--- The Baltic-American community is actively weighing in with appeals to Congress in a final effort to have funding restored to Voice of America (VOA) and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty (RFE/RL) broadcasts to the Baltics and other Central and Eastern European countries. The broadcasts are currently funded under a broad Continuing Resolution, a temporary provision keeping all U.S. government services, including the broadcasts operating until October 31. With the legislative session now heading into November, a new C.R. will have to come into force to continue funding until the appropriations bills for fiscal year 2004 are agreed to by Congress.

Both Senate and House Authorizing committees are on record as supporting the effort to keep alive U.S. international broadcasting (Continued on page 13)

- e-PINE Rolls Out – New U.S. Initiative Brings Baltics and Nordics Closer

Washington, DC (JBANC) --- A new United States policy initiative that would bring the U.S. closer together cooperatively with the Baltic and Nordic countries was officially launched on October 15. e-PINE, the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe, was announced by the U.S. State Department to a large gathering of policy makers, diplomats, Baltic-Americans and other interested leaders at the Johns Hopkins Nitze School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC.

Speakers at the event were Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Heather Conley, Congressman John Shimkus (R-IL) and Latvian Ambassador Aivis Ronis. The event was moderated by Dan Hamilton of SAIS.

e-PINE evolved from the State Department’s Office of Nordic and Baltic Affairs and its Northern Europe Initiative (NEI), created in 1997, and will build upon the progress already under way in the region.

Conley remarked that the U.S. wants “to remain part of the multilateral network of cooperation that has developed in this region over the past decade. We want to deepen our dialogue on ways to address remaining challenges within the region.”

The three broad areas of focus under e-PINE are described as cooperative security; healthy societies; and vibrant economies. The first centers on political security, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, working within NATO, etc. The second deals with addressing such problems as disease control (continued on page 4)
The Time is Now - Let's Acknowledge the Victims of Communism

A recent news item in a local paper reported that a U.S. Congressman plans to introduce legislation to create a federal commission to study the feasibility of erecting a National Museum of the American Latino in central Washington, D.C. This, the first step in the business of building national memorials, follows on the heels of a similar effort to build a museum dedicated to the struggles of the African American. That was preceded by a museum telling the story of the American Indian, now half-completed on a prime parcel of land on the Washington Mall.

Also, a building not far away is a long overdue memorial to World War II, in turn a stone's throw from veteran memorials to the Korean war and the Vietnam war, the latter still the most visited memorial site in the nation's capital. This spasm of memorial building in Washington started in the early 1980's when the Holocaust Museum came into being. This edifice, currently the second most popular attraction of its kind, stands a bit off the Mall, though still suitably located.

Some of the museums tell or will tell stories that are uniquely American, i.e. the African-American and the Indian, while others are of a more universal nature. The one thing all have in common is that each in its own way commemorates man's inhumanity to man.

There is, however, one major global event that has been neglected in terms of memorialization, but now appears to be on the verge of coming into reality. That is a memorial to the victims of communism, more than one hundred million people over roughly the course of the last century. This failed philosophy and warped system of rule easily outdistances all the others in terms of numbers of victims and the degree of ruin it has visited on the world.

A rejuvenated organization in Washington, D.C., the Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, is spearheading the effort to build a memorial and museum to all those who suffered and perished under communist rule. It is working diligently and receiving close cooperation toward receiving the requisite permits and authorizations from the national and local governments and is well positioned to proceed with the project. It has scouted appropriate sites in central Washington and has various fund-raising efforts underway. The group has been assured of receiving matching funds for the effort.

But the success of this effort depends on all of us as well. With the Baltic states assured of NATO and European Union membership, it is time now to turn and focus on this specific project.

Material support for the project is of course needed, in contributions large and small. Contributions to the Foundation are tax-deductible.

The Foundation will host its fifth annual Truman-Reagan awards dinner on Thursday, November 20 at the Embassy of Slovakia in Washington, DC.

For more information, contact Foundation President Jay Katzen at 540-270-6309, vocmemorial@aol.com. Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation, 1521 16th St., NW, Washington, DC, 20036.

~Janis Bolsteins
On September 26, 2003, the oldest and best-known Baltic defense co-operation project, the Baltic Battalion (BALTBAT), came to an end. To commemorate the occasion, a festive military review was held at the unit’s training center at Adazi, Latvia. During the ceremony, the unit’s battalion flag was retired and removed to a museum to preserve the memory of this distinguished unit. The flag, with its distinctive parallel blue, maroon, and yellow strips, one taken from each of the units respective national flags, symbolize the unity of these three Baltic nations. The unit’s motto “Fortitudo in Unitate” (Strength in Unity) clearly proclaimed the intention of the unit’s founders. BALTBAT was established to demonstrate the unity and desire of the three Baltic states to rejoin the nations of the free world after 50 years of Soviet occupation. Since then the unit proved to the world that the Baltic states could take an active part in the ongoing struggle to maintain international peace. Today, BALTBAT stands as an outstanding example of regional co-operation and the willingness of the Baltic states to participate in international peacekeeping operations.

The concept of a joint Baltic peacekeeping unit was first announced in November 1993 during a meeting of the Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian Defense Force Commanders. The goal of the proposed unit was to provide joint training and development for their forces in anticipation of taking part in NATO and UN peacekeeping operations. In addition, the proposed unit provided a unique opportunity to demonstrate to the world the Baltic states will and ability to take part in operations to preserve international peace and security.

In September 1994, the Baltic Prime Ministers, meeting in Riga, signed an agreement officially accepting the concept of a joint Baltic peacekeeping unit. Thereafter, their Defense Ministers signed specific agreements with the United States, Britain, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland related to international support for the unit. Denmark was appointed the lead nation to coordinate the supporting nation’s assistance.

In January 1996, a combined tri-national BALTBAT Headquarters was established at Adazi, Latvia. This headquarters’ contingent provided the necessary logistics and support to the three national infantry companies formed from Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian soldiers. Under established agreements, each national company was subordinated to its own authorities until each of the companies were joined under the battalion commander for a specific mission or exercise. About 300 officers and men served in these three established units on a rotating basis. Although each company used its own language internally, the working language for all command and communication interaction for the multinational unit was English.

International support and guidance was provided related to the unit’s structure, manning, training, equipment and administration in accordance with Western standards. This support was substantial and included everything in the unit inventory from the soldiers’ personal gear to the unit’s mortars and anti-tank weapons. One of the most important elements of this support was providing instructors and training through the BALTBAT Training Team (BTT) program. Basic training was conducted both according to national standards and mutually agreed training standards. The provided training was not only given at the BALTBAT Headquarters, but at the three unit’s training centers established in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Additional training was provided abroad through military units of the spon-
and prevention, trafficking in persons, and the environment. The third is development of trade, investment, economic and business ties, creating bridges between the U.S. and businesses in the Nordic-Baltic region, and fostering entrepreneurship.

While NEI priorities were centered on helping Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania become the best possible candidates for NATO and the EU through the U.S.-Baltic Charter, it also centered on promoting cooperation and integration between Northwest Russia and its Baltic Sea neighbors.

In implementing NEI, the U.S. became more involved in regional multi-lateral cooperative organizations and helped to further carry through U.S. assistance programs to the region, at a time when SEED (Support for East European Democracy) programs were being phased out on a country-by-country basis. NEI also helped to bolster U.S. trade and investment, and strengthen key Western institutions and security structures.

Budget constraints will continue to be an issue. While previous earmarks were generous, the U.S. budget is much tighter now. Future funding for e-PINE may come from foundations and corporations.

Specific programs that developed under NEI in the region included the Helsinki Women Business Leaders Summit and also the Partners for Financial Stability program, which provides training and technical assistance designed to strengthen capital and financial markets.

To help advance the shared agenda, regular consultations of the Nordics, Baltics, and the U.S. are envisioned. The “8+1” meetings will focus on the three agenda items. An initial meeting was held recently in New York with the next consultation tentatively scheduled for April.

In his remarks, Rep. Shimkus professed his close attachment for the Baltic region, as he is a fourth generation Lithuanian American. This interest has led him to become the co-chairman of the House Baltic Caucus, an interest group with over 70 members of the House of Representatives. Through this and his role as a member of the U.S. delegation to the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, Rep. Shimkus has been able to keep close watch on the region. For the future, he envisions trade delegations to the Baltics and furthering of Trans-Atlantic contacts.

Ambassador Ronis emphasized the timeliness of e-PINE, which reflects the positive changes in the region. He pointed out that the active and creative involvement of the United States is important both multi-laterally and bilaterally. Ronis also pointed to the new challenges ahead and stressed the importance of increasing cooperation with neighbors such as Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus and Moldova.

The e-PINE event was the third Baltic-related event this year at the Johns Hopkins Center for Transatlantic Relations. Following a kick-off meeting with Baltic and Nordic ambassadors and policy experts in January, the Center co-hosted a discussion on the topic of “Baltic Regional Security Challenges” in July.

Prior to the roll-out, JBANC met on October 1 with State Department officials to discuss e-PINE and the status of other joint projects in the Baltics. With SEED regional funding being eliminated, remaining non-military programs funded through the Foreign Operations bill, including environmental programs developed by the EPA will be phased out by the middle of 2004. JBANC supported regional SEED funding on a regional basis in the Baltics.

Participating at the State Department meeting from JBANC were Janis Bolsteins, Mati Kõiva, Lya Karm, Ramunas Kondratas, Karl Altau and Simonas Girdzijauskas.

State Department officials were NEI coordinator Robert Hilton, along with Dana Sullivan and Pat Attkisson from the Bureau and European and Eurasian Affairs.

For more information on the new initiative, please see the e-PINE website: http://www.state.gov/p/eur/rt/epine/.
On the verge of becoming official members of NATO and the European Union, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have begun to search for their role in new alliances as well as their place in a new geopolitical map that will emerge when both international organizations expand their borders to the east.

While these countries have not enjoyed long periods of political independence in the modern era, efforts at regional cooperation between Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have started to return dividends over the past decade. This is happening as the region is securing itself behind the shield of strong alliances and regional expansion of the Western bloc.

Location in a crucial geographical and geopolitical region between East and West has been an asset for the Baltics in their efforts to consolidate with the West. In a single decade, the Baltics have evolved from consumers to contributors to the collective security framework. As they develop defensive burden sharing with Western powers, they are thus erasing traditional fears about foreign occupation.

Successful political and social transitions from communism to free market economies have helped generate some of the fastest growing economies in the world. This has enabled the three to actively participate in international military operations in places like Iraq, Afghanistan, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina. After the fall of the Soviet empire, the Baltic governments were able to gain credibility as a strong regional partner and even a stabilizing factor for the Central European region.

Accepting Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into NATO will have multiple positive affects on the Trans-Atlantic outlook of international affairs and the power balance between Eastern and Western Europe.

First, it will remove the so-called “gray zone” and move the line of the Western frontier to the borders of Russia. This zone emerged after the Baltic countries regained their independence and Russia declared the Baltic region as part of their “near abroad.” This was meant to be a signal to the West that although the Soviet Union was gone, Moscow still considered the Baltics as part of the Russian Federation’s network of influence. The “gray-zone” concept also characterized the uncertain political direction and progression of needed reforms in the Baltic countries during the early and mid-’90’s. It was a time when the new Baltic governments were challenged to lead their transitional societies while facing fiscal crisis, unemployment, corruption, escalating crime and multiple pressures from outside the region.

Today, after a decade of successful reforms and close regional and Trans-Atlantic cooperation, the uncertainty over the political direction of the Baltics has vanished along with the “gray zone”. Their dedication and capability to implement these changes have been exemplary. The Baltics have become a politically independent, democratic and a very important component of regional stability in Central and Eastern Europe.

Instead of being a crossroad, the Baltic region has now become a bridge between East and West. It has become a successful transformation story that can be transmitted to countries like Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Georgia, and Azerbaijan. The Baltics have learned important political lessons as transformational societies seeking to integrate into a system of Western democratic values. These lessons need to be shared with their friends in other regions, including towards their south-east.

These outreach efforts have already begun in earnest. In September, Lithuanian President Rolandas Paksas visited the South Caucuses. His visit illustrated the point (Continued on page 12)
Central and East European Coalition Meets with Senator Joe Lieberman

Americans of Central and East European Heritage Plan Meetings with all 2004 Presidential Candidates

Washington, DC – The Central and East European Coalition (CEEC) met on September 8 with Presidential hopeful Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT), to discuss issues related to United States foreign policy. The CEEC, which represents 20 million Americans, plans to meet with all 2004 Presidential candidates.

At the meeting with Senator Lieberman, the group discussed NATO and the Euro-Atlantic relationship, U.S.-Russia relations, foreign aid and U.S. public diplomacy, including the status of Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty broadcasting to the region.

Regarding U.S. relations with Russia, the CEEC stressed the importance of holding Russia to the same standards as other countries. Russian economic pressures in the region, along with the country’s record on minority, religious and human rights, including its brutal war in Chechnya, were all marked as critical areas of concern.

On the topic of international broadcasting, the Senate Appropriations committee on September 4 marked up the FY04 Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations bill (S.1585). Although funding for these broadcasts will be restored to FY 2003 levels, it is not certain whether all their services will remain intact in the coming year. Senator Lieberman remarked that if broadcasting to Central and Eastern Europe is stopped, it sends a message that “we take the people for granted.”

Senator Lieberman thanked the CEEC for taking the time to brief him on issues of concern and expressed his hope that this meeting would be the beginning of an ongoing foreign policy discussion with the group. The Senator said, “American foreign policy at its best is all about American principles -- freedom and democracy.”

He noted that if elected President, his foreign policy would be based on “our best values, strength of alliances, and assistance to the newly independent states of Central and East Europe.”

Regarding NATO, the CEEC expressed its satisfaction with the Senate ratification vote of May 8, in support of NATO enlargement. Although Senator Lieberman was not able to vote, he is a longtime supporter of expanding NATO membership. The CEEC reiterated its support for continued enlargement to countries able and willing to participate.

Karl Altau, Joint Baltic American National Commit-

(Continued on page 12)

Sen. Lieberman with CEEC members Sept. 8. To his left are Hadassah Lieberman, Frank Koszorus (Hungarian American Coalition), Simonas Girdzijauskas (JBANC).
JBANC Hosts Meeting with Representatives from Baltic Embassies

October 10 meeting between Baltic embassies and Baltic American organizations in Rockville.

Rockville, MD (JBANC) – On October 10, JBANC hosted the latest in a series of quarterly meetings between local Baltic organizations and representatives of the Baltic embassies in the U.S. The meetings are used to exchange information on important developments in the Baltic countries and on U.S. foreign policy.

JBANC President Dace Copeland led the meeting along with Chairman Janis Bolsteins. The Baltic embassies were represented by Renatas Norkus of the Lithuanian, Priit Masing of the Estonian, and Rihards Mucins of the Latvian embassy. Representatives from the American Latvian Association, Lithuanian American Council, Estonian American National Council, World Federation of Free Latvians and JBANC participated on behalf of the Baltic American communities. Other frequent Baltic American attendees such as the U.S. - Baltic Foundation, Baltic American Freedom League and Lithuanian American Community were unable to attend the meeting.

The meeting was the first since the U.S. Senate ratified the NATO enlargement protocols in May. It was understood that there would be no more projects like NATO enlargement in its magnitude in the near future. However, a string of other relative issues were raised that showed that work will not end with NATO membership, and that the continued participation of Baltic-American organizations and local activists is still needed to further successful U.S.-Baltic relations.

Issues discussed were International Broadcasting, U.S. military assistance to the Baltics, regional cooperation beyond the NATO and EU, the International Criminal Court, actions in the U.S. Congress and Administration, and the status of NATO ratification. Currently ten countries have ratified the treaty (for more details go to http://jbanc.org/ratification.html).

Special attention was paid to the new initiative by the U.S. State Department called the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE). e-PINE is successor to the Northern European Initiative and is meant to engage the Baltic region through a broader Baltic-Nordic framework. Mr. Norkus expressed hope that the new initiative will improve and provide more substantive results to the Baltic region.

Renatas Norkus of the Embassy of Lithuania.
Estonian American National Council
Update on 2003 Activities

The activities of the Estonian American National Council, Inc., which observed its 50th anniversary in 2002, continued in 2003. The 35-member XVIII assembly was elected in early 2002 for a three-year term by the Estonian-American community through general elections. The XVIII assembly held its second meeting on May 3, 2003 at a Baltimore Washington International Airport hotel. As one of the three members of JBANC, most of the liaison work in Washington was done through JBANC. EANC also is a member of the Central and East European Coalition and participates in the activities of that organization on national issues.

The EANC funds scholarships in Estonia and provides assistance to 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 Archives and the work of the Estonian American Historical Commission, which aims to preserve Estonian American heritage in the United States. The draft for the History of Estonian Americans for the period 1949 to 2000 edition is now undergoing its final review. The Council also holds periodic conferences with Estonian American organizations and parishes to coordinate activities. The last such conference was held in Lake-wood, NJ.

Since the Estonian World Festival ESTO 2004 will be held in Riga, Latvia, June 27-30 2004, EANC will appoint a coordinator to perform liaison and provide information to potential participants and attendees from United States. Such festivals have been held by Estonians living outside of Estonia every four years since 1972.

EANC looks forward to continuing its work with JBANC and with the CEEC in the coming years.

Mati Kõiva
President, EANC

Jüri Luik - New Estonian Ambassador to the U.S.

Estonia’s new ambassador to the United States, Jüri Luik, officially assumed his duties in early September.

Then Estonian Minister of Defense, Luik was keynote speaker at JBANC’s 4th Conference on Baltic Security in March 2001. He served in an earlier government in that role as well, and was Foreign Minister from 1994-95. In 1996-99 Luik was Estonian ambassador to NATO and more recently served as head of the Estonian delegation in Accession Talks with NATO. Among his initial tasks in Washington was overseeing the embassy’s move back to its location on Massachusetts Avenue. A fire in the summer of 2001 forced the embassy to relocate to temporary quarters elsewhere in the city.

Luik’s first opportunity to meet with the local Washington, DC Estonian community was after the screening of the Estonian film “Names in Marble” which attracted 200 viewers during its U.S. premiere on September 20. Luik thanked the Estonian-American community for its role in preserving Estonia abroad during the long dark days under foreign occupation and communism and in their more recent efforts to make NATO membership for Estonia a reality.
During the past year, the Board and members of the American Latvian Association have focused their energies on supporting Latvia’s admission to NATO. We felt this would not only help secure Latvia’s sovereignty, it would also help the U.S. in spreading the common values of democratic government and personal freedom.

ALA’s President, Ms. Dace Copeland, attended the November Prague NATO Summit as an official observer, the only observer there representing a U.S. ethnic organizations. Earlier in July, she had attended the “Vilnius – 10” NATO Candidate Conference in Riga. When Latvia received NATO’s official invitation to begin accession talks, ALA used personal meetings and letter writing campaigns to inform the U.S. Senate of our stand on this matter. We kept the Latvian-American community apprised of the NATO situation through various means, including regional seminars, such as one held in Seattle this past March. The seminar panel, presenting an in depth understanding of the NATO expansion process, consisted of World Association of Free Latvians President Janis Kubains, ALA president Dace Copeland, ALA Vice president Peteris Blumbergs, and former Congressman Thomas Downey.

We shared the joy and satisfaction of the whole Baltic American community when the U.S. Senate approved the expansion of NATO by a vote of 96-0. Just weeks later, on May 30th, five ALA members and Karl Altau, Managing Director of JBANC, made the rounds of the U.S. Senate offices thanking them for their vote and presenting them with a copy of Ron Asmus’ book “Opening NATO’s Door.” This event was duly noted in a Washington Times column which commented on the unusual nature of a Senate visit meant only to “thank” and not to “ask”.

Most Latvian-Americans believe that Latvia’s security and economic growth would be further enhanced though membership in the European Union. Indeed, in May, the 52nd Convention of ALA passed a resolution encouraging Latvian citizens to cast a positive vote on this matter during the September 20th referendum. ALA publicized this viewpoint with an article on the ALA website and in the ALA periodical, Latvian Dimensions. The article was also published in the leading Latvian American newspaper. We also sent a press release to newspapers and other news media in Latvia. The referendum passed with a 67% positive vote and Latvia will join its Baltic neighbors as a European Union member in May 2004.

During the year, ALA has

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Janis Eichmanis (right) of Latvian Embassy receives Certificate of Recognition from ALA Board member Janis Gramatins on Sept. 29.
The Lithuanian American Council - the Lithuanian component of the Joint Baltic American National Committee - is an organization whose roots date back to the early part of the 20th Century. In 1915 American Lithuanian organizations formed a national organization to represent their interests and thus created the Lithuanian American Council. It was an organization that was active during the czarist days in the struggle to reestablish freedom of Lithuania and the other Baltic countries. It coordinated many of the political, charitable and related activities before and during World War I.

Among its accomplishments was the collection of a million signatures urging the United States Government to recognize the de jure independence of the Republic of Lithuania. This was one of the many petitions that the LAC would be involved in during the forthcoming decades.

The organization was essentially revitalized in 1940 with the onslaught of World War II and the ensuing occupation of the Baltic states. One of its most important accomplishments was eliciting from President Roosevelt the principled statement of non-recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states - a position which was the cornerstone of U.S. policy towards the Baltics. It was maintained by every U.S. administration until the reestablishment of independence of the Baltic States.

Today LAC continues the mandate it received almost a hundred years ago. Its annual convention is scheduled for November 8, 2003 in Chicago at the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture. The organization now encompasses some 15 national organizations and is continuously looking for ways to revitalize and retool itself. Among the projects currently being reviewed is the prospect of forming a junior board which would include the future leaders of the community who would be willing to integrate into its established structures.

This year was a particularly important date for Lithuanian Americans, not only because it marks the 750 year anniversary of the State of Lithuania, when King Mindaugas was crowned King in 1253, but also because now Lithuania and its sister Baltic countries are stepping up to NATO and European Union membership. The integration into the West which has been a long-term goal of the LAC is now becoming a concrete reality. To commemorate the 750th anniversary of the Lithuania’s statehood, the LAC has issued a commemorative seal with the image of King Mindaugas which is being made available to the public. Designed by the graphic designer Viktoras Paulauskas it represents three aspects of Lithuania’s statehood. First, its geographic integrity showing the King with the map of Lithuania, then its national unity depicted by the capital/fortress of King Mindaugas and finally its role as an integral part of the European community situated as it is on the Baltic Sea.

The LAC was likewise involved in helping to retain U.S. environmental programs earmarked for the Baltic states. While this latter ef-

The Lithuanian American Council has issued a commemorative stamp of King Mindaugas, marking the 750th anniversary of Lithuanian statehood.
Invitation to a Baltic Celebration

The U.S.- Baltic Foundation invites you to this year’s A Baltic Celebration Silent Auction and Gala Awards Dinner honoring successful Americans of Baltic heritage and highlighting the achievements of Baltic leaders and culture. The Gala will feature special guests U.S. Securities and Exchange Commissioner Paul Atkins and Vilnius, Lithuania Mayor Arturas Zuokas on Saturday, November 1, 2003 at Washington, DC’s historic Omni Shoreham Hotel – near all of the main attractions of the nation’s Capital, including the White House, the Capitol, the Smithsonian museums and the world-famous pandas in the National Zoo. The A Baltic Celebration Gala is the premiere annual event for successful American friends of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Susan Allen, wife of Senator George Allen and a Lithuanian-American, is the Gala Chair. The Gala Honorary Patrons are Lithuanian President Rolandas Paksas, Latvian President Vaira Vike Freiberga and Estonian President Arnold Rüütel. The Gala program will also feature a showcase of Baltic fashion and a classical piano performance by Edvinas Minkstimas, the Grand Prix winner of the 2003 Music Without Limits competition. Swedish Ambassador Jan Eliasson, the official Gala Co-Host, will host a VIP reception at his residence the evening before the Gala, but space is limited and subject to availability on a first-reserved basis.

The Silent Auction will feature fabulous items for Gala guests to win including: cruise travel anywhere in the world on a romantic Windstar sailing ship, the historic original U.S. Senate roll call vote on NATO enlargement, Ozo Golf Package including a lesson, lunch and a round at Latvia’s first 18-hole golf course, created and owned by NHL star Sandis Ozolinsh, 2 roundtrip tickets anywhere in Europe on Scandinavian Airlines, business class ticket on Finnair, 4 nights at the luxurious Stikliai Hotel in Old Town Vilnius, Lithuania, romantic weekend escape at Padaste Manor, the exclusive resort & spa on Muhu Island, Estonia, 7 nights at Hotel Amrita, Kurland, Latvia’s best place for work & leisure, tickets to Celine Dion’s “A New Day” at Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas, autographed basketball from NBA star Sarunas Marciulionis, fine Baltic amber jewelry, linen and artwork, and dinners at the finest restaurants in the Baltics & the Washington, DC area.

Send an email to gala@usbaltic.org to reserve your seats or visit www.usbaltic.org for more information and an RSVP form. Seat prices are $250 each (group discounts are available, send an email to request information) and are subject to availability. Attire is black tie optional. Contributions are tax-deductible except $75 per seat. Information on sponsorship and advertising opportunities is also available on the website and by calling 202-393-3338.

The U.S.- Baltic Foundation is a national non-profit membership organization that conducts programs to strengthen cultural and business relations between the U.S. and Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. USBF was founded in 1990 to support democratic and free market reforms in the Baltics. USBF has raised more than $8 million and established 11 local democratic institutions, including Municipal Training Centers and journalist training institutes in each country. Today, USBF sponsors a Baltic speaker series in the U.S. Capitol and supports a variety of charitable and professional educational projects, including youth scouting and computer camps. Proceeds from the Gala and Silent Auction support the work of the Foundation throughout the year.

A special $119/night rate is available at the Omni Shoreham Hotel, call 202-234-0700 or 800-843-6664 for reservations, mention “U.S.- Baltic Foundation,” also subject to availability.

Please email gala@usbaltic or call 202-393-3338 to reserve seats or with any questions. We hope you will join us for an exciting fall weekend in Washington, DC!

A BALTIC CELEBRATION Silent Auction & Gala Awards Dinner
November 1, 2003 ~ Washington, DC
Building Bridges to the East

(Continued from page 5)

that the Baltic governments are taking this role of being movers and shakers in the region’s political transformation very seriously.

Although the task of experience sharing is noble, it may prove to be burdensome. Success in the Baltics can be tied to a decade of common foreign policy implementation. Acting as a bloc, the Baltics have advanced their cause beyond most optimistic predictions. Unfortunately, members of the South Caucus region are not united by a vision of single policy. Armed conflicts fueled by ethnic, religious, social and economic interests, some friction dating back hundreds of years, has swept the region over the last decade. Strategists have a decade of regional cooperative experience, there are profound political, cultural and historical differences between the Baltics and Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. Therefore finding the key to stability in the South Caucasus while applying the Baltic experience may prove extremely challenging.

Regional conflicts in the South Caucasus may be comparable to the Israeli-Palestinian crisis in their complexities. However, successful mediation in the region could bring new status for the Baltics, as they develop into mature and capable partners and as they pave their way towards future cooperation and a stronger role in Europe. This is a wonderful opportunity for the Baltics to be able to share their practical democracy-building experience with a region that still needs much help in this area. Failure in this essential mission may discourage future Baltic cooperative initiatives in other regions. Therefore, failure is not an option and no matter how challenging, this mission must be carried forward.

Simonas Girdzijauskas
JBANC Program Director

Central and East European Coalition Meets with Senator Joe Lieberman

(Continued from page 6)

tee (JBANC) representative to the CEEC said, “Our meeting with Senator Lieberman was informative and useful. We thanked him for taking the time to meet with us. The CEEC plans to invite other 2004 Presidential hopefuls to meet with the organization and to discuss issues of mutual concern. We will also closely track the major Party platforms as the process develops.”

The Central and East European Coalition represents 20 million Americans of descent from that region of Europe. The Washington, D.C. - based CEEC is composed of 18 national organizations in the United States and has been actively involved in U.S. foreign policy issues for the past decade.

Senator Joe Lieberman (D-CT) at September 8 meeting with CEEC.
(Continued from page 1)

to the region. The House measure passed but the Senate Authorization bill, being advocated by Senators Lugar and Biden, is awaiting floor action.

There are fears that a new Continuing Resolution may enact the provisions passed in the FY04 House Commerce, Justice, State (CJS) Appropriations bill, which does not include funding for international broadcasting to Central and Eastern Europe.

The Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC) has expressed profound alarm that the closure of the radios will be detrimental to getting America’s message heard in Europe. In a recent letter to Senate and House Appropriations committee members and Congressional leaders, JBANC asked that Congress work to restore funding and to consider the significance and future of United States public diplomacy in the region.

The Central and East European Coalition, of which JBANC and its constituent organizations are members, has also sent letters to Congress on the radio broadcasting issue. The CEEC represents 20 million American voters. JBANC has contacted the White House as well to express its concerns.

In a separate letter to the Washington Post on October 22, JBANC remarks that the “United States still needs good friends in Europe…Silence by the United States would not be golden.”

The Senate Appropriations Committee agreed on September 4 to restore funding to the FY03 level for VOA and RFE/RL services (S. 1585), while the House Appropriations Committee did not include the necessary language in H.R.2799 when it passed that chamber on July 23.

Although the Senate Appropriations Report (S. Rept. 108-144) asks that funding for the services be retained at FY03 levels, the bill provides a lower funding level of $5.5 million, rather than the $8.9 million needed to fund all the affected programs.

It appears likely that the Senate will not be able to finish work by October 31 on its CJS Appropriations bill, which has provided funding and report language to keep the radios alive. If the Senate does not finish the bill by then, the House may have leverage in dictating the terms of the final conference report.

A conference committee of members from the House and Senate will still need to meet on the CJS Appropriations bill, but the point may be moot by then. If this is the case, the services will be faced with shutting down.

Once the conference report is finished, the CJS and other appropriations bills may be rolled up into a single omnibus bill.

In the CJS Appropriations Senate report, Latvian VOA was not mentioned, along with a couple of other language services. This was seen as an oversight that still needs to be corrected.

Leaving Latvian VOA out would in effect isolate that country and send a counterproductive message that information from the U.S. is not relevant there anymore. The other five Baltic services were included in the Senate report language.

While the United States has over the years achieved high credibility in Central and Eastern Europe, there is growing concern that America’s view is being marginalized. United States public diplomacy efforts should be strengthened and not sacrificed in Europe.

The benefits of maintaining VOA and RFE/RL for the near term are still significant. This should be of vital national interest of the United States.

According to JBANC Chairman Janis Bolsteins, “America needs to continue its role and responsibility in presenting an accurate picture of what the United States is about – our motivations, policies and ideals. These radio services are a low-cost vehicle for delivering this message.”

Karl Altau
JBANC Managing Director

*JBANC has prepared a backgrounder on the issue: "Keeping VOA and RFE/RL on the Air in Central and Eastern Europe": http://jbanc.org/issues.html

*A U.S. government-mandated advisory group issued a comprehensive report on the state of public diplomacy and international broadcasting on October 1. The report “Changing Minds, Winning Peace” was prepared by a blue-ribbon panel of experts and headed by Edward Djerejian, former ambassador to Syria and Israel. Although it deals with U.S. efforts in the Middle East, it can be easily applied to the state of U.S. public diplomacy in Europe as well.

The report is available online at: http://www.state.gov/documents/organization/24882.pdf
American Latvian Association Continues its Cultural, Educational and Political Activity in 2003

(Continued from page 9) continued to inform the American public of the legacy of 50 years of Soviet occupation. ALA sponsors a traveling exhibit of the Latvian Occupation Museum. This exhibit began its tour in the Russell Senate Office Building last year with a speech by Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga. More recently it has been on display in Omaha, Nebraska.

A major goal of ALA is to support the Latvian language and culture in the U.S. This year, and during the past 52 years, we have supported Latvian Saturday schools, and summer schools, by providing books, other educational materials, scholarships, and teacher training seminars. One of the most successful programs for encouraging an interest in things Latvian are our summer tours. We organize tours for teenagers as a reward for graduating from a Saturday school program. We also have tours for adults, some with Latvian speaking guides and some with English speaking guides.

The culmination of the Latvian cultural experience in the U.S. is our song festivals. In the early 1990’s they had virtually stopped as we worked to help Latvia recover from the occupation. However, our song festivals have now resumed with considerable enthusiasm. Over the Labor Day weekend, several thousand Latvian Americans gathered in San Francisco for the 14th West Coast Song Festival. The opening ceremony included greetings from ALA’s Vice President and ALA had an information booth which featured accomplishments we have achieved working with JBANC.

ALA was founded by World War II refugees. Internally we were motivated by our desire to maintain and enrich the Latvian cultural experience in America. This will continue. Externally we were motivated to overcome the occupation. With NATO and European Union membership all but assured, a certain vacuum has been created with regard to external goals. During the next year, ALA leadership will work with its members to sharpen our external agenda, given the current world realities.

Dr. Juris Mezinskis
Vice President, ALA

The Lithuanian American Council
Past Accomplishments, Future Resolve

(Continued from page 10) fort may seem to have gone down in flames, it nevertheless is a take-off point for future activities and projects of a similar nature.

The LAC was also especially active in promoting the candidacy of American-Lithuanian Victor Wolski to the Federal Judiciary. This was an uphill battle. The LAC initially lobbied the Senate Judiciary Committee to allow his candidacy to come to a vote in the full Senate. The LAC energetically lobbied the full Senate and when the dust settled, Mr. Wolski had won by a narrow margin. To our knowledge he is the first American Lithuanian to serve on the Federal judiciary. His assignment - the Federal Court of Claims in Washington, DC – is for a fifteen-year term.

Among the activities which the LAC coordinated with JBANC has been the ongoing effort to maintain U.S. broadcasting to the Baltic states. In particular, the LAC has been active in the campaign to restore funding for Baltic Radio programming (VOA and RFE/RL). In connection therewith, it has generated some 20,000 pieces of mail urging the Senate and House of Representatives to reinstate monies for these all-important programs.

The LAC is pleased to be part of the JBANC team and especially appreciates the professional and collegiate approach of the JBANC Board and its staff.

Saulius Kuprys
President, LAC

www.jbanc.org
“FORTITUDO IN UNITATE”
Reflections Upon the Baltic Battalion and Baltic Contributions to International Operations

(Continued from page 3)

BALTBAT personnel regularly took part in military exercises organized within the framework of NATO’s Partnership for Peace (PfP) initiative designed to assess the unit’s readiness for combat actions. As time passed, the soldiers from the three national infantry companies successfully completed a required six-month international mission program and were certified to take part in United Nations peacekeeping missions. The Estonian company was deployed in south Lebanon as a part of the Norwegian battalion in the framework of the UN peacekeeping operation UNIFIL. The Latvian and Lithuanian companies, supported respectively by Sweden and Denmark, took part in NATO’s SFOR mission in Bosnia. In October 1996, with the success demonstrated by the BALTBAT units, the Baltic Defense Ministers not only agreed to continue the project, but to increase the size of the unit a full infantry battalion. By the end of 1997, the initial phase of the BALTBAT training program came to an end with the battalion being declared full, ready to participate in all peacekeeping missions. BALTBAT units established a history of successful bilateral cooperation in the field of training and deployments on international peacekeeping missions. With their demonstrated abilities, the unit armament was augmented to provide it with anti-tank and mortar support capabilities. From its establishment until being disbanded, Baltic soldiers have served along with Danish and Swedish contingents that were deployed on UNPROFOR, IFOR, SFOR, and KFOR missions in Bosnia, Herzegovina, and Kosovo.

With the advent of the war on terrorism, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have again shown their willingness to stand with the free nations of the world. The Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian soldier now stands side by side with his American and European counterparts serving in Afghanistan and Iraq military operations. The demonstrated military training of these soldiers can be traced to the Baltic Battalion. In the framework of the BALTBAT project, officers, NCOs and soldiers of the Baltic Defense Forces received high-level training and acquired valuable international operations experience. With the successful rotation of these soldiers between BALTBAT and their respective national forces, combat skills were disseminated throughout their forces. Surely the skills demonstrated by these Baltic soldiers contributed greatly to the Baltic NATO invitations.

It can truly be said that the success of BALTBAT led to its disbandment. Today, many are looking for new ways to channel Baltic cooperation. Military planning is now focusing on the development of joint Baltic brigade and division level formations. A new trilateral draft agreement is now being prepared and expected to be presented to the Committee of the Baltic Chiefs of Defense for consideration by the end of 2003. The BALTBAT mission has been a complete success and this distinguished unit now serves as a model for future worldwide cooperation.

JBANC wishes to congratulate all of the soldiers that have served in this unit and to thank all of the sponsoring nations that made the success of this unit possible.

Henry Gaidis
JBANC Board member

“Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have again shown their willingness to stand with the free nations of the world.”

Henry Gaidis
JBANC Board member

www.jbanc.org
Stephen D. Mull presented credentials to President Paksas as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Lithuania on August 26, 2003. He is a career member of the Senior Foreign Service in the class of Minister-Counselor.

Prior to this assignment, Ambassador Mull served as the Deputy Chief of Mission at the U.S. Embassy in Jakarta.

Ambassador Mull joined the Foreign Service in March 1982 and has worked in a variety of positions focusing on nations undergoing political and economic transitions. He served two tours in Poland, where more recently as Counselor for Political and Political-Military Affairs he coordinated bilateral efforts to prepare Poland for membership in the NATO alliance. President Kwasniewski in 1997 awarded him the "Knight's Order of Merit" in recognition of his efforts. In South Africa from 1986 until 1990, he worked in the U.S. Embassy's political section's black politics unit, in which capacity he won the State Department's Director General's Award for Reporting.

Ambassador Mull has also served in Washington as Deputy Executive Secretary of the Department of State, the Director for Southern Europe in the State Department's Bureau of European and Eurasian Affairs, and as Deputy Director of the State Department Operations Center.

Ambassador Mull is the recipient of the 2002 Baker-Wilkins Award for Outstanding Deputy Chief of Mission, the Presidential Meritorious Service Award, and several Superior Honor Awards.

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