

Statement By Philip T. Reeker, Deputy Spokesman : Baltic Partnership Commission

U.S. Department of State
December 10, 2001

On December 10, 2001, Foreign Ministers Toomas Hendrik Ilves, Indulis Berzins and Antanas Valionis of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, respectively, met with Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage and other State Department officials in the framework of the fourth annual Baltic Partnership Commission. The Commission, established by the 1998 U.S. Baltic Charter, aims to advance the integration of the Baltic nations into transatlantic and European structures.

Deputy Secretary Armitage expressed appreciation for Baltic assistance, including the quick adoption of financial controls and security measures, in the war against terrorism. The participants noted plans to hold remembrance events today on the three-month anniversary of the September 11 attacks and pledged to continue work to eliminate the scourge of terrorism.

The Deputy Secretary reaffirmed our commitment to President Bush's vision of a new round of enlargement at the 2002 Prague NATO Summit. He welcomed the steps taken by the Baltic States to fulfill their NATO Membership Action Plans and encouraged the spirit of solidarity expressed by NATO aspirants through the Vilnius Ten process.

Yesterday's meetings also highlighted U.S. investments in the region fostered by increased openness and transparency in the Baltic economics. Such openness enhances economic relations between our countries, strengthens the bonds of friendship and understanding and advances both transatlantic cooperation and accession negotiations with the European Union. Lithuanian Foreign Minister Valionis offered to host the next Baltic Partnership Commission meeting in Vilnius in late spring or early summer of 2002.
