The decision to issue invitations to seven countries to join the North Atlantic Organization was announced on November 21 at the beginning of a two-day Summit meeting of NATO Heads of State and Government in Prague. Among the countries invited to join are Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Following the opening of the Summit at the heavily-guarded Prague Congress Center, NATO Secretary General Lord George Robertson made the long-awaited announcement at 9:55 a.m. local time.

"This is a crucially important decision where consensus among Allies has emerged gradually over the past months. I believe that a
With these simple words, NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson brought down his gavel in Prague on November 21, 2002. For seven aspirant countries, it meant that the world had changed. The nineteen NATO members had unanimously agreed, without debate, to issue membership invitations to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

For the three Baltic countries, as with the others, it brought closure to almost eight years of effort to be accepted in history's most successful defense alliance.

A hard road still lies ahead, of course, as the invitees must still fulfill certain requirements. And the invitations must be approved by the nineteen NATO member parliaments, the chief among them the U.S. Senate. We at JBANC certainly hope that by the time the NATO countries meet again at a Summit in May 2004, there will be twenty-six national flags flying at the NATO Headquarters in Brussels. And that there will be NATO flags flying in Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius.

Baltic Americans across this great land have worked hard to help bring this about and deserve the thanks and gratitude of JBANC and all other Baltic American organizations. What remains is informing the Senators in all the fifty states of the need to ratify the Articles of Accession and amendments to the Washington NATO Treaty of 1949. We feel, of course, that after half a century of suffering in the aftermath of Yalta, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania deserve the votes of all the one hundred senators. It will not be too much to ask!

JBANC kept the U.S. Non-Recognition Declaration alive for decades, at times against almost overwhelming odds. We succeeded. For the last eight years, we worked very hard to help the Baltics to achieve the security they need in joining NATO. Again, we succeeded. But the vagaries surrounding non-recognition taught JBANC to continue keeping a watchful eye for the future good of the Baltics, so there will be no backsliding.

Just like we remember the U.S. Non-Recognition Declaration of 1940, we will remember the words of President George W. Bush in Vilnius on November 23, 2002:

“We knew that this continent would not remain divided. We knew that arbitrary lines drawn by dictators would be erased, and those lines are now gone. No more Munichs. No more Yaltas. The long night of fear, uncertainty and loneliness is over. You’re joining the strong and growing family of NATO. Our Alliance has made a solemn pledge of protection, and anyone who would choose Lithuania (Estonia, Latvia) as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America. In the face of aggression, the brave people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will never again stand alone.”

Mr. President, the Balts, Baltic Americans and friends of the Baltics thank you! We have been waiting for those words since JBANC was created in 1961! We will remember those words and expect your successors to abide by them as well.

We remember the recent words of President Havel of the Czech Republic, who said that NATO enlargement is “a clear signal given, not only for all Europeans, but for the entire world, that the era when countries were divided by force into spheres of influence, or when the stronger used to subjugate the weaker, has come to an end once and for all.”

JBANC is proud to have had a part in helping to create a Europe whole and free, a trans-Atlantic community allied with the United States of America. That task is not yet complete and we will continue to help. In the words of Baltic Caucus Co-Chair, Rep. John Shimkus of Illinois, “we are completing the task begun in 1948 – to establish a peaceful Europe whose security is upheld by our joint military power and by our common commitment to the principles of freedom.”

Senator Joseph Biden of Delaware added that the Prague Summit “has changed forever the political face of Europe.” And so it has.

And the peoples of the Baltics, Baltic Americans and JBANC are grateful.
A few days in November radically changed the course of security relations for Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Seven countries, including the Baltics, received invitations at the Prague Summit on November 21-22 to begin accession negotiations to join NATO. On November 23, in Vilnius, President George W. Bush vowed that the U.S. would see to it that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania would “never again stand alone.”

Enlargement was one of a host of issues on the table at Prague. NATO agreed in the necessity of further strengthening itself to meet new threats and security challenges of the 21st century, including in the fight against terrorism and defense against weapons of mass destruction. A comprehensive package of measures was approved to address these issues, including the creation of a NATO Response Force (NRF), which should be fully operational by 2006.

Enlargement is seen as critical in strengthening security in the Euro-Atlantic area, and helping Europe become whole and free, and united in peace and by common values. Invited countries have demonstrated their commitment to NATO’s basic principles and values, the ability to contribute to the Alliance’s full range of missions including collective defense, and a firm commitment to contribute to stability and security, especially in regions of crisis and conflict. The invitees will continue to work on their respective Membership Action Plan (MAP), which will include a timetable for reforms, “upon which further progress will be expected before and after accession.”

The door will remain open “to European democracies willing and able to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, in accordance with Article 10 of the Washington Treaty”. NATO will continue to work with Albania, Macedonia and Croatia and other qualified countries that wish to begin the MAP process in order to join.

What happens before the seven new invitees (Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia) actually become members? On the NATO website, five steps are given that need to be taken before that moment: See “The Road to NATO Explained” at:

http://www.nato.int

(Continued on page 13)
NATO INVITES SEVEN NEW MEMBERS TO JOIN ALLIANCE

(Continued from page 1)

consensus has now been reached. Therefore, I would like to ask that the Heads of State and Government agree to invite to the following nations to the Accession talks with NATO: Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia" stated Robertson.

President George W. Bush was among many world leaders participating at the Summit. Bush remarked that "by welcoming seven members, we will not only add to our military capabilities, we will refresh the spirit of this great democratic alliance."

The U.S. delegation also included Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Advisor Condoleezza Rice.

President Bush traveled to Vilnius on November 22 to meet the three Baltic presidents and other leaders and to lend support to the candidacies of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania as they now begin to concentrate on the ratification process. This process is expected to be completed in 2004 by the time of the next NATO Summit.

JBANC Managing Director Karl Alttau attended the NATO Summit in Prague and also traveled to Vilnius for a series of celebratory events (see also page 13, top).

Presidents Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania and George W. Bush are all smiles in Prague.
December 2002

Alliance of Freedom Being Tested by "New and Terrible Dangers"
Remarks by the President to the Citizens of Vilnius Rotuse
Vilnius, Lithuania

10:20 A.M. (Local)

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all very much. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for your friendship and thank you for your leadership.

I'm also honored to be here with the Presidents of Latvia and Estonia. I want to thank them for coming, as well. Laura and I are honored to be here with you. Thank you for coming out to say hello.

(Applause.)

This is a great day in the history of Lithuania, in the history of the Baltics, in the history of NATO, and in the history of freedom. (Applause.) The countries of NATO have opened the doors of our Alliance to Lithuania and six other European democracies. And I have the honor of sharing this message with you: We proudly invite Lithuania to join us in NATO, the great Atlantic Alliance. (Applause.)

Many doubted that freedom would come to this country, but the United States always recognized an independent Lithuania. (Applause.) We knew that this continent would not remain divided. We knew that arbitrary lines drawn by dictators would be erased, and those lines are now gone. No more Munichs. No more Yaltas. The long night of fear, uncertainty and loneliness is over. You're joining the strong and growing family of NATO. Our Alliance has made a solemn pledge of protection, and anyone who would choose Lithuania as an enemy has also made an enemy of the United States of America. (Applause.) In the face of aggression, the brave people of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia will never again stand alone.

AUDIENCE: Aciu, aciu, aciu! (Thank you, thank you, thank you!)

THE PRESIDENT: You're welcome. (Laughter.) You are needed in the Nato Alliance. You will contribute to our common security. Yet the strength of NATO does not only depend on the might of armies, but on the character of men and women.

We must be willing to stand in the face of evil, to have the courage to always face danger. The people of the Baltic states have shown these qualities to the world. You have known cruel oppression and withstood it. You were held captive by an empire and you outlived it. And because you have paid its cost you know the value of human freedom.

Lithuania today is true to its best traditions of democracy and tolerance and religious liberty, and you have earned the respect of my nation and all nations. (Applause.)

Our alliance of freedom is being tested again by new and terrible dangers. Like the Nazis and the communists before them, the terrorists seek to end lives and control all life. And like the Nazis and the communists before them, they will be opposed by free nations and the terrorists will be defeated. (Applause.)

Over a decade ago hundreds of thousands of Lithuanians, Latvians and Estonians joined hands, from [Tallinn] to Vilnius, to show your love for freedom. Near Cathedral Square is a stone commemorating that struggle. Inscribed on that stone is one word: Miracle. The recent history of the Baltic states truly is a miracle. You've gained your freedom; you have won your independence. You now join a great Alliance, and your miracle goes on.

Today on this great day, may God bless the memory of Lithuanian patriots and freedom fighters who did not live to see this moment. And may God always bless the brave and the free people of Lithuania. (Applause.)

Thank you for coming today. May God bless freedom. (Applause.)

END 10:30 A.M. (L)
A notable celebration of the most recent enlargement of NATO took place December 4 in a U.S. Senate Office Building in Washington, D.C. Entitled “Celebration of the Vision of Europe Whole and Free,” the occasion marked the extension of NATO membership to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia.

The evening’s masters of ceremony were the ambassadors of Albania, Croatia and Macedonia, the three nations expected to be in the next round of NATO enlargement. Featured speakers were Daniel Fried, Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Europe and Eurasia at the White House National Security Council, Senator Ben Nelson (D-NE), who recently joined the U.S. Senate’s Baltic Caucus, Congressman Ben Gilman (R-NY) and Adam Michnik, a former dissident and key player in Poland’s groundbreaking moves toward sovereignty in the late 1980’s.

Fried conveyed a congratulatory message to the new NATO invitees from the President and underscored the benefits of a rejuvenated NATO. Sen. Nelson commented on the remarkable journey made by these nations over the course of not much more than a decade. Michnik, likewise, from his particular perspective, noted the contrast between the dark days of Soviet rule and that sense of normality now ever more common in Poland and throughout the countries of East and Central Europe.

The program was sponsored by numerous U.S. Senators and Representatives. Among the attendees were U.S. Government officials, diplomats from the noted countries and many Americans of East European descent who have worked for many years to-

(Continued on page 16)
**2002 ELECTION REFLECTIONS**

*Thoughts on 2002 U.S. congressional elections from a Baltic-NATO perspective*

(Washington, DC/JBANC) - The November 5 elections were more suspenseful than many had counted on, and from a Baltic-American perspective, results were fairly positive. The most relevant election issue for the one million strong Baltic-American constituencies is NATO enlargement, a great bi-partisan success story in both chambers of Congress.

**SENATE** --- In 34 Senate races, ten new Senators were elected. They are: Mark Pryor (D-Arkansas), Saxby Chambliss (R-Georgia), Norm Coleman (R-Minnesota), Jim Talent (R-Missouri), John Sununu (R-New Hampshire), Frank Lautenberg (D-New Jersey), Elizabeth Dole (R-North Carolina), Lindsey Graham (R-South Carolina), Lamar Alexander (R-Tennessee) and John Cornyn (R-Texas).

Republicans won a historical victory in the Senate and reclaimed leadership. The election basically came down to three critical elections with three Republican gains, in Minnesota, Missouri and Georgia. In each of these three states, the role that President Bush played in campaigning may mean that newly-elected Senators Coleman, Talent and Chambliss will support NATO enlargement, which the White House has been effectively pushing with wide bi-partisan support.

Of thirteen Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus members, only co-chairmen Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Sen. Gordon Smith (R-OR) faced re-election. Both won.

In the four open races for retiring Senators, Republicans retained all seats. Retiring Senators are Jesse Helms (R-NC), Sen. Phil Gramm (R-TX), Sen. Fred Thompson (R-TN) and Strom Thurmond (R-SC). They are being replaced by, respectively, Elizabeth Dole, John Cornyn, Lamar Alexander and current House member Lindsey Graham. Helms was chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at the time when he came out with his breakthrough endorsement for Baltic NATO membership in January 2001. For this support, Sen. Helms was honored with JBANC’s Baltic Democracy Award in 2001.

As for the new Senators, Dole is expected to be a NATO supporter, considering the strong position that her husband Bob has taken. As for Cornyn, he responded to JBANC’s election questionnaire to 2002 Senate candidates. The Texas Attorney General, who ran for Gramm’s vacant seat in Texas, answered with unequivocal support for NATO enlargement, Baltic membership and ratification for the Treaty with new aspirants, including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania included. Graham of South Carolina voted for both the Gallegly (H.Res. 468) and Solomon (H.R. 3167) resolutions during the 107th Session of Congress, as did Chambliss and Sununu (although Sununu’s vote was not recorded on the Gallegly resolution).

Sen. Tim Hutchinson (R-AR), one of a small handful of Republicans from the Senate Armed Services committee who had consistently opposed NATO enlargement-related legislation in the past, was defeated by Democrat Mark Pryor in Arkansas, in the only Democratic Senate seat gain. Another such opponent, Sen. Bob Smith (R-NH) lost in the Republican primary earlier this year to Sununu, who later won the New Hampshire general election.

In New Jersey, Sen. Lautenberg, based on his 1998 NATO Ratification voting record, may be a supporter of NATO enlargement ratification this time around as well. The vote for ratification in 1998 was 80-19.

An eleventh Senate seat change will occur in Alaska, since Sen. Frank Murkowski (R-AK) won election for Governor and was sworn in on December 2. He will appoint a Republican this month to fill out his Senate term, which ends in 2004.

Finally, the Louisiana Senate race was decided on December 7, with Democratic incumbent Mary Landrieu winning re-election. Landrieu, has been supportive of NATO through her role as chair of the Armed Services committee’s subcommittee on Emerging Threats and Capabilities.

*(Continued on page 13)*
Lithuania’s invitation to join NATO and President Bush’s visit to Vilnius on November 22-23 were events that none of us, who were involved, will ever forget. As the American Ambassador to Lithuania, I am very proud that our country has played such a vital role in the process leading to the invitation in Prague. Having never recognized the Soviet incorporation of the Baltics, we were instrumental in supporting their integration into the trans-Atlantic community of nations. President Bush’s speech on Rotuse Square captured the moment perfectly. The President summarized so clearly what NATO membership means and conveyed to the people of all three Baltic countries an empathy - an understanding of the tragedies through which they suffered during the twentieth century.

On a personal level, President Bush’s visit was one of the highlights of my career in the U.S. Foreign Service, which, since 1979, has focused primarily on central and Eastern Europe. My wife, Mariella, and I feel very fortunate to have participated in the rebirth of freedom in this vital region of Europe.

In celebrating these milestones in European history and America’s relations with the three Baltic countries, I know that much remains to be done. We still have a broad agenda both in helping prepare the armed forces to carry out future NATO missions, and in building an honest, civil society. I know all of us at the American Embassy in Vilnius look forward to working with our Lithuanian colleagues and friends to fully realize the promise of the NATO invitation and President Bush’s wonderful visit.

John F. Tefft
Ambassador of the United States
Vilnius, Lithuania
December 12, 2002
It was Zbig Brzezinski who reminded me about the pictures in Riga’s Occupation Museum.

One of the most haunting photographs in that gallery is the one showing the young resistance fighters, huddled in the cold Latvian woods in the late 1940’s.

Over and over, I’ve looked at that photograph. The camera lens stares down, into their drawn faces as they clutch their rifles. The young Latvians know the Stalinist troops are searching for them day and night in the Latvian forest. You see in their eyes hope that the Americans and Europeans will come to their rescue. They believe the victorious allies will land on Baltic beaches to save Latvia from Soviet occupation. “If we can just hold out a little longer,” their faces say, “if we can prove that Latvia is worthy, the West will come.”

Dr. Brzezinski recalled for me those images from the Occupation Museum when he told me what the NATO invitation to Latvia meant for him. What, he wondered aloud, would those courageous young men have thought, if they could hear a U.S. president declare that anyone who makes an enemy of the Baltic states, makes an enemy of America.

Many people say NATO’s invitation ended World War II and returned Europe to the Baltics. It is equally true that Latvia and its neighbors invited NATO to come back where it belonged – making a Europe whole and free.

Much hard work lies behind the invitation. Beginning with the recovery of independence, Latvia’s leaders put their nation on the path to a market economy, private ownership of property, a tolerant political environment, human rights, and a society ruled by laws – not oligarchs.

In recent years, Latvia worked hard to better its democracy. By easing the naturalization process, conducting a public campaign on citizenship, and eliminating restrictions on candidates for public office, Latvia signaled it has a democracy in which all residents participate.

Latvia also has come to terms with its 20th century history. Last month President Vike-Freiberga, Riga’s community leaders and I dedicated a monument to victims of the Rumbula massacre. Recognizing that Latvians as well as Nazis took part in that atrocity is important in making sure intolerance and hatred never shed Latvian blood again.

The NATO invitation is not the beginning of the end -- rather, it’s the end of the beginning.

But, Latvia is most certainly worthy.

Brian E. Carlson
Ambassador of the United States
Riga, Latvia
December 10, 2002
By the time this article is published, I will have completed a year as the U.S. Ambassador to Estonia. What a year it has been! By the end of 2002, Estonia will have achieved its greatest international objectives at least since the removal of Russian troops in 1994. Estonia has received invitations to join NATO and the European Union. I extend heartfelt congratulations to the new Prime, Foreign and Defense Ministers of Estonia, and to all of those who through the years have worked hard to bring Estonia to this historic moment in history.

For my wife, Leslie, and me, the single most impressive experience we have had is meeting with the many Estonians who created this new ally, a vibrant democracy with one of Europe's freest and fastest growing economies. It is a remarkable story, and we have had the privilege every day of meeting the people who wrote it.

On the first anniversary of September 11, I was able to properly thank the Estonian government and people for their strong support for the United States in the aftermath of that tragedy. The moving September 11 memorial ceremony organized by the Estonian government at the Pirita Cloister will certainly top the list of beautiful images we take from this country.

Estonia has made progress on several important issues this year, including dealing with Holocaust history and HIV/AIDS prevention and education. We are pleased that we were able to support Estonian efforts in these areas. In the course of my first year I have also learned a great deal about Estonia’s World War II past and its still painful wounds. I was gratified to be the first U.S. Ambassador to attend the memorial ceremonies for Estonians deported by the Soviets in the 1940's. It is a precedent that I intend this Embassy to repeat every year. Estonia is to be saluted for the steps that it has taken to come to grips with all aspects of the past, even as it sets its sights on a bright future.

This has been our most active year for high level contacts. The Foreign and Defense Ministers went to Washington to meet their American counterparts. In the space of five days in June, former President Clinton, Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld, and Deputy Secretary of State Armitage all came to Tallinn. In September, Prime Minister Kallas held the first-ever bilateral meeting by an Estonian Prime Minister with the President of the United States. We also hosted visits by some of the most influential members of the House of Representatives and the Senate. Of course, the year has ended with the Prague summit and President Bush's meeting with the three Baltic presidents in Vilnius – a true highlight for everyone involved.

Much has changed in the past year, but sadly some things have not. The U.S. and much of the civilized world are still at war with global terrorism. As I write this, the first phase of a construction project to upgrade the security of this Embassy against terrorist threats is being completed. An Estonian Rescue Board unit is entering its fourth month of deployment with U.S. forces in Afghanistan, and our two governments are preparing together to face additional threats and promising opportunities. Future Estonia-U.S. relations will bring new challenges and the need for even more cooperation between the U.S. and Estonia.

My next year promises to be as challenging as the first. We look forward to working with our Estonian counterparts on the full range of issues in the U.S.-EU dialogue, including new challenges such as counter-terrorism. We will be working with Estonia as well on the common project of drawing Russia fully into Europe and the West as a partner. Finally, we will continue our efforts to create a secure, democratic and prosperous world.

Joseph M. DeThomas
Ambassador of the United States
Tallinn, Estonia
December 16, 2002
Washington D.C.: William Altman, Chairman of the U.S.-Baltic Foundation, and USBF Board members from around the country hosted A Baltic Celebration to recognize Baltic achievements and American contributions to the Baltics at the Embassy of Finland, courtesy of Ambassador Jukka & Etel Valtasaari, on December 7, 2002.

The evening began with singer Maria N, winner of Eurovision in 2002, descending the Embassy’s grand staircase for her American debut performance in front of a delighted and surprised audience. Ron Asmus, author of Opening NATO’s Door, served as the Master of Ceremonies for the Gala Awards Dinner and Silent Auction that honored former Secretary of State Madeleine Albright with the American Statesmanship Award, and Undersecretary of Commerce for International Trade Grant Aldonas with the Baltic American Statesmanship Award, who was present to accept his award. Undersecretary Aldonas, whose father was from Lithuania, is the highest-ranking Baltic American in the Bush Administration.

U.S. President George W. Bush greeted “those gathered for A Baltic Celebration,” in a special letter for the Gala, and sent “Congratulations to your honorees as they are recognized for their contributions to the Baltic states.” Lithuanian President Valdas Adamkus, Latvian President Vaira Vike-Freiberga, and Estonian President Arnold Rüütel were the Honorary Patrons of the Gala. President Freiberga, in a film produced for the Gala, stated that “the U.S.-Baltic Foundation has been most generous with its time and means and, most of all, with emotional support for the Baltic region. I would like to say thank you and my warmest congratulations on this anniversary.”

The Foundation also honored USBF Co-founder Linas Kojelis with the President’s Award, presented by former U.S. Ambassador to Lithuania Keith Smith. Estonian Ambassador Sven Ronis and Lithuanian Ambassador Vygaudas Usackas presented, respectively, the USBF Founder’s Awards to investor Edward E. Clark, investment manager John J. Medveckis, and philanthropist and businesswoman Audrey Gruss. USBF Vice Chairman Hamid Ladjevardi presented the Cultural Achievement Award to critically-acclaimed architect Gunnar Birkerts, who is of Latvian heritage.

The newly-elected Deputy Prime Minister of Latvia Ainars Slesers, who visited the U.S. at USBF’s invitation, addressed the Gala and encouraged Americans to visit and invest in the Baltics. Mr. Slesers was introduced by former U.S. Ambassador to Denmark Richard Swett. Special guests included Danish Ambassador Ulrik & Mrs. Federspeil, German Ambassador Wolfgang & Mrs. Ishchinger, Macedonian Ambassador Nikola Dimitrov, Joint Baltic American National Committee Chairman Vello Ederna, Radio Free Europe President Tom Dine, the House International Relations Committee Chief of Staff Vincent Morelli, Baroness Garnett Stuckelberg, State Department Director official Robert Hilton, Swedish Rear Admiral and Mrs. Bertil Bjorkman, World Federation of Free Latvians Chairman Janis Kukainis, American Latvian Association President Dace Copeland, the National Press Club’s Peter Hickman, and Evan Zimroth with YIVO Institute for Jewish Research.

The dinner menu was designed by Chef Martins Ritins of Vincents in Riga, Latvia, and Embassy of Finland Chef Mikko Kosen. Several guests were seen going into the kitchen at the end of dinner in search of one more taste of the delicious Forest Mushroom Sauce or Jannsson’s Temptation.

(Continued on page 12)
Between November 27th and December 1st the American Latvian Youth Association celebrated its 50th Congress in Chicago, Illinois. Joining approximately two hundred ALYA members were family, friends, and former ALYA members.

Thursday and Friday participants enjoyed lectures by speakers Simonas Girdzijauskas (Joint Baltic American National Committee), Rimants Liepins (founder of Platforma Records in Latvia), Maris Graudins (former Latvian politician and head of Consensus PR firm with offices in Riga, Vilnius, and Tallinn). Saturday morning everyone convened for the general assembly meeting in which new resolutions were passed and a board elected for 2003.

That evening the new board met in the ballroom with many distinguished guests, including former ALYA presidents and the president of the World Latvian Freedom Association Janis Kukainis to raise their glasses in a toast to the past 50 years and to a successful 50 more years. The cocktail hour was followed by a ball and a slideshow of pictures from past Congresses.

The ALYA board and their fellow members are looking forward to a productive and exciting new year working with other Baltic American political and social groups, including the Joint Baltic American National Committee. ALYA and the 50th Anniversary Congress Organizing Committee would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to Simonas Girdzijauskas of JBANC for his informative lecture about NATO.

Kaija Dankers

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The Silent Auction featured paintings and art objects from Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, as well as airline tickets to the Baltics from SAS and Finnair, Finlandia vodka, signed hockey stick from Florida Panthers star Sandis Ozolins, luxury hotel nights across in the Baltic capitals, tickets to Celine Dion at Caesar’s Palace in Las Vegas and autographed photos of Guns ‘N’ Roses guitarist Slash. Proceeds from the auction will be used to support selected Baltic cultural projects in 2003.


The USBF Board members who attended also included Eric Harkna (Chicago), Jonathan Lack (Houston), Stephen Payne (Houston), George Ramonas (Washington, DC), Dom Repici (Washington, DC), James Schaefer (New York), Tom Thomson (Washington, DC), Jaak Treiman (Los Angeles), and Danguole Spakevicius (Houston).

Tom Wilbur, of Vilnius on Video, produced the film presented during the Gala. Copies are available from USBF. Next year’s gala will be held in cooperation with the Embassy of Sweden.

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Kaija Dankers
Historic Days in Prague and Vilnius

(Continued from page 3)


*Step 3 - March 2003: Accession protocols are prepared

*Step 4 - 2003-2004: Accession protocols ratified by NATO countries (including U.S. Senate ratification vote, which may occur between the mid-2003 and early 2004)

*Step 5 - By May 2004, at the next Summit: Invitees become NATO members

Following the Prague Summit, a delegation of “Friends of the Baltics” flew with Lithuanian President Adamkus to Vilnius to participate in events on November 22-23. Besides the highlight of President Bush’s address, events in the Lithuanian capital included a reception organized by Lithuanian business leaders and a luncheon with the three Baltic Presidents. Contributors to the cause were singled out, including former National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski, Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL), NATO Committee members Julie Finley and Bruce Jackson, Ron Asmus, Polish patriot Jan Nowak and others. A visit with the Lithuanian Jewish Community followed, along with an evening gala concert at the Vilnius Opera House, where the three Baltic presidents were joined by President Kwasniewski of Poland. A get-together hosted by the U.S.-Baltic Foundation concluded the evening events.

Karl Altau

2002 ELECTION REFLECTIONS

Thoughts on 2002 U.S. congressional elections from a Baltic-NATO perspective

(Continued from page 7)

Committees - Richard Lugar (R-IN) takes over Foreign Relations Committee chairmanship. Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE) is Ranking Member. Mitch McConnell (R-KY) will likely resume chairmanship of the Senate Foreign Operations subcommittee. Sen. John Warner will again be chairman of the Armed Services committee, with Sen. Carl Levin (D-MI) as Ranking Member.

See complete Senate election results at: http://expandnato.org/election2002.html

HOUSE --- Baltic Caucus co-chairs John Shimkus (R-IL) and Dennis Kucinich (D-OH) were re-elected to the House. Congressman Shimkus now represents the new 19th District, due to redistricting.

In all, ten House Baltic Caucus members are departing in 2003. They are: Jim Barcia (D-MI), Thomas Barrett (D-WI), Rod Blagojevich (D-IL), David Bonior (D-MI), Robert Borski (D-PA), Van Hilleary (R-TN), Stephen Horn (R-CA), Connie Morella (R-MD), Lynn Rivers (D-MI) and Bob Schaffer (R-CO).

With these losses, House Baltic Caucus membership slips from 75 to 65 members.

House Committees - Republicans retain majority and committee leadership.

International Relations - Henry Hyde (R-IL) is again chairman and Tom Lantos (D-CA) Ranking Member. Long-time friend and supporter Benjamin Gilman (R-NY) is retiring. In the Europe subcommittee, Elton Gallegly (R-CA) remains as chairman, following the success of his NATO resolution (H.Res.468) which passed by 358-9 on October 7. Gallegly is one of the newest House Baltic Caucus members from

(Continued on page 16)
White House Briefing on NATO Enlargement

National Security Adviser Dr. Condoleezza Rice briefed a group of Americans of Central and East European descent on NATO enlargement and other national security objectives on December 11 at the White House. Rice was recently with President Bush at the Prague NATO Summit and later traveled with the President to Vilnius and Bucharest. Despite icy conditions in Washington, DC, some of the briefing guests came from as far away as Ohio and New Jersey. Senator George Voinovich (R-OH), a leading supporter of NATO enlargement, was represented by staff from both state and national offices. As NATO was inviting seven new members to join the Alliance, a gathering of about 300 people of Central and East European heritage met in Cleveland on November 21 to celebrate the occasion. Sen. Voinovich, in the U.S. delegation at the time in Prague, gave a rousing twenty-minute live telephone greeting to those gathered for the Cleveland event. Besides Dr. Rice, Dan Fried of the NSC also spoke at the briefing. Current JBANC President Mati Kõiva participated at the meeting, along with JBANC staff.

JBANC Lecture at American University

JBANC had the unique opportunity to give a lecture at the American University in Washington, D.C. November 14 on how we operate in the Nation’s Capital. JBANC Chairman Vello Ederma visited the campus at the invitation of Prof. John Calabrese. The class included about fifty juniors and seniors from across the United States and some foreign countries, enrolled in a special semester designed to give the students exposure to the Washington policy process. The JBANC lecture was within the framework of how non-governmental organizations (NGO’s) operate to influence the policies of the U.S. Government. Mr. Ederma gave an overview of what JBANC is all about, its history, what it does and how. The hour-and-a-half lecture was well received by the students, who asked many questions and later approached Mr. Ederma for quotes for their term papers.

Vello Ederma
The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC) is pleased to inform that it will hold its fifth conference on Baltic Security and NATO on March 6–8, 2003.

The JBANC conference in March 2003 will provide an oversight of the political environment surrounding NATO enlargement, review the outcome of the Prague Summit and inform about new political trends that have emerged from the summit. The aim of JBANC's fifth conference is to supply the audience with reliable information about the changed security environment, new threats and challenges of the Euro-Atlantic area, and NATO's role in addressing those challenges.

As during previous conferences, high-level representatives from the U.S. government and legislature and leading NGO’s and the diplomatic community, including top Baltic officials, will participate and discuss NATO enlargement, foreign policy and the issues of transatlantic security.

JBANC is dedicated to providing and advocating objective and reliable information about international relations, diplomatic trends and policies on foreign affairs. Our organization is also devoted to facilitate and encourage open debate about security in the Euro-Atlantic area.

For details on sponsorship and participation please contact:

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California, along with Rules Committee chairman David Dreier (R-CA), Lucille Roybal-Allard (D-CA) and Brad Sherman (D-CA).

Rep. Doug Bereuter (R-NE) was recently named President of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly, the inter-parliamentary organization of legislators from the member countries of the NATO Alliance and Associate members, including Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. There are about another ten House members in the NATO PA, including Congressman Shimkus.

**Armed Services** - Chairman Bob Stump (R-AZ) is retiring. Next in succession for the Committee chairmanship is Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA).

**Foreign Operations** - Jim Kolbe (R-AZ) will remain as chairman and Nita Lowey (D-NY) as Ranking Member. Kolbe is a member of the House Baltic Caucus.

**House Democratic Leadership** - Dick Gephardt stepped down two days after the election, and the Minority Leadership position was won by Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-CA), a member of the House Baltic Caucus. She becomes the first female Minority Leader in Congress.

**Governors** - Maryland, Michigan and Pennsylvania all have new governors, all party reversals. In Maryland, Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend (D) lost a tough race to House member Bob Ehrlich (R-MD). Jennifer Granholm (D) won in Michigan and Ed Rendell (D) won in Pennsylvania. The National Guards of those states have partnership programs with the Baltics. Estonia and Maryland are linked, as are Latvia and Michigan and Lithuania with Pennsylvania.

**Karl Altau**

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**NATO Celebration in Washington, D.C.**

Members and friends of the Central and East Coalition gathered to celebrate NATO invitations to Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Romania and Bulgaria.

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