

Estonian President today opened the third international conference organised by the NATO-accredited Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. In his opening speech, president Ilves among other issues touched upon the asymmetry of cyber threats. Estonian President, Mr. Toomas Hendrik Ilves today opened the third international conference organised by the NATO-accredited Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence. In his opening speech, president Ilves among other issues touched upon the asymmetry of cyber threats.

According to President Ilves there have already been cases of actual or prevented aggression against nation-states carried out in cyberspace: "Were they to have been carried out with kinetic weapons, we in NATO would be faced minimally with an Article 4 and most likely with an Article 5 scenario."

However, as President Ilves said, "we have no conception of how to define aggression in cyberspace or redefine it for cyberspace; we lack clear attribution to any political entity; we lack a response doctrine to apply were we to know who committed the aggression; and we have not dealt with the possibility of asymmetry, i.e., what if an effectively military action was perpetrated in its entirety by a small group of unknown hackers."

"This means that even before we can talk about the hardware and software side of cyber defence and cyber warfare, we have to develop a conceptual consensus."

Speaking of computerisation and internetisation, President Ilves said that since our critical infrastructure, our electricity grids and transportation and mobile phone networks are so enmeshed with and tied to the internet - any open society is vulnerable. "As much of our critical infrastructure is also transnational – we require a transnational approach. We need to make our transnational computer-dependent critical infrastructure resilient, that is to say, if not impervious then at least maximally shielded from the dangers of an attack," President Ilves stressed.

Conference on Cyber Conflict brings together more than 300 computer security specialists from 39 countries. During the event, experts from government, private sector and the academia discuss cyber security in three parallel conference tracks: strategy, law and technical. Upcoming keynote speakers include renowned cryptographer Bruce Schneier and former cyber security adviser to the US president, Melissa Hathaway. The Conference on Cyber Conflict unites two highly-regarded events that CCD COE held in 2009: the Conference on Cyber Warfare in June and the Legal and Policy Conference in September. The conference ends on Friday 18 June, 2010.

Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence is a NATO-accredited multinational organisation dealing with education, consultation, lessons learned, research and development in the field of cyber security. The centre's mission is to enhance the capability, cooperation and information sharing among NATO, NATO nations and Partners in cyber defence.

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