

NATO's new strategic concept, Afghanistan, the presence of the United States of America in Europe, relations with Russia, and the nuclear ambitions of Iran – these were the main issues discussed by the President and the US Secretary of State. NATO's new strategic concept, Afghanistan, the presence of the United States of America in Europe, relations with Russia, and the nuclear ambitions of Iran – these were the main issues discussed at the meeting yesterday between the President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves, and the US Secretary of State, Mrs. Hillary Clinton.

President Ilves stressed that NATO's new strategic concept, which will, undoubtedly, be based on collective deterrence and collective defence, will only become a guideline for the alliance if embraced and adopted by all the NATO member states.

“This shall mean very close mutual consultation over a long period of time and an end to the so-called last minute compromises and agreements, which serve the interests of no-one,” said President Ilves.

At the same time, the Estonian Head of State admitted that within a NATO context territorial defence will mean that the defence of our own countries and citizens may start at a greater distance, using the operation in Afghanistan as an example.

The US Secretary of State commended Estonia for raising the issue of cyber defence and for its commitment to the subject, which resulted in the establishment of the NATO Co-operative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence in Tallinn.

“But the fact that we have new threats from a greater distance does not mean that the old threats have gone,” President Ilves added.

In speaking about Afghanistan, the Estonian Head of State considered the increase in the number of civil and training projects led by NATO and the European Union at the same time as the increase in military presence to be highly important.

“Only this way – by literally building up the country – can we finally achieve a situation in which the authorities of Afghanistan will be capable of controlling the situation themselves,” stated President Ilves. “NATO's interference is characterised by one specific factor: the objective of the alliance's presence is to depart.”

When speaking about the presence of the United States of America in Europe, the Estonian Head of State admitted that while Europe's problems may seem solved for the USA, known as a problem solver, we must find new points of contact for trans-Atlantic integration with our important allies.

“In the same way that NATO needs a more contemporary management scheme, both Europe and the United States of America will need a new foundation for their relations, as many problems dating back to the times of the cold war have been successfully resolved since the fall of the Iron Curtain,” said President Ilves.

The Estonian Head of State mentioned the fact that the USA succeeded in bringing Russia back into more constructive dialogue, citing the START-arrangement, which was recently signed in Prague, as a highly positive example.

“I do hope that pragmatic, practical co-operation between NATO and Russia and the members of the alliance and Russia will continue,” said President Ilves.

When speaking about the issue of Iran’s nuclear programme, the Estonian Head of State considered it very important for the international community to understand: nuclear weapon in the hands of a country like Iran will be a threat for all of us.

“The resolution of the UN Security Council, condemning Iran and imposing some sanctions, would be very important; then we need to achieve a situation in which Iran will be alone with its ambitions, in opposition to everyone,” said President Ilves.

Remarks after the meeting via [U.S. State Department homepage](#) .

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