Board members also mentioned that ALA does not sufficiently explain its activities to the public, and should make efforts to raise its public image.

Some of the suggestions made to improve ALA's work included the following:

- ALA should disseminate more information about its activities through the Latvian press and its Internet website,
- ALA should involve younger people and also Latvians who have recently immigrated to this country in specific pro-

jects,

- ALA Board members should address Latvian audiences more frequently during social events to discuss the activities of the organization,
- ALA should support more Latvian cultural and educational events.
- ALA should better demonstrate that it is an inclusive organization that welcomes every interested individual, and that it cares about the fate of the U.S. Latvian community.

During the meeting, the Board members also addressed some of ALA's ongoing projects. During this forum, the Board:

- noted that the campaign to support NATO enlargement is not finished until membership is certain and the ratification

(Continued on page 18)

Report from Our Member-Organizations



Mati Kõiva



Senator Mikulski of Maryland provided this year's observance national attention with her comments in The Congressional Record of July 19, 2002.

Estonian American National Council, Inc. Notes Its 50th Anniversary

In 2002, the Estonian American National Council, Inc. observes its fiftieth anniversary. The anniversary is being observed jointly with events of local and regional organizations and parishes. The central organization of Estonian Americans, the Council, was established on July 19, 1952 in New York City. United States Senator Barbara A. Mikulski of Maryland provided this year's observance national attention with her comments in *The Congressional Record* of July 19, 2002. The purpose of EANC upon its founding was twofold:

** To regain independence of Estonia and human rights for its people denied as a result of the forcible annexation and occupation by the Soviet Union. The United States never recognized the Soviet annexation of Estonia and its Baltic neighbors, Latvia and Lithuania.*

** To preserve the Estonian cultural heritage in the United States and provide mutual assistance for the ethnic group members.*

The Council is elected nationally every three

years by Americans of Estonian descent. Earlier this year, Estonian-Americans elected the 35-member XVIII Council, which in turn elected a governing Board. Activities are sustained by the voluntary, tax-deductible contributions of the Estonian American community. The newly elected Council held a two-day planning session in April, 2002 at a BWI Airport hotel in Maryland. At this meeting, Mati Kõiva was elected president and Vello Ederma and Lya Karm, EANC's JBANC representatives, were elected to the Executive Board of EANC.

The focus of EANC activities has changed somewhat with the re-birth of Estonian independence in 1991. It is essential to help Estonia now to have security and stability.

American support for these goals is vital. There is a need to help Estonia develop democracy, recreate civil society, rebuild its democratic institutions and establish a viable free market economy. It needs stability and security an-

chored in NATO. The EANC aids in all these efforts. Much of that work is done in cooperation with the American Latvian Association and the Lithuanian American Council through JBANC and the Central and East European Coalition.

The EANC also funds scholarships in Estonia and provides assistance in social and educational programs. The EANC continues to help fund Estonian American cultural activities, schools, youth camps, boy and girl scouts and folk dance groups. It provides support for the U.S. Estonian Archive and the work of the Estonian-American Historical Commission, which aims to preserve Estonian American heritage in the United States. The Council also holds periodic conferences with Estonian American organizations and parishes to coordinate activities.

*Mati Kõiva
President, EANC*

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION No. 146
STATE OF NEW JERSEY
210th LEGISLATURE
INTRODUCED JUNE 24, 2002

Sponsored by:

Assemblyman JOHN S. WISNIEWSKI

District 19 (Middlesex)

Assemblyman ALBIO SIRES

District 33 (Hudson)

Co-Sponsored by:

Assemblymen Eagler and Conners

(Sponsorship Updated As Of: 9/24/2002)

An Assembly Resolution supporting the admission of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Whereas, The Baltic countries of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are undergoing a historic process of democratic and free market transformation after emerging from decades of brutal Soviet occupation; and

Whereas, Each of these Baltic countries has been exemplary and consistent in its respect for human rights and civil liberties; and

Whereas, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have clearly demonstrated their ability to operate with the military forces of North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations and under NATO standards; and

Whereas, In a federal law enacted in 1998, Congress declared that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania: "would make an outstanding contribution to furthering the goals of NATO and enhancing stability, freedom, and peace in Europe should they become NATO members and upon complete satisfaction of all relevant criteria should be invited to become full NATO members at the earliest possible date."; and

Whereas, On June 10, 2002, both Congress and the President of the United States expressed their support for NATO expansion by enacting Public Law No. 107-187, which endorses the vision of the further expansion of the NATO alliance; and

Whereas, At its 2002 summit meeting in Prague, NATO will consider the further enlargement of its alliance; now, therefore,

Be It Resolved by the General Assembly of the State of New Jersey:

1. This House supports the admission of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

2. Duly authenticated copies of this resolution, signed by the Speaker of the General Assembly and attested by the Clerk thereof shall be transmitted to the President of the United States, the Presiding Officers of the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States Congress, the members thereof from the State of New Jersey, Mr. Sven Jurgenson, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Estonia, H.E. Mr. Aivis Ronis, Ambassador of Latvia, and H.E. Vygaudas Ušackas, Ambassador of Lithuania.

STATEMENT

This resolution promotes the admission of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. These three Baltic states desire to share in the benefits and obligations of NATO in order to pursue the development, growth, and promotion of democratic institutions and free market economic development.

Estonian Prime Minister Siim Kallas in Washington, DC

(Continued from page 7)

answered specific questions and thanked Estonian-Americans for supporting work in Estonia, the country of their heritage.

That same evening, there was a reception in honor of the Prime Minister in the Capitol, where he praised and thanked the work of Baltic-Americans. Among the approximately 60 guests were Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE), and Congress-

men Elton Gallegly (R-CA), John Shimkus (R-IL) and staff members from a number of Congressional offices. Shimkus is the co-chair of the House Baltic Caucus.

Gallegly recently joined the House Caucus, while Sen. Nelson is one of the newest members of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus. Present at the reception were ambassadors from NATO and NATO aspirant countries, including the U.S. ambassador to Esto-

nia, Joseph DeThomas. The reception was organized jointly by JBANC, the U.S.-Baltic Foundation, the Baltic American Freedom League and the Estonian Embassy.

Prime Minister Kallas met earlier in the day with President George W. Bush, who confirmed strong U.S. support for Estonia's accession to NATO.

*Karl Altau
JBANC*



"The LAC has access to four newspapers - one being a daily, two television programs and also a national network of radio programs"

ALA Board Meets to Discuss Strategies for the Fall Months

(Continued from page 15)

- process is complete; set the goal for the Fall 2002 fundraising campaign at \$150,000;
- approved Ms. Sandra Aistars as ALA's representative to JBANC;
- lauded the work of ALA's "Cooperation with Latvia" division, which has sent over

- \$40,000 to aid orphans and children from large families in Latvia;
- praised the successful ALA-organized summer youth trips to Latvia,
- decided to support the 50th Anniversary Congress of the American Latvian Youth Association with a \$1,000 grant.

ALA will hold its next two Board meetings on December 7-8, 2002 in Rockville, Maryland, and on March 14-16, 2003 in Seattle, Washington. The 52nd Annual Congress will take place from May 2-4, 2003 in Minneapolis/St. Paul.

*Raitis Eglitis
Executive Director, ALA*

Lithuanian American Council: Looking to the Future

(Continued from page 14)

cooperation with U.S.-based Baltic and Eastern European organizations. Besides JBANC, it has been active in the newly created Midwest Baltic Coalition, which sponsored a NATO seminar during the Latvian Festival in Chicago this past summer. The LAC has also established a working relationship with the Polish American

Congress and the Polish National Alliance based in Chicago. The Lithuanian American Council is fortunate in having access to a well-developed media network to disseminate needed information throughout the community. The LAC has access to four newspapers - one being a daily, two television programs and also a national

network of radio programs. These media resources are mobilized in the current national NATO enlargement campaign.

The Lithuanian American Council deeply feels the loss of the recent death of its long-term representative in Washington, Algirdas Rimas. His direction and positive approach to all who had the



November 18, 2002, 10:00 AM



Opening the Doors at Prague

Dr. Ronald Asmus will be JBANC's guest in its seventh interactive webcast on **Monday, November 18 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. EST**. That same week, NATO allies meet in Prague to issue invitations to up to seven new potential members, including the Baltics. Asmus will field questions which can be submitted at: <http://jbank.org/studio.html>

Asmus, whose book "Opening NATO's Door" is being published in November, has been a Senior Transatlantic Fellow since September 1st at the German Marshall Fund of the United States. At the same time, he is Adjunct Senior Fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations. Previously, Asmus served at the State Department as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs.

For more information
on NATO visit:



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Simonas Girdzijauskas

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Algirdas Rimas – In Memoriam



Algirdas Rimas (1941—2002)

(Continued from page 3)

March, I will miss his guidance terribly.

Algis was born in Vilnius, Lithuania in 1941 and grew up in New York City. He received his BA in political science from the City College of New York and his MA in economics from the University of Oklahoma. After service as an infantry lieutenant in the U.S. Army, he joined the U.S. Foreign Service in 1967 and served in Germany, Guyana, Ecuador, Iceland, Ireland, Canada and Lithuania. After retiring in 1994, he served in volunteer positions on the executive committee of the Lithuanian American Community, Inc. and as the Washington representative of the Lithuanian American Council, Inc. He joined the JBANC Board in 1997 and served twice as its chairman.

Algis was recently decorated with the Knight Cross of the Order of the Lithuanian Grand Duke Gediminas, honoring his contributions to American-Lithuanian organizations in the United States. The decree to honor him was signed on October 7 by Valdas Adamkus, President of the Republic of Lithuania. The award was presented by Lithuanian Ambassador Vygaudas Usackas.

Algis leaves wife Ramune of Reston, Virginia, two sons, Algis and Andrius and his mother in Connecticut.

Algis, you are missed! RIP!

Vello Ederma, JBANC Chairman (EANC) on behalf of the Board, staff and all the members of JBANC

New Members Helping to Expand Congressional Baltic Caucuses

(Continued from page 5)
1979.

The addition of these new members to the House Baltic Caucus has expanded the Caucus member list to 75, representing about 18%, or nearly one of every five House Members. Besides Rep. Shimkus, the other Caucus co-chairman is Congressman Dennis Kucinich (D-OH).

Please see pages 12–13 in this Chronicle for current lists of House and Senate Baltic Caucus members. These are also updated on JBANC's webpage:

<http://www.jbanc.org/senbalticaucus.html>
<http://www.jbanc.org/caucus.html>

Simonas Girdzijauskas
JBANC



Sen. Ben Nelson (D-NE) addresses guests during the September 4 reception in the United States Capitol

www.jbanc.org