

*Administration of Barack Obama, 2014*

**Remarks With Prime Minister Taavi Rõivas of Estonia to United States and Estonian Troops at Tallinn Airport Hangar in Tallinn, Estonia**  
*September 3, 2014*

*Prime Minister Rõivas.* Mr. President; commander of the Estonian Defense Forces; company of the U.S. "Sky Soldiers," Scouts Battalion, Charlie Company; ladies and gentlemen: It's my great pleasure and great honor to welcome you, Mr. President, together with your soldiers here in Tallinn.

I stand here in humility and in great pride, in front of the soldiers of our two nations. I'm proud of the Estonian soldiers, and I'm proud to see them standing beside soldiers of our ally, the United States. All those servicemen are training together here in Estonia. But you have also served side by side, far from your homes, in Afghanistan and Iraq, defending our way of life and our common values.

Through your service and sacrifice, you have strengthened our relationship. You represent those values, principles, and beliefs that symbolize our friendship. The Charlie Company in front of us is the first unit that we deployed to south Afghanistan, and coincidentally, it was the last unit that deployed to that conflict. You fought side by side as brothers-in-arms with the soldiers from America. You endured the same challenges and hardship. You, together, bore the trials of separation from loved ones with high spirit and, sadly, made the same sacrifices on the battlefield, pursuing a common mission.

We will never forget our brave men and women who gave their lives so that we can live in peace and freedom. It does not matter whether you are from—[inaudible]—Estonia or Plainfield, New Jersey, whether you're from Saaremaa or Hawaii, the commitment, dedication, and loyal service of you all is beyond price. The example of our soldiers, sailors, and airmen go beyond the size of our countries. They demonstrate our beliefs in the same values and principles. And through that, we both make a difference in the world. We both stand for what's right and good. We are both prepared to accept responsibility for helping to ensure the freedom and prosperity of all nations that stand with us.

I thank you, Mr. President, for standing with us in Estonia. Your presence both reassures us and fuels our determination for freedom and the right to choose our own destiny. And I thank our troops for their fortitude and sacrifice to ensure that that happens.

Mr. President, thank you once more. The floor is yours.

*President Obama.* Well, good afternoon, everybody. And thank you, Prime Minister Rõivas, for your kind words, for your work together today, and for being a great champion of our alliance.

It's an honor to be here with some of our extraordinary servicemembers, Estonians and Americans, including the legendary 173d Airborne Brigade, the "Sky Soldiers." I just gave a long speech, so I'm not going to give another long speech. The main reason I'm here is to just shake some hands and to say thank you, because I want to join the Prime Minister in expressing to every single one of you our incredible appreciation and the deep gratitude of the Estonian people and the American people.

Nearly a hundred years ago, as Estonians fighting for independence were looking for help, Americans came here to help. Some were U.S. officers who had advised the Estonian military and helped establish the "Scouts Battalion," which is here today. Some Americans were part of the Red Cross. And some of these Americans gave their lives for Estonia's freedom.

As NATO allies, we stood together again in Iraq, in Afghanistan. Our troops served shoulder to shoulder. And Americans and Estonians made the ultimate sacrifice in that mission to keep our countries safe back home.

Today, up at Amari Air Base, you're standing together again, training together, exercising together. And other members of the 173d are rotating through Latvia and Lithuania. So you're sending a powerful message that as NATO allies, we stand together, we stand as one.

Mr. Prime Minister, many of our American soldiers here today are also part of the 500—503d Airborne, "The Rock." They're strong. They're tough. They hold their ground. And NATO, including the United States, will defend Estonia, will defend Latvia, will defend Lithuania, will defend all of our NATO allies. Americans are proud to be at your side as you won your independence a century ago. We'll be by your side, helping you to protect that independence for the centuries to come.

So thank you, Mr. Prime Minister, for being such a strong partner. And thanks to all of you for stepping forward, for putting on a uniform, for serving in this mission, which is so vital to the security of our nations. You make us proud, and we can never thank you enough.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 4:48 p.m. In his remarks, Prime Minister Rõivas referred to Maj. Gen. Riho Terras, commander in chief, Estonian Defense Forces.

*Categories:* Addresses and Remarks : Tallinn, Estonia, U.S. and Estonia troops at Tallinn Airport hangar; Meetings With Foreign Leaders and International Officials : Estonia :: Prime Minister Rõivas.

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