

President Ilves mentioned relations and co-operation in the European Union, NATO, and United States of America triangle as a sphere that is highly important for both Estonia and all other democratic countries. President Toomas Hendrik Ilves, who is currently on a working visit to the United States of America, visited Harvard University yesterday afternoon where he gave a presentation on European and Trans-Atlantic security in the 21st century.

The facilitator of the lecture, which was organised by the Harvard Kennedy School, was Professor Nicholas Burns, who previously worked as United States Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs. During the first half of the 1990s, in the capacity of a high-ranking official of the US National Security Council, he was closely involved with the negotiations for the withdrawal of the Russian armed forces from Estonia.

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"We have common interests – above all, a successful operation in Afghanistan, the resolution of Iran's nuclear problems and preventing the distribution of nuclear weapons in general, fighting cyber attacks, and energy security as well as bringing an end to the recession," said the Estonian Head of State. "Strong partnership between the European Union, NATO, and the United States of America is required to overcome these issues. This needs to be more efficient and visible than it has been until now."

President Ilves emphasised the importance of the Trans-Atlantic bonds remaining strong, especially now when NATO has expanded to embrace 28 member states and the security of all of the European allies of the USA is stronger now than it has ever been during the last fifty years.

"I can also say the following: Estonia's security has never been guarded as well as it is now," said the Estonian Head of State.

President Ilves met with Estonian students studying at Harvard University and other universities in the Boston region before the lecture. He commended the students for their entrepreneurship in learning abroad, calling it good and useful experience, but also encouraged them to return to Estonia after completing their studies to pursue a career in their homeland.

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