

1954**Department of State, Memorandum, 'The Attitude of the United States and Other Governments Toward the Forced Incorporation of the Baltic Republics into the Soviet Union'****Citation:**

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Summary:

State Department memorandum summarizing policy toward Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia following the Soviet incorporation of the Baltic States.

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The Attitude of the United States and Other Governments
Toward the Forced Incorporation of the Baltic Republics
Into the Soviet Union

The United States has not recognized the "incorporation" of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and continues to recognize the diplomatic and consular representatives of those States in this country. On July 23, 1940 the United States Government issued a statement denouncing the "devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic republics - Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania - were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors". The "devious processes" referred to were the Soviet-style single list elections hastily staged after the Soviet occupation of June 15, 1940, and the precipitate decisions of the puppet parliaments so "elected" to declare the Baltic States "Soviet Republics" and to request immediate incorporation into the Soviet Union.

This Government's statement declared further that the people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or the threat of force, and that the American people are opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one state, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak. Finally the American Government declared that the United States will continue to stand by those principles which we believe must govern international relations, "because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice and of law - in other words the basis of modern civilization itself - cannot be preserved".

At the time of the illegal occupation of the Baltic countries by the Soviet Union all three of the Baltic States had representatives in the United States. Lithuania was represented by Mr. Povilas Zedekis, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, who is still in this country in this capacity. Estonia was represented by Mr. Johannes Kaiv, Acting Consul General of Estonia in New York City in Charge of Legation who is still in this country in this capacity. Latvia was represented by Dr. Alfred Hilmanis, Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary, who died in July 1948. Dr. Hilmanis

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was succeeded by Minister Jules Feldmans, who in the absence of a Latvian Government in fact to accredit him as Latvian Minister, presented his credentials as Charge d'Affaires of the Legation of Latvia in June 1949. Mr. Feldmans was appointed by Mr. Charles Zarine, Latvian Minister in London, who made the appointment under special emergency powers granted by the last independent Latvian Government. Subsequent to the death of Minister Feldmans on August 16, 1953, Dr. Anatol Dinbergs has functioned as Charge d'Affaires ad interim of the Latvian Legation in Washington.

The Baltic diplomatic representatives in this country are listed in the Diplomatic List of the Department of State. They have full diplomatic privileges and immunities and their missions function as do other diplomatic missions, issuing passports, clarifying citizenship status, assisting in the settlement of displaced persons, issuing notariats, making available publications and other material regarding their countries, and so forth.

With reference to Governments, other than that of the United States, appropriate and authoritative definition of the attitude of a foreign Government towards the "incorporation" of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union must come from the foreign Government itself. In the unique circumstances imposed by the sudden Soviet "incorporation" of the Baltic Republics, involving both the destruction of the legitimate Governments of the Baltic States and the continued presence abroad of Baltic diplomatic and consular representatives, the question of the evolving attitudes of the various foreign Governments towards the Baltic Republics, their official representatives, and their citizens, has become an exceedingly complicated one susceptible of precise definition only in the case of a few countries.

On the basis of such information as is available to this Department, it appears that the Vatican and Spain have not recognized either de jure or de facto the incorporation of the Baltic Republics into the Soviet Union. Great Britain has not recognized the incorporation de jure but appears to have done so de facto. The position of France and most other countries with whom the independent Baltic Republics maintained diplomatic relations appear similar to that of Great Britain.

In the case of the Netherlands, recognition of incorporation appears to have followed inevitably from the fact that the Netherlands extended de jure recognition to the Soviet Union at a time when the

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Soviet Union had already absorbed the Baltic Republics. Sweden recognized incorporation de jure. In the circumstances of the relationship which existed in 1940 between Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany on the one hand and the Soviet Union on the other, the German and Italian Governments closed down the diplomatic and consular offices of the independent Baltic representatives. While it is not considered that the German Federal Republic and the Government of Italy recognize de jure the incorporation of the Baltic Republics into the Soviet Union, they have not extended full recognition to Baltic diplomatic or consular representatives as official representatives of the Baltic countries.

A number of Governments recognize Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian citizenship, as well as Soviet citizenship, while at the same time not otherwise acting officially to define their attitude towards the Baltic Republics. Some Governments grant diplomatic courtesies to certain Baltic diplomatic officials without prejudice to whether or not these Governments consider the Baltic representatives as having official capacities.

Whatever their official attitude may be, many Governments other than the United States have given concrete evidence of their sympathy for and interest in the Baltic countries. Baltic refugees, for example, have found asylum and the opportunity to live and work in freedom in Great Britain, Canada, Australia, Brazil and Uruguay, where consular representatives are permitted to function for the protection of the interest of Baltic nationals.

The United States will continue to stand by these principles, because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice and of law—in other words the basis of modern civilization itself—cannot be preserved.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

FOR THE PRESS

July 23, 1940

STATEMENT BY THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE,
THE HONORABLE SURBNER WELLES

During these past few days the devious processes whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic republics—Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania—were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion.

From the day when the peoples of these republics first gained their independent and democratic form of government the people of the United States have watched their admirable progress in self-government with deep and sympathetic interest.

The policy of this Government is universally known. The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force. They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one state, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak.

These principles constitute the very foundations upon which the existing relationship between the twenty-one sovereign republics of the New World rests.

The United States will continue to stand by these principles, because of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice and of law—in other words the basis of modern civilization itself—cannot be preserved.
