

NATO is unique in the annals of history as a successful alliance. But we have to recognize that threats evolve, and threats have evolved as a consequence of what we've seen in Ukraine, but threats are also evolving in the Middle East that have a direct effect on Europe.

And to go back to what I said earlier to Ann, we know that if we are joined by the international community, we can continue to shrink ISIL's sphere of influence, its effectiveness, its financing, its military capabilities to the point where it is a manageable problem. And the question is going to be making sure we've got the right strategy, but also making sure that we've got the international will to do it. This is something that is a continuation of a problem we've seen certainly since 9/11, but before. And it continues to metastasize in different ways.

And what we've got to do is make sure that we are organizing the Arab world, the Middle East, the Muslim world along with the international community to isolate this cancer, this particular brand of extremism that is, first and foremost, destructive to the Muslim world and the Arab world and North Africa, and the people who live there. They're the ones who are most severely affected. They're the ones who are constantly under threat of being killed. They're the ones whose economies are completely upended to the point where they can't produce their own food and they can't produce

the kinds of goods and services to sell in the world marketplace. And they're falling behind because of this very small and narrow, but very dangerous, segment of the population. And we've got to combat it in a sustained, effective way. And I'm confident we're going to be able to do that. All right?

Thank you very much. I appreciate it, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:59 a.m. at the Bank of Estonia. In his remarks, the President referred to Juulia Kristine Ilves, daughter of President Ilves; musician Bruce Springsteen; Prime Minister Taavi Roivas of Estonia; President Andris Berzins of Latvia; President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania; Steven Sotloff, a freelance journalist killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization in Syria on September 2, his parents Shirley and Arthur Sotloff, and his sister Lauren Sotloff; James W. Foley, a freelance journalist killed by members of ISIL on August 19; and former Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates. President Ilves referred to the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS), an alternative designation for ISIL; and the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). A reporter referred to Prime Minister David Cameron of the United Kingdom.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With President Toomas Hendrik Ilves of Estonia, President Dalia Grybauskaite of Lithuania, and President Andris Berzins of Latvia in Tallinn

*September 3, 2014*

*President Ilves.* Let me just say that it has been a genuine honor and pleasure to host this multilateral meeting of President Obama, President Grybauskaite, and President Berzins here in Tallinn today, a day before the NATO summit. American engagement in our region's security runs deep. Twenty years ago, Russian troops left the Baltic States. Ten years ago, Russian troops left—we joined NATO. And we've all—we've reached all of those his-

toric milestones thanks to very strong U.S. support and leadership.

Our defense and security cooperation is extremely close. We appreciate the immediate steps that the United States has taken to demonstrate solidarity with our three countries, with Poland and Romania. In the past months, we have seen an increased U.S. air, ground, and naval presence in our region as well as an enhancement of scheduled exercises.

The four of us share a common vision and goals for the upcoming NATO summit. We face a completely new security situation in Europe, and we're pleased that this is reflected in many of the summit's documents. We expect the summit to adopt the readiness action plan that will guide allied nations for years to come through a set of practical steps and measures of reassurance and deterrence.

We expect it to provide a solid framework for allies to contribute to a stronger NATO presence on its eastern border. Maintaining a persistent presence in this region should include, among other things, increasing the readiness of the Multinational Corps Northeast in Poland and giving it more responsibilities for matters of collective defense. This would help facilitate NATO's rapid reaction in our region and bolster security on NATO's periphery.

A good part of our discussion today obviously focused on Ukraine. We need to think about what more can be done to support this country. Estonia has doubled its humanitarian and development assistance and is looking for ways to do more, including assisting wounded soldiers from Ukraine here in our rehabilitation center. But we should not also—we should not forget about the other so-called Eastern Partnership countries—countries. Countries like Georgia and Moldova should not be left on their own as we focus on Ukraine. They must have the right to make their own decisions, their own security arrangements and alliances. Continued U.S. support for these countries' engagement in the region is of vital importance.

We also believe in maintaining a strong transatlantic link in other areas, such as cyber and energy security. But over the year—the past year, our cooperation on cyber issues has strengthened and now covers many areas on both civilian and military levels. I keep no tally of cyber attacks, hacks, and espionage, but it is absolutely clear that cybersecurity has become a concern for all of us to a degree we have never seen before, a domain of warfare in the same category as land, sea, and air.

There is no doubt that the security architecture here in Europe has changed in the past year and, alas, not for the better. How it will

look in a year is difficult to predict given the unpredictability of so many of the actions we have seen. But I can confidently predict that whatever the future does hold, the Baltic countries and the United States are working together globally to promote our common values: democracy, human rights, rule of law, freedom, and especially, Internet freedom.

Thank you.

*President Grybauskaitė.* So we had important meeting because we do have in our region today American President, and this means a lot not only for our region and security of our region, but a signal before the summit, NATO summit, for all Europe.

Today, what's happening on Ukraine's soil—the open aggression from Russian side against sovereign country—means that the recent attack, not only against Ukraine, it is an attack against the peace and borders of Europe after Second World War.

Why? Today, Ukraine is fighting not only for its own freedom, but it's fighting instead of us, for us. So why it is so important our full pledge to support Ukrainian sovereignty, support of the fight against aggression? And of course, we need to think about further improvement of security in our region. And we appreciate all the United States bilateral commitments and NATO's commitments for our region, for the NATO members, and article 5 commitments.

Why today standing here? We very clearly know what we want from NATO summit tomorrow, what kind of measures improving our security we ask for: an updated standing defense plans, additional NATO and U.S. presence in our region, rapid reaction force, and other measures necessary to improve and secure our region's security.

So today and tomorrow, we are talking and solving the future peace and security of Europe. Why? Our responsibility lies on our shoulders, not only thinking about our region, about our countries, but also about Ukraine.

Ukraine today is in frontline for all of us, and we need to take this very seriously and responsibly, helping Ukraine in every measure available in our hands.

*President Berzins.* Thank you, President Ilves, for the warm welcome. President Obama, welcome to the Baltics. At the beginning, I condemn the killing of American Steven Sotloff and express my condolences for—to his family and friends. We express our support and solidarity with the U.S. in the fight with terrorists in Iraq and elsewhere.

Today's meeting proves a strategic partnership of the Baltic States and the United States. Last year, we met at the White House. This meeting should be continued not less than annually. Security cooperation based on shared values is a foundation of our relations.

I thank President Obama for the American leadership. Your support, the European reinforcement initiative is very important for our region's security. I'm confident that the U.S. Congress will pass it without delay. I commend the U.S. in providing troop presence in the Baltic region. We would like to see the U.S. troops and equipment in Latvia as long as necessary. We support U.S. efforts to consolidate firm international response against Russia's invasion in Ukraine. We must realize that to stop further aggression, solidarity in speaking with one voice is a key.

Today we discussed the NATO Wales summit. The summit will need a clear message about reinforcing collective defense. We'll accept complete measures to ensure troop presence, infrastructure, and command structure in the Baltic region.

Transatlantic relations and the U.S. presence in Europe is crucial for the Euro-Atlantic security. Europe too has to invest more in defense. Latvia will increase defense spending to 2 percent of GDP by 2020. The Parliament of Latvia has passed a special law on it. Answering the challenge of information war, Latvia will host the NATO Center of Excellence for Strategic Communication.

During the summit, we will discuss what NATO can do together to eradicate the greatest source of terrorism in the Middle East: militant fighters of the Islamic State.

Together, we go ahead with the Baltic-U.S. cybersecurity partnership that we started last year in Washington. We reaffirm our commit-

ment to the strategic Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership negotiations. We need to work as fast as possible to enable the signing of this agreement.

We wish to develop a real transatlantic bond between Europe and the U.S. on energy. Recent developments in Ukraine are the further proof of the urgency to reduce dependency on one supplier. Thereby, the U.S. involvement is very important for our efforts to make strong energy security and develop integrated energy markets in the region. I would also benefit—it would also benefit both the European and American economic interests.

I'd like to convey my gratitude to our friends and partners for the significant contribution and support in opening the OECD membership talks with Latvia. The Baltic States and the U.S. have a shared interest in supporting economic development and good governance in the EU Eastern Partnership countries and in Central Asia. This will be main priority during Latvia's Presidency in the Council of the EU next year.

Finally, I would like to stress that the Baltic States and the U.S. are natural partners bound by a shared belief in democratic governance, the rule of law, and respect for human rights and civil liberties.

Thank you.

*President Obama.* Well, good afternoon, everybody. I am the final speaker, so I will be brief.

I want to thank President Ilves for hosting us today, especially in these magnificent surroundings, which speak to the long and diverse history of this country and the endurance of the Estonian people. And I want to thank my colleagues, Dalia and Andris, for coming here for this important meeting.

As has been indicated already, we last met as a group a year ago, and I was pleased to host our three Baltic allies at the White House. The four of us spoke more recently to discuss the situation in Ukraine. And my main message today is the same as it was last year at the White House: The Baltic nations are among our most reliable allies in NATO, and the commitment

of the United States to their security is rock solid.

More recently, we've demonstrated our commitment to the additional American aircraft that have joined NATO's Baltic air patrols, and we've demonstrated our commitment in the additional training exercises that our forces are now conducting. And we've demonstrated our commitment to the additional American forces that are now continuously rotating through Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. So here in the Baltics, the United States has stepped up its presence.

And we are working to do even more. As I announced earlier, the initiative I've proposed to bolster the American military presence in Europe would include additional Air Force units and aircraft for training exercises here in the Nordic-Baltic region, with all three of these allies. And the NATO summit in Wales will be an opportunity to bring the alliance together around a plan to enhance our readiness even further, including infrastructure and facilities here in the Baltics capable of handling rapid reinforcements.

So the bottom line is this: As NATO allies, we will meet our solemn duty, our article 5 ob-

ligation to our collective defense. And today I want every Estonian and Latvian and Lithuanian to know that you will never stand alone.

I want to thank all of these leaders for coming here today. I'd close with this observation. Nearly a hundred years ago, the United States recognized the independence of the Baltic nations. And for 50 years, you've endured a brutal Soviet occupation. In all those years, the United States never recognized that illegal occupation. All those years—even as your flags of independence were often banned here at home—your Embassies stayed open in the United States, and your flags flew proudly alongside ours. They always will. Because the United States intends to always stand with you.

So thank you very much, everybody. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:22 p.m. in the Kadriorg Art Museum. In his remarks, President Berzins referred to Steven Sotloff, a freelance journalist who was killed by members of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) terrorist organization in Syria on September 2.

## Remarks at Nordea Concert Hall in Tallinn September 3, 2014

Thank you. Thank you so much. Hello, Estonia! *Tere, Eesti!* Thank you, Oskar, for your wonderful introduction and for representing the talent and the energy and the optimism of today's Estonia, especially its young people. And Oskar is sitting next to his father, and his father and I agree that we're getting gray, so we have to make sure that somebody is coming up behind us. Please give Oskar a big round of applause for the great job that he did.

To President Ilves and distinguished guests, to the people of Estonia: It is a great pleasure to be with you in this historic city, in this beautiful land. I thank you for the incredible hospitality that you've shown me today. I understand the weather is always like this. [*Laughter*] My only regret is that I missed this summer's Laulupidu. And I'll try to come back next

time and catch it. I bring with me the friendship of the American people, and I am honored to be the first President of the United States to deliver an address like this to the people of Estonia.

I just had the opportunity to meet once again with the Presidents of all the Baltic States, and I thank the President of Latvia and Lithuania for being here. We're joined by friends from throughout the region. And I want to say a special welcome to everyone watching this out in Freedom Square. And I'm especially pleased to see so many young people here today. Because, like Oskar, you are fulfilling the dream that your parents and grandparents struggled for, but could only imagine, and that is, living your lives in free and independent and democratic Baltic nations.