

Your Excellencies, Honorable Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Thank you for being with us to celebrate the 99th anniversary of the restoration of Lithuania's Statehood.

Coalition For Defense is honored to be co-host of this celebration, in this way being able to contribute in creating awareness among the Dutch population for this rather thinly populated, small, but highly brave country as one of the front-line states of NATO Territory in Europe.

Throughout its age long history, Lithuania has fought against its occupying neighbors, and against the Sovjets during the Sovjet Occupation even until 1954, waging a guerrilla/partisan war in the dark forests and swamps of Lithuania.

Lithuania regained its Freedom and Independence in 1990, 1 year before the demise of the Sovjet Empire in 1991. We will all remember the live chain of 1 million civilian demonstrators, which reached from the frontiers of Poland up to the Northern frontiers of Estonia, crying out for Freedom and Independence from the Sovjet Occupation.

Lithuania's population succeeded in bringing down the Sovjet Occupation by showing courage, determination and sheer will power.

Today, again, they have to face as a NATO Partner, the aggressiveness of the new Emperor of Russia, Mr Vladimir Putin. However, NATO Air Policing Patrols above Baltic Aero-space and Army Forces of NATO are showing Mr Putin, Lithuania this time is not on its own any more.

Coalition For Defense hopes that through this strong attitude Lithuania sets an example to its Western European Allies how to face the current insecure and threatening situation in NATO Europe.

For regretfully until today, especially West European Leaders dare not to recognize nor face fully yet, the dangers which Mr Putin poses upon at least NATO's East European Allies.

*Si vis Pacem, para Bellum*

Lithuania abides to this rule dating back to the Roman Empire, by having raised its Defense Budget to 2 % of its GDP next year, which again will be raised to 2,5 % of its GDP in the following years .

An other example of its firmness towards its NATO Allies, especially the Netherlands.

For regretfully Dutch Government and Parliament do not wish to face the threathening situation in Europe, as is published in their election programmes, inviting their voters to dance the last waltz on board the Tittanic, while enjoying the good life in their short lived happiness.

Together we are strong, let's bring a toast to that, having in mind that Freedom always will prevail.

Thank you.

Ton Welter

The Hague, February 13th, 2017