

JBANC Chronicle

An Overview of Baltic Events With a Washington Perspective

JOINT BALTIC AMERICAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE INC.



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BALTICS JOIN NATO

Celebrations Held at White House and Corcoran Gallery



Washington, DC (JBANC) — The flags of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovenia were raised on April 2 at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium, marking the admission of these countries to NATO. The number of NATO mem-

bers was thus increased to 26. Their admission



became official in Washington on March

29, 2004 when the Prime Ministers of the seven new member states presented the protocols of accession to United States Secretary of State Colin Powell.

The seven prime ministers of the new member states attended a formal

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Chairman's Corner by Dr. Ramunas Kondratas



Dr. Ramunas Kondratas



"NATO membership provides many guarantees but with it come many responsibilities as well."

How Sweet It Is!

March 29th was a day of rejoicing and thanksgiving for Baltic Americans and Baltic people everywhere. On that day, the prime ministers of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, together with those of Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Slovenia, presented the protocols of accession to NATO to the United States Secretary of State Colin Powell in Washington, D.C. Several days later, on April 2nd, the flags of these seven countries were raised at NATO Headquarters in Brussels, Belgium. A major milestone for Baltic national security and reintegration into Europe and the Transatlantic Alliance has been achieved. Certainly a great cause for rejoicing!

There are so many thanks to give. JBANC and its parent organizations have worked extremely hard and effectively for over ten years for NATO enlargement. One only has to thumb through the back issues of this journal to see how much was done. Many governments, many organizations, and many people in Europe and the United States have made this possible. None of this would

have occurred without the strong will of the Baltic people themselves to live in freedom and security.

NATO enlargement should continue. The Baltic states should not sit on their laurels. They should support and aid the accession efforts of the remaining Vilnius 10 - Croatia, Macedonia and Albania - and others. On April 15 Linas Linkevicius, Lithuania's Defense Minister, met with his counterpart from Ukraine and promised to help Ukraine's armed forces with the necessary reforms on the road to NATO.

NATO membership provides many guarantees but with it come many responsibilities as well. The prime ministers acknowledged this in their news conference at the National Press Club following the ceremony at the White House. The global war on terrorism, the need for peacekeepers and nation-builders were often mentioned.

NATO planes have begun patrolling Baltic airspace, giving concrete evidence of the promised security guarantees, but the great-

est immediate test for NATO and its new members will be the war in Iraq, the continuing unrest in Afghanistan, and the global war on terror. Many of the professed common values and wills will be tested. Will the Baltic states maintain their strong support for and commitment to peacekeeping and nation-building efforts in these parts of the world, especially if they begin to sustain increased casualties? How will NATO and later EU membership affect intra-Baltic cooperation and relationships? There is a suggestion already to disband the Baltic Assembly.

These and numerous other questions and problems will face the Baltic states after NATO and EU accession. They will also affect Baltic-American political activity. The JBANC Board has thought long and hard about these issues and has prepared a White Paper outlining future strategies and goals, which we will begin sharing with you shortly. In the meantime, let's enjoy our admission into NATO - how sweet it is - and prepare ourselves for the challenges to come.

Guest Commentary

Letter from Vilnius



Amb. Stephen D. Mull



"Lithuania is reaching out and has become a net contributor to peace and security"

Spring this year in Vilnius has been unusually busy and dramatic, gripping Lithuanians and their friends in the international community with alternating bouts of joy and determination. Even as the Lithuanian tri-color ascended the mast at NATO headquarters in Brussels and the skies of Vilnius exploded in fireworks, the Seimas was beginning the final act in the impeachment process against President Rolandas Paksas, the first such action against any European president in modern history. That Lithuanian democracy carried the day, and carried the nation through this ordeal is testament to Lithuania's maturity, and underscores why the country is now our NATO ally and soon to be a member of the European Union.

And what an ally; from Afghanistan to Iraq and Kosovo, Lithuania stands firm with us. Lithuania actively pursued a good neighbor policy while supporting democratic reform in Belarus and capacity

building in the Caucasus. True to its word, Lithuania is reaching out and has become a net contributor to peace and security.

It would be understandable if Lithuania had turned inward during this period in order to deal with its domestic political affairs. Instead, Lithuania remained engaged internationally as it prepared itself to realize two of its key, long-standing foreign policy goals. Lithuania's entire national security team kept Lithuania firmly in support of our common efforts to defeat our common terrorist enemy, and to build a new Iraq. Defense Minister Linkevicius and General Kronkaitis excelled in preparing Lithuania's military to take up its NATO responsibilities. Lithuania's law enforcement leaders cooperated closely with us in equipping Vilnius's airport with state of the art sensors to guard against the smuggling of radioactive material through Lithuanian territory. And Prime Minister Brazauskas and his government team con-

tinued to burnish Lithuania's stellar reputation in preparing for the duties and obligations of membership in the European Union.

Democracy has taken root in Lithuania and the economy has blossomed. For two years now, European Commission statistics show Lithuania has the fastest growing economy in the EU and accession states. Lithuania has become a land of freedom, opportunity and the rule of law.

Looking back on these events, I think our Lithuanian friends should take great pride. They faced a serious internal problem, and they solved it themselves without the foreign interference that so often tried to squelch the Lithuanian spirit in centuries past. And all the while, they repeatedly proved themselves in every field as one of America's most reliable and stalwart friends. We are lucky to have them as an ally.

*Ambassador
Stephen D. Mull*



Simonas Girdzijauskas



Mr. Lebedko is to appear for questioning in relation to the criminal case [on] "slander concerning the President of Belarus."

Losing Belarus

With the Baltics, a crucial geopolitical crossroads between East and West, already in NATO and showing great growth and democratic strength, political leaders of the democratic West have turned their attention to the authoritarian regime of Belarusian President Lukashenka. Mr. Lukashenka does not like NATO expanding to the borders of "his country" with good reason. Expansion of the democratic block has brought the spotlight on what will soon be both a new EU and NATO neighbor authoritarian Belarus.

Recent conferences in Riga and Munich and the introduction of the Belarus Democracy Act in the U.S. Congress have brought increased international attention to the state that has been hijacked and ruled by a single man, Aleksandr Lukashenka. The timing is even

worse for Lukashenka since the parliamentary elections to their National Assembly are approaching. Opposition groups united under the "Five +" banner have used this opportunity to spotlight severe human right violations by the government and to rally international support to remove the last dictator of Europe.

However, Lukashenka's regime answered the opposition's attempts to gain political ground by applying the usual tactics of intimidation, seizure of property, closures of neutral or opposing media outlets, and putting its most

fierce opponents behind bars.

For example, the inspector of major affairs of the Office of the Public Prosecutor of Minsk, A. V. Pikirev, on March 1, 2004 summoned the leader of the United Civil Party and one of the initiators of the People coalition "Five +", Anatoly Lebedko. Pikirev's letter stated that Mr. Lebedko is to appear for questioning in relation to the criminal case initiated under article 367 part 2 of the Criminal Code of Belarus "Slander concerning the President

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Independence Day demonstration being broken up in Minsk on March 25, 2004.

Victims of Communism Memorial Update

After years of quiet hope and resolve, and following excellent fund-raising results, it appears now more likely than ever that a memorial to the Victims of Communism will be unveiled in Washington, DC in 2004.

The major remaining question regards the site location for the monument. Initial hopes that the site would be located off of Louisiana Ave. and 1st St., NW have been supplanted by plans to locate the memorial on a triangle between Maryland and Constitution Avenues, NE. This location is by the Hart Senate Office Building and just across the street from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). The Supreme Court building is also within eyesight.

A decision will be made within the next few weeks whether to proceed with securing the alternate site.

The site needs final approval by the National Capitol Memorial Commission, the National Capitol Planning Commission and the Washington DC Commission on Fine Arts.

The Victims of Communism Memorial Foundation is authorized under Public Law 103-199 to build a

Memorial to the more than 100 million victims of communism on federal land in the Nation's Capital. The original legislation, HR 3000, was sponsored by Representative Dana Rohrabacher and Senator



This statue is a replica of the statue created by student activists and destroyed by communist tanks in Tiananmen Square in 1989.

Copyright Thomas Marsh

Claiborne Pell, and passed unanimously on December 17, 1993. It was signed by President Clinton, Speaker Foley, and President pro tem of the Senate, Robert Byrd. It subsequently has been renewed through Sec-

tion 326 of PL 105-277, approved October 21, 1998, until December 17, 2007.

The memorial includes a replica of the Goddess of Democracy from Tiananmen Square, an eternal flame and marble panels featuring quotations of the U.S. and foreign heroes of the Cold War.

If approval is granted, groundbreaking for the memorial to the victims of communism and dedication of the Memorial are expected later this year.

Ethnic American groups, including JBANC, representing more than twenty countries and 26 million Americans that suffered under communist rule have been active in this endeavor. JBANC Managing Director Karl Altau became a member of the Memorial Foundation Board in January, the first Baltic-American in that position. In addition, three former Presidents of the Baltic nations: Vytautas Landsbergis of Lithuania, Lennart Meri of Estonia and Guntis Ulmanis of Latvia are on the organization's International Advisory Council.

President George W. Bush is Honorary Chairman of the Foundation.

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Karl Altau



Janis Bolsteins



*"a small step for
Moscow to admit
to the illegal
occupation and
annexation of the
Baltics"*

Searching for Closure

Condemning Communism and Its Crimes

Since the Soviet Union imploded, there have been persistent calls for the condemnation of communism's crimes in one fashion or other, particularly the Soviet brand. Contrast is made with post-World War II denazification measures which did much to clear the air in Europe and paved the way for democracy and free markets. A few steps in the right direction have been taken. The Black Book of Communism, published in France in 1997, thoroughly catalogued the crimes and terror that warped ideology left in its wake. More recently, it appears that a memorial to the victims of communism will soon finally join the pantheon of such memorials in the heart of Washington, D.C. And there have been other measures.

Probably the most wide-reaching current effort to condemn the crimes of communism is under consideration by the Council of Europe (a political alliance not to be confused with the economically oriented European Union). The Council's Parliamentary Assembly has under consideration a resolution supported late last year by

the Baltic Assembly. That resolution (Doc. no. 9875 of Sep. 25, 2003) would condemn the crimes of communism on an international level and would establish an independent commission which would compile and evaluate crimes against humanity perpetrated by communist regimes. It would be a multi-year project and would issue reports and findings.

JBANC has begun to formulate a somewhat parallel measure which, together with condemning communism's crimes, would also express the need for an admission by Moscow of the draconian policies carried out against the Baltic states during the years of occupation. The question of reparations is also applicable, although that subject might best progress as a stand-alone item.

Soviet head Mikhail Gorbachev, just before the USSR's dissolution, grudgingly apologized to Poland for the World War II massacre by Soviet forces of thousands of Polish officers in the Katyn Forest. Even more grudgingly, the last Soviet government also admitted

to the existence of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, which was almost a death sentence for the Baltics. There is also some evidence that Moscow may have expressed regret for the invasions of Hungary and Czechoslovakia.

With those precedents, it would appear to be but a small step for Moscow to admit to the illegal occupation and annexation of the Baltics. A declaration of that kind by Moscow would certainly clear the air in Baltic-Russian relations. It would quickly take the edge off of the Russian minority situation in Estonia and Latvia and would have positive repercussions elsewhere. Moscow should know that the truth does indeed heal.

JBANC will work towards legislation along these lines, likely in the form of a resolution, and request selected U.S. Senators and Representatives to introduce the measure in Congress. At that point, Baltic Americans around the country would be asked to participate in achieving passage of the resolution in Congress.

Janis Bolsteins

Midwest Lithuanians Meet Members of Congress

Two Members of Congress extended a warm welcome to a group of prominent Lithuanian Americans from the Midwest on March 30, 2004. Sen. Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Rep. John Shimkus (R-IL) met in their Washington offices with the group of about 15 constituents to discuss issues vital to the Baltic-American community.

Saulius Kuprys, President of the Lithuanian American Council, Inc. and JBANC, Stanley Balzekas, President of the Balzekas Museum of Lithuanian Culture in Chicago and Lithuanian Honorary Consul in Palm Beach, and Patricia Annette Streeter, President of the Lithuanian American Bar Association were among the group of primarily Chicago constituents participating in the meetings.

The meetings took place a day after celebrations in Washington to mark the historic expansion of NATO to Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, among seven countries of Central and Eastern Europe. As co-Chairs of the Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus and House Baltic Caucus, Sen. Durbin and Rep. Shimkus have been strong supporters of efforts by the Baltics to join the Trans-Atlantic alliance. The participants emphasized that it is crucial to keep the Baltic Caucuses and its members engaged in the ongoing activities to maintain flexible and broad support for the Baltics on Capitol Hill. Repre-



Lithuanian-Americans on Capitol steps with Rep. John Shimkus (right) on 3/30/04.

sentatives of the different organizations present at the meetings also pledged to keep up their outreach efforts to bring new members to join the Caucus.

Some of the main issues of concern to the group were U.S. public diplomacy, U.S. – Baltic cooperation and the question of a monument to honor the victims of communism, scheduled to be unveiled in Washington later this year.

Due to the changing priorities of the Administration, combined with political and economic progress achieved by the Baltic countries as reflected by their inclusion in NATO and the European Union, broadcasts of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty and the Voice of America in Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian have

been discontinued. Pulling the plug on Baltic and other services earlier this year was highly contentious. The constituents expressed their concerns about the pattern of continued reductions to international broadcasts to Belarus, Ukraine and other countries that are still transitioning towards democracy. It is feared that a premature withdrawal from regions that are in desperate need of objective outside broadcasting could jeopardize the civic freedom movements and could hamper their hopes to achieve societies with an objective news media and respect for civil rights.

Furthermore, the constituents expressed to both Sen. Durbin and Rep. Shimkus their concerns that the move to eliminate broadcasting to the Baltics

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“The constituents expressed their concerns about the pattern of continued reductions to international broadcasts “

Victims of Communism Memorial Update

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In addition to the construction of the Memorial, plans include the establishment of a virtual museum on the Memorial's website and the preservation of vital documents about communism for study by present and future scholars.

Recent articles in the press and efforts by others working to see the memorial a reality have begun to gain momentum. A March 25, 2004 article in "The Hill", a Congressional newspaper, chronicled the effort to build the memorial. The March 31 issue of The Washington Times published an article "Lest We Forget" by Helle Dale, former Editorial Page Editor of that newspaper. Pressure from Members of Congress to resolve the final impasse is also reaping benefits. The time for building the Memorial is at hand.

JBANC will continue to work with all responsible parties to see this through.

Another project related to the effort to bring recognition to the victims of communism is a documentary film project now underway which will chronicle the tragic absurdity of the Soviet Union and help to convey the lessons of the fall

of the USSR.

Professor David Satter, a former journalist with the Financial Times, who wrote extensively on the Soviet Union for that paper in the 1970's-80's and who witnessed the paradoxes of that system is the man behind the project. Satter, now with the Paul H. Nitze School of Advanced International Studies at Johns Hopkins University in Washington, DC, is the author of *Age of Delirium, the Decline and Fall of the Soviet Union*.

The film, based on the book, will be produced by South Carolina Public Television, Dreamscanner of Germany, and the Evans-McCan group in the U.S.A. in cooperation with the Hudson Institute. Its purpose is to depict the fall of the Soviet Union as it was lived and experienced by the Soviet people. *Age of Delirium*, as well as receiving critical acclaim in the U.S., was published in Russian and is being translated into Estonian.

The film will consist of two, 90 minute parts. The first part will take the viewer inside Soviet society, from the factories and collective farms to the labor camps, party cells and psychiatric hospitals of the So-

viet Union to show what it meant to construct an entire state on the basis of a false idea. The second part will show the impact of truthful information on a delusional system and why, when the ruling idea began to be discredited, it was inevitable that the whole pyramidal structure of Soviet society would begin to collapse.

The method employed will be filmed interviews with persons whose experiences illustrate the forces that led to the decline of the Soviet Union and its eventual fall. These persons will return to the locations where their stories unfolded and describe the events in which they participated. There are plans to have scenes of the Baltics. In his book, Satter writes about the bloodshed in Lithuania in January 1991, and also depicts the struggles of Baltic political prisoners, and the famous Hirvepark meeting in Tallinn Estonia in 1989, on the 50th anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.

The product will be a film which will be shown on television and made available in cassettes for high school and university students in the United States and abroad.

Karl Altau



"Another project... is a documentary film project now underway which will chronicle the tragic absurdity of the Soviet Union."

Tribute to Ambassador Stasys Sakalauskas

On March 25 former Lithuanian Ambassador to the United States Stasys Sakalauskas succumbed to cancer at the age of 58. Known to many in the Greater Washington DC Area he served as Lithuania's Ambassador to the U.S. from 1997 to 2001. JBANC mourns the loss of Ambassador Sakalauskas.

Sakalauskas was a career diplomat and Secretary of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and was appointed Ambassador of Lithuania to the United States by decree of President Algirdas Brazauskas on September 22, 1997.

This tour was Sakalauskas' second in Washington: from 1994-1997, he was Counselor in the Lithuanian Embassy.

Sakalauskas presented his credentials as ambassador on November 12, 1997, replacing Dr. Alfonsas Eidintas, who had been Lithuanian ambassador since 1993. Sakalauskas was succeeded on March 13, 2001 by Vygaudas Usackas.

JBANC Chairman Ra-

munas Kondratas commented, "Ambassador Sakalauskas was one of the first professional diplomats in newly-independent Lithuania. He was energetic and optimistic—always seeing the glass as half full. He was very proud of



Ambassador Stasys Sakalauskas, 1946-2004.

Lithuania—its history, culture, and people—and wanted to share that pride with the people and officials of the United States. He was very concerned about Lithuania's long-term national security and thus worked very hard for its admittance into NATO. He will be missed but not forgotten by his many friends and admirers in the Washington area."

Mel Huang, who served with JBANC in the mid-1990's and knew Amb. Sakalauskas from his days as chief political officer and of the Lithuanian Embassy remarked, "Stasys became everyone's friend during his long service in Washington. What he's

done for Lithuania is immeasurable; to his friends, like me, he was just a brilliant guy. His loss devastates all of us, especially just before Lithuania's formal entry into NATO -- to which he worked so hard. Stasys, thank you, we miss you dearly. We'll see you soon, my friend. Iki pasimatymo."

Sakalauskas was able to keep NATO enlargement a very high-profile issue, even in the days when opposition to Baltic membership seemed strong. Sakalauskas was ever confident the door to NATO would remain open for future members.

Sakalauskas leaves behind his wife Jurate Sakalauskiene and two sons, Vytautas and Antanas.



"Ambassador Sakalauskas was energetic and optimistic—always seeing the glass as half full. He was very proud of Lithuania"



*"our new
members bring
moral clarity to
the purposes of
the Alliance"*

G.W. Bush

BALTICS JOIN NATO

Celebrations Held at White House and Corcoran Gallery

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ceremony at the White House on March 29th where they were received by President George W. Bush, members of his Cabinet and Congress, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and other officials and dignitaries. Among those participating was NATO Secretary General Jaap de Hoop Scheffer who greeted some two thousand participants attending the White House ceremony on the South Lawn of the White House.

The three Baltic countries were represented by their respective prime ministers Indulis Emsis of Latvia, Juhan Parts of Estonia, and Algirdas Brazauskas



Joint Chiefs of Staff Chairman Richard Myers, with Secretary of State Colin Powell and Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld on the White House lawn on March 29, 2004.

of Lithuania. Noting that NATO is strengthened by the admission of the seven new member states, President Bush emphasized the

historical significance of the admission of the seven new members to NATO: "As witness to some of the great crimes of the last century, our new members bring moral clarity to the purposes of the Alliance. They understand our cause in Afghanistan and in Iraq, because tyranny for them is still a fresh memory. These nations know that when great democracies fail to confront danger, far worse peril can follow." Other participants at the ceremony included Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, National Security Advisor

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The seven prime ministers of the countries just joined NATO answer questions at the National Press Club on March 29, 2004.

Losing Belarus

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of Belarus". It is troubling to observe that violations of freedom of speech, instead of protecting free speech and human rights, Belarus law protects Mr.

Lukashenka.

Other arrests have also occurred recently. Vincuk Viaciorka, leader of the BDF Party, which is part of the "Five+" opposition block, together with Uladzimir Kiskurna, head of BPF Party Minsk organization, Ales Biadlacki and Valancin Stefanovic, the head and a member of the closed "Viasna" human rights defense organization, and many others, were incarcerated on March 25. They were detained for standing with red-white-red (colors of the national flag) and singing songs in commemoration of the 1918 Belarusian Independence Day.

Concerts and celebrations to commemorate the day were cancelled and forbidden by authorities. Civilian-dressed militia forced people into vans and brought them to the station for interrogations. Some were bru-

tally beaten.

The most disturbing part is not the illegal detention of innocent people in violation of even the Belarus law, but rather that those detained were not arrested by military forces of Belarus. They were arrested by members of the Russian militia from the cities of Tver and Arkhangelsk, who said they were "on practical work" in Minsk.

This fact reveals two things. The first is that Lukashenka is not interested in protecting the sovereignty or independence of Belarus. By allowing Russian law enforcement agents to operate in his country, he is further advancing his goal to integrate Belarus with Russia. Belarus already has an unprotected border with Russia. In 1999 it signed the Union Treaty of Belarus and Russia, and is on its way towards adopting the Russian ruble as the national currency. There is a noticeable trend by authorities to employ the Russian language instead of the native Belarusian.

These facts bring us to the second point - that it is time for the international

community to act now.

Senator John McCain (R-AZ), in his keynote speech during the Riga conference on "The Future of Democracy Beyond the Baltics" in early February, called dictators like Lukashenka a "dying breed" in today's world. Sen. McCain went on to express his conviction that the regime of the last dictator of Europe will not be able to "survive the last democratic revolution that has swept the world over the last 15 years".

However, the optimism of the Senator is countered by the expanding interests of Russia, and the well-implemented apparatus of propaganda and intimidation of Lukashenka's regime. Unfortunately, democracy may be in danger of losing the battle against social and political erosion of freedom in Belarus, if left to its own merits. It is not too late for democracy to win its battle for survival in Belarus. However, the window of opportunity may be closing soon.

Simonas Girdzijauskas



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BALTICS JOIN NATO

Celebrations Held at White House and Corcoran Gallery

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Condoleezza Rice, as well as Senators John Warner and Majority Leader Bill Frist. The prime ministers of Croatia, Macedonia and Albania also participated in the White House ceremony, representing countries awaiting admission to NATO at some future date.

Following the White House event, a news conference with the Prime Ministers was held at the National Press Club. Celebrations were concluded with a gala reception at the Corcoran Gallery of Art in Washington, DC. The Central and East European Coalition

(CEEC), representing 18 national organizations and 13 ethnic communities in the U.S. cooperated with the embassies of the new NATO member states in organizing the event.

Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld delivered the keynote address at the reception, at which there were some 1000 participants. The premiers of the "Vilnius 10" countries, along with other delegation members and representatives of the CEEC joined Secretary Rumsfeld on the marble staircase in the grand hall of the Gallery. JBANC and Lithuanian American Council President Saulius

Kuprys, American Latvian Association President Dace Copeland and Estonian American National Council President Mati Kõiva also joined in the program. Regina Narusis of the Lithuanian American Community was master of ceremonies, and Frank Koszorus of the Hungarian American Coalition spoke on behalf of the CEEC, emphasizing the need to further broaden the Transatlantic Alliance. The Joint Baltic American National Committee, Inc. (JBANC), has supported NATO enlargement to the Baltic countries and warmly welcomes Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into NATO.



*"Celebrations
were concluded
with a gala
reception at the
Corcoran Gallery
of Art in
Washington, DC."*



Members of various Central and East European Coalition organizations at the Corcoran Gallery on March 29. Congressman John Shimkus is also pictured with the group.

Midwest Lithuanians Meet Members of Congress



Delegation of Lithuanian-Americans and JBANC with Senator Richard Durbin on March 30, 2004.



"The Baltic-American community strongly believes that at least minimal funding should be allocated to fund joint projects"

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could represent the beginning of a U.S. withdrawal from the region. Another paradox is the case of the new initiative by the State Department known as the Enhanced Partnership in Northern Europe (e-PINE). This program evolved from the Northern European Initiative (NEI), which was funded by the SEED account. It has not been allocated any money in the Fiscal Year 2004 budget nor has any funding been requested for FY 2005. Beginning in October 2004, the U.S. non-military policy towards the Baltic region will be based solely on diplomacy with no funding to support any joint projects.

The Baltic-American community strongly believes that at

least minimal funding should be allocated to fund joint projects that deal with problems in the environmental field, and address critical issues such as HIV/AIDS, TB, corruption and human trafficking.

Another issue addressed during the course of meetings with Sen. Durbin and Rep. Shimkus was the Baltics' role in the changed geopolitical region of Europe. Capitalizing on their successful transformation from communist to free and independent societies, the Baltic countries have been actively engaged in exporting their experience to countries that are still struggling to transform in this post-Soviet era. However, countries like Belarus, with Europe's "last dictator" Aleksandr Lukashenka, need a more

pro-active engagement not only from the Baltics, but also from the international community as a whole. The Belarus Democracy Act, introduced in both chambers of Congress (H.R.854 and S.700), addresses the problems faced in that country, which affect the region as well. The constituents thanked Sen. Durbin and Rep. Shimkus for their support of the bill and have stressed the need to further advance the measure through Congress.

The participants also addressed issues related to the building of a memorial to the victims of communism and efforts to raise awareness regarding the condemnation of the crimes of communism, which will hopefully be supported by Congress. In addition, the matter of Russia's policy towards its neighbors and its struggle with dealing with what can be described as a post-Soviet imperial hangover were also brought up during the meetings.

*Simonas Girdzijauskas
JBANC*



Baltic Energy Security and Independence

June 2004 Conference in Vilnius



"[The Baltics] will soon face a major redirection of energy supplies in the coming years."

With the Baltic countries joining the European Union, and with their just-minted membership in NATO, their strategic relationships are making a monumental shift. Changes in their regional energy security environment are also occurring. While national energy structures have evolved greatly in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania over the past 13 years, there are growing concerns that this future may be clouded. New challenges are signaling a call for closer cooperation within the Baltics.

Following 50 years of forced reliance on Soviet energy supplies, the Baltics do not look favorably at the prospect of becoming more dependent on Russian energy imports at the expense of their own energy sources. At the same time, the Baltics would miss the export of Russian energy supplies through the Baltics, a significant source of revenue.

Russia's economy is dependent on oil and gas exports, and much of that country's exports have flowed westward through Baltic ports. Russia is shifting its export capacity to its own newly developed terminals on the Gulf of Finland. Baltic energy vulnerabilities are increasingly exposed to

the influence of Russia, and the whims of Russian politics, sometimes likened to economic blackmail.

An April 16, 2004 story in the Wall Street Journal ("Baltic Power Providers Feel Pressure From Russia", by Alexei Barrionuevo) highlights the difficulties faced by Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania in this area. Russian energy companies, offering competitive deals thanks to their access to Russian energy supplies, are looking more and more to purchasing Baltic companies. Strong-armed tactics have included cutting off supplies to the Baltics and also exports through the Baltics. In this way, Russian companies are able to exert control on pipelines, along with natural gas and electricity supply and distribution.

The potential fall out from the EU-mandated closing of the Ignalina nuclear power plant in Lithuania is another sign that the Baltics, especially Lithuania, will soon face a major redirection of energy supplies in the coming years.

These worries are prompting the Baltics towards finding viable energy supply alternatives. A workshop in Vil-

nius in June this year will help bring together specialists to discuss these issues of energy supply and energy security in the Baltics. An initial workshop in 2002, with participation of NATO, the Lithuanian Ministry of Economy, the Lithuanian Energy Institute, and others, focused on the future of Ignalina, which supplies a majority of Lithuania with its electricity. One Ignalina plant is scheduled to shut down in 2005 and a second in 2009. The workshop was sponsored by NATO, which is also sponsoring this year's meeting.

In 2003, the respective Estonian and Latvian ministries also expressed their interest in joining the project, which will look at existing energy sources and begin to consider other alternatives further on down the road. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has agreed to provide technical support for the project and is a co-sponsor. The Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS), in Washington, DC will also be a co-sponsor and peer reviewer of the report. A workshop report is to be published by NATO.

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Baltic Energy Security and Independence

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The report will analyze the basic national energy requirements of the three countries until the year 2025. There will be a comparison of investment efficiencies and energy security strategies. National self-sufficiency requirements are also to be outlined in the new report, with no co-ordination or co-operation scenarios yet considered. This scenario develops the basic cost of energy security if Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania meet their needs independently.

A series of five regional co-operation and co-ordination cases are analyzed. These include: additional natural gas storage, additional interconnections with Finland and Poland, limiting the percentage of natural gas supply in the generation of electricity and supply of district heating, strengthening inter-Baltic interconnections and continued operation of the second Ignalina unit until 2017.

The Workshop will provide policy level presentations and round table discussions, with supporting economic and technical presentations. The conference is scheduled to begin with a keynote presentation by Lithuanian Prime Minister Brazauskas. International experts will provide outside focus, including a discussion of the Finnish decision to build a new nuclear plant at Olkiluoto. A rationale for building the new nuclear power plant was its competitive energy production costs with other forms of power. Energy security also tilted the balance in favor of nuclear power in the Finnish case.

JBANC wishes to thank Mr. Joe Bader, one of the NATO Workshop Co-Directors, for providing information about the Workshop.

The JBANC Chronicle **Number 28 (since 1994)** **Published April 2004**

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A publication of:

Joint Baltic American
National Committee, Inc.

Representing:

Estonian American National Council, Inc.
American Latvian Association, Inc.
Lithuanian American Council, Inc.

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Lithuanians to Head JBANC in 2004-2005

Washington, DC (JBANC) – At its annual Board of Directors meeting on March 6, 2004, the chairmanship of the Board of Directors of JBANC rotated, with the Lithuanian American Council assuming the leadership of the organization for 2004-2005.

Saulius Kuprys, the President of the Lithuanian American Council (LAC), based in Chicago, became JBANC's new President. Dr. Ramunas Kondratas of Springfield Virginia is JBANC's new chairman and Henry Gaidis of Olney Maryland is the third member of the JBANC Board representing the LAC.

Other members of JBANC's Board of Directors are Mati Koiva and Lya Karm of the Estonian American National Council and Dace Copeland, Janis Bolsteins and Peteris Blumbergs of the American Latvian Association.

At their meeting, the JBANC Board discussed the successful conclusion of the ten-year campaign to bring the Baltics into NATO. In addition, new policy strategy for 2004-2005 was considered, including the development of a White Paper outlining future goals. Major issues for the coming year include U.S. engagement in the Baltics, dealing with the legacy of communism and its crimes, expanding democracy beyond the Baltics, U.S.-Russia relations, U.S. Public Diplomacy and the Baltic-American communities continued involvement with Congress, the Administration and electoral politics. Also considered was whether to organize in 2005 a major conference related to the Baltics.

JBANC was formed in 1961, uniting the efforts of Estonian, Latvian and Lithuanian organizations in the United States. It is dedicated to providing and advocating objective and reliable information about U.S. policies as they affect the Baltic countries.

