

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me begin with a quote:

We had hoped that the method of international agreement would be allowed to work; but it has not been allowed to work, and so what should have been a great experiment in postwar international collaboration has only been a continuing source of friction and bother.

Thus spoke British Labourite Foreign Secretary and former Labour Union leader Ernest Bevin, on January 22 1948 in the House of Commons – in a speech in which he insisted that the democracies of the West organize in order to protect themselves. This, if you know your history, was the beginning of NATO. Soviet bullying, seen in Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary and other Central European states – and in Norway, which was offered a non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union, had shown that agreements were not enough, because agreements were not respected. In other words, the failure of the Post-War settlement less than three years after the end of World War II led a left-wing government to begin pushing for a trans-Atlantic link that would come into being a year later. But I am not going to talk about NATO, but rather the collapse of the Post-War collective agreements upon which security in Europe has been based.

For today, we again see that international agreements no longer hold. The Anschluss of Crimea, what is currently taking place in Ukraine now; already what happened in Georgia in 2008 shows that that Helsinki Final Act of 1975 stating that state borders cannot be changed by force, is no longer valid. Today, again, when one member withdraws, from the agreement, we must rethink the security architecture of Europe.

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Aside from the internal market, the intellectual foundation of the European Union rest on Immanuel Kant's essay "Perpetual Peace" (1795). Kant believed in what has two centuries later become our dominant foreign policy mantra: republics – that is today, democratic states based on the rule of law – that form a federation, do not wage war on each other. That is basically

what the EU is about. The European Union has, since its origins in the Coal and Steel Community in 1951, amply proved Kant's thinking to be correct. What we have not dealt with, however, is what to do with countries outside federated democracies, especially when they behave badly.

By and large, we have extrapolated from Kant and the experiences of the Union to believe that tied to a latticework of agreements, countries will not engage in aggression.

25 years ago when I read Francis Fukuyama's National Interest essay "The End of History?", a general optimism reigned in our belief in the inevitable and Hegelian victory of liberal democracy.

From 1991 on, the fundamental assumption in the European Union – but also in NATO – was that post-cold-war Europe is also post-modernist: forever free of the evils of 19th and 20th century history and thinking. The idea of spheres of influence was mercifully dead and buried – and we thought, forever.

Yet suddenly we find that the rules that we assumed would apply from now on, at least in Europe where history had ended – do not apply.

So, what are these fundamentals that we based our thinking on?

First, the UN Charter from 1945, which outlaws aggression, by stating that Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat or the use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state.

Secondly, the Helsinki Final Act signed right here in Helsinki 1975, which states:

The participating States will:

- refrain from use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any State.
- regard as inviolable all one another's frontiers as well as the frontiers of all States in Europe.
- will respect the territorial integrity of each of the participating States.
- will likewise refrain from making each other's territory the object of military occupation. No such occupation or acquisition will be recognized as legal.

Then there's the 1990 CSCE CHARTER OF PARIS FOR A NEW EUROPE in which the signatories of all the then members "fully recognize the freedom of States to choose their own security arrangements".

Recall that it was Ukraine's desire to sign an Association Agreement, not even a "security arrangement" that led to the country's dismemberment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are living in a new security environment. Not only have these core agreements of European security been thrown out, we see the return of even older, even long discredited ideas such as the 1938 Sudetenland-argument, where the ethnicity of "compatriots" abroad is used as a justification to annex territory. Combined with that we've seen "instant passports" handed out en masse, turning citizenship into a tool of aggression; we see the ethnicization of nations and Russian-backed war-lordism creating chaos in Eastern Ukraine – which is a country right on the border of the European Union.

In this radically new situation, Europe is still looking for answers – or failing to agree on what those might be. We, as the EU, still do not quite know how to react. What Europe should realize, however, is that once the rules of the Helsinki accords no longer hold in relation with just one signatory, the situation has changed for all of Europe.

This is not an East European issue. Ukraine is not a "faraway country we know nothing about". The skepticism in our region about authoritarian Russia can no longer be dismissed as the "East Europeans suffering from Post-traumatic Stress Syndrome". As Jonathan Eyal of RUSI,

the UK military think tank, recently wrote in Financial Times: "We spent 20 years telling the Eastern Europeans that they were paranoid, living in the past, that they should treat Russia as a normal country. Now it turns out they were right."

There are things we in Europe can do. We need to make it clear that not everything is for sale. Paradoxically, we had more genuine economic interdependency with the Soviets during the Cold War, when trade was plainly divorced from politics. One side had the cash, the other side the gas but it was understood we would not sell our principles.

During the past decades, however, oil and gas have become tools of policy, while European politicians at the highest levels have made political and economic decisions for which they were later amply rewarded financially. It is time for Europe to reconsider its pragmatist, often ethically dubious gas-fueled relations with Moscow. And to invest in energy security.

Since much of the money that has supported aggression has come from corrupt sources, we also must get serious about money laundering. Oligarchs and corrupt rulers should not feel safe keeping their money and assets in European banks. The United States Congress already in 1977 passed the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act which made its citizens criminally liable for paying bribes abroad. Knowing what we know about Russia's place in the Transparency International corruption list: 127. out of 177, behind Mali, Nicaragua and Pakistan and sharing its spot with Bangladesh, I think we can be sure that our own companies have not been immune.

Those who insist on looking at the costs incurred by sanctioning Russia for its aggression – and we see so many saying "we cannot afford those sanctions" –, fail to take into account the costs of not stopping it. For the costs may turn out to be far beyond what we can imagine. Do we believe the Ukrainians will accept an authoritarian occupation or the kind of repression and lawlessness we already see in Crimea and Eastern Ukraine? Are we ready for the waves of refugees from a country on the EU's border attacked by a foreign power? If the failure of the West in Bosnia-Herzegovina, a country of 4.5 million, some 20 years ago resulted in 2 million refugees across Europe and some 200 thousand plus refugees in Sweden alone, then what will be the effect of a mass exodus from Ukraine, with a population of 44 (sorry, now, 42) million Ukrainians? Recall as well Europe's geography. You are not dealing with the Mediterranean and North Africans coming in old boats. Ukraine borders directly on four EU member states: Poland, Slovakia, Hungary and Romania. They would not have to cross the Mediterranean in old boats and in small numbers. They will drive across the borders, or take a bus, or maybe they will walk. And they will have the right to protection. Can we imagine several million Europeans in refugee camps in Europe in 2014? Can we imagine the cost of that for the EU?

Ladies and Gentlemen,

In hard times, small countries should not be alone. Luckily, we are not. First of all we are all members of the EU. But here, in the region, there is more that unites us. And could be even more.

I've written years ago that we, countries and nations around the Baltic sea and especially along its Northern rim, are deeply connected and tied to one another, in spite of our different historical fates, and have been for a long, long time, reaching back to a period long before written history. Many things, from different versions of the word "joulu" to mark the winter solstice holiday since ancient times to the high level of ICT-use and the low level of corruption, are characteristic of much of the area and especially the Northern rim.

Since 2004, the Baltic Sea has been almost an inner lake of the EU. It was this realization that led Alexander Stubb and me to propose in the European Parliament a special programme to recognize this feature and to promote deeper EU integration of the Littoral States of the Baltic. During the 2009 Swedish Presidency this proposal was adopted as the first macro-regional program of the EU. Our code word for the project back then was Mare Nostrum.

The Romans called the Mediterranean their sea, Mare Nostrum. The Baltic sea is our Mare Nostrum. It is almost an internal sea of the European Union. It could be also our own security home, if we think about other organizations.

We, the two neighbours on the coasts of the smaller Mare Nostrum, the Gulf of Finland, both have bitter experiences of what it means to be small and neutral in a world that follows realpolitik. But in spite of some claims to the contrary, none of us has ever been entirely alone. Finns have helped Estonians back in our independence war, and Estonians have helped the Finns, even when almost no one else did. We in Estonia remain always grateful to our grandfathers, the ones in JR 200 (Finnish Infantry Regiment 200 or soomepoisid) for what they did to protect freedom in our region.

And the Estonians were generously rewarded in the early 1990s, when we were rebuilding our military from nothing. Finns helped establish the Estonian artillery; our cadets were trained in the Finnish Cadet school – thus Finland turned around the JR 200 motto to its new version: "for Estonian freedom and Finnish honor".

And we always remain grateful to the countless individual Finns who helped our people to get through the occupation and to get back up on our feet after it ended – by little gestures, personal friendships, gifts and donations, smuggled books and records, by lobbying behind the political scenes and helping us to set up businesses and do business in honest and transparent ways; by telling us your stories and by being interested in ours.

All of that has helped us to get to where we are today, which is far different from where we were 20 years ago. And in spite of some different choices we remain close friends and allies, now as states as well as peoples.

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As for institutional arrangements, Estonia had a clear goal after restoring its independence: to become a state that is democratic and liberal, and a member of the EU and also of NATO – a goal that, if we look at the post-cold war world, was hardly as self-evident as it seems today, looking back in retrospect. Alternative choices, as we have seen, abounded. That today we can appeal to common democratic values – freedom of speech, expression and association, the supremacy of law and justice, human rights – is unfortunately rather an exception than the norm in the nations that came out of communism 23 years ago. So much for the End of History.

For us, emphasizing those values has not really been an antithesis to pragmatism. In today's foreign and security policy environment, the antithesis to value-based foreign policy is realism, Realpolitik
, that defines the limits to which we can appeal to values, to international law and to justice.

For us, joining the European Union and NATO was a solution to the dilemma that all small states have to face: how to survive among the strong.

The problem is that with those who are not tied to our value system, the Kantian solution of perpetual peace simply does not work. When we deal with countries that recognize neither the rules nor the norms of international behaviour, then all that counts is military force and power. In short: might makes right.

For those of you who have read your history and philosophy, here is nothing new in this dilemma. To the contrary, throughout history this has been the norm. The second history known to Western culture, Thucydides' Peloponnesian Wars (431 B.C.) in the chapter known as the Melian Dialogues, describes what happens to the weak and small when the rules don't apply:

Melos, an island that had declared its neutrality in the Peloponnesian War, was approached by the Athenians, who wanted the Melians to submit to them. The Melians asked for negotiations to maintain their neutrality. The Athenians answered that they had a right to rule simply due to their superior force. That "the strong do what they can and the weak do what they must".

In the end, as we recall, the Athenians offer the Melians a choice faced by too many small nations of Europe: submitting you will avoid the worst and remain alive. The Melians decide, however, not to give in to pressure, the Athenians kill all the Melian men and enslave all the Melian women and children.

We in small countries of Europe no longer want to face a Melian situation. We see NATO, at least in Estonia, as anti-Thucydides: an alliance where the small do what they can and the large do what they must.

I am far from wanting to give advice to our friends about their solutions. We can only share what we know of ours – now with ten years' experience.

NATO was founded after WW II when some Europeans, watching what was happening in Central and Eastern Europe, decided that Western democracies needed to stick together to protect themselves against lawlessness and aggression. People tend to forget that the initiative in fact came from Europe; from left-wing European governments who realized they needed better protection than they had. Even president Paasikivi noted that Czechoslovakia 1948 "opened the eyes of the world".

At the time the then isolationist US was initially reluctant to have a role in Europe's defense. Max Jakobson has written that Stalin told Zhdanov in January 1948 that they'd failed to occupy Finland because they'd overestimated the importance of the US presence. It was Europeans, then, who wanted the US around, to feel safer.

So NATO was created as a reaction to what was happening to Europe. It began with Western European democracies coming together to implement projects for greater military cooperation and collective defence. In the end, it was determined that only a truly transatlantic security agreement could deter Soviet aggression while preventing the revival of European militarism.

The North Atlantic Treaty was signed on 4 April, 1949 – we just celebrated the 65th anniversary a month ago. In the Treaty's renowned Article 5, the new Allies agreed "an armed attack against one or more of them... shall be considered an attack against them all" and that following such an attack, each Ally would take "such action as it deems necessary, including the use of armed force" in response.

But while the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty had created Allies, it had not created a military structure that could effectively coordinate their actions. This changed when growing worries about Soviet intentions culminated in the Soviet detonation of an atomic bomb in 1949 and with the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950.

NATO was little more than a political association until the Korean War galvanized the organization's member states, and an integrated military structure was built up under the direction of two U.S. supreme commanders – thus adding the O, the Organization, to what was up to then the North Atlantic Treaty. That was how the Alliance became what it is today.

Associated with this is a number of myths that I read once in a while.

If the fear of Soviet aggression in Eastern Europe made democracies reorder their security architecture after WW II, then today, the fear caused by the events in Ukraine has triggered discussions on the need to rethink security cooperation between democracies again. Especially here, in Finland and Sweden.

Naturally we in Estonia follow these debates with great interest. While some have chosen to throw out the CSCE Paris Charter, I most certainly think each country retains the right to choose its own security arrangements and membership, and therefore I respect every country's decision about what arrangements they make. That said, I must also add that I notice that some wide-spread assumptions about security arrangements that our experience does not confirm, still hold strong.

There is, first of all, a strong skepticism about whether the alliance really helps its members. At the same time, many believe that the EU is enough of a security guarantee for its members.

The origins of what turned into the European Solidarity Clause in today's EU Lisbon Treaty go back to the 1954 Brussels Treaty that established the Western European Union (WEU). Indeed, the commitment to mutual defence, should any of its signatories be subject to armed attack in Europe, constituted the cornerstone of the WEU.

But eventually, due to the transfer of security and defence policy to the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and to the European (now, Common) Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), the institutional structure of the WEU was dissolved in 2009. After numerous attempts to do something, the obligation that was in WEU treaty was brought into the Lisbon Treaty under Article 42(7).

Another article in the Lisbon Treaty, Art. 222 extends mutual commitment beyond the traditional concept of armed attack and territorial defence, to encompass "terrorist threats" and "natural or manmade disasters". This clause is rooted in the post 9/11 security context.

The precise meaning of the demands upon EU members, and their implications for EU institutions and member states, have yet to be fully assessed. But we can see that the Common Defence and Security Policy has fallen short of its early ambitions. In the 10 years since the concept of the European Union's Battle groups was adopted, they haven't been used in practice. Can anyone tell how long it'd take for "Europe's Rapid reaction forces" to get ready?

This is the fundamental difference between the EU solidarity Clause and NATO's collective

security commitment. NATO's core task is to protect and defend its Allies. Since the beginning of the crisis in Ukraine, NATO has emphasized its commitment in this regard. Our defence plans will be again reviewed and reinforced. This sends a clear message: NATO will protect every Ally and defend all of the Allied territory, whereas when it comes to the EU, there is no organization, there are no contingency plans, there is no military command structure.

Regarding another myth I've noticed, there certainly has not been any pressure on us, as I occasionally read here, to give up our conscription army – after all we've been in NATO for ten years, and we still have it and intend to keep it. We think it's the ideal solution. We do not have any nuclear weapons on our territory. Some people are concerned that NATO membership might irritate Russia. My question then is, how did Ukraine irritate it? It wasn't applying for NATO membership. On the other hand, does anyone doubt that we are in a worse position today, after what we've seen in Ukraine, being members of NATO, than we'd be not being members of NATO?

People fear that NATO membership might force member states to participate in foreign operations far away that they have no stake in. But the Alliance cannot force members to make decisions they do not agree with. All NATO decisions are made by consensus, after discussion and consultation among the allied members. A decision reached by consensus is an agreement accepted by each member country.

Those who fear that NATO is too much an American project, should recall again that it was created as a European initiative, because European states felt insecure in a situation where agreements proved to be empty without the backup of sheer force. Today, 22 of EU member states are also members of NATO, and 95% of citizens of the European Union live in a NATO country, under the protection of article 5.

We also still often hear, as a gut reaction reminiscent of the Cold War, that pro-Western foreign policy is "right-wing" while inclination toward the East has been the territory of certain fractions of the European Left. If you look at the world today, and especially at Europe, we really need a serious re-evaluation of "left" and "right" certainly in this context, or even more, of what can be labeled "fascist" and what not.

It may be ironic that NATO, an alliance of democracies initiated by European pro-democratic socialists and soon to be led by a Scandinavian social democrat, is still seen as a "right-wing" foreign policy choice. But beyond left or right, the allied West sticks to its fundamental values:

democracy, rule of law, respect for human rights.

Now, faced with a power that increasingly defines itself through ethnic nationalism, religious conservatism and political autocracy; that is increasingly militarist and militant, openly aggressive toward some and more subtly intimidating toward others of its neighbours; a power that tolerates and encourages homophobia, demonizes selected ethnic groups as "others", stifles free speech and uses militant nationalist rhetoric to appeal to the darkest side of human nature of its own people in the name of "patriotism", I would submit that we are surely not dealing with a "left-wing" opponent even in theory.

No wonder then that increasingly those in Europe who understand and excuse the aggressor in the East are in themselves the extreme right-wing anti-liberal parties that also like to appeal to homophobia, xenophobia, so-called "traditional" values and anti-European rhetoric. The likes of the French Front National, British National Party, the Freedom Party in the Netherlands, the Golden Dawn in Greece or Jobbik in Hungary. They are the people who currently support the actions of the Kremlin, they are the ones who went to observe the so-called referendum in Crimea.

With those moods on the rise in post-crisis Europe, with the security structure we knew blown to pieces and with the aggression in Ukraine still going on, we need more than ever to remind ourselves of the values that Europe and the Euro-Atlantic community stand for, the values held in especially high esteem up here among our friends in the North of Europe. Respect for the individual, open and tolerant society.

None of that is self-evident although we may have been lulled into believing so after the end of the Cold War. We now see that we must be prepared to actively defend the values we believe in. As said, we still have not quite figured out how we, after decades of living in a dream of perpetual peace that is also a prison of our illusions, will react to the current situation.

In closing, I can just say: We can only hope that Europe will not respond to the collapse of the Helsinki Act with a turn to the Stockholm syndrome.