

I am happy yet somewhat wistful addressing I guess for the tenth and last time the Lennart Meri Conference, hardly presumptuous enough to echo Dean Acheson claiming "Present at the Creation" but certainly feeling like a midwife to one of the more successful non-digital developments in this country in the past decade, the Lennart Meri Conference. When I look back on the past ten years, and, as this year we commemorate 25 years since Estonia re-established its independence, also the long road from "Former Soviet Republic" to E-Estonia, I must confess I am less optimistic than at any time in either time span.

When Kadri Liik first organized this conference, it was a genuine gush of fresh air in this part of the world, where high level conferences were a rarity, organized by people from elsewhere. But the world of 2007, this conference and what we then discussed was an altogether different era. That was the generally optimistic world before the financial crisis, before discussions of Grexit; before the invasion of Georgia, the Arab Spring, Bolotnaya, Maidan and the Anschluss of Crimea, before the migration crisis and the reaction to it among member states; before the rise of populism and serious talk of the UK leaving the EU. Through the years at LMC Boris Nemtsov was a frequent panelist. So was Andrei Sannikov, who would later languish in Lukashenko's prison.

In the intervening ten years... dare I echo W.H. Auden and call it a "low, dishonest decade?" – we have not only lost the optimism of Europe East and West, just 2 years after the accession of Eastern Europe to the European Union, and the inclusion of the Baltic countries in NATO, we also have lost the underpinnings of that optimism, its foundational core. We have discovered that the post-war foundations of security – the UN Charter, the Helsinki Final Act and the Paris Charter can be violated. And some ask if we shouldn't go back to business as usual. If during the Cold War, at least after 1962, threats to use nuclear weapons were no longer *il faut*, then today, they are part of the discourse, as it were and in our own Northern Europe, not just in the bizarre huffing and puffing of North Korea but with simulated nuclear strikes on such targets as Warsaw, Stockholm and Denmark's Bornholm island. We see saber-rattling, we witness an ongoing war in Europe itself, where it takes the Foreign Affairs Council a year to go beyond grave concern and talk about Russian troops in Ukraine. At home, we see the possible collapse of the Schengen area.

What we – meaning the countries that had just finished a difficult 15 year odyssey to rejoin Europe – hoped for was a new normality, that is to say, to be participants the norms of behaviour, be they in foreign affairs or security or in following the rules of government fiscal policy. Yet no sooner did we join than the world around us began to unravel. And not because of us.

Of course, thank the heavens that we did join when we did. Thank the heavens that we did all the work that it took to be accepted. We need only to look at those who failed to undertake the necessary reforms, and who for whatever reasons did not push themselves to reform enough to join the liberal democratic fold. Neither in the EU nor NATO, they live in a Hobbesian world.

While few will say so publicly (though some do), the Fukuyaman quarter-century is drawing to a whimpering close. It is no longer about the victory of liberal democracy, it is a scramble to protect it both abroad and at home. Enlargement, though not dead in the water, say some, is barely afloat. But NATO at least is back to protecting its own. Back in area, back in business. The Peace Dividend is spent, indeed we borrowed off it more than necessary and now countries have to recapitalize.

From a strictly national point of view, Estonia has done rather well. As with this conference, the country is serious. Serious about its defense and its commitment to NATO's 2 percent. Its finances are sound, corruption is low, we enjoy the Euro, a free press, freer than many countries of so-called Old Europe and even the Commission concludes that we have a more developed e-governance system than any other member state. In short, despite or perhaps even because of our own domestic whining about our inadequacies, the country has become a genuine country, something even some of our neighbours doubted 20 years ago when I became foreign minister.

And yet Estonia does not stand alone. Our worries are no longer just our own worries, our worries include Europe's worries. While we are among those nations that have agreed to the Commission's numbers for taking refugees and continue to do so apace, while we willingly participate in the various operations of both the EU and NATO to maintain our European borders, it is because we realize full well that Europe's fate is our fate and that we rise or fall with the institutions and treaties that were created to keep Europe free and democratic...

Yet everywhere we in Europe turn, there seems to be another intractable crisis. Blame is ascribed to everyone, usually everyone else. This "new normal" that we are in, from an aggressive revanchist Russia to the migration crisis, horrific terrorism in Brussels and Paris, right and left-wing populism and the crumbling of solidarity requires us to stop whining and do something.

We ourselves must be better. Meaning our own leaders and politicians, both in government and in opposition. A simple catalogue of issues I gave above should give us enough pause to realize those who want a secure safe liberal democratic Europe must pull together. And voters must as well, and realize the seriousness of what we face when they make their electoral decision. Extremist parties and politicians exploit the current refugee crisis, like they exploited the economic crisis, they exploit the dissatisfaction of voters with the often anodyne and milquetoast resolve of European leaders. Citizens await decisive responses to crises. When traditional parties do not provide them, they look for those whose rhetoric sounds decisive yet carries within it the "decisiveness" of reaction, of simple, often un-European solutions the Union was created to rid Europe of forever.

We need leaders to lead. If every principled decision is watered down by the latest poll, that is not leadership, that is holding on your seat.

A Europe where someone else is always to blame, a Europe that looks first at where one can make a quick euro in a shady deal with an authoritarian regime and only then at international law, as we see in the ongoing sanctions discussion, a Europe that doesn't take its defense seriously enough to pay for it or refuses to help other EU members overwhelmed by refugees, is not a Europe that will last for long. This is a Europe that many on the far right and far left, however, want. For they know well, it is the end of Europe. And a return to the might makes right mindset of the 1930s. In that Europe everyone will lose, but first the small.

This is why, Ladies and Gentleman, we must not adjust to the "new normal". We must not allow it to become the baseline. But this requires also that we do more than has been the case with the old normal. Inter alia, this means:

We must admit that our current level of funding to deal with the migration crisis is inadequate. UNRRA, the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Agency spent between 1945 and 1947 the equivalent of 50 billion 2015 Euros on the post-war refugee crisis.

Europe needs dramatically to up defense expenditure to deal with threats we thought long gone.

We need to get over Europe's orientalism that Edward Said used to describe attitudes toward the Middle East but persists to this day in attitudes toward those so-called "Eastern Members".

For 20 years the eastern Europeans were said to be "paranoid. Now, however, what was long considered to be the "Eastern factor" in EU-RU relations, has become "the new normal".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our Europe, our liberal democratic West, is a very different place from what it was a decade ago. We know whence we started but we must think harder how to shape it. If we don't it will be shaped by an anti-Enlightenment movement of authoritarians with little concern for democratic legitimacy. This will require us to be pro- not re-active. Much of what the West faces today, from Russian aggression to the migration crisis was foreseeable. We simply chose to ignore the signs.

While I haven't gotten into it here, we need also to end our provincial protectionism and luddite approach to the economies and technologies of the the 21st Century. If not even rising democracies like India will overtake us.

At the minimum, we must create a future that is rules-based. Not only for aggression or trade, but for ourselves. If any single moment defines for me the beginning of our decline it was the 2003 decision that the Stability and Growth Pact applied only to some. Quod licet Iovi non licet Bovi is no way to run a Union.

A rules-based order means we do not allow those who have violated the rules to determine what they will be. Commentary is fine but just as dialogue is not a policy, giving the aggressor a say in defining aggression is to throw out the rules.

The upcoming NATO summit will be one opportunity to begin to address these issues. It will be a sign of the new times, when we will redefine Western security to deal more appropriately with the sea-change in we have witnessed in this realm, admitting that the current and foreseeable security environment of 1997 in twenty years has changed beyond recognition.

The EU too will have to overcome the divisiveness caused by the migration crisis. For one, we need to tone down the rhetoric. Realize that NIMBY is not a policy. And finally come up with a solution that leaves no one unfairly burdened. That will not be an easy task. Yet it is vital to ensure we will not have smouldering resentments within the West in the future.

So, Ladies and Gentlemen, I hope this year the Lennart Meri Conference will not only delineate and adumbrate the problems we face, something participants have done for years with particular perspicacity. Those issues we already know. I hope that out of this conference we at least start drawing the outlines of a Prolegomenon for a future Europe, again whole, free and at peace.