

The main issues included the global recession, trans-Atlantic relations, the visibility and credibility of NATO as an organisation established to protect its allies, and the current situation in Afghanistan. The Estonian Head of State, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is currently on a working visit to the United States of America, met in Washington with the President of the United States, Mr. Barack Obama, and his Security Advisor, Mr. James Jones.

The main issues that were discussed at the meeting in the White House included the global recession, trans-Atlantic relations, the visibility and credibility of NATO as an organisation established to protect its allies, and the current situation in Afghanistan, the most important foreign mission of the alliance.

President Obama offered his condolences to Estonia for the death of Warrant Officer Allain Tikko who was killed in Afghanistan Monday morning. President Ilves affirmed that while Estonia, like its allies, has suffered severe losses, we will go all the way and will not desert the mission in Afghanistan.

“Three strengths – a strong Europe, a strong US and strong trans-Atlantic co-operation, supported by common values, are important for those interested in a stable and safe democratic world,” President Ilves said.

“We need these strengths both in Afghanistan, where faith in a safe country among the local population must be restored, and in Pakistan, by supporting the fight against the extremist movement; in restraining the nuclear ambitions of North-Korea and Iran; for enhancing democratic principles in NATO regions; for maintaining the military capabilities that are required for collective defence of the alliance, which serve as a necessary discouragement in fending off theoretical plans of attack from the outset; and also to mitigate the financial and economic crisis that is ravaging many countries in the world,” said the Estonian Head of State.

“It’s quite obvious that to overcome the global recession we need both decisiveness and persistence of the governments of those countries most effected by the crisis, as well as international and co-ordinated co-operation that is free of any protectionism,” President Ilves stated.

Cyber security was also discussed in the White House, and the Estonian Head of State thanked the United States for its assistance and support in the establishment of the NATO Co-operative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn.

“Cyber attacks, as those launched against Estonia two years ago, were a wake-up call, which demonstrated the importance of cyber security for many countries,” President Ilves stated. “Cyber attacks are cross-border by nature and, therefore, demand an international counter-attack.”

Proposals made by the President of Russia, Mr. Dmitri Medvedev, concerning the new security structure of Europe were also discussed at the meeting; this will also be one of the major issues of the upcoming visit to Moscow of the President Obama.

“Serious and semantic dialogue with Russia is highly important and good co-operation between the United States and Russia would be beneficial all along the trans-Atlantic axis,” President Ilves acknowledged. “However, I don’t think we have exhausted the solutions that are currently offering us security. And it is also important that dialogue with Russia would not harm the alliances of today.”

The Estonian Head of State admitted that NATO shares some common interests with Russia, such as restraining the nuclear programmes of North Korea and Iran, although we are concerned with Moscow’s attitude towards the countries between Russia and NATO.

Office of the President
Public Relations Department
Phone +372 631 6229