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**Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet**

**Clinton Library**

<table>
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<td>n.d.</td>
<td>P1/b(1)</td>
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**COLLECTION:**
- Clinton Presidential Records
- National Security Council
- Robert Boorstin (Speechwriting)
- OI/Box Number: 415

**FOLDER TITLE:**
- Baltic States - Background

**RESTRICTION CODES**

- Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]
  - P1 National Security Classified Information [(a)(1) of the PRA]
  - P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
  - P3 Release would violate a Federal statute [(a)(3) of the PRA]
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  - P5 Release would disclose confidential advice between the President and his advisors, or between such advisors [(a)(5) of the PRA]
  - P6 Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(a)(6) of the PRA]

- Closed in accordance with restrictions contained in donor's deed of gift.
- PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).
- RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

- Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]
  - b(1) National security classified information [(b)(1) of the FOIA]
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  - b(8) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
Swing Shift in the Baltics

Czeslaw Milosz

The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence by Anatol Lieven. Yale University Press, 454 pp., $29.95

Liberal thought of our time has often treated nationalism as a relic of an unenlightened tribal past. No wonder that many are now bewildered by the passions aroused by the question of national identity in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union. A more nuanced approach was elaborated by Leninist doctrine, which was mindful of nationalism's nineteenth-century origins. After all, the great expressions of revolutionary élan of that century blended democratic rhetoric and the national aspirations of peoples struggling against monarchies. That is why the Soviet rulers, instead of denying the existence of "the national question," attempted to defuse it and make it serve their purposes. Colonialist in fact, they tolerated the republics' traditional cultures, but only under the condition that they would be "national in form, socialist in content." For some of the subject peoples, however, the slogan also lent itself to an interesting reversal—"socialist in form, national in content." The failure of the Communists to govern from the center while also maintaining the trappings of local autonomy brought about the present explosion of the empire by national entities. It probably proves that the duplicity needed to play such a game is beyond the skill of even the most capable bureaucrats.

The Baltic states were the first to break with Moscow and recover the independence that they had lost as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact signed on August 23, 1939. A secret protocol assigned Estonia and Latvia to the Soviets and Lithuania to Germany; but a few weeks later an additional secret clause also gave the Soviets a free hand in Lithuania. Now, after half a century of foreign domination and the internationalization of the Soviet system, the three small countries have been able to make their claim to independence after having set in motion the events that caused one of the two big powers in the world to disappear. To understand what pushed them to act as they did is of central importance to us all, and if their driving force was nationalism, nationalism deserves our attention.

Strange as it may appear, the foundation for recent conflicts on a continental scale was laid in the Baltics when Johann Gottfried Herder, a Lutheran pastor in Riga between 1764 and 1769, discovered and cultivated folk songs that were popular among the Baltic peoples. Herder was constructing his magnum opus, the "Philosophy of History," and the "History of Mankind," and he was trying to explain, in plain English, the soul of the Baltic peoples and to describe how they recovered their independence. And yet his book shows it is possible. Lieven was a London journalist and the author of and through baptism (which came late, in 1863) they tried to enlist the help of the local people. Moreover, just like my ancestors who already spoke Polish by the sixteenth century, all the members of the ruling groups called themselves Lithuanians. Some were sympathetic to the dialect of the simple folk, but if they had been told that allegiance to the Lithuanian language was the basic national attribute, they would have been as much surprised as Scots would be if they were forced to learn Gaelic.

The national languages gradually deteriorated. By the time of Herder's preaching, for example, Lithuanian was already strongly Slavicized, that is, Polonized. The rebirth of the Lithuanian, Latvian, and Estonian languages that occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century verges on the miraculous. It is not an exaggeration to say that the three nations were brought to life by history but by philology, which implies literacy and books. This is why Lithuanian heroes of the nineteenth century were called "the book bearers." They smuggled, on their backs, books printed in Russian across the border, since printing Lithuanian books in the Latin alphabet was forbidden in the Russian Empire between 1864 and 1904. These were elementary texts, grammars, popular brochures, and soon, also, literary works, mostly poetry. Their authors were the first intelligentsia, mainly priests and pastors; they were the real creators of national literatures that until then had, except for some religious tracts, been preponderantly oral. A major goal of these languages was to fulfill the poet's dream, for one was at the same time a bard, a codifier, an oracle of literary criticism, and, in some instances, the author of a national hymn.

First came philology, then attempts to construct national literatures. The Baltic nation was keenly aware of the mythologizing character of such enterprises as well as of the imprint left on them by the era of Romanticism. During several decades toward the end of the nineteenth century, the Baltic intelligentsia called for a national revival occurred; peasants, led by a handful of intellectuals, transformed themselves into fervent national patriots, proud of their "race" and full of hostility toward their oppressors, the landowners. In Estonia and Latvia, the

Photograph © C. Zetterberg

Tallin, Estonia, 1989
Lithuania, which, only a few months later, was occupied and incorporated into the Soviet Union along with the other Baltic states. Anything connected with the history of this city is hard to explain for it changed hands some twenty times throughout the twentieth century. The takeover of the city by Lithuanians both fulfilled a national dream and led to conflict, for they engaged in a protracted confrontation with the Polish and Jewish majority in the city and surrounding region.

The first period of Soviet rule was a shock for the Westernized people in the Baltic states: They were thrown into a nightmarish system of Oriental terror, with mass deportations of many thousands of people to Soviet Asia; then, suddenly, came the German attack in June 1941. In some of the nations under Soviet rule, the Germans were greeted as liberators and it took some time before people discovered their mistake. In the memory of many people of the Baltic countries, especially in Lithuania, the time of the Nazi occupation remains a black hole. The few days in June 1941 when Lithuanians rose against the retreating Soviets and at the same time attacked and killed many Jews are still a source of embarrassment for some, a taboo subject for many others. Lieven summarizes what he found to be the spoken or unspoken version of what happened:

The traditional Lithuanian belief is that 1940–1941 saw a clash of two nations, in which first the Jews, with Soviet help, betrayed and attacked the Lithuanians, and then the Lithuanians, with German assistance, wreaked their vengeance on the Jews.

How many, one wonders, share this belief today? It has been openly denounced as simplistic nonsense by some Lithuanian intellectuals, notably the poet Tomas Venclovas; and in fact, many Jews were deported by the Soviets and suffered the same harsh treatment as other Lithuanians. Even worse things happened throughout the Nazi occupation, when Lithuanians, especially in Lithuania, the time of the Nazi occupation remains a black hole. The few days in June 1941 when Lithuanians rose against the retreating Soviets and at the same time attacked and killed many Jews are still a source of embarrassment for some, a taboo subject for many others. Lieven summarizes what he found to be the spoken or unspoken version of what happened:

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and believers were at the core of resistance. Yet I sensed not only that the Church, which was the source of nationalism, but that a large-scale process of laicization was taking place. The Church hierarchy allied itself with the nationalist right and backed Landserhagen, who emphasized nationalist-religious language in their campaigns lost in the inability to think individually also and believers were at the core of resistance. Yet, in doing so, the nationalist founders of the country built an trap for their successors — the inability to absorb minorities. In 1939 and 1940 when Vilnius was taken over by the Lithuanians it would have been logical to extend the notion of Lithuanian national identity to all the participants in the nation's life, irrespective of language. Instead, the Lithuanian-speaking leaders proceeded with "de-Polonization" as their most urgent task. Similar difficulties today — with the Poles and Russians in Lithuania, with Russians in Estonia and Latvia — derive from the same old linguistic premises.

At present there are no obstacles to good relations between Poland and Lithuania. Poland recognizes the present border and has renounced any claims to Vilnius. As for the members of the Polish-speaking minority — 7 percent, according to statistics, but mostly concentrated in Vilnius and the neighboring region — they are insecure and coerced. They are the least educated of Lithuania's groups, and are mostly workers who own small wooden cottages with gardens or laborers employed on collective farms.

Thus the old pattern in which Polish was the language of "high culture" is turned upside down. In Soviet times the Lithuanian Poles looked toward Moscow for protection and now they feel abandoned by Poland. These Poles mistrust Lithuanian administrators. Did they not impose Lithuanian as the language of the state? Only 15 percent of Poles know Lithuanian, a very difficult language for Slavs, while Russian is familiar and previously gave the younger men and women chances to have careers anywhere in the Soviet Union. One administrative move after another by the government seem to confirm a silent intention to "de-Polonize" Lithuania. The officials of the ruling nationality still have much to learn before they gain the trust of 45 percent of Vilnius' residents.

Concerning Poland's own policies, I should mention a man who for many decades had considerable influence on the thinking of its intellectual and political elites. Jerzy Gedrosz, a son of Polish-Lithuanian aristocracy, has published the monthly Kultura since 1947, printing it in France for émigrés and smuggling it across Polish borders for those without a free press. Foreseeing the disintegration of communism, he concentrated upon the future.
Reverse Tradition
Postmodern Fictions and the Nineteenth-Century Novel
Robert Knopf
Reverse Tradition invites the reader of postmodern fiction to travel back to the nineteenth-century novel without pretending to get "of contemporary anxiety and expectations. What happens to the reader of Beckett when he or she returns to the Middle Ages? Or to the enthusiast of Tom Morrison who wonders what it means to have arrived? While he admits that it does not claim that all fictions begin to look alike, he finds unexpected pleasures in examining a variety of ways in which new texts reflect on old.

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The Strategy of Letters
Mette Hjort
Although literary theories describe a world of strategies—textual, discursive, interpretive, and political—what seems missing is the strategy. Poststructurality tries to explain agency as the effect of large-scale systems or formations; as a result, intuitions about individual action and responsibility are expressed in terms of imperative strategies. Hjort's book responds to this situation by proposing an alternative account of strategic action. One that begins the strategic back into the picture.

$17.50

Literary Interest
The Limits of Anti-Formalism
Steven Knapp
Is there such a thing as a specifically literary discourse, distinguishable from other modes of thought and writing? Is there any way to defend the intuition that a work of literature must contain something that can't be said in any other way? Drawing on recent work in the philosophies of language and action, Steven Knapp presents a challenging new definition of "literary" in a forceful analysis that radically changes the sometimes heated debate about formalism.

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The Kitchen Table Conversations
The Four Women of Lithuania
Charles Rialus
"This is a powerful book, idiomatic and personal, Pragmatism is a Farmer's name for what he calls a myth about poetry and a myth about America. He elaborates these evolved myths by developing a canon of American writers containing on Emerson, Joyce, and Stevens.

$12.95

The Haunting of Sylvia Plath
Jacqueline Rose
["A] brilliance achievement. The framework of deconstructive, psychoanalytic, and feminist ideological, gives the work a high intellectual shimmer. One is dazzled, excited.

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Mimesis as Make-Believe
On the Foundations of the Representational Arts
Kendall L. Walton
"Rigor, ingenuity and arresting subtlety are evident in the deftly working out of Walton's ideas."—Sebastian Gardner, Times Literary Supplement

"The exposition, intelligence, curiosity, and perceptiveness deployed here are impressive, and the inquiry they sustain is bracing.

—James Scaran Allan, Svenska Review

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A Feminist Approach
Ilan Gadsby
"This timely and stimulating book probes the words and the silence of such figures as Eve, Rachel, and Zipporah, using their stories in turn to test a variety of contemporary feminist approaches to the Bible...original blend of textual history, feminist theory, and literary analysis."—David Damrosch

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A Series Edited by Edward Said
Poetry and Pragmatism
Richard Rorty
"This is a powerful book, idiomatic and personal. Pragmatism is a Farmer's name for what he calls a myth about poetry and a myth about America. He elaborates these evolved myths by developing a canon of American writers containing on Emerson, Joyce, and Stevens.

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NEW IN PAPERBACK
Meaning in Henry James
Millicent Bell
"I admire Milliken's Bell's elegant, wry, subtle book. There can be no higher praise than to say it is literary worthy of a great subject: our most immersive writer and the question, about narrative method and moral intelligence raised by his work.

—Susan Sontag

"Sensitive, provocative, and complex readings...[Bell] never succumbs to the lure of the idea that everything is the same, but sticks to the main journey through James's world. Mindful that the joy of his fiction is as much in the experience of meaning as in the contemplation of it.

—John Mihmey, Nineteenth-Century Literature

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1993 Review Panel
Caroline B. Brettell - Southern Methodist University
Rebecca Huss-Ashmon - University of Pennsylvania
Dell H. Hymes - University of Virginia
Sherry Lindh Energy - City University of New York
Beverly D. Sheats - University of Colorado

$16.95
landowners were German or, as with Lieven's own family, Germanized local people. In Lithuania they were natives who spoke Polish and therefore were exposed to the repressive system of the Baltic German landlords and pastors in 1905, thus putting an end to the self-imposed idyll of masters surrounded by faithful servants. The entire class of Baltic Germans became obsolete and even the name "Balt," referring to the German Balts, lost its meaning.

The three countries became independent after World War I. One of the first acts was a radical agrarian reform aimed at the landowners. By disposing of them, the Latvians and Estonians performed in their view, an act of historical justice, compensation for the Treaty of Versailles and the Versailles Treaty that stripped them of their Baltic German landlords and pastors in 1915, thus putting an end to the self-imposed idyll of masters surrounded by faithful servants. The entire class of Baltic Germans became obsolete and even the name "Balt," referring to the German Balts, lost its meaning.

The three newly created republics faced immense difficulties after World War I. They were largely agricultural, bad land, and except for forests, few natural resources. They lacked enough educated people to organize an efficient administration. Everything had to be started from scratch: schools to train an intelligentsia who came from peasant stock, universities, newspapers, diplomacy, export-import trade. Lieven justly stresses the phlegmatic and pragmatic character of the Baltic peoples and their work ethic. These qualities helped: The three republics prospered, exporting their agricultural products to Western Europe, Estonia and Latvia also had some industrial exports, and Lithuania, which I know the best, developed state cooperatives, which would buy farm products and sell them in the cities or abroad.

Nationalism was undoubtedly the central keeping goal of all these countries together. It would have been better had a less compromised term been available; but if an ethnic group with the same language and common past is regarded as the creator and rightful owner of the State, then nationalism. Other groups were tolerated in the hope that they would be willing to learn the indigenous language and thereby become full-fledged members of the nation. Yet this also a doctrine tinged with the nineteenth-century ideology of pitiful populism and democracy against tyranny. The three republics were democratic, with parliaments, political parties, and freedom of speech and assembly. They each permitted to linguistic homogeneity and de-Germanization and de-Polonization, goals that were to be pursued by more or less legal means.

However in 1926 when a socialist-populist coalition came to power in Lithuania, backed by the vote of national minorities, right-wing forces

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THE VIEW FROM THE EDGE

Eternal Guilt?

FORTY YEARS OF GERMAN-JEWISH RELATIONS
Michael Wolffsohn, UNIVERSITY OF THE ARMED FORCES, MUNICH
Translated by Douglas Bokovoy
240 pp / $27.50, cloth
Wolffsohn demonstrates that Germans, Israelis, and Americans are still coming to their historical legacy in order to manipulate contemporary political ends.

Letters from Prison

Antonio Gramsci
Edited by Frank Rosegarten
Translated by Raymond Rosenthal
Volume I: 408 pp
24 llus / $33.00, cloth
Volume II: 352 pp / $33.00, cloth
The only complete and authoritative edition of Gramsci's deeply personal and vivid prison letters reveals a great political thinker exploring the nature of imprisonment, along with a remarkable variety of other questions in history, politics, philosophy, sociology, folklore, and literature. This edition includes a comprehensive introduction, a chronology of Gramsci's life, a list of correspondents, and explanatory notes; the Letters from Prison can be read not only as companion volumes to Prison Notebooks but also as the fragments of a richly textured spiritual and intellectual autobiography.

Islam

THE VIEW FROM THE EDGE

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COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

224 pp / $29.95, cloth
In assessing the historical evolution of Islamic society, Bulliet abandons the historian's typical habit of viewing human history "from the center." This is, focusing on the rise and fall of imperial dynasties. Instead, he examines the question of how and why Islam became--and continues to be--so rooted in the social structure of most majority-Muslim societies, and in turn, he explores the causes of this success. Bulliet's earlier scholarship in medieval Islamic history.

Mahatma Gandhi

NONVIOLENT POWER IN ACTION

Dennis Dalton
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Dalton's political biography moves from the birth of Gandhi's method of nonviolent resistance in South Africa to an in-depth analysis of two of his signal triumphs: the civil disobedience movement of 1930 and the historic Caucastra's 1947. Dalton reveals Gandhi as a political artist who was vitally concerned with practice and who persistently tested his beliefs in the crucible of national politics. He pays particular attention to the role of religious faith in Gandhi's social reform, how his views on the caste system affected his political idealism, and his changing perception of his own identity.
I. Setting

The Baltic States have made significant progress in democratic transformation and free-market reform. Key to the reassertion of sovereignty has been negotiations with Russia for the complete withdrawal of its military forces, which left Lithuania last year. On April 30 the Russians and Latvians, with considerable U.S. effort and your personal involvement, concluded a similar agreement, calling for troop withdrawal by this August 31. Russia and Estonia seem near to closure. The Baltic States are reaching out to NATO via PFP and to EU-related institutions, and cooperate well among themselves.

II. Objectives

**Russian Troop Withdrawals:** Laud progress in getting Russia to withdraw its troops from the Baltics, underscore the successful U.S. effort—and your personal involvement—and, if needed, press for resolution of the Estonian-Russian agreement.

**Stronger Ties:** Stress your strong interest in the broadening and deepening of bilateral relations.

**Baltics in CEE:** Address the larger theme of CEE's place in the new security structure of Europe. By explicitly highlighting the cooperative structures we want to encourage in Europe, your visit implicitly solidifies the point that the Baltics are not in anybody's sphere of influence.

III. Strategy

**U.S. Help to Get Troops Out:** Our help to dismantle the LPAR at Skrunda, to clean up the two nuclear reactors at Paldiski, and our $160 million Russian officer housing resettlement program are testimony of your strong interest.

**Stress New Partnership:** The Baltic Enterprise Fund, the upcoming trade mission (TBC); and the recent agreements on Trade, Investment, Intellectual Property Protection, and Science and Technology Cooperation illustrate how we are rapidly building a broad foundation for close cooperation.

**Normal Defense/Security Ties:** We are expanding cooperation with the Baltic States bilaterally, in conjunction with PFP, and regionally. You have sent a $10 million FY95 proposal to Congress to support CEE Peacekeeping, including the Baltic Battalion.
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**U.S. ASSISTANCE TO THE BALTIC REPUBLICS**

- **Total Commitment:** Through FY 1993, total U.S. assistance is approximately $117 million, including over $30 million in Support for East European Democracy (SEED) and ESF funds, and $87 million in food and feed grain aid.

  U.S. assistance priorities are free market reform, democratic pluralism and energy efficiency/nuclear safety.

**SEED Program:**

- **Enterprise Fund:** The U.S. is proceeding with plans to create a Baltic-American Enterprise Fund, to be capitalized at $50 million over several years, to promote private sector development.

- **AID:** To promote privatization, U.S. advisors to Baltic governments and industries on the legal, fiscal, institutional and regulatory changes involved in developing a market economy.

  ABA and other U.S. advisors to help develop civil commercial codes, as well as new laws on agricultural cooperatives, taxation and budget reform.

  Financial support for the Estonian Roundtable, created by President Meri to address ethnic minority concerns.

- **Treasury:** Five long-term and regular short-term advisers to provide assistance in tax policy and administration, budgeting, accounting, and commercial banking. Customs is also providing short-term advisory services.

- **DoE/Nuclear Regulatory Commission/AID:** Consultants and equipment to increase energy efficiency at four industrial facilities in each Republic. Technical assistance in energy pricing and management for a market economy.

  DoE and NRC technical assistance and training for the Ignalina reactor in Lithuania.

- **USIA:** Management training and economics education program. Business management courses are being developed at Baltic universities and institutes through links with U.S. universities.

  Technical assistance and training in the areas of public administration and local government management, constitutional and civil law, and mass media.

- **Peace Corps:** Operating in the Baltics since 1992. There are currently 58 volunteers in place, teaching English and small business skills.
US POLICY

Q: What are U.S. policy goals towards the Baltic States?

A. - U.S. policy towards the Baltic States in general is based on the orderly withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic States by August 31, 1994, Baltic integration into Western political, economic and security structures, and the strengthening of bilateral ties with each state.

We have tried to be helpful on the issue of troop withdrawals by providing assistance for the dismantling of the Skrunda radar facility, the cleanup of the nuclear reactors at Paldiski, and the departure of retired and demobilized Russian officers from Estonia and Latvia.

Through FY93, we have assisted the Baltic States with approximately $186 million in developing open market reform, democratic pluralism, and energy efficiency/nuclear safety. To this end, we also have supported the CSCE missions in Estonia and Latvia.

We consistently have supported Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania's membership in such European institutions as the Council of Europe and the European Union, and we welcome their active participation in Partnership for Peace as we expand our defense and security relationships. We also will work with them in their application for GATT membership.

The Baltic Enterprise Fund, the upcoming trade mission; and the recent agreements on Trade, Investment, Intellectual Property Protection, and Science and Technology Cooperation illustrate how we are rapidly building a broad foundation for close bilateral economic cooperation with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.
U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE BALTIC STATES

Q: How does the U.S. see U.S./Baltic relations?

A. Relations between the United States and the Republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania always have been excellent, and will continue to remain so.

The United States never recognized the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, and we stood firmly beside them during the dark years of occupation. All the while, the Baltic States were well represented diplomatically by their legations in the United States, and Baltic gold and other assets remained secure. The nearly one million Americans of Baltic descent were instrumental in reminding us and the world of conditions in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania during those years, and now play an important role in promoting political and economic reform in those three democracies. We were proud to recognize the independence of the Baltic States from the Soviet Union in 1991, and we have consistently pressed Russia hard for the speedy, unconditional, and total withdrawal of its troops from the Baltic States.

Now that this era has nearly reached completion, the United States eagerly looks forward to open a new door on our relations and focus more fully on our bilateral ties with each Republic. We believe that this primarily will happen through trade, investment, and cooperative projects in the fields of science, technology, and regional security.
NATO ISSUES

Q: Why has the U.S allowed Russia to veto Lithuania and other countries in CEE from joining NATO?

A. NATO has most certainly not allowed Russia to veto the future expansion of the Alliance. NATO leaders at their January Summit stated that they expect and would welcome an evolutionary expansion of NATO to democratic states to the east. The question is thus no longer whether NATO will take on new members, but when and how it will do so.

- In considering membership issues, NATO will take account of the overall European security situation and the common interest of all members of the Euro-Atlantic community in seeing that Russia plays a constructive role in efforts to promote stability throughout the region. But no state outside the Alliance will have a "veto" over NATO decisions.

- We take very seriously the collective defense obligations NATO membership involves; extension of NATO security guarantees to new countries is not something which can or should be undertaken lightly.

- Expansion of the Alliance through the an evolutionary process will maintain NATO's capabilities and preserve its political coherence and ability to act, while at the same time permitting adjustments to be made as events and developments might warrant.
Q: How does the U.S. assess the economic situation in each of the Baltic States? What are the successes and failures?

A. All three countries boast strong currencies and hold annual inflation rates to as low as about 30%.

- Estonia is a regional role model for reform. It has a balanced budget and supports free trade. Privatization is occurring at a fast clip, and more than 75% of its trade is with the West. Over 90% of small and medium-sized firms are in private hands, while two-thirds of large firms have been privatized. Only agricultural privatization lags.

Latvia has maintained a positive balance of trade, remained a regional financial center, and followed IMF recommendations. Upon passing a naturalization law, Latvia needs to institute legislation on privatization of enterprises and housing. Defunct privatization of agriculture already has occurred.

In Lithuania, the Government has followed the IMF’s recommendations and also passed comprehensive privatization legislation this spring. We look forward to its implementation. Lithuania also has a positive trade balance.

At the same time, we recognize that significant portions of the Baltic populations have suffered from the hardships imposed by the economic transition. We are confident, however, that these hardships will lessen as each country continues its turnaround.

Q: What can the Baltics do to attract more foreign investment?

A. The Baltic States have already taken many of the steps it needs to take to attract foreign investment, simply by establishing a stable macro-economic framework for the economy, introducing strong and convertible currencies, opening up opportunities for foreign investment and establishing the legal framework for a market system. Estonia, for example, is virtually tariff-free and boasts a flat tax. All three countries have excellent port facilities and provide natural conduits for trade with the West. The bilateral trade, investment and intellectual property protection agreements also build a secure foundation for foreign trade and investment.

- But there is still more that can be done. All three countries can pursue more comprehensive financial and banking reform. Latvia needs to pass basic privatization legislation for enterprises and housing. Lithuania and Latvia need to develop the necessary infrastructure to meet Western standards for long-term foreign direct investment and allow foreign ownership of property. More, not less, reform and free trade will attract greater interest.
POST-COMMUNIST RETURN

Q: What is the U.S. view of the return of former communists to power in a number of Central and Eastern European countries, such as Lithuania and Poland?

We are more interested in a government's policies and results than in the political labels that apply to it. We are committed to work with any democratically elected Central and Eastern European government that supports political and economic reform, human rights, respect for neighbors, and good relations with the United States. Thus U.S. relations with Lithuania and Poland are excellent.
SKRUNDA

Q: Did the United States ever have some sort of deal with Russia over the disposition of the Skrunda radar facility?

- The United States had absolutely no formal or informal agreement or arrangement with Russia on the future operation or disposition of the ballistic missile early warning radar in Skrunda, Latvia.

- Apart from its status under the ABM Treaty and recognizing that such radars contribute to strategic stability, the ownership and ultimate disposition of the skrunda radar facility was most appropriately decided between the governments of Latvia and Russia. The United States is pleased that the talks aimed at resolving issues associated with the operation of the Skrunda facility have been successfully concluded. We will work with both parties and with the CSCE to ensure its successful, strict implementation.

- We informed both the Latvian and Russian governments about our position.
U.S. - BALTIC SECURITY RELATIONSHIP

Q: What type of "normal" defense and security relationship does the United States have with each of the Baltic States?

Since their independence, the U.S. has developed a network of active bilateral and multilateral security relationships with Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Our approach has been to use these relations to promote regional stability, demonstrate support for Baltic sovereignty, accelerate the integration of these states with Euroatlantic institutions, and foster the development of civilian control of the fledgling armed forces.

In May, we conducted Bilateral Working Groups -- consultations on regional security, defense cooperation, and bilateral assistance -- with each of the Baltic states. We also conduct an expanded program of high-level visits, ship visits, and exchanges of defense officials.

Each of the Baltic states also participates in U.S.-administered programs such as IMET and the Joint Contact Team Program (which oversees military-military exchanges).

Subject to case-by-case review, all of the Baltic states are also eligible to receive U.S. Government-origin defense articles and defense services through the Foreign Military Sales program. They are also eligible to receive grant, non-lethal excess defense articles from the U.S. To date, actual transfers have been minimal.

The Administration has proposed to Congress a $10 million program in FY 1995 to support regional peacekeeping units in Central and Eastern Europe, including the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion being established jointly by these three states.

We also hope to expand our security cooperation through NATO's Partnership for Peace, in which all of the Baltic states intend to participate.
ESTONIAN - RUSSIAN TALKS

Q: What is the status of the Estonian - Russian negotiations? What role has the United States played in these talks?

- We understand that virtually all issues in the Estonian-Russian troop withdrawal negotiations already have been resolved. The key remaining issue concerns the status of Russian military retirees living in Estonia.

- The U.S. has strongly promoted the timely and full withdrawal of all Russian forces from the Baltic States.

- We have remained actively engaged with both sides in promoting an agreement, and have encouraged them to focus on practical solutions to the outstanding questions.

- We strongly urge Russia to withdraw its forces from Estonia by August 31, 1994 -- the date Russia proposed to Estonia and Latvia last fall.

- It is our firm hope that an Estonian-Russian troop withdrawal agreement can be achieved soon. Only 2,500 Russian troops remain in Estonia.

- We established a $160 million program for the construction of housing for demobilizing Russian officers returning from the Baltics and elsewhere, and in early April modified the program to make military retirees living in Estonia and Latvia and wishing to resettle in Russia eligible for vouchers that will be made available under the program. 750 vouchers are available in each country.
ETHNIC RUSSIANS IN ESTONIA AND LATVIA

Q: What is the United States position on the status of ethnic Russians in Estonia and Latvia? Do you see the issue of troop withdrawal linked to the Balts' treatment of ethnic Russians?

- We see no link between Estonia's and Latvia's treatment of ethnic Russians and the speedy and unconditional withdrawal of Russian forces from the Baltic States, but there are a number of ways that we can assist in addressing this practical problem.

- Because of our concern for the protection of human rights worldwide, we have supported the visits to Estonia and Latvia of numerous international human rights experts from non-government and inter-governmental and organizations. We agree with their conclusions that there are no pattern of human rights violations there, but also have strongly encouraged Estonia and Latvia to accept the presence of resident CSCE missions to monitor these political conditions, offer support to the host governments in drafting legislation affecting these Russians, and provide ombudsman-like services to the Russian communities.

- While we have attempted to alleviate the situation of retired and demobilized Russian officers in Estonia and Latvia through $160 million in housing vouchers and housing construction programs, we insist that absolutely no issues be linked to the prompt and orderly withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltic States.
KALININGRAD

Q: What is the U.S. position on the status of Kaliningrad?

A. - Kaliningrad involves complex historical questions with significant regional implications. The postwar Potsdam Conference agreed in principle to a Soviet proposal concerning the ultimate transfer of Kaliningrad to the USSR subject to expert examination of the actual frontier; the Two-Plus-Four Agreement settled Germany's border but did not address the status of Königsberg.

- The high concentration of Russian forces and the increasing desire of the other Baltic Sea states for Kaliningrad's demilitarization add to the controversy. We also understand that neighboring countries have disclaimed sovereignty over the region.

- Lithuania and Russia signed a civil transit agreement on Kaliningrad in July 1991, but a military transit agreement still needs to be negotiated and signed. The Russians have withheld implementation of Lithuania's MFN status (signed in November, 1993) until the transit rights problem is resolved.

- We oppose emphatically any approach or solution that does not respect Lithuania's sovereignty. We understand that the Lithuanians have developed better relations with officials in Kaliningrad, and we continue to encourage Lithuania to cultivate good ties with the enclave.
Q: What does the U.S. think about the draft Latvian Law on Naturalization?

A. The United States believes that the bill is an improvement over earlier drafts but has some minor problems, most notably the stiff quota for those not born in Latvia. We continue to encourage the Government of Latvia to work with the Council of Europe and the CSCE to ensure passage and implementation of such a law in keeping with Western standards.
AID PHASEOUT IN ESTONIA

Q: Won't the United States cutoff of aid to Estonia devastate Estonia's attempts to continue radical economic reform?

- Estonia's phased graduation from AID's assistance programs, which will not be completed until 1996, recognizes Estonia's position at the vanguard of Eastern European reform. Its renaissance and reemergence in the Western community has been described by almost everyone as a resounding success, a "political and economic miracle," or as "The Little Country that Could."

- We recognize that Estonia still needs to pursue more comprehensive reform in agriculture and in its banking and financial sectors, and that some sectors of Estonian society have suffered great hardship during Estonia's transition.

- However, U.S. assistance to Central and Eastern Europe was intended to be temporary: until those countries could reestablish democratic institutions and economic relations with the West. So far, Estonia and the Czech Republic have best succeeded in doing so.

- The Estonian Government also realizes that its graduation from AID's assistance programs does not mean that other forms of United States Government assistance through different Departments terminate. Of note, the U.S. military academies have accepted three Estonian scholars for their programs beginning this year, and the Baltic American Enterprise Fund will provide $50 million of capital to small and medium-sized enterprises. Rather, this new "partnership of equals" signals a new relationship of mutual benefit in increased cooperation. Our support for Estonia's active role in Partnership for Peace, for example, is indicative of this development.
STABILITY PACT

Q: What does the U.S. think of the Baltic Table of the European Stability Pact?

A. - The U.S. is consulting closely with the European Union on its proposal to establish a Baltic Table as much as we seek the views of concerned states. We welcome the EU's intention to enhance stability and security in Europe through the Stability Pact concept. We will, thus, continue work with the EU to ensure that this initiative contributes to the success of the already ongoing CSCE and other efforts.

CSCE MISSIONS

Q: What is the CSCE's role in the Baltic area?

A. - The CSCE has been very active fostering stability in the Baltic States region. The CSCE has established a mission in Latvia—headed by an American diplomat—which monitors citizenship issues as well as issues related to the withdrawal of Russian troops. The mission to Estonia works to promote stability, dialogue, and understanding between Estonians and Russian-speaking communities. In addition, the CSCE's High Commissioner on National Minorities, Max van der Stoel, has been particularly active in the Baltic area to resolve tensions and disputes involving national minority issues. The U.S. strongly supports these CSCE activities.
The last free man in Estonia was hunted down in 1978. August Sabe was the sole survivor of the Forest Brothers, men who took to the woods to resist the occupying Soviets in 1944. He was finally found in southern Estonia by two KGB agents posing as fishermen. A photograph shows the 36-year-old Sabe and an agent sitting on a riverbank (facing page). Sabe holds a fishing pole and grins for the photographer, the other KGB man.

Minutes later they tried to arrest him, and Sabe wrestled one agent into the river. But more agents were on their way, and, seeing no escape, he dived underwater and hooked himself to a submerged log, ending his life.

For the KGB it was necessary work, of course; the state must check its cancers lest they spread. But the Soviet state, in the 73 years since the Bolshevik Revolution transformed tsarist Russia, has excised more than tumors. It has, I would hear again and again, practiced massive cultural and intellectual lobotomy, on its own people as well as on those it has colonized.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania are the most urbanized and westernized—and perhaps the least willing—republics within the unraveling Soviet Union. Separate nations by all the measures of culture and inclination, they tasted independence for 22 years between the two World Wars. In those years they were parliamentary democracies, belonged to the League of Nations, sent teams to the Olympic Games, and competed in the marketplace of Europe. They were occupied again in 1940, in a division of eastern Europe between the century's leading despots, Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler and the Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin.

Today, maneuvering amid the collapse of communist ideology, they have come within a few precarious steps of regaining their self-determination.

The challenges of restoring statehood are daunting. But it is not the economy, nor the politics, nor the eroded culture that concerns Baltic leaders most—it is the widespread degradation of the human being after 70 years of communism. They worry about the kind of people they have become.

Listen to one of Lithuania's parliamentarians, Emanuelis Zingeris, in Vilnius:

"Ours is the struggle of 3.7 million people who have, since early childhood, been injected with fear and submission. We have lived in a system where no one could be different. Tens of thousands of our intellectuals were exiled to Siberia in the 1940s. We have a few capable leaders, but we are not used to speaking out as other people are. This is why we value every person who hasn't been co-opted by the Soviet system—and there are not many of them."

Listen to Estonia's new foreign minister, Lennart Meri, in Tallinn: "When you shut people's mouths so they cannot talk, when you close their eyes by forbidding them to travel, when you plug their ears by jamming airwaves, the population becomes very passive. In this condition, when people don't care, it seems as if nature herself reacts: Fields produce less wheat, forests die of pollution, fouled rivers catch fire. The entire society degrades. This catastrophe is so far unrecognized in the West, but it has been obvious here. Life expectancy has fallen, and the infant mortality rate has risen to its highest level.

"Even the ability of students to learn has deteriorated. Today's technology is so exact and refined that only a person who thinks freely and critically can use it well—a person who has been taught since age four that he has rights and responsibilities."

"In our society this new person has been weeded out: people with capabilities, with intelligence, practically the entire educated class, went to jail. Farmers who did better work had their heads mowed off like grass.

"The rest of the world has evolved, but we have gone backward. This is the tragic difference between the Soviet Union and the rest of the world."

The Baltic republics, with their eight million people, intend to move as far away as possible from this failed experiment. They are not disgruntled "breakaway" states of some legitimate union, nor extremists trying to sabotage perestroika. They are nations that were strong-armed into the Soviet colonial empire, one orbit closer to the center than Eastern-bloc
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HOTGRAPHER LARRY PRICE and I
arrived in the Baltic nations in the
spring of 1990 to measure change, at
a time when the entire world had
focused its attention here, perhaps
for the first time. For me the visit
had a special dimension: I
was born in Tallinn:
my family fled in 1944 as the Red Army
approached. I
was only one and a half years
old then, yet a feeling for Estonia has remained
with me always. This was my sixth journey
back in recent years.

The old city of Tallinn, built as a medieval
citadel, seemed much the same. At night I
could smell again the damp and crumbling
stone, the cabbage cooking somewhere up an
alleyway patrolled by silent cats. I could see
the yellow glow from windows on the cobble-
stones and the lights of offshore ships blinking
in the dawn.

There was little new construction, even
shoddier consumer goods, even drabber win-
dows in the shops. Yet there was an energy
beneath the surface, a new willingness to
take risks. Much new enterprise was directed
at Western tourists, with their desperately
needed hard currency. In Tallinn’s Finnish-
built Palace Hotel, complete with pizza bar,
you could believe you were in Helsinki. From
Hertz Rent-A-Car we could hire a bright red
Volvo station wagon.

A year earlier you could not rent a car. You
could not travel by yourself without a watch-
dog of a chauffeur on the payroll of the KGB.
Certain roads were taboo, certain subjects for-
bidden. Now Larry and I simply piled our gear
into this car and drove from city to city, repub-
lic to republic, exactly as we would have done
in Canada or Austria. We bounced from
unprecedented to unheard-of, finding little in
the way except our own surprise.

Communism lay prostrate. In Vilnius, Algim-
antas Cekuolis, an editor and parliament
deputy, offered this irreverent opinion of the
communist economy: “We are living under
the carcass of a dead cow, and it stinks. There
are two electrodes attached to this carcass, and
every once in a while it twitches. And that
cow’s name is Bolshevism. And you have that
from an old commie.”

Truly the establishment was standing on its
head: Non-communist governments sat in all
three capitals; yesterday’s strongmen were
today’s fools; onetime “hooligans” and ene-
mies of the state gave stirring speeches in the
parliaments. Speech, intoxicating free speech,
bubbled like a spring.

The Baltic Nations
SWEDEN

ESTONIA
Area: 17,413 sq mi. Population: 1,566,000

LATVIA
Area: 24,595 sq mi. Population: 2,587,000
(52% Latvian). Capital: Riga. 915,000. Religion: Lutheran 70%, Roman Catholic 30%.

LITHUANIA
Area: 25,170 sq mi. Population: 3,873,000

Bold moves for pawns of the empire
Ironically, art and literature were at a standstill. "Only some idiots like me are still writing novels," said Estonian novelist Jaan Kross. "All the others are writing for newspapers."

"Or running the governments," added Kross's wife, Ellen Niiit, an author of children's books.

"What about the communist writers?"

"They were dead already," she said.

Communist youth groups such as Pioneers and Komsomol were finished among Balts. Boy Scout and Girl Scout troops, whose leaders had been jailed or executed in 1940, were revived. Estonia's first YMCA since before the war was being organized by Ullar Kerde, an intense young man with a wiry crew cut and a whistle around his neck. "This has to be a voluntary organization," he told me. "We have enough angry young men. In our sports schools everything is forced. You must do sports. You must do, you must learn. It blunts the kids."

Kerde has already taken his boys basketball team to Finland and plans a trip to the United States. "They will actually have seen, with their own eyes, a basketball game in Madison Square Garden, New York, the United States of America!"

"Our children lack civilization," he said. "They have been raised as savages. I want to plant a seed in these boys—from them the future of this country will grow. For that, I am willing to spend sleepless nights and work myself to the bone. I do it for Estonia, for that principle alone."

After the political euphoria in the winter of 1989-1990, when glasnost spurred dissent and courage, ordinary citizens returned to the
Aiming at Western eyes with their message, Lithuanian activists, aided by American counterparts, paint posters and print pamphlets in English at the Press Center in Vilnius. Across town at a monument factory a worker sweeps off a paint-stained statue of Joseph Stalin, one of many now tucked away in the shadows throughout the Soviet Union.

Russian troops go away from press center...
In solidarity with their Baltic neighbors, Latvia’s leaders, including President Anatolij Gorbunovs (right, at center), gather in Riga on May 4 to declare independence. Spurred by Popular Front members, like Dainis Ivans (with tulips), Gorbunovs and other Latvian communist leaders broke with Moscow to support a measured approach to freedom.

Days later Estonia’s Supreme Council Chairman, Arnold Rüütel (bottom left), announced the decision to drop “Soviet Socialist” from Estonia’s name.

Editing a score in his Vilnius apartment, Lithuanian President and musicologist Vytautas Landsbergis occupied the hottest seat in the Baltics after Lithuania’s historic declaration of independence on March 11.

of the Baltic nations by the Soviet Union in 1940. But only embarrassed silence emanated from the West.

The Little Nations of Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania speak three separate languages. They are drawn from different tribes, each with its own myths and music. Yet their common enemies and circumstances dictate that they fight together. Their leaders have reinstated the Council of Baltic States, last convened in 1939, to present a common front to Moscow. A Baltic common market has been formed to help withstand economic hardships.

But whatever happens economically, the three will stay apart. History has bred the Baltic nations into proud and determined peoples for whom separate nationhood is sacred, because it has been forbidden. Along this glacier-scraped moraine on the eastern Baltic Sea the soil itself is hallowed. In Baltic poetry and songs it is mixed with blood and sacrifice and motherhood, and tinged with memories of animism and forest spirits that the tribes embraced when they reached these shores more than 4,000 years ago.

The homelands have been occupied and colonized, Christianized and socialized by Vikings, medieval German crusaders, Danish, Polish, and Swedish kings, Russian tsars, Nazis. Few have been welcome. This is not the New World, not a melting pot. Foreigners are tolerated here, but they stay foreigners.

Today’s occupiers, the Soviets, returned in 1944, driving the Nazi armies before them.
Thousands upon thousands of Balts fled: those who did not make it were declared “liberated.” The door clamped shut. The Soviets hauled in heavy industry to exploit the educated labor force, and Soviet workers—mainly Russians and Byelorussians—arrived until they rose to nearly a third of the population of the three republics.

Larry and I were hammered almost daily with a potent lament: Tell the Russians to go home. They were not invited here. They have brought fear and mistrust and a haggardness of spirit. They have changed us, eaten at our soul. We have had enough of them.

Now, more than ever before, the Russian-speaking population and the Baltic peoples are estranged and bitterly divided in a sort of mutual apartheid. Already, by official Soviet count, Estonia is 38 percent non-Estonian, and Latvia is 48 percent non-Latvian. Only Lithuania has a solid base—with just 20 percent of its population non-Lithuanian.

To the Baltic peoples these foreigners represent forced Russification. They arrive as migrant workers, many without education and without roots, yet with the arrogance of overseers. They do not bring Dostoyevsky or the Bolshoi Ballet. They have. Balts say, only lowered standards and the quality of life.

“Most of these workers had little idea where they were coming,” said Estonian actor Tõnis Rätsep. “Estonia? Made no difference to them; they just came here for the jobs. What? We've got to learn Estonian? It was news to them. When our new language law was passed, the one that required people in service industries to speak at least 300 words of Estonian, our instructors went to the factories, and they had to start their lectures by showing the workers, on a map, precisely where in the Soviet Union they were.”

In the northeast corner of Estonia, near the town of Kohila-Järve, the twin threats of Russification and pollution have reached their
Western money, patience, and humor are requirements for enjoyment of the mildly risqué show at Riga's Hotel Latvia, says the author, who found the club offered poor service and cheap champagne but no beer or vodka.

Riga, like other Baltic cities, also boasts a rock-oriented youth and arts scene, reminiscent of the 1960s counterculture in America.

In Riga's Vērman Gardens Park a chess game occupies two elderly Russians, whose compatriots, along with other non-Latvians, make up 63 percent of Riga's population. The city is especially popular with retired Soviet military personnel.

The Baltic Nations
declared support for separate Baltic nationhood, many Baltic Russians rally defensively around the old party and the old order. With communism quickly fading even in the Russian Republic, they have become an isolated and reactionary remnant. "The Russians here have very little self-esteem," said Tõnis Ratsep. "And now they have no place to return to. A Russian man came up to me the other day and said, 'I want to go with you, with the Estonians. Tell me what to do. I want only to feed my children.'"

One of the intellectual leaders of Estonia's budding independence movement, Kaido Kama, admits that Baltic activists have erred in neglecting the Russian population. "It could easily backfire on us," he said. "but we really can't have an Estonia in which 40 percent of the people are Russian. A migration is essential. The Russians won't go back to Russia. They will chase the Western life, perhaps go to Finland or Sweden, just as Turkish workers went to Germany."

The Red Army is quite another matter. The military in the Soviet Baltic is massive, larger than that of the Scandinavian countries combined, with perhaps 300,000 soldiers, hundreds of airplanes, and a work force that rivals the civilian economy.

It is also abusive. More than 37,000 hectares (91,000 acres) in north-central Estonia, an area once called the Estonian Switzerland for its beauty, have been turned to wasteland by bombing practice. Jets routinely dump fuel before landing. In Siauliai, Lithuania, near a Soviet airfield, environmentalists told me that birth defects have escalated and children suffer from strange ailments. They blame the fuel dumping and also improperly stored jet fuel that leaks into groundwater.

"Before we can have free elections," said Kama, "the army must be under control. The 50 years of fear that has intimidated people has to be gone. Without that, we are kidding ourselves — this is not a nation."

Kama is a forester by profession, and thus untainted by the past. "I set myself up in the woods in Brezhnev's day," he said, "because
Riga spreads south along the
Baltic is massive, larger
than any other Baltic state.

More than 30,000 kilometers of
coastline in Estonia, an
environmentalists' paradise.

Jets routinely dump fuel
over the Baltic Sea, a
pollution crisis in Estonia.

The Baltic Nations

In this brave new business the ruble is nearly
worthless. “We’ll be using it for wallpaper;
valuta, Western currency, is the medium of choice.

The new law also gave many state enterprises
an allotment of valuta to go shopping in
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money dominate the co-ops, and they remember fondly the good old days of stagnation, when there was more order.

Despite the promises of private enterprise, the lack of basic consumer goods still throws society askew. My guide in Latvia, a lively young professor with a doctorate in English, told me of a sad love affair; her fiancé changed his mind at the last moment. "He married someone else," she said, "who was ten years my senior. She had one thing up on me though: I was only a lecturer at the university; she was the attendant at a gas station."

E DROVE SOUTH from Estonia into Latvia, along the chilly strip of sand by the Gulf of Riga, where the pine trees are tousled by a constant wind. The shift of cultures is subtle—different haystacks, different farmhouse roofs—but the language difference is abrupt. Estonian—akin to Finnish and Hungarian—is a Finno-Ugric language, distinct from the Indo-European languages spoken by Latvians, Lithuanians, and Russians. Latvian and Lithuanian together make up the Baltic branch of the Indo-European family.

Today Russian is heard nearly as often as the mother tongue; unofficial estimates suggest that Latvians may soon be outnumbered by Russians and other non-Balts. New Moscow rules for the secession of republics demand a five-year period of transition and a republic-wide referendum with a two-thirds majority in favor. Even though Lithuania and Estonia could probably win such referenda, they refuse to initiate them, knowing that Latvia would be forced to follow suit and might not be so lucky.

And in Latvia the curtain of fear has not fully lifted. Even in the heart of Riga, by the Latvian Freedom Monument where multiethnic crowds gather every evening to debate the issues of the day, a university professor warned me: "Better not use my name. Don't forget that the Stalinists have all the army and the police. This is like letting prisoners out in

The blossoms of spring and the bloom of youth conspire for laughs on a Latvian bus north of Riga. Famous in medieval times for their honey and herbs, the Baltics are still awash in flowers during their short spring.

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the jail yard for a bit and saying to them, 'You can talk for one hour, but then you must go back, or you will be shot.'

Once forbidden items were for sale on park benches—portraits of former Latvian Republic President Kārlis Ulmanis, underground newspapers, Christian church brochures, kung fu manuals. But both vendors and buyers moved warily and silently, as if they were dealing in pornography or state secrets.

Bolder were the flower vendors, their booths covered with plastic sheets against the drizzle. They coddled and picked at blossoms, preening them like pets. Among the sentimental Balts, the flower business has bloomed so that many of those who cultivate roses and tulips have become wealthy. In winter, roses cost from 3 to 17 rubles each in Riga, for some a full day's salary. I wondered aloud how many rutabagas could be grown with the kind of effort that goes into flowers but was reminded that we were speaking here of soul and beauty, and these things do not carry price tags.

Riga is, like Tallinn, an old Hanseatic League city, its core medieval. Doing research here seemed often like a series of trips up crumbling staircases replete of cigarette smoke, molding plaster, and cat urine.

Up one such staircase were the offices of the Latvia Popular Front, the independence
who cultivate roses and wealth. In winter, roses bloom each in Riga, for some a
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Tallinn, an old Hanseatic medieval. Doing research like a series of trips up crum-
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aircase were the offices of Front, the independence
movement. As in the other Baltic capitals, young, media-wise Americans of Baltic back-
ground had joined the movement, mostly in public relations, dealing with the press and
coordinating information flow between Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius. A journalist who
hooked into this system could cover the three republics in the English language without
missing any vital information.
The Popular Front of Latvia ran on coffee and adrenaline, its offices as tense and
crowded as a railroad station in which everyone is late for the only train.
"There is no time for speculation," said Front member Jānis Škapars. He covered his

From ingots to circuit boards, Baltic workers do it all. Many factories, like the Latvian steel-
works at Liepāja, were built in the post-Stalin era of rapid industrialization. The VEF electronics plant in Riga (above) dates from the inter-
war years, when the republics, then free, took long strides on their own toward economic
development. Latvia itself was at one time one of Europe's more prosperous nations. Today entreprenuers like Vitas Ždanavičius — a Vilnius innkeeper with a new satellite dish — represent the vanguard of a return to private enterprise.

The Baltic Nations
eyes with both hands and drew them slowly down. "Every day there are new plans, new jobs, new developments. The situation is so dynamic—it changes, and we have to change our own thinking. It's like math—plus this, minus this, calculate this new factor in."

The Russians came to Latvia in such great numbers for strategic reasons: it is said that he who controls Riga, with its central location, controls all the Baltic States. Latvia has absorbed some 200,000 Soviet military personnel. The local culture has been bludgeoned, and its remaining champions have an edge of panic in their voices.

"I've been able to resist," said the writer Imants Ziedonis, "but I've seen many of my friends perish—from alcohol, drugs, melancholia. There is immense psychological pressure to conform, to be simply units of production for the state.

"Latvia has a special nature and philosophy that is found in our folk songs, the dainas, that cannot be translated. Because we are not all alike, every Latvian home and garden had its own character, and thus its own philosophy. Most of us have been driven from our old homes and farms—our natural surroundings—by forced collectivization. Instead of farmers, we have become proletarians."

To help recover from that deeply felt sense of loss, Ziedonis has organized a group of 14 men—biologists, artists, and politicians—who spend weekends in the countryside. With saws, axes, and rakes they prune tree branches that block views, clean up scattered leaves, rebuild old stone walls. It is not wilderness that is sacred here but nature tended by the hand of man. These scenes re-create the old Latvia. Ziedonis calls them "holy places."

Ironically their large numbers in Latvia have made Russians less edgy and more open to change than their counterparts in the two other Baltic republics. At a gasoline station in Riga, where I waited more than three hours to reach the pump, I asked a Russian driver brooding in his tiny Moskvich if he feared the Latvians would harm them.

"Nonsense," he answered in fluent Latvian. "Those who've been living here for a long time don't believe it. If I respect Latvians as such, there is nothing to be afraid of. I'd hate to leave. I have my Latvian friends. Nothing bad will happen to me here."

I asked him who was to blame for the blockade of fuel and other supplies by the Soviets. "Mikhail Sergeyevich," he said without hesitation, using the Russian patronymic for President Gorbachev. "I'm a Russian, and they have brought tanks into Lithuania to protect people like me. And now it's this." He twisted his hands as if he were wringing a neck. "Now they're hurting me."

We slipped quietly into Lithuania. Although by then most foreign journalists had been forced out of the capital city of Vilnius as their visas expired, no guards patrolled the border with Latvia, and even the grain silos made us feel as though we had come from, say, Indiana to Ohio. We lunch on the road, at a privately owned snack bar—eating chunks of beef, chopped onion, and a credible barbecue sauce, with a glass of buttermilk.

The farmsteads here were molded to the knolls of dark soil like gravestones. Each nurtured a small greenhouse full of vegetable and flower sprouts basking in the April sun. Buds weighed down the tips of branches, but the air was cold and whippet thin. And then a Soviet helicopter, armed with missiles, cut a diagonal across the highway.

Estonia had been courageous and a trifle arrogant. Latvia had been tentative and fearful. But Lithuania stood confident. It made a clean cut with Moscow, at least technically. Not a red flag was to be seen in Vilnius, a gracious city that retains an air of cosmopolitan, old-world charm. The parliament nearly burst with brand-new deputies in rumpled suits. More than 70 percent had been backed by Sajudis, the grass-roots independence movement. Many were elected for their lack of experience in the bankrupt independence movement. The 28-year-old minister of culture still lived in a student dormitory with his wife and a young son.

I was in the gallery when the ministers were sworn in; the oath ended "so help me God."

Unmitigated pollution, like this dust spewing from the Kunda cement factory on Estonia's coast, is a scourge of the Baltics and a shame of the communist economic system. Cause of untold medical problems, Kunda's "gray snow" hardens like mortar on village roofs.
An unassuming musicologist named Vytautas Landsbergis was the new president of the Supreme Council, the first non-communist leader of a Soviet republic in history, a man with no experience in diplomatic niceties or political brutality. On March 11, 1990, he declared that Lithuania was free.

Arunė Degutis, a busy graphics designer who offered her guest room to us, remembered rushing upstairs that night to tell her four-year-old daughter. "I wanted her to remember. 'Igne, Igne!' I said. 'Lithuania has declared independence today. Do you know?'

"She looked up at me and said, sleepily, 'Bananas? She meant would we now have the possibility to buy fresh fruit.'"

Even Igne Degutis knew the shape of the future, but the present was more problematic.

"This parliament is like the campus radicals who occupied your college buildings in the 1960s," said a woman journalist, "with their feet propped up on the dean’s desk, smoking his cigars."

The citizens of Vilnius debated as they rejoiced. As satisfying as it was to let these Sajudis amateurs thumb their noses at Gorbachev, wouldn’t it be better to let old pros like Algirdas Brazauskas finish off the deal?

The reformist Communist Party that had led Lithuania to the threshold of independence, chaired by the popular Brazauskas, was suddenly reduced to shouting from the corners as the opposition party.

"The Communist Party is not the party we have been for 45 years," activist Gediminas Kirkilas assured me. "It’s now social democratic in its concept. This name, the communist name, is alive just because of tactics, to keep contacts with Moscow. We acknowledge this pluralistic system."

As the war of telegrams and phone calls escalated, as Soviet tanks made their show of force in the streets in March, as the Kremlin launched the energy embargo in May that had people dusting off their bicycles to save gasoline, and as Gorbachev’s long-awaited summit with President George Bush in June resolved nothing, Lithuania stood firm.

At a rally of university students, parliament deputy Algimantas Čekuolius told the crowd: "In other parts of the world such things are happening with bloodshed and violence. But we are not in Afghanistan or Pakistan. This is Lithuanian-style revolution. Whenever you meet a Russian in the street, take him by the..."
Sign of a new religious tolerance, two Pentecostal ministers lay their hands on young Viktoria Kuzmina during a service in Riga (right). Despite government discouragement, Latvians and Estonians have managed to sustain a strong Lutheran tradition. Throughout the Baltics, religion has provided the most natural means of protest against Marxist doctrine.

Like a good shepherd, depicted in a wood carving at a cemetery near Paberze (left), the Roman Catholic Church of Lithuania has proved a stalwart guardian of national cohesiveness through centuries of foreign domination. The last nation in Europe to accept Christianity, Lithuania was not converted en masse until 1386, when its Grand Duke Jagiello married the 13-year-old Polish Queen Jadwiga. Even so, many peasants remained pagan until the 16th century.

In Kaunas, which served as Lithuania's capital during its independence, the Cathedral of Kaunas (below) dates from the 15th century.
Sacred ground for Lithuanians, the Hill of Crosses north of Šiauliai bristles with thousands of crosses erected over the years by the faithful to honor their dead. As much a patriotic as a

arm and show him the way. Be kind. This is our nuclear weapon. He has no defense against it. The important thing is to keep our calm."

As they often are, young men were asked to make the sacrifice for others. When the Soviet Army held its spring draft, they were asked by local governments not to go, to resist serving in a foreign army.

For the past four years, as independence movements blossomed throughout the Baltic States, soldiers had been systematically harassed, branded "fascists," and beaten by fellow soldiers. Some committed suicide. Thousands fled for home.

Legislation passed by all three Baltic governments offers alternative civilian service for those of draft age. A support group named Geneva-49, for the Geneva Convention of 1949 that forbade conscription by an occupying army, has formed to aid resisters.

The army was not impressed. Last March in Vilnius, 21 defecting Lithuanian soldiers had taken refuge in a psychiatric hospital, under supervision of the Red Cross, when Soviet troops smashed in. All were dragged away.

In the town of Panevėžys, I spoke to the families of two captured soldiers. Angele Malinauskas described the scene after her nephew, Gintaras Stitilis, was taken:

"There was glass all over—broken. All the doors had been ripped off their hinges. And there were drops of blood. One mother was sitting there, screaming, holding her son's bloody jacket. All the people were crying; the doctor couldn't speak."

The army would not tell the families anything. Veronika Krasauskas finally got a telegram from her son, Kestutis. It was sent from Anadyr, eastern Siberia, closer to Los Angeles than to Vilnius. The contents: "Parents, I am alive and well. I am in Chukotka, and I will write details later."

"All the mothers got this telegram," said Mrs. Krasauskas, her eyes misting. "They were all the same. The same wording. He... he doesn't even have a coat or a toothbrush, not even one kopeck."

Kestutis's father, Povilas, stared at the

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late one night in Vilnius. As a Jew and as a Lithuanian, he understood persecution and a social system that could not tolerate the independent heart.

"For me, as a Jewish man, freedom for Lithuania means not only leaving the Soviet Union, not only material things, but above all the rebirth of our own moral, spiritual, and individual values — when all are welcome to be themselves. You don't know what it means to have a man like Landsbergis for our president at this time — a creative person, a person with sensitivity."

IN HIS SMALL APARTMENT in Vilnius, Vytautas Landsbergis was struggling with his necktie, pausing now and then to sip from a cup of tea. I had come to interview the President of Lithuania that morning, but he told me he had some work to do first. Statecraft, I imagined — perhaps an urgent telegram from Mikhail Gorbachev. But Landsbergis took out a folder full of sheet music. "I promised a friend I'd edit this," he said apologetically.

"We have the support of the people," he said later. "We are a moral force in the face of this great immorality. We knew the Western powers would not support us. But we decided we needed this declaration of independence now! It must be done! Of course the other Baltic States must take action now too. And it's uncomfortable for Western governments as well; we are sorry for them." He laughed. "But for us, it would be much more uncomfortable staying in the Soviet Union for the next 50 years."

He even played the piano for me. Prelude in E flat by Mikalojus K. Ciurlionis, the Lithuanian composer whose works he studies and promotes. He played with powerful fingers and compassion, with a slightly hunched back, leaning into the piano as he might have leaned on an old friend, someone to trust in these times of pain and joy and quiet revolution — the first free man in Lithuania.

National Geographic, November 1990
Presentation to the AABS Canadian Committee and Chair of Estonian Studies symposium:

POLICIES AND REALITIES - Minorities in the Baltic Republics

by Ojars Kalnins, Ambassador to the United States
for the Republic of Latvia
February 5, 1994
Toronto, Canada

In any presentation of the minorities policies of the Republic of Latvia, it is first necessary to place Latvia into its proper historical and political context. Latvia is not a newly independent state that was recently forged from the former Soviet Union. Nor is it country like France with centuries old laws and established demographic patterns to build on.

Latvia is both old and new, a nation in transition. It is a democratic republic which legally came into existence in 1918, much the same way many of today's sovereign nations were born. At its birth it was the nation of a distinct, homogenous people, built upon a common culture, language and social experience. People, who in 1918 recognized their right to political autonomy and a state of their own. This desire of the Latvian people to forge their own unique state was in turn recognized by the world community.

But Latvia's fate, like that of its Baltic neighbors, Estonia and Lithuania, has been unique in that its natural development as a nation-state was brutally and abruptly halted by the Soviet invasion and occupation of 1940. I would like to begin this presentation with a premise, namely, had not Latvia been invaded and demographically altered by the Soviet Union these last 50 years, there would be no discussion of about minorities in our country. It is somewhat ironic, but not all that surprising, that the so-called "minority problem" in Latvia has been created, either in perception or in fact, largely outside of Latvia. In one sense, I believe the evidence will show that there is no "minority problem" in Latvia at all. There is indeed a social problem in Latvia, namely the uncertain status of nearly 700,000 former Soviet citizens who are now technically stateless. These people may be in a political limbo, but they are not a traditional minority. Their problem was initially created by a Soviet Communist government headed by Joseph Stalin in 1940, and was exacerbated for 50 years by successive Soviet regimes in Moscow.

During Latvia's independence between 1918 and 1940, and even in the centuries before that, Latvia always had a sizable minority population. Nearly 23% of Latvia's population was Russian, German or that of other ethnic groups. During independence, these minorities lived side by side with the indigenous Latvian population and enjoyed full human and civil rights.

Between 1940 and 1991, the Soviet government sent hundreds of thousands of Soviet citizens into the occupied territory of Latvia. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Latvia's citizens were either killed, deported or otherwise forced out of Latvia. This was both an invasion and a systematic resettlement of a sovereign country. During this half century of illegal occupation, Latvia's demographic balance was radically and artificially altered.

In 1990 Latvia declared its intention to restore its independence and in 1991 that independence was fully restored. With that, Latvia restored its constitution, its laws and its citizenship policies. Just as during its first period of independence, the restored Republic of Latvia embraced policies that forbid discrimination against minorities or ethnic groups. For example, the Supreme Council of the Republic of Latvia passed a law on March 19, 1991 which states, "Republic of Latvia residents are guaranteed, regardless of their nationality, equal human rights which correspond to international standards." This same law also guarantees to "all permanent residents in the republic, regardless of their nationality, equal rights to work and wages" and adds that "any activity directed toward national discrimination or the promotion of national hatred is punishable by law."
In addition, the Latvian law on citizenship, first passed in 1919, was renewed by resolution in 1991. The Sept. 1993 report by the staff of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, entitled "Human Rights and Democratization in Latvia", states, "The principle of this resolution was citizenship, not ethnicity: non-Latvians who were citizens of the interwar Republic of Latvia had their citizenship reinstated: though available figures vary, and sometimes widely, these people together with their descendants number between 300,000 - 500,000. On the other hand, some 30,000-40,000 ethnic Latvians who were not citizens did not obtain citizenship".

Allow me to repeat those figures: following the restoration of Latvia's independence in 1991, over 300,000 non-Latvians, mostly Russians, had their citizenship restored, while over 30,000 ethnic Latvians did not. This is a fact which should put to rest once and for all any claims that Latvia has denied citizenship to ethnic Russians, or bases citizenship on ethnicity.

The issue at hand, therefore, concerns the 700,000 or so former Soviet citizens who now reside in Latvia. It has been claimed that Latvia has disenfranchised these individuals. But if anyone has disenfranchised them, it is the Soviet Union. These individuals entered or were born in Latvia as Soviet citizens. They did not recognize Latvia as an independent state, they did not emigrate into a country they recognized as Latvia, and had no intention of becoming Latvian citizens. They were Soviet citizens. The moment the Soviet Union ceased to exist, they lost their citizenship and became stateless.

Like millions of others who have endured hardship as a result of both the creation and eventual dissolution of the Soviet Union, these individuals now face an uncertain political status. But they have a choice. All of them have had a right to apply for citizenship in the country of their origin, be it Russia, Ukraine, Belorus or another former Soviet Republic. Had they so chosen, they would have become citizens of these states. In such cases, they could remain in Latvia as permanent resident immigrants. Canada, the United States and most every other democratic country in the world has a substantial population of resident aliens, who enjoy the same basic human rights as citizens. The former Soviet citizens who choose Russian or other citizenship and wish to remain in Latvia can still do so. Their status would be no different than that of a landed immigrant in Canada.

If, however, these former Soviet citizens wish to become citizens of Latvia, they will also have this opportunity. The Latvian parliament is presently deliberating over a draft naturalization law which will set the conditions for the acquisition of citizenship. Once this law is passed, every permanent legal resident of Latvia will have an opportunity to apply for citizenship. But until then, these stateless individuals will continue to enjoy the same basic human rights as Latvian citizens. As I mentioned earlier, Latvia's laws do not allow for discrimination against any ethnic group, regardless of their citizenship status.

The discussion of minority rights in Latvia has been muddled by those who insist on equating human rights with political rights. But these are two very distinct and separate issues. During the last three years, the Latvian government has invited and welcomed every conceivable international organization and/or human rights group to come to Latvia and determine the situation for themselves. Numerous fact-finding missions have been sent by the Secretary General of the United Nations, CSCE, and Council of Europe. All have concluded that there are no systematic human rights violations in Latvia. The United States government has done its own evaluations and reached the same conclusions in its annual State Department Human Rights report. In February 1994, Latvia's Foreign Minister Georgs Andrejevs led a delegation of Latvia's parliamentary leaders to Washington, D.C. where they met with President Clinton, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, NSC Director Anthony Lake and other U.S. officials. We were repeatedly and consistently told that the U.S. does not believe there are human rights violations in Latvia. This fact has been conveyed to the Russian government during every meeting the US has had with Russian officials.

Nevertheless, Russian officials insist on accusing Latvia of human rights violations. What evidence do they offer? Last year, for example, the US Department of State received a complaint from the Russian government, in which Latvia was accused of violating the human rights of retired Soviet military officers. The specific charge?
That these retired military men were being forced to pay for the use of public transportation in Latvia. Under Soviet law, retired officers could ride the buses for free. Independent Latvia, however, does not have such a provision, and asks all its residents - including retired Soviet military - to pay for the privilege of riding a bus. A bus token costs 4 santims - that's about 7 cents. This is what some Russian officials view as a human rights violation.

Russia spokesmen have also claimed that ethnic Russians are being put out of work in Latvia. Yes, this is true. Factories are indeed closing down and workers are going on unemployment. Are ethnic Russians among those losing jobs? Yes. Largely because these factories were built by the Soviets and staffed by Soviets - mostly ethnic Russians - to serve the Soviet economy. But there is no longer a Soviet economy and many of these factories can no longer economically justify their existence. All employees, regardless of ethnicity, face the same prospect of unemployment. Many of these Latvian factories depended upon Russia for their raw materials and supplies. When Russian authorities choose to end their relationship with these factories, it is they who are putting ethnic Russians out of work in Latvia.

The United States has allocated $160 million to build housing for Russian military leaving the Baltic States. This project has been stalled because of corruption and confusion within the Russian Federation. Latvia has offered its own construction companies, many of them employing mostly ethnic Russians, to build the housing. By doing so, Latvia feels it can not only expedite the project but also provide employment to Latvia's ethnic Russian community. But US legislation requires that this money go to Russian companies. Were Russia to request that the Latvian companies participate in the construction, this provision could be overridden and both Russian officers and workers could benefit. So far, Russia has declined to do so.

Russia's highly publicized concern for the welfare of ethnic Russians in Latvia also falls short in another area. There is an ethnic Russian organization in Latvia called "Roots", which seeks to promote the repatriation of ethnic Russians to Russia. Clearly many patriotic Russians would like to return to their homeland but cannot do so because of financial constraints and reported housing shortages in Russia. To date, the Russian government has done nothing to assist their compatriots in Latvia in this regard. Rather than welcome their countrymen home, the Russian government is insisting that they remain in Latvia and acquire Latvian citizenship.

Interestingly enough, under pressure from the Russian government, the debate over minority rights in the Baltic States has actually begun to shift in a significant way. In the face of overwhelming evidence that there are no human rights violations in Latvia, some human rights groups have begun to redefine the concept of human rights. They have begun to claim that citizenship itself is a human right. I am not a legal scholar and do not wish to undertake this complex argument here, but can with some assurance state that this shift is somewhat unprecedented, controversial and were it to continue, could threaten the sovereignty of every democratic nation.

Traditionally, the sovereignty of a nation is based upon three factors: its territory, its citizens and a government, elected by the citizens, to effectively control that territory. Until now, the requirements for citizenship in any country were always viewed as something which the government, and the government alone, could determine. To my knowledge, there is nothing in any international human rights covenant which sets forth a universal norm for granting citizenship. Nor is there a sovereign country on this globe whose citizenship laws were created by someone other than government of that country.

Nevertheless, in response to the urging of the Russian government, some groups have tried to dictate to Latvia what its citizenship laws should be. I think this sets a dangerous precedent, for were these groups to succeed, every nation, including Canada and United States, could come under pressure to change its citizenship laws to please some pressure group.

For example, the New York-based Lawyer's Committee for Human Rights has urged Latvia to adopt a naturalization law, known as the "zero option" which would grant automatic citizenship to all permanent residents of Latvia. Among its arguments, is the assertion that Latvia should give weight to an individual's "link
to his community” and “nationality” links. If this line of reasoning were taken to its logical conclusion, then it would become clear that a majority of the ethnic Russians living in Latvia should become citizens of Russia, not Latvia.

Let us take, for example, the approximately 20,000 retired Soviet army officers, who along with their families, and former KGB and Soviet Communist Party officials, represent a large portion of the presently “stateless”, but permanent residents of Latvia. For most of these individuals, Latvia never represented a “community”. Most never even recognized the existence of Latvia, had no intention to learn the Latvian language and had no social, cultural or psychological ties to the Latvian people. The “community” to which they were linked was the Soviet Union, the Soviet State, the Soviet military and Soviet Communist Party apparatus. Throughout their residency in Latvia they read Soviet newspapers, watched Soviet TV and listened to Soviet radio. For most, their language, culture and identity was ethnic Russian. They knew more about Moscow - because this was their only source of information - than they knew about Riga, their physical place of residence. Many viewed Latvian statehood as anathema to their own interests. It is therefore no surprise that between 1988 and 1991 many of these retired army officers and Party officials made up the bulk of anti-independence forces in Latvia. They actively opposed Latvia’s independence because their interests, identity and community were Soviet and Russian. Any prescription for a “zero option” citizenship law would have the affect of automatically conferring citizenship upon individuals who are directly opposed the independence and sovereignty of Latvia.

If indeed, as the Lawyer’s Committee for Human Rights states, citizenship should be accorded based on one’s links to the community, the Russian government should be making every effort to grant these former Soviets Russian citizenship, for Russia has claimed it is the legal successor of the Soviet State.

I would like to end this presentation as I began, with an attempt to put this issue into a broader perspective. First of all, as numerous international organizations have already determined, there are no violations of human rights in Latvia. There is, however, a controversy over the future political rights of presently stateless, but formerly Soviet citizens.

Some have agreed that Latvia does indeed have the legal right to set any citizenship law it wishes, but have urged the Latvian parliament to adopt a more liberal law for purely practical and political reasons, namely so as not to antagonize Russia. This is like telling the victim of a burglary to donate some of his belongings to the family of the thief, to avoid angering him into a later reprisal. We are told we have a right to do as we see fit, but that it would be most prudent to see it Russia’s way.

In defence of prudence, we have also been told that the granting of instant citizenship to stateless Russians would ensure their loyalty to the Latvian State. But citizenship does not necessarily foster loyalty. Usually, it is the other way around. The weakness of this argument has already been demonstrated in Ukraine, where former Soviet Russians were given citizenship and thus the right to vote, and subsequently have created a political crisis in Ukraine due to their support of separatist (in the Crimea especially) pro-Russian political forces. While physically residing in Ukraine, these voters are still loyal to Russia and are using their Ukrainian citizenship to weaken Ukraine’s sovereignty and national integrity. The addition of 700,000 voters of uncertain loyalty to Latvia’s voting population could bring about disastrous consequences in Latvia’s delicate political balance.

But Russia’s antagonism has many motivations, including internal political concerns. That antagonism also rises and falls in direct relation to the response of the international community. If the international community indicates a willingness to appease Russia on this issue, Russia’s pressure on Latvia will increase. In effect, the international community will enable Russia to dictate Latvia’s citizenship laws.

On the other hand, were the international community to make it clear to Russia that it will not be appeased on this issue, Latvia will be able to pursue the legal, just and fair policies which protect all its residents, as well as, its own security.
And this is the perspective with which I would like to conclude. Latvia, like all the once occupied states of the former Soviet Union, is in a very difficult and delicate transition period. While academicians and legal scholars can talk about abstract principles under ideal conditions, Latvia must deal with very real issues under very dangerous and difficult conditions.

Our people and nation have barely survived a brutal and destructive 50-year occupation. The Latvian people, culture and language were on the verge of total annihilation. It will take years, perhaps decades, to undo the damage of this occupation. That damage goes beyond Latvia's physical environment or infrastructure, but has opened wounds in the very social, political and psychological fabric of our nation. Under ideal conditions, it would take years to stabilize our institutions to secure the restoration of our democratic system.

But the conditions are far from ideal. As this is written, over 10,000 armed Russian troops still occupy Latvian soil. Former Soviet KGB officers and other enemies of our state continue to operate freely on our territory. Where logic would dictate that we remove these avowed enemies from our land, Russian authorities are demanding that we give them Latvian citizenship and empower them to take part in the very government they are trying to destroy.

Some have said we exaggerate the internal and external threats to our countries. Yet each week, voices in Moscow speak openly of Russian spheres of influence, armed intervention in the near abroad and even the restoration of the former Russian empire. And it is not only radicals such as Vladimir Zhirinovsky who echo these threats to our nation.

This symposium is entitled "Policies and Realities". I have presented some of the policies of our government, and can anticipate presentations later this day which will point out some of the shortcomings in the implementation of these policies. We are well aware of these shortcomings and are working with our friends in Europe and North America to rectify them. But the reality of Latvia today is that 50 years of occupation cannot be undone in 3 years of restored independence. Our present government is less than one year old. Our institutions and ministries are being reformed and rebuilt, in many cases, from scratch. Our judicial and security agencies are undergoing profound growing pains and should be expected to make mistakes.

During the last year one Latvian government agency - the Citizenship and Immigration Department - has been criticized for improprieties concerning the manner in which it implements Latvian law. Subsequently, the head of this department was dismissed by the Latvian government and the activities of this department are being investigated. We are attempting to deal with this and other problems in good faith. I believe, and I think most will agree, that our policies are sound and fair. The reality is more complex. It will take time, patience and the help of our friends to bring this reality into line with our policies.

To those who question our good faith in this, I ask you to consider Latvia's task from a Latvian perspective. There is only one place in the world that ethnic Latvians can call their homeland. Approximately 1.5 million ethnic Latvians live there, on 24,000 square miles of land. We are not many, and our land is not large. But it is all we have, and we ask for nothing more. To our east is a nation of 150,000 million Russians living on 7 million square miles of land. It would be suicidal for us to do anything to antagonize or threaten this huge and powerful neighbor. But by the same token, we see no reason why this huge nation should wish to interfere with us.

The Russian culture is an old and great one, and is now on the doorstep of finally realizing the fruits of freedom, democracy and prosperity. It has more than enough land and resources to fulfill its promise. If the Russian government is truly concerned about the welfare of the Russian people and culture, it should focus its energies on Russia itself, and maximize the opportunity for loyal Russians to become an integral part of Russia's future.
Latvia threatens no one. Not its neighbors, not its minorities, nor even those who threaten the very existence of our state. All we ask is the opportunity to restore our land, our state and our society to the best of our abilities. Those who wish to be a part of our society, partake of our culture, obey our laws and share our commitment to Latvia’s future, will always be welcome in our land. Together, we hope to build a brighter tomorrow, not only for Latvia, but for the entire global community of which we hope to be an integral and invaluable part.

Ojars Kalnins - Ambassador - Toronto, Canada

February 5, 1994 (Revised June 1994)
ESTONIA

1990 Population: 1,573,000

Area: 17,400 sq. mi.

Economy: Fishing, farming and shipbuilding are most important industries.

People: Estonians are ethnically and linguistically related to Finns. Russian minority concentrated in Tallinn and eastern areas.

History: Conquered by German knights in the Middle Ages; ruled by Sweden before 1921, then Russia until 1920; independent after World War I until occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

President: Arnold Ruutel

Flag Colors: Top and bottom, blue, black and white.

LATVIA

1990 Population: 2,681,000

Area: 24,600 sq. mi.

Economy: Most industrialized of Baltic states, with textiles, chemicals, electronics, machinery manufacturing; dairy farming.

People: Latvians speak a Baltic language and are descended from the tribes of Liv, Lett and Kur.

History: Conquered by German knights in the Middle Ages; ruled by Lithuania, then Sweden before 1721, then Russia until 1918; independent after World War I until occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

President: Anatolijs Gorbunovs

Flag colors: Maroon and white.

LITHUANIA

1990 Population: 3,690,000

Area: 25,200 sq. mi.

Economy: Heavily agricultural, with dairy and meat farming, flax, sugar beets, potatoes and vegetables. Many mineral resources; hydroelectric power.

People: A Baltic people with ancient roots.

History: Rule of Lithuanian kings extended to Byelorussia and the Ukraine in the 15th century; merged with Poland in 1569; annexed by Russia when Poland was partitioned in the 18th century; independent in 1920; occupied and annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.
President: Vytautas Landsbergis.

Flag Colors: Top to bottom, yellow, green and red.

(Sources: The Europa World Yearbook; Encyclopedia Britanica; U.S.S.R. Facts and Figures Annual) (pg. 4)

"The Baltics: The Path to Independence"

1990

March 11: The Lithuanian Parliament declares the republic's independence, arguing that its incorporation into the Soviet Union was illegal.

April 18: Moscow cuts off oil supplies to Lithuania, the first step in economic sanctions imposed by the Kremlin.


June 29: Lithuania votes to suspend independence declaration to allow discussion with Moscow on its future.

July 12: Soviet Government lifts sanctions.

1991

Jan. 10: President Mikhail S. Gorbachev tells Lithuania to act in line with Soviet law or face possible direct rule.

Jan. 13: At least 13 people are killed and more than 100 wounded when Soviet Army storms television tower in Vilnius, Lithuania's capital. A curfew is imposed and attempts are made to install pro-Moscow government.

Jan. 20: At least four people are killed and nine wounded when Soviet troops storm the Latvian Interior Ministry in Rigs.

Jan. 22: Gorbachev says the shootings in the Baltics will be investigated and demands immediate repeal of laws passed by pro-independence parliaments in the three republics.

Feb. 9: Lithuanians, in a poll declared illegal by Gorbachev, votes by huge majority to restore the republic's pre-World War II independence.

July 29: The Russian Federation and Lithuania sign a friendship treaty recognizing Lithuania as a sovereign state.

Aug. 20: After a hard-line coup in Moscow against Gorbachev, Estonia declares its immediate independence.

Aug. 21: Latvia declares independence.

Aug. 25: Lithuanian President says achieving Baltic independence is now a formality.
Sept. 2: President Bush announces the United States is granting full diplomatic recognition to the Baltic Republics.

Sept. 6: The Soviet Union’s new ruling council, at its first meeting, recognizes the independence of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia.

(Source: Reuters) (pg 4)