

Baltic Advocacy Day Talking Points

For questions or follow-up, please contact Karl Altai at jbanc@jbanc.org

Defense cooperation: As a strong ally to the U.S. and NATO, each Baltic country contributes at least 2% of GDP to military spending. U.S. engagement, including the European Deterrence Initiative (EDI), security assistance in the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA), and Foreign Military Financing (FMF) for each of the Baltic nations, is the cornerstone to safeguarding NATO's eastern flank. Full funding for all these programs is a must. Specifically, we call for support of:

- **Rep. Shimkus amendment in the NDAA** to increase funding to Baltics by \$25 million to \$125 million.
- **Permanent presence of U.S. troops in the Baltic countries**, in coordination with Enhanced Forward Presence (EFP) deployments already established in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.
- **NATO Centers of Excellence:** cyber (Estonia), strategic communications (Latvia), and energy security (Lithuania).
- **National Guard State Partnership Programs:** Maryland (Estonia), Michigan (Latvia), and Pennsylvania (Lithuania). These ties, and their people-to-people components, should be supported.

Energy Security: We consider Nord Stream 2 to be a major threat to Baltic and European energy security and call for U.S. policies that push back on the project and the political leverage it would give the Kremlin over Germany and other nations dependent on Russian gas. We stand for enabling access to Western energy resources and reducing dependence on energy supplies from Russia through current and future LNG projects and the Baltic Pipe Project. To that end, please support:

- **H.R.3206/S.1441 Protecting Europe's Energy Security Act of 2019 (PEESA)** - Reps. Kinzinger & Heck/Senators Cruz & Shaheen. Imposes sanctions on individuals that provide significant underwriting services or insurance or reinsurance for a vessel that helps construct the Nord Stream 2 pipeline.

Three Seas Initiative (3SI): Improved infrastructure and economic connections among the twelve 3SI member states is essential to stability and prosperity in the region and would subsequently boost wider EU stability and prosperity. Setting a new dynamic of cooperation among the nations along the EU's eastern border on the north-south axis will advance economic growth and cohesion across the EU. Relevant legislation includes:

- **H.Res.672 Expressing support of the Three Seas Initiative in its efforts to increase energy independence and infrastructure connectivity thereby strengthening the U.S. and European national security.** Reps. Kaptur&Kinzinger.

Fighting corruption and kleptocracy: Both remain major threats to democracy in Europe and beyond. We commend the recent efforts of Congress and the Helsinki Commission to address these issues with bipartisan support. While a number of worthy bills have been introduced, we have chosen to highlight and ask support for the following:

- **H.R.3843 Countering Russian and Other Overseas Kleptocracy (CROOK) Act** - Reps. Keating & Fitzpatrick. Creates an anti-corruption action fund from 5% of FCPA fines and penalties and streamlines U.S. work to promote the rule of law abroad.
- **H.R.4330/S.2483 Transnational Repression Accountability and Prevention (TRAP) Act** - Reps. Hastings & Wilson/Senators Wicker & Cardin. Codify no arrest based solely on red notice and prohibit the denial of U.S. government services based on red notices from countries with which the United States does not have an extradition treaty.

Baltic Caucus membership: The House Baltic Caucus (HBC) and Senate Baltic Freedom Caucus (SFBC) were established after the Baltic nations regained independence from the Soviet Union in 1991. Caucus members have since been vocal and effective champions of NATO membership, democracy, economic development, and strong U.S. partnership for the three nations. If you are already a member of your caucus, we thank you. If not, please consider joining.

- **HBC:** 72 members. Co-chairs are Reps. John Shimkus and Adam Schiff. POCs are Ari Kirsh (ari.kirsh@mail.house.gov) and Jeff Lowenstein (jeff.lowenstein@mail.house.gov), respectively.
- **SFBC:** 11 members. Co-chairs are Senators Dick Durbin and Chuck Grassley. POCs are Erum Ibrahim (Erum_Ibrahim@durbin.senate.gov) and James Rice (James_Rice@grassley.senate.gov), respectively.

Democracy, human rights, rule of law, and the information war – The foundational principles of democracy (rule of law, human rights, minority rights, freedom of the press, and historical accuracy) are indispensable to stability and security in the Baltic region, Europe, across the Atlantic and beyond. Russia’s denials of its history in relation to the Baltic nations and defense of the USSR’s Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact with Nazi Germany distort and falsify both current events and history. The Kremlin’s propaganda, disinformation and cyber attacks are powerful tools that exploit democratic institutions and values. We support substantive reforms to protect democracy, including elections and cyberspace; empower fair and unbiased journalism; and educate consumers of media messages. Please support:

- **H.R.739 Cyber Diplomacy Act of 2019** - Reps. McCaul & Engel. Establishes the Office of International Cyberspace Policy within the Department of State to advise the State Department on cyberspace issues; lead diplomatic efforts on issues relating to international cybersecurity, Internet access and freedom, and international cyber threats; and implement U.S. policy to work internationally to promote an open, interoperable, and secure Internet governed by a multi-stakeholder model. Also directs the President to devise a strategy related to U.S. engagement with foreign governments on international norms with respect to responsible state behavior in cyberspace.
- **S.1060 Defending Elections from Threats by Establishing Redlines Act of 2019 (DETER)** - Senators Van Hollen & Rubio. To deter foreign interference in United States elections.

Sanctions: We call upon the 116th Congress to further amend and strengthen the bipartisan Countering America’s Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA), which was signed into law on August 2, 2017. We believe that further measures are warranted, to include sanctioning additional individuals, banks and institutions and strengthening banking regulations in order to maximize the economic impact of the sanctions. More support is needed to uphold strong sanctions against the Russian Federation for its war against Ukraine, and attacks against the U.S. electoral system. Current legislation includes:

- **S.482 - Defending American Security from Kremlin Aggression Act of 2019 (DASKAA)** - Senators Graham & Menendez.

Thank you for your interest and consideration in supporting Baltic security!



Baltic Advocacy Day is sponsored jointly by the Joint Baltic American National Committee, the American Latvian Association, the Estonian American National Council, the Lithuanian American Council, and Baltivist.com.