



# »WE WILL NOT RETURN TO BUSINESS AS USUAL«

INTERVIEW MIT DER EHEMALIGEN AUSSENMINISTERIN ESTLANDS, MARINA KALJURAND

Die ADLAS-Redaktion nutzte die Gelegenheit auf der diesjährigen »Young Leaders Conference« der F.A.Z. mit der estnische Diplomatin Marina Kaljurand sprechen zu können. Die bis 2015 amtierende Außenministerin des Landes stellte klar, solange Russland nicht den Verpflichtungen des Minsker Abkommen nachkomme, werde es keine Rückkehr zur Tagesordnung geben. Das Interview ist in englischer Sprache geführt worden.

**Mrs. Kaljurand, since the Russian intervention in Ukraine in 2014, many people have been asking themselves what the strategic goal of the Russians might be, especially considering the high economic and diplomatic price Russia is currently paying for its actions. Since you were the Estonian ambassador to Russia from 2005 to 2008, could you give us an insider assessment on that?**

Wladimir Putin has called the dissolution of the Soviet Union the biggest geopolitical catastrophe of the 20th century. During my time as ambassador to Russia, I got the feeling that many Russian people feel the same; that they lost something in 1991: territories, independence, self-confidence. Instead of being powerful, Russian people suddenly became only one of many former Soviet independent nations.

## NATO & RUSSLAND

My guess is that Russia wants to restore itself as a geopolitical leader in global affairs and Russian people want to be proud about their country. And if we take a closer look at the current state of affairs, I would say that Russia has partly achieved the goal – Russia is not in isolation as in 2014, Russia is back at the table in the negotiations on Syria, even has taken initiative in the process et cetera.

### Speaking of Russian military interventions in Crimea and Syria: Are you afraid, Estonia might be next?

No, I do not think that Estonia will be next. Estonia is very different from Ukraine and Crimea – we are members of the EU and of NATO. However, Russia is very good at playing-off countries against each other. Russia has become less predictable and is behaving provocatively – violating Estonian airspace, conducting military exercises next to our border, increases military presence next to our borders et cetera.

We have to follow it and we have to take it very seriously. Therefore Russia's behaviour has impact on Estonia's security concerns. And we can't ignore provocations.

### So, what are Estonia's security interests and how can they best be served?

Estonia's main security interest is to have good relations with all our neighbours. We want all our neighbours to be democratic, friendly, prosperous and governed by the rule of law. Unfortunately, our current relations with Russia are not like that. The key to improve these relations lies not in Berlin, Tallinn or Brussels, but in Moscow. We always have to remember the reasons for the current state of affairs: the illegal occupation of Crimea and the violation of international law and agreed order by Russia.



Foto: Johannes Kummerow

Marina Kaljurand auf dem Podium der 5. »Young Leaders Conference« der F.A.Z., die am 24. Januar 2017 in Berlin stattfand.

The guiding principles of Estonian-Russian-relations are the same as those of EU-Russian-relations: the emphasis on respecting international law, asking Russia to stop the occupation of Crimea and military conflict in East Ukraine, sanctions for not doing so and the support of Russian human rights organizations.

Of course, we still have to talk with Russia about things that are in our mutual interest, such as terrorism and Syria, but we will definitely not forget about Crimea and just return to business as usual until Russia fulfils commitments under Minsk agreements. It is crucial that Europe is united and speaks with one voice in this regard and follows the policy of non-recognition of occupation of Crimea.

### What can Germany, the EU and other NATO allies do to enhance Estonia's security?

I think we have to maintain the sanctions on Russia even if I understand that they are difficult for the economy. In fact, according to statistical data, the sanctions have the worst economic implications for the Baltic States – outside Russia, that is. However, our business community is not lobbying against the sanctions because they understand that there is a certain price to pay for protecting our common values and for security in Europe. What will the actions taken by Russia be if we forget about Ukraine and Crimea and just lift the sanctions? So, what else could our partners do? Firstly, I call all

## NATO & RUSSLAND

European leaders visiting Russia and talking to Russian officials to constantly raise questions on human rights, the occupation of Crimea, international law and European security. Secondly, what Germany can do – and is already doing: The German government is assisting us with building our own Russian language media channels. This is imperative, because we have to provide more and accurate information to stop the brainwashing of Russian-speaking people in Estonia and elsewhere by Russian state-run media. We, for example, have many TV- channels in the Russian language and whilst we are not closing them we have to counter their narrative with correct data and information in Russian language. And last but not least – EU has to stay united and committed.

**In the past, the new US-President repeatedly questioned the willingness of the US to start a shooting war with Russia over the Baltics. Do you ill fully trust in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty?**

First of all, nobody wants a war on the eastern flank. NATO is a collective defence organization, so its strength is in deterrence. Nobody wants real escalation. Deterrence is crucial and important; it has to be strong and effective so that nobody will even consider attacking NATO member states. So yes, I believe in Article 5 of the NATO Treaty.

But first and foremost, we Estonians believe in ourselves and the measures we have taken. We are among only five NATO countries spending at least

two per cent of their GDP in defence. And of course, we additionally rely on our allies and Article 5. Therefore it is very important to fulfil the agreements reached in Warsaw at the NATO Summit on enhanced forward presence of NATO on the Eastern flank of NATO. We are grateful to the UK who is the leading nation of the multinational battle group that is present in Estonia and all other allies who participate in it.

To be fair, some of Trump's critical statements on NATO – for example, Europe's obligation to defend Europe – are true, even if he communicates them in very unconventional ways. Nevertheless, words count and we are listening carefully to the US. And so is Russia. It is encouraging to hear from the Trump administration about the United States' commitment to NATO and its allies and the relevance of the Alliance. We look forward to President Trump's participation in the NATO Summit. The United States have always been and will continue being an important ally for both Estonia and the EU.

**Estonia has signed an additional bilateral defence policy treaty with the US. What is its' added benefit compared to the NATO-Treaty and will it endure under the new US-administration?**

Besides NATO cooperation, we have bilateral defence cooperation with several countries. During a critical time, the US-forces first came to Estonia under the US-flag to show their presence with their troops on the ground. In many cases we have seen that the US has reacted much quicker than NATO: They first started operations under their flag and those then developed into NATO operations.

But we also have close cooperation with other NATO partners such as Finland and Sweden. NATO-cooperation and bilateral defence cooperation add

Foto: Bei den meisten A-Scrambles wurden russische Kampffljets abgefangen. Hier eine Suchoi Su-35 Flanker. / Quelle: Luftwaffe/PAO VAPP



Die Bundeswehr beteiligte sich bereits zum neunten Mal am NATO Baltic Air Policing und nutzte dabei den estnischen Luftwaffenstützpunkt in Ämari. Zuletzt erfolgte ein Kontingentwechsel an die spanische Luftwaffe im Mai 2017.



Marina Kaljurand

value to each other. Doing both is absolutely not a sign of mistrust in NATO. We trust both – US and NATO –, we cooperate with both and we will continue the cooperation with both.

**Estonia has a large Russian minority, around 25 per cent of the entire population. What is the situation in Estonia with its sizeable Russian minority with regard to integration on the one hand, and influence from Russia on the other?**

We usually do not call them »Russian minority« but »Russian-speaking«, because they actually have many nationalities. It is important to clarify that the Russian-speaking population in Estonia is not a problem! I am Russian and my family has been

living in Estonia for four generations; my mother tongue is Russian. So we are Russians living in Estonia as proud Estonians with good and qualified jobs.

The issue really has two dimensions: On the one hand, Russian-speaking people who immigrated during the Soviet times and stayed in Estonia after the break-up of the Soviet Union often share the political views of Putin. The integration of these people could have been much more efficient, yet this topic was very difficult to handle during the 90's, when things became sometimes very emotional, e.g. when Estonians and Russians called each other fascists and occupants. They had – and some still have – very different views on their shared history. On the other hand, today there is a growing will among Russian speaking people for integration. More and more Russians learn Estonian and more and more Estonians learn Russian. People now see that this is to their benefit: If you are young and you want to be successful, you have to learn languages. The more languages you speak, the more successful you are. It is really that simple.

We also have to keep in mind, that the Russian-speaking people in Estonia are not all on par with each other. They are all different people with different views, attitudes and histories. What is uniting them is that they do not want Putin or his administration to protect their rights in Estonia and they certainly do not want Crimea to happen in Estonia. People are not stupid.

They see the differences in how Russia and Estonia developed after Estonia's independence: the salaries, the social benefits, the job opportunities, the benefits from the EU. Even for those who may not deeply love Estonia, it still is a huge benefit for them to have permanent residency here. Russians had the chance to go back to Russia after the dissolution of the Soviet Union but only some did. I see it as the best compliment to Estonia.

**Currently, you are advising the Estonian foreign ministry in cyber-security. Estonia is at the forefront of NATO's cyber defence and quite experienced in that field since the serious cyber-attack in 2007. What, in your view, has to be improved in the field of cyber security in the future?**

Cyber-attacks are not killing anybody yet, but they are disturbing and costly. For example, during the DDOS cyber-attack on Estonia in 2007, our banks and some websites were taken down. Estonia is an »e-country«, we call it »e-lifestyle«, so for us the question of cyber-security is crucial. Our overall approach is, that cyber-security is not only a government or a private sector issue.

We learned that we need a comprehensive national approach, where government, private sector, think tanks, civil society and academia are closely working together. For this reason, the voluntary Cyber Defence League was founded in 2007, after the cyber-attacks. Here, the private sector cooperates with the government for free, because they see the relevance of the mutual exchange of information.

However, in terms of cyber-security you cannot only act on a national level. It is important that international organizations like the United Nations, OSCE, EU and NATO are dealing with cyber security, too. We are trying to facilitate the necessary debate on the international level, for example by hosting NATO's »Cooperative Cyber Defence Centre of Excellence« or within the newly established »Global Commission on the Stability of Cyberspace«, which I am chairing. Also, digital topics, including digital market, e-services will be high on the agenda of the Estonian EU presidency starting from July 2017.