

“An army without educated officers is not an army, it is just a group of armed men,” President Toomas Hendrik Ilves stated today in a lecture held at the Baltic Defence College (BALTDEFCOL) in Tartu.

Speaking to the participants of the college’s courses for joint staff officers and civil officials, President Ilves stressed that military education must be accompanied by developments in the military sphere and hopefully be a step ahead of them. “Historically, there have been enough cases when generals and politicians have prepared for the last war, but actually the next war is always different,” the Estonian Head of State noted.

President Ilves expressed his conviction that for small countries NATO will remain the cornerstone of all security policy. “The meaning of Article 5 is extremely important today; without it, NATO would lose its purpose,” President Ilves said. The Head of State acknowledged that the Baltic Defence College is a good example of cooperation between the three Baltic countries and noted that studying and working in an international environment helped officers from the Baltic countries to acquire valuable experience in the period prior to accession to the NATO and does so today as well.

At the Head of State’s meeting with Brigade General Gundars Abols, the Commandant of BALTDEFCOL, following the lecture, discussions included the need to preserve the multinational nature of the faculty and the preparations for the 10th anniversary of the college in February 2009.

Almost 100 officers and civil officials from an average of 20 NATO member and partner states complete various courses at the Baltic Defence College every year.

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