

At his meeting today with the British Secretary of State for Defence, Liam Fox, President Toomas Hendrik Ilves discussed the continuation of the NATO air security mission in the Baltic states, military co-operation between Estonia and the UK in Afghanistan, joint ventures in the sphere of cyber security and the situation in Libya.

“It will serve the interests of all parties to the alliance if NATO’s air security mission in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania becomes permanent rather than temporary,” President Ilves confirmed.

“This will contribute to increasing the security of the Baltic states and NATO as an organisation, while enhancing the visibility and credibility of the whole alliance,” the Estonian Head of State emphasised. “Support given to NATO member states to secure a permanent air security mission in the Baltic states serves as a type of litmus test, and it demonstrates our understanding of common interests.”

Liam Fox, who is the first British Secretary of State for Defence to visit Estonia in nine years, acknowledged the professionalism and valour of Estonia’s Defence Force members in the NATO-led mission to Afghanistan, where Estonian and British servicemen are working side by side in the southern part of the country.

“Helping Afghanistan as a country to stand on its own feet and handing responsibility for security over to Kabul is a clear and explicit objective for both NATO member states and partner countries,” told President Ilves. “An Afghanistan that is successful and peaceful both inside and outside combined with a stable Pakistan shall ensure security and safety within both their own immediate region, and on a much wider scale.”

The Estonian Head of State described as very important Britain’s wish for co-operation and joint ventures with the NATO Centre of Excellence for Co-operative Cyber Defence, and in particular the Cyber Defence League.

“We have made a proposal, within a NATO context, to bring NATO’s Allied Command Transformation’s (ACT) Cyber Defence Department to Estonia,” President Ilves explained.

President Ilves met with British Secretary of State for Defence

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When speaking of the situation in Libya, the Estonian Head of State and the British Secretary of State for Defence considered the smooth transition towards the building of a democratic and stable society to be of primary importance.

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