

Dear Jaap, dear friends,

It is an honour for me personally as well as for my country to be able to welcome all of you, distinguished guests, in our capital Tallinn.

Recently, we have been able to observe that the future of Europe's security architecture is again a topic of discussion, both within NATO as well as more broadly. This is all the more true as recent events in Georgia have seriously undermined the fundamental understanding of European security upon which any decisions must rest, and negatively affected our common sense of security. Moreover it is once again clear that Europe must invest in its security; the consequences of not doing so may be grave.

It is our understanding, here in Estonia at least, that Europe's security must continue to be underpinned by the principles of rule of law, freedom, democracy and human rights. A security arrangement that does not take these values as its basis, will in my opinion, fail. For what it is that we shall be called on to defend if not values? Yes, every country will defend itself, even North Korea. But we who live in democracies with governments accountable to our electorates and to the law can legitimately only be called upon to share in the defence of countries that share our values.

Unfortunately, we live in a world, indeed a Europe, where not all actors share the principles of democracy, rule of law and human rights. Some are willing to openly question and even attack them these principles. For these and other reasons, I am convinced that we need to expand the traditional concept of democratic peace.

Dear friends,

Since we have gathered here in the occasion of the meeting of the NATO – Ukraine Commission I would like to raise some issues of importance for the future of NATO.

Europe has been free and at peace first and foremost because NATO has been successful in fulfilling its role as the cornerstone of Euro-Atlantic security.

We tend to forget this. Only when the transatlantic community of rule of law based liberal democracies stands united can we secure our own liberty and advance the cause for others. If Europe is to remain free, NATO must remain the guarantor of security in the continually changing international environment. No other organisation will do this.

These and other reasons force us to return to viewing NATO as our primary source of security, a view that here and elsewhere had begun to fade after the "Out of area or out of business" debate of a decade ago, when we thought that Europe at least had entered an era of Kantian Perpetual Peace.

Ladies and Gentlemen:

It is not by changing NATO's tasks, but by adapting its capabilities to meet new threats that we

will be able to ensure that NATO's core task of collective defence remains credible in the face of future challenges. Clearly the challenges we face in today's globalized world are increasingly complex, multi-faceted and asymmetrical. Though this does not mean the old symmetrical challenges have withered away like Karl Marx's idea of the state.

This is why NATO must continue to transform itself. Transformation is not a change in our core task, but rather a part of it – the defense of our common security, no matter what the origin of the threat: projecting and sustaining force over long distances is important for the protection of our security, be it in or out of area. This is why Estonia remains committed to Allied Ground Surveillance, Strategic Airlift Capability and the UK/FRA helicopter initiative.

We all know that the new challenges that confront us may arise from weak as well as strong states, from sources nearby as well as far away. It is important, however, to understand that significant challenges of the future arise increasingly from the cyber world.

This is why NATO needs to transform itself not only in the realm of the physical, but also in the virtual world. A cyber attack can cause enormous damage to the functioning of society. Quite similarly to a conventional threat, we need to possess both the ways and means to deter and defend ourselves against all attackers targeting our modern, ever-increasingly digitized way of life.

We have debated and discussed the ways of deterring and defending against conventional attacks for centuries. It is urgent that we start discussing the same regarding cyber security. This is why Estonia has created a NATO Cyber Centre of Cooperative Defence and called upon all Allies to participate.

Dear Jaap,

In the second part of my speech I would like to concentrate on Ukraine as part of the transatlantic community.

It is because of the continued vitality of NATO that we are all here today. The perspective of future membership in such a vital Alliance helped Estonia regain its independence and transform itself from an occupied territory to a free and democratic country. The prospect of membership enabled us to advance and push through the reforms needed to make this country a Western liberal democracy with a military accountable to a democratically elected government. I am convinced that in order to witness an expansion of freedom and democracy in Europe we must ensure both NATO's vitality and that aspiring nations' hope for future membership remains alive.

Today's meeting is a case in point, demonstrating again that membership in NATO is attractive to European countries as important as Ukraine. A glance at Europe's map should convince even the casual observer that a secure and democratic Ukraine would in itself be a guarantor of peace and security in Europe. A country of 48 million people, situated at the strategic crossroads of Europe, Ukraine and its fate remain a litmus test for the future of Europe. Objections to NATO membership of Ukraine similarly only serve to demonstrate the country's

strategic importance to the family of liberal democracies.

A free and democratic Ukraine is a must for a major and decisive victory for democracy everywhere, especially in the Black Sea and Balkan regions. The stabilization of Europe's neighbourhood is impossible unless Ukraine remains secure and democratic. This is why support for Ukraine is so important - our own security and the fulfilment of our foreign policy goals in Europe's neighbourhood depend on the success and security of Ukraine's democracy.

Furthermore, a secure and democratic Ukraine is a clear response to those who contend that democratic freedom is not a universal possibility. We have heard too much in the past several years that democracy, rule of law and respect of fundamental freedoms such as freedom of speech and expression is some kind of relativistic concept, appropriate for some, but contingent upon one's "historical traditions". I am firmly convinced that this is false. Indeed I believe that genuine democracy in Ukraine, the home of Kievan Rus, the well-spring of Slavic Orthodoxy proves that the concept of culturally determined so-called "sovereign democracy" is false. The Ukrainians have proven that they desire freedom much like we do. It would be unacceptable to give a free hand to those that threaten Ukraine's destiny - a democratic Ukraine is a major argument for democracy itself, and this is why our stakes in Ukraine's future are so critically high.

The Crimean peninsula has emerged as a point of contention between Russia and Ukraine. Russia has intentionally been evasive about recognizing the sovereignty of Ukraine over Crimea. We should work with Russia to communicate our concern; we should also work, should it be requested, with the Government of Ukraine to provide assistance (education opportunities, investments etc.) to further integrate Crimea with the rest of Ukraine.

We should also keep in mind that Partnership initially was not just made to support reform; it included a substantial element of security dialogue and engagement. The goal was to provide the confidence needed to embark on fundamental transformations. But this part of Partnership has atrophied; aside from membership, there has been little urgent need to exercise the "security consultations" part of Partnership, given the seemingly benign regional security environment that we have faced until recently. There is a need to re-invigorate this part of the Partnership, to make it clear that the Alliance stands by its commitment a Europe "whole and free" – and will work to actively support the security of those countries that have chosen a democratic path.

Friends,

At the summit in Bucharest, NATO affirmed that Ukraine as well as Georgia will become members of NATO. I can assure you from Estonia's experience, such a perspective is an important catalyst for implementing critical democratic reforms. We are grateful for Ukraine's desire to join our Euro Atlantic community. However, it is

Ukraine that has to take the necessary steps and assure all of us that it is willing to make the required decisions.

For Estonia, the blueprint of these decisions was the Membership Action Plan – that was the

Alliance's message to us, outlining the steps that Estonia had to make, not an automatic guarantee of anything. Now, as Ukraine has to implement reforms, we must de-mystify the MAP process.

The Alliance has committed to Ukraine's membership in the Alliance, and to joining MAP. So to a certain extent we will continue to discuss MAP. But we should consider how to move beyond the current deadlock over timelines and political symbols. Perhaps one way to approach it is to acknowledge that MAP, as provided to countries like mine in 1999, is outdated. Ukraine already has an extensive toolbox that exceeds that provided by MAP in 1999. The political fetishisation of MAP, as if this process were tantamount to instant membership instead of its opposite, was unfortunate. I think we should not over-mystify an acronym and instead deal with realities in our continent.

We also need to call upon Ukraine to do more. Joining the Euro Atlantic community is a demanding task that requires domestic support and political stability. Quick succession of governments, conflict between different branches of power and the lack of a coherent message to the people of Ukraine and to the outside world on Ukraine's own aspirations inhibits the country's integration into the Euro Atlantic structures. Such a situation can be remedied only by Ukraine itself, no outsider can provide a solution.

Lack of public support remains a critical issue for further integration of Ukraine to NATO structures. It's obvious that those who oppose this integration would use low public support as their main argument against Ukraine. Although public support maybe not relevant for a programme like the Membership Action Plan or any other process short of membership, it becomes a serious obstacle in the debate concerning full membership. An effective co-operation between different branches of the government as well as civil society and the political culture of developing foreign policy consensus are needed to overcome this obstacle.

Dear friends,

It is clear that Ukraine is critical for Euro Atlantic security and vice versa. It is our mutual desire to cooperate in order to advance our common interests. This is already possible and our cooperation can and must deepen. I am sure that I may say on behalf of all Allies that Ukraine's contributions to NATO's key undertakings like ISAF and the UK/FRA helicopter initiative are more than welcome. After all, membership in NATO is not only about passively consuming security, but collectively ensuring it.

The fact that Ukraine is here today with NATO ministers of defence should convince everyone that NATO understands Ukraine's importance to European security. I can assure you that NATO remains committed to the protection of Europe's security. This is why we will never abandon democratic Ukraine – an integral pillar of the European security architecture.