

FOIA MARKER

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Folder Title:

Latvia: Russia - Latvia [1]

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Withdrawal/Redaction Sheet

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
001. email	White House Situation Room to Susan Braden, et al., re: [Latvia-Russia Relations] (3 pages)	04/01/1998	P1/b(1)
002a. fax	Fax coversheets (4 pages)	03/13/1998	P1/b(1)
002b. report	Re: [Russian-Latvian Relations] (1 page)	03/12/1998	P1/b(1)
003. email	White House Situation Room to Susan Braden, et al., re: [Latvia] (6 pages)	04/06/1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
004. email	White House Situation Room to Stephen Flanagan, et al., re: [Meeting] (2 pages)	07/20/1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
005. email	White House Situation Room to Susan Braden, et al., re: [Deputy Secretary's July 8 Meeting] (4 pages)	07/20/1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
006. memo	Eileen Malloy to the Deputy Secretary, re: [Your Meeting with Vladis Birkavs] (6 pages)	04/23/1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
007. report	U.S. Government Report (2 pages)	01/06/1998	P1/b(1)
008. briefing	Re: [Latvia] (1 page)	ea. 1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
009. talking points	[Talking Points for Moscow Trip] (3 pages)	ea. 1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
010a. memo	Eileen Malloy and Ross Wilson to the Secretary, re: [Latvia] (5 pages)	04/23/1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023
010b. paper	Re: [Operational Plan] (4 pages)	04/23/1998	P1/b(1) VZ 9/21/2023

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Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
European Affairs (Norland, Richard)
OA/Box Number: 2630

FOLDER TITLE:

Latvia: Russia - Latvia [1]

2011-1037-F
ke2195

RESTRICTION CODES

Presidential Records Act - [44 U.S.C. 2204(a)]

Freedom of Information Act - [5 U.S.C. 552(b)]

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P2 Relating to the appointment to Federal office [(a)(2) of the PRA]
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PRM. Personal record misfile defined in accordance with 44 U.S.C. 2201(3).

RR. Document will be reviewed upon request.

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**STATEMENT BY MINISTER FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF THE
REPUBLIC OF LATVIA, VALDIS BIRKAVS, REGARDING A
BOMB EXPLOSION IN KRONVALDA PARK ON APRIL 6TH**

The Minister of Foreign Affairs unequivocally reproves those responsible for the bomb explosion on the night of April 6th, 1998, in Kronvalda Park, near the Embassy of the Russian Federation. The Minister considers as completely unacceptable any and all terrorism and extremism aimed at destruction of security and public order; especially so in instances which endanger foreign diplomatic missions in the Republic of Latvia. The Minister expresses deep indignation at this act of terrorism, and is convinced that the perpetrators of this cynical and provocative act will not succeed in destabilising the political situation in Latvia, nor in discrediting Latvia before the international society.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs regrets the damage caused to the vehicles of the Embassy of Russian Federation, and reiterates the strong resolution of the government of Latvia to guarantee the safety and inviolability of foreign missions, in compliance with the 1961 Vienna Convention.

Accountable government institutions will endeavour to disclose to do all possible, such that those responsible for this act of terrorism are apprehended forthwith, and are sentenced to the maximum allowable by law.



EMBASSY OF LATVIA

4525 17th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20011
Phone: (202) 725-4215
Fax: (202) 725-6785

FAX MESSAGE

TO: S. FLANAGAN

FROM: E. SEMANIS

DATE: APRIL 7

PAGES TO FOLLOW: 2



Embassy of Latvia

PRESS RELEASE

April 6, 1998

Statement of the heads of Latvia's major churches:

The following joint statement appeared in Latvian newspapers on Saturday, April 4, 1998:

Your love, o Lord, reaches to the heavens and your faithfulness to the skies

For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.

See how the evildoers lie fallen – thrown down, not able to rise!

Psalm 36.

We would like to express our condolences and acknowledge our solidarity with the Latvian Jewish community in relation to the terrorist act, which was directed against the Synagogue of Riga on the night of April 2. The provocation, the purpose of which obviously was to create the perception in the international community that anti-Semitism is raging in Latvia, has created enormous moral harm, not only to our State. Most of all the Jewish community has suffered, its sacred objects have been desecrated, and profound damage was done to the temple.

It is absolutely unacceptable to make use of a nation or religious organization as a means to achieve a political goal. The suffering of the people and the defiled holy places is too high a price. The morality of those, who planned and executed this act of terror, is

miserable and repugnant. We appeal to the terrorists to acknowledge the amorality of their action. We appeal to the law enforcement institutions of Latvia to do everything in their power to make such attacks impossible in the future. We also appeal to Latvian society to express its solidarity with the Jewish community in this critical moment and where possible, to provide practical assistance in the restoration of the Synagogue. It is very important that Jews and those of all other nationalities that live in Latvia be able to live with peaceful hearts and a feeling of security. Only then will the task of rebuilding Latvia be successful. God bless Latvia!

In the name of the traditional churches of Latvia:

Janis Vanags, Riga's and Latvia's Archbishop of the Latvian Evangelic Lutheran Church.

Janis Pujats, Archbishop-Metropolitan, Roman Catholic Church.

Alexander, Archbishop of Riga and Latvia, Latvian Orthodox Church.

Andrey Shtern, Bishop, the Union of Latvian Baptist congregations.

Joan Mirolubov, the Head of the Riga's Grebenschikov's Old-Believers' community.



EMBASSY OF LATVIA

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Fax: (202) 726-5735

FAX MESSAGE

TO: ST. FLANAGAN

FROM: E. SEMANIS

DATE: APRIL 3

PAGES TO FOLLOW: 3

Unofficial translation

Press release

An extraordinary meeting of the **National Security Council (NSC)** took place today, on 3rd April. The Council considered issues related to the developments over the recent month in Latvia and the issue pertaining to the bombing in Peitava street at the Synagogue in the night on 2nd April.

The NSC heard the reports of the Minister of Interior Z. Ceveris and the Chief of the Bureau of the Defence of the Constitution (SAB) L. Kamaldins. Having heard the report of the Minister of Interior, the NSC decided to recommend the Cabinet of Ministers to dismiss the Chief of the National police A. Lieljuksis.

The NSC decided to recommend the Parliament to dismiss the Commander of the National Armed Forces J. Dalbins due to his failure to fulfil the decision of the Government that the Government should not take part in the commemoration ceremonies of the veterans of the Latvian Legion this March.

A decision to take measures to improve the organisational performance of the Ministry of Interior and the SAB was taken during the meeting.

The NSC decided to convene the next meeting of the NSC on 8th April when the Council will hear the report of the Chief of the SAB L. Kamaldins on the performance of the SAB and discuss whether the leadership of the SAB is suitable for this position.

**Announcement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Latvia
Riga, 3 April 1998**

The **OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities** Mr Max van der Stoel yesterday completed a successful visit to Latvia. The visit was marked by constructive, open dialogue and an atmosphere of mutual understanding.

The visit took place at a time of **political breakthroughs** which should facilitate the implementation of the remaining recommendations by international organisations to Latvia regarding the integration of non-citizens into Latvian society.

On 31 March the Prime Minister established a **ministerial Integration Council**, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister and comprising the Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Education, Justice and Culture, which has been instructed to draft a National Programme for Social Integration by 30 June and an interim report in May. It is expected that the Council will place special emphasis on the role of the state language and take note of the recently published results of a large-scale social research project on integration issues.

On 1 April the Cooperation Council of government coalition partners decided to **open discussions on amendments to the present Law on Citizenship**. A coalition working group will aim to draft by 14 April a joint proposal to the Parliament for amendments to the Law on Citizenship aimed at facilitating the naturalisation process. It was also agreed that if the working group cannot come up with a joint proposal, the factions will submit separate proposals for consideration by the Parliament.

In terms of language legislation, Latvia demonstrated maximum transparency by inviting the OSCE High Commissioner to send experts to work with the Parliament on finding an optimal approach to the **draft language law** before a third reading in late summer. International expertise would also be applied to **draft amendments to the labour code**.

The OSCE High Commissioner stressed the need to widen and deepen the implementation of the National Programme for **Latvian Language Training**, in order to facilitate the integration of non-citizens through knowledge of the state language.

Latvia welcomes the invaluable assistance provided by international organisations, including the EU, UN, OSCE and Council of Europe and others, as well as the cooperation with bilateral partners in working towards our common goals. Latvia wishes to continue its **close cooperation with international partners** in resolving sensitive complex issues and invites

further assistance to Latvia's efforts in promoting the integration of non-citizens through Latvian language training and other measures.

FACT SHEET
The Latvian Legion (Waffen SS) 1943-45

Recent news reports have erroneously associated membership in The Latvian Legion (1943-45) with Nazi atrocities committed during the Nazi Germany occupation of Latvia (1941-45). Historical evidence shows that the conscripted combat units of the Latvian Legion (designated by Berlin as the Waffen SS) could not and did not participate in these atrocities.

1. The Latvian Legion was formed in 1943 *after* the Nazi occupation forces had completed their systematic destruction of Latvia's Jewish population. The last major killing operation against Jews in Latvia took place in March 1942.
2. The Legion consisted of combat units (*Waffen SS* means Weapons SS in German) which fought on the Eastern Front against Soviet forces from 1943 until 1945.
3. Nazi occupation forces in Latvia created the Latvian Legion/Waffen SS in 1943 through forced conscription, in violation of the Hague Convention.
4. Individual Latvians did voluntarily collaborate with the Nazi occupation forces and participated in atrocities against Latvia's Jewish population from 1941-42. Some of these individuals did join the Latvian Legion in 1943 in order to disguise their criminal activities. However, the Legion itself was not involved in actions against the Jewish population. Of the 140,000 men who served in the Latvian Legion, 50,000 were casualties in combat against the Soviet army on the Eastern Front.

On November 28, 1950 the U.S. Displaced Persons Commission Headquarters in Frankfurt, West Germany, APO 757, acknowledged the above circumstances in a memorandum concerning Baltic Waffen SS Units. The memorandum states:

"In the case of the Baltic Waffen SS Units [the Commission] received evidence showing membership in these units was due to conscription, a method by the Hitler regime, and that members of the Baltic SS were impressed for the most part for actual fighting on the Eastern front. After careful consideration, the Commission finally decided that the Baltic Waffen SS units were not a hostile movement within Section 13 of the Act, and membership in these units was not a bar per se."

Robert Corkern,
US Displaced Persons Commission Coordinator for Europe

According to Harry Rosenfield, Commissioner of the US Displaced Persons Commission, the Commission also approved the following statement:

"That the Baltic Waffen SS Units/Baltic Legions/ are to be considered as separate and distinct in purpose, ideology, activities and qualifications for membership from the German SS, and therefore the Commission holds them not to be a movement hostile to the Government of the United States under section 13 of the Displaced Persons act, as amended."

Additional facts about the Waffen SS:

Despite the 'SS' designation, Waffen SS units were not associated with SS activities in the infamous Nazi death camps, nor did they participate in any actions against civilian populations. These were combat units, often of an international nature. For example, in 1943, Latvian Waffen SS combat troops were part of an international brigade operating in Northern Russia, which also included Dutch and Flemish Waffen SS troops.

In effect, these Latvian units had two identities, depending on one's point of reference. Nazi German authorities called these units Waffen SS. Latvian members of these units looked upon themselves as the Latvian Legion. The decision of the United States Displaced Persons Commission in 1950 reinforces this distinction by stating that the units of the Latvian Legion "*are to be considered as separate and distinct in purpose, ideology, activities and qualifications for membership from the German SS.*"

Historical background:

The Latvian government and armed forces were dissolved in the summer of 1940 following the Soviet Union's occupation and illegal annexation of independent Latvia. Tens of thousands of Latvians were deported and/or executed by the Soviet regime by June 1941. Nazi Germany invaded Latvia in July 1941, forcing a Soviet retreat to Russia. A new wave of mass executions and deportations was initiated by the Nazi regime, focusing mainly (but not exclusively) on Latvia's Jewish population.

As the Nazi German invasion of the Soviet Union began to collapse in 1943, Hitler ordered the conscription of Latvian nationals into combat units known as the Latvian Legion (Waffen SS). Latvian conscripts were sent to the Northern Sector of the Russian front in order to cover the retreat of the German Wehrmacht. The Legion was forced back to defensive lines on Latvian territory, where major engagements took place in 1944. Latvian troops eventually retreated to Germany, where they became POW's under either US/British or Soviet jurisdiction. At no time did units of the Latvian Legion engage in combat against United States' or other Western Allied forces.

On the gathering of Latvian Legion veterans in Riga on March 16, 1998:

1. The gathering of Latvian Legion veterans on March 16 was organized by the veterans themselves. It was not endorsed by the Latvian government.
2. The purpose of the veterans' gathering on March 16 was to pay tribute to fallen 'brothers-in-arms', i.e. to all those fellow combat soldiers who fought and died on the Eastern Front against the Soviet Red Army. It was not a political demonstration.
3. March 16 was chosen because this date commemorates the March 16, 1943 Battle of Velikaya River (in Russia), where the 15th and 19th divisions of the Latvian Legion held off a much larger Soviet force for several days.
4. Leaders of the gathering made it clear that they were not, nor have they ever been 'Nazis'. No Nazi flags or insignias appeared at the gathering.
5. Individual members of the Latvian parliament and Latvian military did participate in the gathering. They did so as individuals, not on behalf of the government. Their purpose was to pay tribute to Latvian soldiers who had fought and died in defense of their homeland.

Official Statement by the Press Service of the President of State

The President of State of the Republic of Latvia emphatically condemns the act of vandalism which occurred on the night of April 2 at the synagogue in Peitavas street, Riga, and unequivocally censures any and all acts of violence and explosions.

The President of State summons Latvia's judicial authorities to investigate this incident and call to account those guilty.

This morning during a telephone conversation with rabbi N.Barkan the President of State expressed his viewpoint, pointing out that Latvia has always supported tolerance and has promoted mutual understanding in the society.

Official Statement

by the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia Dr. Valdis Birkavs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia expresses deep indignation and regret of the explosion which occurred on the night of April 2 at the synagogue in Peitavas street, Riga. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs emphatically condemns all crimes and acts of vandalism that result in the defiling of holy places. Any and all manifestations of extremism are unacceptable to the Latvian Government and the people of Latvia.

At 10:00 on April 2, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Latvia, Mr. Guntars Krasts, arrived at the scene to express the Government's, as well as his personal, condemnation of this crime. The State Police of Latvia have initiated a criminal investigation. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs expresses its firm belief that responsible institutions will take all possible measures to ensure that those guilty receive punishment in accordance with the law, and that similar crimes are not repeated.



EMBASSY OF LATVIA

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FAX MESSAGE

TO: Steve Flanagan

FROM: P. Vinkelis

DATE: April 2

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ПОСОЛ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
В США

*Copy for
Steve Flanagan.*

AMBASSADOR
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE USA

Mr. Leon S. Fuerth
National Security Adviser to the Vice President
Office of the Vice President
Old Executive Office Building
17th and Pennsylvania Ave., N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20501

March "30", 1998

Leon
Dear Mr. Fuerth,

On the instructions from my Government I would like to forward to you the text of the address by the State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation to the Heads of States and Governments, as well as to the Parliaments of the OSCE Member-States regarding the recent march of the Latvian SS Legion veterans in the city of Riga (Latvia).

Yuli M. Vorontsov
Yuli M. VORONTSOV

Unofficial translation

To the Heads of States and Governments, to Parliaments of the Member-States of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe in connection with the recent march of veterans of SS in the city of Riga, Republic of Latvia.

The State Duma of the Federal Assembly of the Russian Federation expresses its utmost indignation and a most decisive protest in connection with a march held in the city of Riga by the veterans of the Latvian Legion of the SS - an organization labeled criminal by the international military tribunal in Nuremberg. The gathering of fascists in a European country who had given oath of allegiance to Hitler, participated in punitive operations and mass killings, can only be viewed as a direct challenge to the world public opinion and an outrage on the memory of those fallen in the Second World War.

The fact that this action has been endorsed by the official authorities of Latvia and took place with the participation of the leaders of the Armed Forces and Deputies of Parliament of the Latvian Republic, says much about the emerging political regime in Latvia. Guided by the ideas of extreme nationalism and Russophobia, this regime has gotten to the point of justifying fascism and those who have committed military crimes and crimes against humanity. While attributing the status of victims of political repressions and broad privileges to former SS veterans guilty of slaughtering tens of thousands of Russians, Jews, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Latvians, and people of other nationalities, the Latvian authorities are at the same time discriminating against those who have been struggling against fascism. It's very revealing that the manifestation of the Latvian SS Legion members took place against the background of continued blunt violations of the rights of the inhabitants of Latvia whose native tongue is Russian, right after the dispersal of a peaceful demonstration in Riga of veterans - Russian compatriots who have stepped up for better social status.

The State Duma has continuously been attracting attention of the international community to the threat of cultivating by the Latvian authorities of the ideology of aggressive nationalism and of their open pursuit of a course towards the creation of a monoethnic state in Latvia. We cannot understand how it may be possible to develop cooperation with a state which is seeking to be called a civilized democratic one but whose authorities, including the military leaders, show indulgence towards the fascists and themselves permit downright violations of the rights of the non-Latvians.

The State Duma calls upon the Heads of States and Governments, the Parliaments of the member-states of the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, and on international organizations to give an appropriate assessment of the policies by the Latvian authorities and to most decisively demand from them full observance of the political, socio-economic, and cultural rights of all inhabitants of Latvia, putting an end to a support for the right-wing extremism and to discrimination of people on national grounds.

Moscow

March 20, 1998



ПОСОЛ
РОССИЙСКОЙ ФЕДЕРАЦИИ
В США

AMBASSADOR
OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION
TO THE USA

March 30, 1998

Dear Mr. Vice President,

I have the honor to transmit to you Mr. Viktor S.
CHERNOMYRDIN's letter of congratulations on the occasion of your 50th
Birthday.

Respectfully yours,

Yuli M. VORONTSOV

The Vice President

Clinton Presidential Records

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50th Birthday

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March 24, 1998

Dear Al,

Allow me to convey my most sincere congratulations on the occasion of your 50-year anniversary.

Such a date provides a good opportunity to evaluate what has been achieved, clarify the goals and map out plans for the future. I am certain that the considerable load of experience with which you came up to this anniversary allows you to feel justifiably proud. Your extraordinary abilities of a prominent political figure, dynamism and energy, aspiration to do practical things and achieve concrete results give you all the grounds to look ahead with confidence.

I highly value your commitment to the cause of full-scale strengthening of strategic partnership between Russia and the US. It is with great pleasure that I recall the five years of our work in the Russian-American Commission on Economic and Technological Cooperation. These years have been marked by dynamic development of interaction in virtually all important spheres of our bilateral economic relations. I believe that the joint efforts allowed to lay a

HIS EXCELLENCY

ALBERT GORE

VICE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES

Washington, D.C.

sound basis for further enhancement of the Russian-American interaction with the aim for 21 century.

I am concluding my activities at the post of the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation but will further on assist the development of the Russian-American relationship.

I wish you, Tipper and your entire friendly family happiness, health and prosperity.

With profound respect and wishes of success and all the best.

V.CHERNOMYRDIN

Flanagan, Stephen J.

From: WHSR
Sent: Monday, April 06, 1998 8:27 AM
To: Braden, Susan R.; Davidson, Leslie K.; Flanagan, Stephen J.; McEldowney, Nancy E.; Roberts, Michael W.
Subject: LATVIA: A TROUBLED PARTNER -- THE ACTION

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~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 05 RIGA 001061

DEPT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT, EUR A/S GROSSMAN AND
DAS ASMUS, AND EUR/NB
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC-FLANAGAN
USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE
HELSINKI PLEASE PASS AMCONSUL ST. PETERSBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/08

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, RS, US, LG

SUBJECT: LATVIA: A TROUBLED PARTNER -- THE ACTION
PLAN

1. (U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR LARRY C. NAPPER.
REASON 1.5(B), (D).

2. (S) SUMMARY: IN A SEPARATE CABLE, WE HAVE PROVIDED
OUR PORTRAIT OF LATVIA AS A TROUBLED PARTNER. THIS
CABLE PROVIDES A FIVE-TRACK ACTION PLAN TO WORK WITH
LATVIA TO OVERCOME ITS CURRENT TIME OF TROUBLES AND TO
HELP LATVIA BECOME A STRONGER PARTNER FOR THE UNITED
STATES IN THE BALTIC REGION. THE FIVE TRACKS ARE
INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION; INTERNAL INTEGRATION OF
LATVIAN SOCIETY; U.S.-LATVIAN BILATERAL RELATIONS;
LATVIA'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA; AND, FINALLY,
STRENGTHENING LATVIA'S EFFORTS TO COPE WITH ITS
HISTORY. WE BELIEVE THAT ALL FIVE TRACKS MUST BE
PURSUED SIMULTANEOUSLY AND IN COORDINATION WITH U.S.
EFFORTS TO STRENGTHEN OUR OWN OPERATIONAL
IMPLEMENTATION OF THE AMERICAN-BALTIC CHARTER AND THE
NORTHERN EUROPEAN INITIATIVE. END SUMMARY.

3. (C) LATVIA'S TIME OF TROUBLES (SEPTTEL) COINCIDES
WITH OUR OWN EFFORTS TO GIVE GREATER OPERATIONAL FOCUS
TO THE CONCEPTS FOR BALTIC POLICY THAT WE HAVE
ELABORATED OVER THE PAST YEAR, INCLUDING THE OPEN DOOR
IN NATO, THE AMERICAN-BALTIC CHARTER AND THE NORTHERN
EUROPEAN INITIATIVE. THESE CONCEPTS HAVE PROVIDED AN
ORIGINAL AND EFFECTIVE FRAMEWORK FOR UNDERSTANDING THE
DYNAMICS OF THE BALTIC REGION AND A VISION FOR ITS
FUTURE. HOWEVER, THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF THE POLICY
FRAMEWORK WE HAVE CREATED HAS GENERATED EXTREMELY HIGH
EXPECTATIONS THROUGHOUT THIS REGION, INCLUDING IN
LATVIA. PERHAPS THE LITMUS TEST OF THIS OPERATIONAL
PHASE OF OUR BALTIC POLICY WILL BE OUR ABILITY TO HELP
LATVIA THROUGH THIS TIME OF TROUBLES AND ENABLE IT TO
BECOME A STRONGER CANDIDATE FOR INTEGRATION INTO EUROPE
AND PARTNERSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. WE RECOMMEND
INITIATIVES ALONG THE FOLLOWING FIVE TRACKS.

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4. ~~(S)~~ THE INTERNATIONAL INTEGRATION TRACK

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-- WTO ACCESSION. THE IMPASSE BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND THE EUROPEAN UNION ON AUDIO-VISUAL SERVICES HAS IMPEDED LATVIA'S ACCESSION TO THE WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION FOR MANY MONTHS. ON JANUARY 16, THE PRESIDENT ASSURED THE BALTIC PRESIDENTS THAT EVERY EFFORT WOULD BE MADE TO RESOLVE THIS PROBLEM RAPIDLY. THE WTO IS THE ONLY MAJOR WESTERN ORGANIZATION THAT LATVIA CAN ACTUALLY HOPE TO JOIN IN THIS CENTURY. WE MUST RENEW OUR EFFORTS TO RESOLVE THIS ISSUE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE U.S.-EU SUMMIT IN MAY SO THAT WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO MOVE FORWARD WITH BALTIC WTO ACCESSION BY THE TIME OF THE FIRST SESSION OF THE AMERICAN-BALTIC PARTNERSHIP COMMISSION IN JUNE.

-- THE OPEN DOOR IN NATO AND THE KIEVENAAR STUDY. WE MUST COMPLETE WORK ON THE FIRST PHASE OF MAJOR GENERAL KIEVENAAR'S STUDY OF BALTIC MILITARIES AND MOVE QUICKLY TO THE PHASE OF DEVELOPING CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT OF LATVIAN, ESTONIAN AND LITHUANIAN MILITARY FORCES. IF WE CAN MOVE RAPIDLY INTO PHASE TWO OF THE KIEVENAAR STUDY, THIS WILL BOLSTER CONFIDENCE IN LTVIA, AS WELL AS IN THE OTHER TWO BALTIC STATES.

-- BALTIC OECD PROGRAM. WE CONTINUE TO BELIEVE A WAY SHOULD BE FOUND TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR A SPECIAL PROGRAM WITHIN OECD FOR THE BALTIC STATES.

-- CBSS MINISTERIAL AND ORGANIZED CRIME TASK FORCE. WE MUST ACHIEVE A BREAKTHROUGH FOR AMERICAN PARTICIPATION IN THE CBSS TASK FORCE ON ORGANIZED CRIME

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 02 OF 05 RIGA 001061

DEPT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT, EUR A/S GROSSMAN AND DAS ASMUS, AND EUR/NB
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC-FLANAGAN
USVIENNA FOR USDEL OSCE
HELSINKI PLEASE PASS AMCONSUL ST. PETERSBURG

E.O. 12958: DECL: 04/06/08
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, RS, US, LG
SUBJECT: LATVIA: A TROUBLED PARTNER -- THE ACTION PLAN

AND THE CBSS MINISTERIAL IN COPENHAGEN THIS JUNE.

-- FOSTERING BALTIC COOPERATION. WE SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO REINVIGORATE BALTIC COOPERATION IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS: DIRECT U.S. ASSISTANCE TO LATVIA AND LITHUANIA IN RESOLVING THEIR MARITIME BOUNDARY DISPUTE IF THE PARTIES DESIRE; CONSULTATIONS WITH THE BALTICS ON CSBMS IN THE BALTIC REGION; AND AN EXPANDED DIALOGUE WITH THE BALTICS ON CFE, BEGINNING WITH THE U.S.-SPONSORED MEETING WITH ALL THREE BALTIC COUNTRIES IN RIGA ON APRIL 8-9.

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5. ~~(S)~~ THE INTERNAL INTEGRATION OF LATVIAN SOCIETY TRACK

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-- USE HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS AT THE WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT DURING PRIME MINISTER KRASTS APRIL 16-17 VISIT TO WASHINGTON TO PRESS FOR LIBERALIZATION OF LATVIA'S CITIZENSHIP LAW.

-- USE HIGH-LEVEL MEETINGS IN THE WHITE HOUSE AND STATE DEPARTMENT DURING THE KRASTS VISIT TO PRESS FOR

INDEFINITE POSTPONEMENT OF AMENDMENTS TO THE LANGUAGE AND LABOR LAWS TO AVOID FURTHER INFLAMING INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS.

-- WORK WITH UNDP AND EUROPEAN UNION EMBASSIES IN RIGA TO PRESS FOR FOLLOW UP TO THE LATVIAN NATURALIZATION OFFICE STUDY OF ATTITUDES CONCERNING SOCIAL INTEGRATION. WORK WITH LATVIA'S NEW INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE ON INTEGRATION POLICY TO DEVELOP CONCRETE RECOMMENDATIONS.

-- ARRANGE A VISIT BY DRL ASSISTANT SECRETARY SHATTUCK TO RIGA. THE VISIT MIGHT TAKE PLACE DURING THE MAY 4-5 CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION SPONSORED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION. THIS WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY FOR BROAD CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN SHATTUCK AND ALL RELEVANT PARTIES IN THE INTEGRATION DEBATE.

-- MOVE FORWARD RAPIDLY WITH A SIGNIFICANT U.S. CONTRIBUTION TO DEVELOPMENT OF THE RIGA LAW SCHOOL TO STRENGTHEN THE RULE OF LAW IN LATVIA. THIS CONTRIBUTION MIGHT BE IN THE FORM OF PROFESSORSHIPS IN THE AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL HUMAN RIGHTS LAW AND/OR PROTECTION OF MINORITIES.

-- CONTINUE AMBASSADORIAL LEVEL DIALOGUE IN RIGA WITH LEADERSHIP OF THE NATIONALIST FATHERLAND AND FREEDOM PARTY TO DRIVE HOME THE NECESSITY FOR RAPID MOVEMENT ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION ISSUES.

-- CONSIDER A CONCRETE U.S. CONTRIBUTION THROUGH FUNDING OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON MINORITIES AND/OR THE PROPOSED INFORMATION CENTER OF THE LATVIAN NATURALIZATION BOARD IN ORDER TO FACILITATE AND IMPROVE INTER-ETHNIC RELATIONS AND PROMOTE ACCELERATED NATURALIZATION.

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6. ~~7~~ THE U.S.-LATVIAN BILATERAL TRACK

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-- ORGANIZE HIGH LEVEL VISITS FOR PRIME MINISTER KRASTS WITH THE ACTING SECRETARY OF STATE AND WITH THE VICE PRESIDENT OR NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISOR IN THE WHITE HOUSE DURING KRASTS' VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES. HIGH LEVEL MEETINGS WOULD BOLSTER LATVIAN CONFIDENCE WHILE GIVING US AN EXCELLENT OPPORTUNITY TO PUSH THE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 03 OF 05 RIGA 001061

DEPT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT, EUR A/S GROSSMAN AND DAS ASMUS, AND EUR/NB
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SUBJECT: LATVIA: A TROUBLED PARTNER -- THE ACTION PLAN

PRIME MINISTER ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA.

-- ORGANIZE SUCCESSFUL START OF TX U.S.-LATVIAN ECONOMIC WORKING GROUP ON APRIL 16, INVOLVING AN ADVISORY ROLE FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

-- PROCEED WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT'S VISIT TO RIGA FOR THE FIRST SESSION OF THE QUADRIPARTITE PARTNERSHIP COUNCIL UNDER THE AMERICAN-BALTIC CHARTER. THIS VISIT SHOULD PROCEED WHETHER OR NOT WE ARE ABLE TO

ARRANGE FOR AMERICAN PARTICIPATION AT THE CBSS
MINISTERIAL IN COPENHAGEN.

-- INCREASE AND INTENSIFY U.S.-LATVIAN ANTI-TERRORISM
COOPERATION. WE HAVE OFFERED LIMITED TRAINING OF
LATVIAN ANTI-TERRORIST UNITS IN THE PAST, BUT THIS HAS
NOT HAD A HIGH PRIORITY BECAUSE THE TERRORIST THREAT IN
LATVIA WAS PERCEIVED TO BE LOW. WHILE THAT THREAT IS
STILL LOW BY EUROPEAN STANDARDS, GREATER ATTENTION TO
COOPERATION AND TRAINING AGAINST TERRORISM IS CLEARLY
WARRANTED.

-- ORGANIZE MEETINGS FOR PRIME MINISTER KRASTS WITH
FBI AND CIA OFFICIALS ON ORGANIZED CRIME AND VISIT TO
THE INTERAGENCY ORGANIZED CRIME TASK FORCE CENTER AT
THE CIA.

-- CONDUCT SUCCESSFUL SESSION OF THE BILATERAL WORKING
GROUP ON POLITICAL-MILITARY COOPERATION IN RIGA IN THE
FIRST WEEK IN MAY.

-- COMPLETE WORK ON PENDING AGREEMENTS IN THE ANTI-
CRIME AREA: SIGN THE BILATERAL CUSTOMS COOPERATION
AGREEMENT; UPDATE THE EXISTING EXTRADITION TREATY; AND
NEGOTIATE A NEW AGREEMENT ON CAR THEFT.

-- PROCEED WITH RATIFICATION OF THE TREATY ON DOUBLE
TAXATION BY THE LATVIAN SAEIMA AND THE U.S. SENATE.

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7. ~~(S)~~ THE LATVIAN-RUSSIAN BILATERAL TRACK

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-- JOIN THE GOVERNMENT OF LATVIA IN CONDEMNING THE
APRIL 6 EXPLOSION IN THE VICINITY OF THE RUSSIAN
EMBASSY IN RIGA. EXTEND THE FBI INVESTIGATION OF THE
APRIL 2 EXPLOSION AT THE RIGA JEWISH SYNAGOGUE TO
INCLUDE THIS NEW BOMBING INCIDENT.

-- COORDINATE WITH EUROPEAN UNION AND OSCE TO USE
AMERICAN INFLUENCE TO HELP RESTART THE BILATERAL
DIALOGUE BETWEEN RIGA AND MOSCOW.

-- AT THE SAME TIME, COUNTER RUSSIAN EFFORTS IN
INTERNATIONAL FORA SUCH AS THE UN HUMAN RIGHTS
COMMISSION TO UNFAIRLY CRITICIZE LATVIA FOR ALLEGED
HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS.

-- EXPLORE CROSS-BORDER COOPERATION AMONG LOCAL
GOVERNMENTS IN THE LATVIAN-ESTONIAN-RUSSIAN BORDER AREA
BY WORKING WITH THE EXISTING COUNCIL FOR COOPERATION OF
THE BORDER REGIONS OF THE THREE COUNTRIES.

-- BE PREPARED TO CONSIDER ASSISTANCE TO RUSSIA AND
LATVIA IN DISMANTLING THE HEN HOUSE RADAR AT SCRUNDA.
THE UNITED STATES PROVIDED RESOURCES FOR DISMANTLEMENT
OF THE LARGE-PHASED ARRAY RADAR AT THE SAME SITE IN
1995. U.S. ASSISTANCE MAY BE NEEDED SINCE RUSSIA MAY
NOT AVE THE WILL OR THE RESOURCES TO FOLLOW THROUGH
WITH DISMANTLEMENT OF THE FACILITY AND RESTORATION OF

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 04 OF 05 RIGA 001061

DEPT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT, EUR A/S GROSSMAN AND
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PLAN

THE SITE TO APPROPRIATE ENVIRONMENTAL STANDARDS.

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8. ~~(S)~~ THE HISTORIC LEGACY TRACK

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-- WORK WITH LATVIA, ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA TO ORGANIZE A JOINT EFFORT TO EXAMINE THE CAUSE, CONSEQUENCES, PREVENTION AND PROSECUTION OF HATE CRIMES. THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PARTNERSHIP COMMISSION IN JUNE COULD ANNOUNCE A ONE-YEAR PROGRAM OF JOINT WORK WITH A REPORT TO BE DELIVERED TO THE 1999 SESSION OF THE PARTNERSHIP COMMISSION. UNDER THIS INITIATIVE, WE COULD BRING TOGETHER GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, NGO REPRESENTATIVES, RELIGIOUS LEADERS, AND LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMUNITIES TO SHARE EXPERIENCE AND IDEAS ON ELIMINATION OF HATE CRIMES.

-- WE SHOULD ARRANGE FOR PRIME MINISTER KRASTS TO PAY A VIP VISIT TO THE HOLOCAUST MUSEUM DURING HIS APRIL 16-17 TRIP TO WASHINGTON. THIS SHOULD BE ACCOMPANIED BY A MEETING BETWEEN KRASTS AND AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS AT WHICH BOTH SIDES COULD EXPRESS THEIR CONCERNS AND UNDERSCORE THEIR MUTUAL COMMITMENT TO ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS TOLERANCE AND FREEDOM OF CONSCIENCE.

-- WE SHOULD INVITE LATVIA TO PARTICIPATE IN THE WASHINGTON CONFERENCE ON HOLOCAUST ERA ASSETS TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 9-12 AT THE STATE DEPARTMENT UNDER THE AUSPICES OF THE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL MUSEUM AND THE STATE DEPARTMENT. IN THIS CONNECTION, WE WONDER WHETHER THE CONFERENCE MIGHT EXPAND ITS AGENDA TO DEAL WITH THE QUESTION OF RESTITUTION OF JEWISH COMMUNAL PROPERTY SEIZED BY THE NAZIS DURING THE WARTIME PERIOD.

-- PROVIDE TIMELY FBI SUPPORT FOR A THOROUGH LATVIAN INVESTIGATION OF THE APRIL 2 BOMBING OF THE RIGA SYNAGOGUE. THIS WILL HELP ENHANCE THE CREDIBILITY OF THE LATVIAN GOVERNMENT'S INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENT.

-- WELCOME ACTION BY LATVIA'S PRESIDENT AND NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL TO REMOVE FROM OFFICE LATVIAN POLICE OFFICIALS WHO FAILED TO PROVIDE EFFECTIVE PROTECTION FOR THE SYNAGOGUE, AS WELL AS THOSE MILITARY OFFICERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN THE LATVIAN LEGION COMMEMORATION ON MARCH 16 IN CONTRAVENTION OF GOVERNMENT POLICY. THIS WILL REINFORCE THE NOTION OF ACCOUNTABILITY OF OFFICIALS IN A DEMOCRACY AND UNDERSCORE OUR SUPPORT FOR EFFORTS TO COME TO GRIPS WITH LATVIA'S HISTORIC LEGACY. WE SHOULD BE PREPARED TO MAKE THIS STATEMENT AS SOON AS THE LATVIAN PARLIAMENT RATIFIES THESE DISMISSALS FOLLOWING ITS EASTER RECESS.

-- CONSIDER PROPOSING TO THE BALTIC PRESIDENTS THAT THEY JOINTLY ORGANIZE A COMMISSION OF HISTORIANS TO EXAMINE THE EVENTS OF WORLD WAR II IN THE BALTIC REGION. IN ORDER TO AVOID SINGLING OUT ANY ONE COUNTRY, THE COMMISSION SHOULD BE AUTHORIZED TO DEAL WITH EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN LATVIA, ESTONIA AND LITHUANIA. THE SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION SHOULD INCLUDE WARTIME DEPORTATIONS OF BALTIC POPULATIONS BY THE SOVIETS, AS WELL AS WARTIME ATROCITIES BY THE GERMANS AND THEIR BALTIC COLLABORATORS. AMBASSADORS HOLBROOKE AND NAPPER MADE THIS SUGGESTION TO PRESIDENT ULMANIS AND OTHER RANKING LATVIAN OFFICIALS ON APRIL 2. PRESIDENT ULMANIS SUBSEQUENTLY TOLD EU AMBASSADORS THAT HE WAS IN FAVOR OF SUCH A COMMISSION.

-- AGGRESSIVELY PURSUE INVESTIGATIONS OF WORLD WAR TWO WAR CRIMINALS IN LATVIA. WE SHOULD PRESS THE LATVIAN

GOVERNMENT TO MAKE USE OF THE EVIDENCE THAT HAS BEEN
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 05 OF 05 RIGA 001061

DEPT FOR DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT, EUR A/S GROSSMAN AND
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COLLECTED IN CONTEXT WITH OSI AND TO PROCEED WITH
INDICTMENTS AND TRIALS WHERE WARRANTED.

-- CONTINUE TO PURSUE PROPERTY RESTITUTION BY LATVIAN
AUTHORITIES TO JEWISH GROUPS FROM WHICH COMMUNAL
PROPERTY WAS CONFISCATED DURING THE WAR.

-- CONTINUE TO CONSULT CLOSELY WITH THE RIGA JEWISH
COMMUNITY ON THE FULL RANGE OF HISTORIC LEGACY ISSUES.
NAPPEB



Embassy of Latvia

FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL SHEET

FOR THE KIND ATTENTION OF:

S. FLANAGAN

FROM:

E. SEMANIS

INSTITUTION:

DATE:

JULY 9

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EMBASSY OF LATVIA

July 9, 1998

RUSSIAN ECONOMIC PRESSURE ON LATVIA CONTINUES

Actions of Russian Authorities are inconsistent with the principles of WTO, International Financial Institutions and the bilateral agreements with Latvia

- **Facts**

Economic measures are being directed against Latvia by Russian federal and local authorities:

1. Restrictions on sale of goods of Latvian origin

The Moscow City Government issued a document (dated 7 April 1998) in which it appeals that goods of Latvian origin be removed from shelves of Moscow shops and that existing contracts for supply of Latvian goods should be terminated.

As a result a chain reaction followed in various regions of Russia. Kemerov, Jaroslavl, Saratov, Primorsk regional authorities fell into line with the appeal released in Moscow by issuing recommendations that stores located in their jurisdiction refrain from selling or purchasing goods of Latvian origin.

Furthermore, the April 7th document suggests that the Moscow business community abstain from doing business with Latvian firms until a "change of political course" is made in Latvia. Leaders of industry controlling the sourcing and distribution raw materials in the Russian Federation are told to alter the routes of transport in order to avoid Latvian territory.

Finally, the same document appeals to the President and Government of the Russian Federation to cancel Latvia's MFN (most-favored nation) status.

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2. Threats to cancel the Most-Favored Nations (MFN) treatment in trade with Latvia

During the Seventh Ministerial Session of the CBSS (Council of Baltic Sea States), the Head of the Russian delegation indicated an intention to cancel the application of the economic cooperation agreement between Russia and Latvia such that the existing MFN trade regime would be ended. Such a move would be a direct step away from the global movement in the direction of trade liberalization and would strongly affect Russian-Latvian economic relations by creating a negative business climate for both Latvian and Russian entrepreneurs.

3. Restrictions on banking activities with Latvia

The Central Bank of the Russian Federation issued three instructions (NR. P-238 of 27 May 1998 NR. 240-y of 27 May 1998; and NR. P-241 of 29 May 1998) which clearly restrict financial transactions between Russia and Latvia. The instructions call for administrative restrictions affecting financial institutions and limit the capacity of legal and physical persons from both sides to engage in financial operations. These instructions issued by the Central Bank have the effect of hampering or even eliminating the standard activities of financial institutions doing business between Latvia and Russia.

The instructions from the Russian Central Bank call for measures to be implemented which single out Latvian institutions not because of some kind of violations of existing law but *because they are Latvian*. Such measures appear to stand in direct contradiction to IMF and World Bank terms and conditions, and they are in no way appropriate for a country that is seeking to bring itself into harmony with WTO principles.

4. Transit of Cargo

On 6 May 1998, the Ministry of Transportation of the Russian Federation took a decision (NR. OMS- 73/121) to reduce by fifty percent the number of licenses available free of charge to truck drivers working for Latvian companies.

(Two types of licenses exist for truck drivers - those which are free-of-charge granted on the basis of bilateral agreements and those for which truck drivers must pay a fee.) In June 1998, Russia also stopped issuing the type of licenses for which Latvian truck drivers must pay a fee. The direct result of this new measure is a limitation on the number of licenses that can be granted to truck drivers from Latvia. For practical business, these changes in the issuance of licenses will serve to exclude Latvian companies from Russia's market. The new procedures introduce a new and unpredictable element of risk in the trucking business between Latvia and Russia.

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Looking at behavior from the Latvian side in comparison, Russian truck drivers and freight forwarders can receive multiple entry visas in 24 hours absolutely "free" (without any charge). Latvia unilaterally eliminated the fees for registered truck drivers. Out of 30,000 licenses reserved for truck drivers from Russia to cross Latvian territory, less than 15 percent of the licenses have been used (approximately 4,000). The opportunity for Russian truck drivers to freely travel across Latvia with goods transported from Russia has not even been fully utilized.

This means that any claims that Russian truck drivers have been restricted are invalid. Moreover, the general principle of reciprocity in international relations has been ignored.

Furthermore, in accordance with the existing bilateral agreement on transportation between Latvia and Russia, the procedure for issuance of licenses should be discussed by the bilateral committee established under this agreement.

Latvia has urgently and repeatedly attempted to call together a meeting of this committee but has not received any answer from the Russian side.

Concerning freight shipped by rail: on June 26, 1998, the Russian Ministry of Transportation sent out a telegram NR. 546 informing all Ministers of Transport in CIS countries on changes to the schedule of tariffs for transport of cargo by railroad in the territory of the Russian Federation. The new regulations effectively mean that companies in all CIS countries choosing railway routes for their cargo through Russia and Latvia face tariff rates twenty to sixty percent higher than those which do not choose routes through Latvia. This instruction reinforces the January decision to remove preferential tariff rates for oil shipments.

Administrative restrictions imposed by the Russian Ministry of Transportation violate GATT (1947) terms for both truck and rail transport. The freedom of transit clause (para. 2, art. 5) and the principle of not applying special measures based on national origin (para. 4, art. 3) are both flagrantly violated.

Russian economic measures directed against Latvia in the transit sector have already negatively impacted transit in the Baltic region. Transport of goods to Germany, Poland and the Nordic countries have been upset.

Measures that adversely affect trade patterns and financial activities in the entire Baltic region have been directed against Latvia through official Russian government channels. High level dialogue between Latvia and Russia is urgently needed to resolve the current situation and to avoid losing the benefits both sides experience due to naturally existing economic interdependence.

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Latvia has offered to engage in dialogue on the issues here mentioned and will continue to do so. In this respect, one cannot fail to notice the way in which such requests for dialogue have been turned aside and ignored by the Russian government.

- **Comments**

The Russian Federation and the Republic of Latvia have taken into account international economic policy principles in development of their mutual economic relations.

Both the Russian Federation and the Republic of Latvia intend to become WTO member states. Compliance with norms and conditions of the WTO will testify to Latvia's and Russia's readiness to become full members. Eventual WTO membership was already foreseen in 1992 when Latvia and Russia signed the *Agreement between Latvia and Russia on Commercial Economic Principles*. This agreement on economic cooperation defined a path of development based on the norms of the WTO.

The statement of the Government of Russian Federation and the Russian Central Bank on economic and structural policy in 1998 envisages further liberalization of current and capital accounts and presents Russia's determination to harmonize its economic policy with standards set by international economic institutions.

In light of the Russian Federation's general policy to comply with international standards and the general policy of the government of Latvia to facilitate bilateral economic cooperation, the measures directed against Latvia are incomprehensible.

Recent internal decisions and public announcements by Russian officials indicate the creation of administrative restrictions of an economic character. These restrictions suggest the initiation of a campaign of centrally-coordinated economic pressure against the Republic of Latvia. The nature of the campaign points to an origin in official circles of the Russian Federation. To a certain extent, it seems that elements of the command economy are continuing to function in Russia.

The *Agreement between Latvia and Russia on Commercial Economic Principles* was established in harmony with two main WTO principles: the most-favored nation (MFN) regime and the principle of national treatment. Recent Russian restrictions clearly contradict the goals of the WTO as well as the spirit of this agreement with Latvia. The restrictions create slopes on an otherwise level playing field.

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Current actions of the Russian Federation do not correspond with CBSS decisions to facilitate regional trade to which Russian delegations have subscribed on behalf of the Russian government.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, as well as other international financial institutions, have worked with the Russian Federation in its process of gradual economic reform and the development of liberal economic relations. The economic measures against Latvia represent a departure from a carefully chosen path for political and economic reform. Such restrictive actions are currently applied mainly to Latvia but have an effect and result that negatively impacts cooperation in the entire Baltic region.

Flanagan, Stephen J.

From: WHSR
Sent: Monday, July 20, 1998 9:48 AM
To: Flanagan, Stephen J.; Lee, Malcolm R.; McEldowney, Nancy E.
Subject: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT'S ONE-ON-ONE MEETING

CLASS: ~~SECRET~~
DTG: 201124Z JUL 98
MSGTO: SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1902
ORIG: AMEMBASSY RIGA
PREC: IMMEDIATE
SSN: 2005
TOR: 980720094356 M3384386

DECLASSIFIED

PER E.O. 13526
216-0314-1-1 (2.56)
6/12/2023 VL

~~SECRET~~ RIGA 002005

NODIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/08
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, LG
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT'S ONE-ON-ONE MEETING
WITH LATVIAN PRESIDENT ULMANIS

(U) CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE JOHN WITHERS FOR REASONS 1.5
(B) AND (D).

1. ~~(S)~~ AT THE END OF DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT'S JULY 8 MEETING WITH LATVIAN PRESIDENT ULMANIS (SEPTTEL), THE PRESIDENT ASKED TO SPEAK PRIVATELY WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY. IN A TEN-MINUTE DISCUSSION, ULMANIS RAISED TWO MATTERS OF IMMEDIATE CONCERN: A POSSIBLE REFERENDUM ON AMENDMENTS TO THE LATVIAN CITIZENSHIP LAW AND CONTINUED RUSSIAN PRESSURE ON LATVIA. THE FOLLOWING IS DRAWN FROM THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S NOTES ON THE CONVERSATION.

2. ~~(S)~~ THE PRESIDENT BEGAN BY VOICING "DEEP WORRY" ABOUT THE EFFORTS OF PRIME MINISTER KRASTS AND THE NATIONALIST PARTIES TO FORCE THE GOVERNMENT TO HOLD A REFERENDUM ON LATVIA'S CITIZENSHIP LAW. HOW, ULMANIS ASKED, CAN PRESSURE THAT IS "EFFECTIVE AND NOT JUST RHETORIC" BE BROUGHT ON KRASTS AND THE NATIONALISTS TO DESIST FROM THIS COURSE? ONE WAY, THE PRESIDENT SUGGESTED, IS TO ENLIST THE SUPPORT OF THE WORLD BANK, THE IMF AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS. THEIR MESSAGE, HE MAINTAINED, SHOULD BE THAT IF SUFFICIENT SIGNATURES ARE COLLECTED TO REQUIRE A REFERENDUM, THE MONEY WOULD BE CUT OFF. THIS SHOULD BE DONE, HE ADVISED, IN A MANNER THAT IS CONFIDENTIAL AND NOT IRREVERSIBLE. ACKNOWLEDGING THAT HE WAS "INVITING FIRE" AGAINST HIMSELF BY MAKING THE SUGGESTION, THE PRESIDENT NONETHELESS SAID THAT SUCH A STEP WOULD ALLOW HIM TO CONVENE AN EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE CABINET AND TO STOP THE PROCESS OF COLLECTING SIGNATURES. SO FAR, HE SAID, THE PRIME MINISTER HAS NOT HEARD THE OTHER WARNINGS HE HAS RECEIVED, INCLUDING THAT FROM SECRETARY ALBRIGHT IN HER MEETING WITH KRASTS ON JUNE 8 IN NEW YORK.

3. ~~(S)~~ TURNING TO RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA, ULMANIS ACCUSED PRESIDENTIAL PRESS SPOKESMAN SERGEY YASTRZHEMSKIY OF MASTERMINDING THE RUSSIANS' PRESSURE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LATVIA. IN ULMANIS' VIEW, FOREIGN MINISTER YEVGENIY PRIMAKOV IS "A PROBLEM," BUT YASTRZHEMSKIY IS THE MAIN PERSON BEHIND THE KREMLIN

1
POLICY OF A "BLACK INFORMATION CAMPAIGN" AGAINST
LATVIA. THE PRESIDENT EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE THAT
YELTSIN IS PREPARED TO MEET WITH HIM. YELTSIN HAD
HEARD FROM SWEDISH PRIME MINISTER PERSSON, GERMAN
CHANCELLOR KOHL, LITHUANIAN PRESIDENT ADAMKUS, AND
OTHERS, URGING SUCH A MEETING. ACCORDING TO ULMANIS,
YELTSIN HAS SAID YES TO A MEETING, BUT YASTRZHEMSKIY
HAS THEN MANAGED TO ISOLATE HIM. ULMANIS URGED THAT
THE U.S. USE ITS INFLUENCE TO GET YELTSIN TO DEAL
DIRECTLY WITH HIM.

4. ~~(S)~~ THIS MESSAGE WAS CLEARED BY THE DEPUTY
SECRETARY'S PARTY.

WITHERS

Flanagan, Stephen J.

From: WHSR
Sent: Monday, July 20, 1998 9:40 AM
To: Braden, Susan R.; Davidson, Leslie K.; Flanagan, Stephen J.; McEldowney, Nancy E.
Subject: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S JULY 8 MEETING WITH

CLASS: ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
DTG: 201121Z JUL 98
MSGTO: RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1897
ORIG: AMEMBASSY RIGA
PREC: IMMEDIATE
SSN: 2002
TOR: 980720093257 M3384379

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PER E.O. 13526

2016-0314-M-1 (2.57)
6/12/2023 VZ

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 01 OF 02 RIGA 002002

DEPARTMENT FOR D, EUR/DAS ASMUS, EUR/NB, S/NIS
HELSINKI PLEASE PASS AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
THE WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC - FLANAGAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/08
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, RS, LG
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S JULY 8 MEETING WITH
LATVIAN PRIME MINISTER KRASTS

(U) CLASSIFIED BY CHARGE JOHN WITHERS FOR REASONS 1.5
(B) AND (D) .

1. ~~(S)~~ SUMMARY: IN A JULY 8 MEETING IN RIGA, DEPUTY SECRETARY TALBOTT PRESSED LATVIAN PRIME MINISTER GUNTARS KRASTS TO EXERT HIS INFLUENCE IN ACHIEVING THE ENACTMENT OF THE PARLIAMENT'S JUNE 22 AMENDMENTS TO THE LATVIAN CITIZENSHIP LAW. FINAL PASSAGE OF THE AMENDMENTS, WHICH OPPONENTS ARE TRYING TO PREVENT THROUGH CALLING A REFERENDUM IN THE AUTUMN, WOULD, HE INSISTED, GREATLY STRENGTHEN THE UNITED STATES IN GETTING THE RUSSIANS TO DESIST FROM THEIR RELENTLESS PRESSURE ON LATVIA OVER THE ISSUE. TALBOTT INFORMED THE PRIME MINISTER THAT THE U.S., IN THE FORM OF PRESIDENT CLINTON, IS WILLING TO INTERCEDE ON LATVIA'S BEHALF WITH PRESIDENT YELTSIN DURING THEIR SEPTEMBER SUMMIT IN MOSCOW. HE CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT THE PRESIDENT'S POSITION WOULD BE IMMEASURABLY STRENGTHENED IF BY THE TIME OF THE MEETING, THE CALLS FOR A REFERENDUM HAVE BEEN DEFEATED AND THE OSCE-COMPLIANT AMENDMENTS WHICH THE SAEIMA PASSED ON JUNE 22 ARE LAW. IN REPLY, KRASTS LIMITED HIMSELF TO COMPLAINING THAT THE OSCE WOULD "MOVE THE GOALPOSTS" EVEN IF THE JUNE 22 AMENDMENTS WERE ADOPTED. HE AVOIDED ANY COMMITMENT TO INVOLVE HIMSELF IN THE CITIZENSHIP DEBATE. AT THE CONCLUSION OF THE MEETING, THE DEPUTY SECRETARY BRIEFLY UPDATED KRASTS ON U.S.-EU DISCUSSIONS ON LATVIA'S ACCESSION TO THE WTO. END SUMMARY.

2. ~~(S)~~ IN A THIRTY-MINUTE DISCUSSION DEVOTED ALMOST ENTIRELY TO LATVIA'S CITIZENSHIP LAW, TALBOTT TOLD KRASTS THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL USE ITS GOOD OFFICES IN COUNTERING THE RUSSIAN PRESSURE CAMPAIGN AGAINST LATVIA. THE U.S., TALBOTT SAID, WANTS TO BE THE CHAMPION OF LATVIA'S INTEGRATION INTO EURO-ATLANTIC STRUCTURES AND INSTITUTIONS. ITS ABILITY TO PERFORM THAT ROLE EFFECTIVELY DEPENDS, HOWEVER, ON THE FATE OF THE OSCE-COMPLIANT AMENDMENTS TO THE LAW WHICH THE SAEIMA PASSED ON JUNE 22. AT THAT TIME, TALBOTT

MAINTAINED, THE USG FELT OPTIMISM AND RELIEF AT THE PARLIAMENT'S BOLD DECISION. THOSE FEELINGS TURNED TO APPREHENSION WHEN NATIONALIST DEPUTIES SUBSEQUENTLY INITIATED A SIGNATURE CAMPAIGN CALLING FOR A REFERENDUM TO REVERSE THE SAEIMA'S ACTIONS. ALTHOUGH THE USG RESPECTS THE DEPUTIES' CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHT TO SEEK A REFERENDUM, THE U.S. FEELS PUZZLEMENT AND FOREBODING AT THE PROSPECT THAT THE SAEIMA'S RESOLUTIONS OF JUNE 22 MIGHT NOW BE UNDONE.

3. (S) NEVERTHELESS, AS IT HAS IN THE PAST, THE UNITED STATES WILL, TALBOTT DECLARED, DO ALL IT CAN TO ASSIST LATVIA IN ITS TENSE RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA. OVER THE PAST FOUR MONTHS, THE U.S. HAS OPPOSED RUSSIAN EFFORTS TO CONDEMN LATVIA IN A VARIETY OF INTERNATIONAL FORA. BOTH THE PRESIDENT CLINTON AND SECRETARY ALBRIGHT HAVE WRITTEN LETTERS SUPPORTING LATVIA'S PROGRESS ON SOCIAL INTEGRATION AND CALLING ON RUSSIA TO LOWER ITS ANTI-LATVIAN RHETORIC. NOW, THE U.S. IS PREPARED TO HAVE PRESIDENT CLINTON RAISE RUSSIA'S RECENT HARSH TREATMENT OF LATVIA DIRECTLY WITH YELTSIN AT THE MOSCOW SUMMIT IN SEPTEMBER. TALBOTT CAUTIONED, HOWEVER, THAT THE TENOR OF THOSE DISCUSSIONS WILL BE DETERMINED BY LATVIAN ACTIONS ON CITIZENSHIP. IF THE JUNE 22 AMENDMENTS HAVE BEEN ENACTED AT THE TIME OF THE MEETING WITH YELTSIN, THE PRESIDENT'S INTERCESSION CAN BE CORRESPONDINGLY FORCEFUL. IF NOT, IT WILL BE DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO INTERCEDE AS STRONGLY. IT IS VITAL THEREFORE FOR LATVIA'S LEADERS, STARTING WITH KRASTS HIMSELF AS THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT AND THE HEAD OF HIS PARTY, TO EXERT THEMSELVES TO THE UTMOST IN URGING THE LATVIAN PEOPLE TO SUSTAIN THE SAEIMA'S JUNE 22 DECISIONS.

4. (S) IN REPLY, KRASTS ASSERTED THAT HE DID NOT SHARE THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S DEGREE OF CONCERN ABOUT THE REFERENDUM: IN HIS VIEW, THE REFERENDUM IS SIMPLY ANOTHER WAY OF SEEKING APPROVAL FOR WHAT THE SAEIMA DID. ONLY ONE QUESTION -- THAT OF "AUTOMATIC" CITIZENSHIP FOR STATELESS CHILDREN BORN IN LATVIA SINCE INDEPENDENCE -- IS AT ISSUE; THE OTHER -- ABOLITION OF THE "WINDOWS" AGE RESTRICTIONS ON NATURALIZATION -- IS NOT CONTROVERSIAL. THE DIFFICULTY WITH THE STATELESS CHILDREN LIES WITH THE OSCE. IT HAS YET TO STATE PUBLICLY AND EXPLICITLY THAT THE JUNE 22 AMENDMENTS CONSTITUTE ITS FINAL REQUIREMENTS ON AMENDING THE CITIZENSHIP LAW. THE OSCE HAS, KRASTS CLAIMED, "SHIFTED THE GOALPOSTS" IN THE PAST. WHAT GUARANTEE

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ SECTION 02 OF 02 RIGA 002002

DEPARTMENT FOR D, EUR/DAS ASMUS, EUR/NB, S/NIS
HELSINKI PLEASE PASS AMCONSUL ST PETERSBURG
THE WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC - FLANAGAN

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/19/08
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, RS, LG
SUBJECT: DEPUTY SECRETARY'S JULY 8 MEETING WITH
LATVIAN PRIME MINISTER KRASTS

DID LATVIA HAVE THAT IT WOULD NOT DO SO AGAIN, AS THE RUSSIANS HAVE DONE? LATVIA, HE DECLARED, HAS BECOME PART OF AN OSCE "EXPERIMENT" ON CITIZENSHIP QUESTIONS. A CLEAR STATEMENT FROM OSCE HIGH COMMISSIONER VAN DER STOEL THAT NO FURTHER DEMANDS WILL BE FORTHCOMING WOULD ASSIST IN DEFEATING THE REFERENDUM DRIVE.

5. (S) TALBOTT NOTED THAT LATVIA HAS BEEN THROUGH A ROUGH PERIOD RECENTLY AND THAT THE U.S. WANTS NOTHING FURTHER TO HAPPEN THAT WOULD MAKE LATVIA'S JOB EVEN

HARDER. THE U.S. POSITION ON CITIZENSHIP HAS BEEN CONSISTENT: OTHER MAY MOVE GOALPOSTS, BUT NOT US. IT IS, IN FACT, LATVIA THAT CAN MAKE THE PROCESS EASIER OR HARDER. IF THE REFERENDUM FAILS, GOOD THINGS WILL ENSUE. WE WILL BE IN A POSITION TO TELL THE RUSSIANS TO CEASE THEIR PRESSURE CAMPAIGN ON LATVIA. IT IS IN RUSSIA'S INTEREST TO DO SO. RUSSIA WILL ONLY ISOLATE ITSELF IF IT CLAIMS THAT THE JUNE 22 DECISIONS ARE NOT ENOUGH. ITS CONTINUED RESORT TO PRESSURE WILL, MOREOVER, ONLY RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT ITS STRATEGIC INTENTIONS. IT IS CRITICAL, ON THE OTHER HAND, THAT LATVIA NOT ISOLATE ITSELF BY VOTING THE JUNE 22 DECISIONS DOWN.

6. ~~(S)~~ TURNING TO THE QUESTION OF LATVIA'S ACCESSION TO THE WTO, TALBOTT TOLD KRASTS THAT MEETINGS BETWEEN U.S. TRADE REPRESENTATIVE CHARLENE BARSHEVSKY AND EU TRADE COMMISSIONER SIR LEON BRITTAN WERE IN PROGRESS AND WOULD NOT CONCLUDE UNTIL AFTER HIS DEPARTURE FROM RIGA. HE WAS NOT THEREFORE IN A POSITION TO BRIEF KRASTS AT THAT MOMENT, BUT UNDERSECRETARY FOR ECONOMIC AFFAIRS STUART EIZENSTAT, WHO WOULD BE IN VILNIUS JULY 9 FOR THE CBSS TRADE MINISTERIAL, COULD PROVIDE LATVIA'S ECONOMIC MINISTER STRUJEVICS WITH AN UPDATE AT THAT TIME. TALBOTT REITERATED PRESIDENT CLINTON'S CONCERN, EXPRESSED AT THE BALTIC CHARTER SIGNING IN JANUARY, THAT LATVIA NOT GET CAUGHT IN A "SANDWICH" BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EU POSITIONS ON AUDIO-VISUALS. HE SAID THAT THE U.S. WAS COMMITTED TO SEEKING A COMPROMISE SOLUTION THAT WOULD RESPECT U.S., EU AND LATVIAN EQUITIES.

7. ~~(S)~~ COMMENT: IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE DEPUTY SECRETARY, KRASTS RESORTED TO THE FAMILIAR TACTICS OF DOWNPLAYING THE SERIOUSNESS OF LATVIAN CITIZENSHIP ISSUES AND OF PLACING THE BLAME FOR LATVIA'S CURRENT DIFFICULTIES ON SOMEONE ELSE, IN THIS INSTANCE, MAX VAN DER STOEL. THROUGHOUT HIS WHOLE IMPASSIONED DISPLAY, HOWEVER, HE AVOIDED ANY COMMITMENT TO EXERTING A CONSTRUCTIVE INFLUENCE ON THE PROCESS OR INDEED TO INVOLVING HIMSELF AT ALL IN FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS. RQHER, AS HE HAS THROUGHOUT THE WHOLE OF THE CONTROVERSY, HE HAS PREFERRED, IN THE WORDS OF THE OLD FOLKSONG, "TO TURN HIS HEAD AND PRETEND THAT HE JUST DOESN'T SEE." IN SO DOING, HE HAS SUCCEEDED ONLY IN ISOLATING HIMSELF BOTH FROM HIS PARTY (WHICH IS ANGERED BY HIS DECISION IN MAY TO PERMIT AMENDMENT OF THE CITIZENSHIP LAW TO GO BEFORE THE SAEIMA IN THE FIRST PLACE) AND FROM THE GOVERNMENT AT LARGE FOR REFUSING TO CARRY OUT HIS RESPONSIBILITIES AS ITS HEAD. WHAT HE GAINS FROM SUCH OBDURACY IS DIFFICULT FOR ANYONE TO PERCEIVE, EXCEPT POSSIBLY KRASTS HIMSELF.

8. ~~(S)~~ COMMENT CONTINUED: THAT SAID, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S MESSAGE REGISTERED LOUD AND CLEAR. OUR WILLINGNESS TO WEIGH IN ON LATVIA'S BEHALF AT THE MOSCOW SUMMIT, CONTINGENT OF COURSE ON THE OUTCOME OF THE REFERENDUM PROCESS, UNDERSCORES IN UNMISTAKABLE TERMS THE PRIORITY WHICH WE ATTACH BOTH TO NORMALIZING LATVIA'S RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND TO ACHIEVING THE INTEGRATION OF LATVIAN SOCIETY. THAT MESSAGE MAY NOT GALVANIZE KRASTS -- ALTHOUGH IT MAY NEUTRALIZE ANY THOUGHTS HE MIGHT HAVE OF PLAYING A NEGATIVE ROLE IN THE PROCESS -- BUT IT WILL CERTAINLY ENERGIZE THOSE WHO WANT TO SEE THEIR SOCIETY BROUGHT TOGETHER AND THE CALLS FOR A REFERENDUM DEFEATED. END COMMENT.

9. ~~(S)~~ THIS MESSAGE WAS CLEARED BY THE DEPUTY

SECRETARY'S PARTY.

WITHERS



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 23, 1998

BRIEFING MEMORANDUM

S/S

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ (with ~~SECRET~~ attachment)

DECLASSIFIED

PER E.O. 13526

2016-0314-M-1 (2.58)

6/12/23 VZ

DECL: 04/23/08

TO: The Deputy Secretary

FROM: EUR - Eileen Malloy, Acting

SUBJECT: Your Meeting with Valdis Birkavs, Latvian Foreign Minister, Friday, April 24, 11:00am, Your Office

I. OBJECTIVES

1. Stress need to make real progress on minority issues.
2. Preview our "shore-up" Latvia strategy.
3. Brief on any Latvia points raised during your recent meetings with Russian officials.

II. APPROACH

We should use this meeting to hold Latvia's feet to the fire on minority issues. The Latvian Parliament is now considering helpful but domestically controversial amendments to citizenship legislation, and the government is shaky, at best. Birkavs, a capable Foreign Minister and leader of the coalition party "Latvia's Way" (16/100 seats in Parliament), is ready and willing to play the right role, and he wants to use his meeting with you to carry home a strong message of U.S. concern. Since this meeting is the first senior level contact we have had with Latvia since the deterioration in relations with Russia, we also should reassure Birkavs that the U.S. will help Latvia weather the storm. We can also note that in London, we have asked U/S Pickering and Eizenstat to argue against Russian proposals to use the G-8 as a forum for discussion of minority issues in Latvia and Estonia and to raise Latvia's WTO aspirations with the EU.

You can remind Birkavs that we are standing by to reschedule the U.S.-Latvia economic BWG in late May, and that you look forward to your visit to Riga in late June to launch the U.S. - Baltic Partnership Commission. You last saw Birkavs during the January Baltic Presidents' visit.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Classified By: EUR/DAS RDAsmus
Reason: 1.5 (b) and (d)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 2 -

III. BACKGROUND

A. Minority Issues

The situation in Riga is unsettled. There likely will be a vote of confidence in PM Krasts' government next Thursday, and the outcome is uncertain. A key factor is a controversial government proposal to amend the citizenship law, which should go to the Saeima next week. PM Krasts and his opponents are near agreement on removing the cumbersome "windows" system (under which tranches of non-citizens become eligible for naturalization over a six year period).

An even more controversial issue concerns the naturalization of children born in Latvia after August 21, 1991. The government prefers to accept OSCE Minorities Commissioner van der Stoel's recommendation (also accepted by Estonia) to make all such children eligible immediately. The government would package this amendment with changes in the language and education laws to promote the study and use of the Latvian language. Meanwhile, the opposition parties argue for a proposal that would require these children to reach the age of 16 before requesting naturalization and also require them to present some evidence of competency in the Latvian language. This variant would almost certainly be unacceptable to van der Stoel.

Your bottom line should be: Nothing less than van der Stoel's recommendations and his active endorsement of the proposals will do. There can be no retreat or compromise, and everything should be done to move the legislation as quickly as possible. This is vital not only to preserve unanimous EU and U.S. support, but also to head off Russian efforts to push for changes in Latvia's citizenship law that exceed the OSCE's recommendations (e.g., quotas).

B. Our Shore-Up Latvia Strategy

We have just sent to the Secretary a proposed strategy for Latvia that would follow up on letters she sent to Primakov and the President sent to President Ulmanis. Our strategy seeks -- through diplomacy, public affairs and some assistance -- to ensure that Latvia does not fall behind the other Baltic nations on the path toward full integration into Europe and Euro-Atlantic institutions. We suggest you outline the key elements of the strategy for Birkavs.

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- 3 -

C. Debrief on Your Recent Meetings with Russian Officials

While we understand that Latvia did not figure prominently in your recent meetings with Primakov, Avdeyev and others, Birkavs would find reassurance in your willingness to give him a sense of how these meetings went.

D. U/S Pickering and Eizenstat's Talks with the EU and Mamedov

At a Friday EU SLG lunch in London (which will have taken place just before you see Birkavs), we asked U/S Pickering to urge the EU to work with us to reassure Latvia and to push for continued progress on minority issues. We asked U/S Eizenstat to urge EU cooperation in resolving remaining issues in Latvia's bid for WTO membership. At a dinner with Mamedov that evening, we have asked U/S Pickering to discourage Russia from seeking to use the G-8 as a forum for discussing minority issues in Latvia and Estonia.

III. PARTICIPANTS

U.S.

The Deputy Secretary
EUR/DAS Ron Asmus
D Staff
EUR/NB notetaker

OTHER COUNTRY

Foreign Minister Birkavs
Ambassador Ojars Kalnins
Mark Dayton, Assistant to
FM Birkavs (AmCit)

Attachment:

Tab 1 - Talking Points
Tab 2 - Biographic Material

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

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- 4 -

April 23, 1998

Drafter: TJEvans *TJE*

ID: BM - April 24 D Birkavs mtg

Tel. 7-8908

Clearance: EUR/NB:GMilovanovic
Clearance: EUR/ERA:SCristina/KHadda
Clearance: EUR/RUS:SGwaltney
Clearance: DRL:JMerz
Clearance: P:BStephenson
Clearance: EUR/RPM:JMcGhee/SPenhune

[Handwritten signature/initials]

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

TALKING POINTS

Minority Issues

- Government's proposed amendments to naturalization and citizenship legislation very positive development, welcomed by OSCE, US, and us.
- Adherence to OSCE recommendations gets Latvia a united front of support, shows OSCE works, argues against using other criteria or objectives.
- Bottom line: Nothing less than van der Stoel's recommendations and his active endorsement of the proposals will do. No retreat or compromise, move the legislation as quickly as possible.
- Caution: Be careful with packaging this important amendment with other changes to education and language laws which might slow down passage.
- Tough job in front of you, changes are not easy, we'll support you publicly. Privately, we are telling Russians that continued rhetorical confrontation will not help.
- Earlier today in London, we asked U/S Pickering to make similar points with the EU SLG.

U.S. Strategy on Latvia

- Charter of Partnership now our foundation, but given current situation, we have recommended the Secretary put in place a supplemental plan to support Latvia's integration efforts.
- Combination of diplomacy, public affairs, and some assistance. Key points:

Focus high level U.S. attention on "win-win" objectives for Latvia and Russia, including involvement in regional cooperation.

Urge Latvian reform on minority issues, publicly endorse improvements.

Work with Russia to reduce counterproductive policies and rhetoric.

More active role in promoting historical reconciliation in Baltics, including open treatment of the Holocaust.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- 6 -

Recent Talks with Russian Officials

- Extent to which Latvia was raised, mood of the talks, etc.

U/S Pickering/Eizenstat's meetings with EU and Mamedov

- At a lunch in London today, we asked U/S Pickering to urge our EU friends to work with us to:

promote reform on minorities in Latvia, publicly commend improvements.

send a message to the Russians that the OSCE is our measuring stick and that they should not move the goal posts.

urge Russia to address minority issues in Latvia and Estonia through direct dialogue and at the OSCE, not the UN or G-8. (We asked Pickering to make the same point with Mamedov at his Friday dinner.)

- On Latvia-WTO, we asked U/S Eizenstat to note that:

we are still waiting for a substantive response from the EU to our compromise proposal on audio-visual services for Latvia's WTO accession application.

essential that we give renewed effort to resolving the WTO issue as part of our efforts to encourage Latvia's integration into the global economy.

Upcoming Visits

- We understand PM Krasts' decision to postpone his visit to the U.S. and hope he can reschedule soon. U/S Eizenstat has reserved time on May 26 for the U.S.-Latvia economic BWG. Let us know if this works for you.
- I look forward to my late June visit to Riga to launch the first meeting of the U.S.-Baltic Partnership Commission.

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Withdrawal/Redaction Marker

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DOCUMENT NO. AND TYPE	SUBJECT/TITLE	DATE	RESTRICTION
007. report	U.S. Government Report (2 pages)	01/06/1998	P1/b(1)

COLLECTION:

Clinton Presidential Records
National Security Council
European Affairs (Norland, Richard)
OA/Box Number: 2630

FOLDER TITLE:

Latvia: Russia - Latvia [1]

2011-1037-F
ke2195

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]
- P4 Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential commercial or financial information [(a)(4) of the PRA]
- 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]

C. 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]
- b(2) Release would disclose internal personnel rules and practices of an agency [(b)(2) of the FOIA]
- b(3) Release would violate a Federal statute [(b)(3) of the FOIA]
- b(4) Release would disclose trade secrets or confidential or financial information [(b)(4) of the FOIA]
- b(6) Release would constitute a clearly unwarranted invasion of personal privacy [(b)(6) of the FOIA]
- b(7) Release would disclose information compiled for law enforcement purposes [(b)(7) of the FOIA]
- b(8) Release would disclose information concerning the regulation of financial institutions [(b)(8) of the FOIA]
- b(9) Release would disclose geological or geophysical information concerning wells [(b)(9) of the FOIA]

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Latvia

New Legislation Proposed: On April 15, the Latvian Cabinet proposed new legislation abolishing the "window" system of naturalization (which limited naturalization by age, with the "window" of those eligible to naturalize opening incrementally over a period of ten years), granting citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia and modifying draft Labor and Language laws to meet international standards. This is a major breakthrough for the Government, but will face a rocky road in the Latvian parliament. Passage will likely depend on our strong and vocal support for the bills, and on moderated Russian rhetoric.

Primakov letter to Albright: On April 14, FM Primakov sent Secretary Albright a second Latvia letter, which crossed in the mail with her letter on the same subject and included a list of six issues on which the Russians want Latvia to make progress. The newly-proposed Legislation will address 5 out of 6 of the Russian demands, and Latvia is already making progress to address the 6th demand. In some cases, the Russian demands go beyond OSCE recommendations. Attachments 1 and 2 outline Latvian progress in addressing OSCE Recommendations and Primakov's demands.

Attachments:

1. Latvian Progress on Key OSCE Recommendations
2. Latvian Progress on Key Issues Identified in 4/14 Primakov Letter.
3. Van der Stoep announcement

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PER E.O. 13526

2016-034-M-1 (2.60)
6/12/2013 VZ

Talking Points prepared for Dep Sec Talbot's
Mascon Trip - Mtg w/ Primakov

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Talking Points

- Hope you agree that Latvian Cabinet's proposed changes in Latvia's naturalization and citizenship legislation were a very positive development; clear Latvia beginning to make important progress.
- Van der Stoel publicly welcomed the Latvian government's action. A very good sign. Our long-standing position has been to encourage prompt implementation of OSCE recommendations. Show OSCE works.
- The President wrote Ulmanis two weeks ago and urged dialogue between Latvia and Russia as well as prompt implementation of OSCE recommendations.
- Thanks to effort on all sides, we believe many of the issues Primakov raised in his April 14 letter have been addressed by the proposals announced April 15 by the Latvian cabinet, including:
 - Proposal to abolish "window" naturalization system and to grant immediate citizenship to stateless children.
 - Proposal to provide additional language training; tests have already been simplified and the pass rate was 98 percent last year;
 - Proposal to amend language law so it will conform with international standards;
 - Proposal to amend labor laws to comply with international legal norms.
- On the issue of participation in municipal elections raised in Primakov's letter, we note that OSCE has not made any recommendations on this matter. Fixing the window problem, however, should also solve problem of disenfranchisement.
- We agree with Van der Stoel that a Latvian commitment to speedier and genuine social integration could help establish a firm basis for inter-ethnic harmony.
- Clearly Latvian Government and Ulmanis will have a tough job working their proposed changes through the Latvian parliament. Nothing would do more to complicate their job than an atmosphere of continuing rhetorical confrontation.

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PER E.O. 13526

2016-0314-M-7 (2.61)

6/12/2023 VR

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- Latvian Government has taken a bold step; what we all need to do is support it; any pressures against Latvia now would only be counterproductive.
- We will continue to work with Ulmanis and the Latvian government to help get these forward-looking proposals enacted into law. Encourage you to do the same.
- Let's keep our eye on the common goal. If the Latvian government can secure passage of all the proposals it announced this week, they will have enacted the essential OSCE recommendations.

(if raised, sanctions against Latvia):

- Madeleine very glad to hear in your April 14 letter that Russian government not contemplating comprehensive trade sanctions against Latvia. But even existing boycotts and threats are causing significant harm to the process of solving this issue. Hurts all residents of Latvia, including Russian minority. Complicates passage of legislative changes. Time to stop rhetoric and start dialogue. Time to welcome the changes and encourage them constructively; not to harm them recklessly.

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Watch Out For:

Primakov may argue, as he did in his April 14 letter to the Secretary, that Latvia is "pursuing a deliberate policy of discrimination against minorities."

- There is no systematic pattern of human rights violations in Latvia.

Russia has called for a G-8 statement on Latvia.

- Continuing inflammatory rhetoric and boycotts will make any G-8 consideration of this issue impossible.

Primakov may note his dissatisfaction with the situation of Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia.

- If currently pending legislation is passed, Estonia will have addressed all 30 of the OSCE's main recommendations.

Latvian Progress on Key OSCE Recommendations

OSCE Recommendation	Latvian Response	Evaluation of Progress
<i>Eliminate "window" system of naturalization</i>	4/98 Latvian Govt proposes legislation to abolish window system	In Progress Requires approval of Saeima
<i>Grant immediate citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia since 1991</i>	4/98 Latvian Govt proposes legislation to grant immediate citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia since 1991.	In Progress Requires approval of Saeima
<i>Simplify language, history tests required for naturalization</i>	1996 Multiple choice test for history/culture introduced 1997 Both test simplified: pass rate for the language test jumps from 92% in 1995-6 to 98% 1997; Passing rates on history/culture tests increased from 89% in 1995-6 to 96% in 1997; OSCE mission input considered	Complete More work needs to be done to educate the public about the testing process, passing rates
<i>Bring proposed language law/labor law into conformity with international standards</i>	4/98 Latvian govt notes plans to propose amendments bringing both laws into compliance with int'l legal norms.	In Progress Requires approval of Saeima
<i>Document non-citizens so they can travel</i>	3/98 - validity of Former Soviet passports extended for travel to CIS states until 10/31/98; validity for re-entry into Latvia extended until 1/99.	In Progress Progress before 1998 desultory
<i>Establish office of the National Commissioner on Ethnic and Language Affairs</i>	1995 National Human Rights Office (NHRO) established	Complete NHRO seen as relatively inactive Further development would be useful
<i>Improve the implementation of national language training program</i>	National Language Training Program Established When	In Progress NHRO seen as relatively inactive Access to language training still problematic

Latvian Progress on Key Issues Identified 4/14 Primakov Letter

1. Elimination of the "window" system of naturalization and citizenship for stateless children.

- Addressed by legislation proposed April 15

2. Acceleration of naturalization, simplification of testing.

- Naturalization slow because few have chosen to apply.
- Legislation proposed April 15 would allow all interested and qualified applicants to apply without waiting.
- Required tests simplified in 1997; passing rates now above 95%

3. Amendments to labor law.

- Amendments proposed April 15 to bring law into compliance with international legal standards.

4. Amendments to language and education law.

- Amendments proposed April 15 to bring pending language legislation into compliance with international law.

5. ** Right to participate in municipal elections for permanent residents waiting for naturalization. **

- Proposed elimination of "windows" will eliminate enforced waiting period: all qualified applicants may apply to naturalize.
- Non-citizen voting rights unusual in any western society

6. Establishment of a mechanism to improve dialogue between Latvians and Russian minorities.

- The Latvian government has recently established a Ministerial-level integration council to draft a national program for social integration.

Italicized Issues Have Not Been Recommended by the OSCE

Drafted: EUR/RPM:SPenhune ok
EUR/RPM:JRosenblatt
EUR/NB:GMilovanovic ok
EUR/RUS:SGwaltney
EUR:RDasmus



United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 23, 1998

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

S/S

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DECLASSIFIED

PER E.O. 13526

2016-0314-M-1 (2.62)

6/14/2023 VR

DECL: 04/12/08

TO: The Secretary

FROM: EUR - Eileen Malloy, Acting
S/NIS - Ross Wilson, Acting

SUBJECT: Strategy on Latvia

SUMMARY

Russo-Latvian tensions are the first real test of the Baltic Charter and the NEI. Our first challenge is to stimulate a return to good faith Russo-Latvian dialogue and help create a dispassionate environment in which the Latvian parliament can take up the far-reaching legislative proposals announced by the Latvian government on April 15. Those proposals, if enacted, would address key OSCE recommendations and improve Latvian nationality, language and labor law to the benefit of Russian and other minorities. We must also assist Latvia to make the integration of minorities work. More broadly, our strategy seeks -- through diplomacy, public affairs and some assistance -- to ensure that Latvia does not fall behind the other Baltic nations on the path toward full integration into European and Euro-Atlantic institutions. To achieve these goals we would foster reform and integration, help Latvia make progress on minority issues, work to convince the Russians that pressure and inflamed rhetoric are counterproductive, stimulate historical reconciliation in all three Baltic states, and engage pro-actively in public diplomacy.

DISCUSSION

We have been working to develop a Latvia strategy to follow up on your letter to Primakov and the President's letter to Ulmanis. The letters have already had a positive effect - both Ulmanis and Primakov have welcomed our intervention - but we'll need to stay engaged with both sides. While we understand Russian Deputy Foreign Minister Avdeyev has agreed to meet Latvian State Secretary

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Classified By: EUR/DAS:Rasmus

Reason: 1.5BandD

Reikstins on April 23, it remains to be seen if this will lead to resumption of genuine dialogue. Meanwhile, Latvia's political instability, exacerbated by Russian threats of economic measures, risks making it fall behind the other two Baltic states in the quest for greater European integration.

We have in the past had considerable success in using our good offices to cool Baltic-Russian tensions. This was most evident during the end-game negotiations surrounding Russian troop withdrawals from the Baltics in 1994. The Baltic Charter and the NEI give us even more clout with both sides, and we should use it. We have a role to play and we should do so before the US ethnic community makes Latvia part of the public debate on NATO enlargement.

Tensions between Russia and Latvia, including Russian threats of "economic measures" to punish Latvia for its treatment of non-citizen Russophones, have shaken Latvia's coalition government and could prove a destabilizing factor in the region. Latvia has been making good progress on OSCE recommendations, but work remains to be done. On April 15 the GOL decided to propose new legislation which would open the naturalization process to all interested and qualified non citizens and would grant immediate citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia since independence in 1991. The GOL also decided to propose amendments to bring pending labor and language laws into conformity with international norms.

We have publicly welcomed this major breakthrough by the Latvian government. The proposed measures, if enacted by the Saeima, would address key OSCE recommendations -- the basis by which we measure Latvian performance on minority issues. But the nationalists of PM Krasts's party and others will make passage difficult. Success will likely depend on our strong and vocal support for passage of the bills, and on moderated Russian rhetoric.

Continuing Russian pressure -- including inflamed public rhetoric, economic measures, and moving the goalposts beyond OSCE recommendations -- threatens to derail the Latvian government's dash to implement OSCE recommendations. It makes the GOL moves appear to be bowing to Moscow and stiffens the nationalistic opposition in the Latvian Saeima. This is the first serious test of the Baltic Charter, and of the NEI principle that there is

a "win-win" outcome to be achieved through cooperation rather than confrontation. In addition to managing the Russia side of the equation, we need a plan for supporting, strengthening and counseling Latvia now and over the longer haul.

Our proposed strategy would:

- Focus US high level attention on getting Riga and Moscow to "win-win." While we would work with the EU and OSCE where appropriate, leaving this issue to either organization would only compound the problem.
- Maximize the prospects for passage of key legislation in the Saeima and for Latvian progress on reform and minority issues by reassuring Riga that it does not face this problem alone. We would take a "tough love" approach that assures them that we remain committed to their Western integration but that they need to adopt and implement OSCE-consistent solutions to the minority issue and regulate their relations with their eastern neighbor.
- Continue to push Moscow to focus on implementation of the OSCE recommendations and drop counterproductive threats of economic pressure. This will require continued high-level dialogue with the Russians. While recognizing that Russian policy is also being shaped in part by domestic politics, we must push back in the face of exaggerated statements and demonstrate that quiet diplomacy can still work. The GOL's bold April 15 decisions have already helped prove our point. We must also hold the line that recommendations formulated by the OSCE -- which Russia itself promotes as the premier human rights institution -- are the standard against which to measure Latvian performance. Any Russian attempts to move the goalposts must be discouraged, encourage both lower rhetoric from Moscow and passage of the proposed legislation by the Latvian parliament.
- Pursue and, if possible, strengthen our efforts to promote regional cooperation despite the current Latvian-Russian dispute. This will allow a Latvian-Russian dialogue to continue, serve as a confidence-building measure, and demonstrate that our policy can ride out patches of rough weather.

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- 4 -

- Work with all three Baltic states to promote historical reconciliation and a more open treatment of the Holocaust.
- Move pro-actively to get our story out at home with the Baltic-American and ethnic community and preempt charges from conservatives that we did not standup to Russian pressure. We should also be prepared for questions when the Senate debate on NATO enlargement resumes April 20th.

TAB 1: Operational Plan for Latvia Strategy

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- 5 -

April 23, 1998

Drafter:

EUR/DAS:Rasmus

ID: LatviaRonmemoTOSECShort April 16

Tel. 76556

Clearance: EUR/NB:GMilovanovic
Clearance: S/NIS:TNuland
Clearance: EUR/RUS:GKrol/SGwaltney
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Clearance: EUR/ERA:SCristina
Clearance: P:BStephenson
Clearance: D:MSullivan

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The Integration/Reform Track

Objective: Find steps to underscore our commitment to Latvia's Western integration that cannot be portrayed as anti-Russian. We should work closely with the Nordics, Poles and the EU to coordinate our efforts.

- Accelerate US/EU talks on WTO accession. This is the only institution that Latvia has a chance of joining this century. Resolving the US/EU logjam on this would provide an enormous political/psychological boost and would make good on a Baltic Charter commitment.
- Ratify treaty on double taxation by U.S. Senate and Latvian Saeima.
- Use General Kievenaars's defense baseline study and security BWG visit in early May to underscore our long-term commitment to helping Latvia become a stronger candidate.
- Find an opportunity (e.g. interview, speech) for a senior USG official to reaffirm publicly the U.S. commitment to Baltic--including Latvia's--integration into Western institutions.

Making Progress on Minority Issues

Objective: To support the GOL and convince the Saeima that it must move boldly ahead on OSCE recommendations. Work closely with van der Stoep, Nordics and EU. Develop shared assessment on what has already been achieved as well as what remains to be done.

- Implement RPM/OSCE action plan outlining bilateral and multilateral steps U.S. could take to facilitate movement on minority issue.
- Coordinate an action plan with other friendly countries, e.g. Nordics, Poland, EU, other Baltics.
- Empower Larry Napper to continue Ambassadorial level dialogue in Riga with the leadership of the Nationalist Fatherland and Freedom Party to drive home the necessity of rapid movement on social integration issues.
- Reinforce Larry from Washington, e.g., arrange a visit by DRL A/S Shattuck to Riga. The visit could take place during the

May 4-5 conference on social integration sponsored by the EU. This would provide an opportunity for broad consultations between Shattuck and all relevant parties in the integration debate.

- Announce a concrete USG contribution to the Riga Law School project to underscore commitment to the rule of law in the region and particularly in Latvian society. The school will be open to members of all ethnic groups, including Russians, in Latvia, as well as to Estonians and Lithuanians.
- Make a concrete U.S. contribution through funding or technical assistance to the Latvian President's Council on Minorities and/or proposed Information Center of the Latvian Naturalization Board in order to promote accelerated naturalization and integration of minorities.

Working with the Russians

Objective: Convince Moscow that current pressure on Latvia is counterproductive in terms of improving the status of the Russian-speaking minority. Encourage Moscow to avoid exaggerated rhetoric and to resume dialogue.

- Establish factual and shared U.S./EU/OSCE assessment of what progress Latvia has made, share it with the Russians, and get it into the public domain.
- Use U.S.-Russian channels to encourage Russia to adopt a more factual treatment of the issue and to give quiet diplomacy a chance. Discourage threats of sanctions or other punitive "economic measures" as likely to be counterproductive and to hurt Russians in Latvia as much as Latvia itself..
- Encourage Russia to agree that OSCE recommendations and assessments are the basis upon which we will work with the Latvians (i.e. discourage the Russians from 'moving the goal posts.') Coordinate on this issue with the EU and others to convince Moscow that there is a common front among the international community in support of OSCE recommendations.
- Rebuff any Russian efforts to mobilize international community to further isolate or stigmatize Latvia, e.g., Russian proposal for G-8 statement.

The Historical Reconciliation Track

Objective: Follow up on Riga synagogue bombing. Convince all the Balts that they should more proactively address the issue of the

past, especially the Holocaust, in order i.a. to prevent mishandling of future veterans' commemorations.

- Keep FBI actively involved in Latvian investigation of the April 2nd bombing of the Riga synagogue. This will help enhance the credibility of the government's investigation of the incident.
- Provide crisis management (including public affairs) training to Latvia (or regionally to all three Baltic states) to enhance domestic capacity to coordinate effectively in a crisis.
- Publicly welcome action by Latvian President and National Security Council to remove from office those military officers who participated in the Latvian Legion commemoration as well as police officials who failed to provide effective protection for the synagogue as soon as these actions are ratified by the Latvian parliament after the Easter recess.
- Continue to encourage the Baltics to form a Historical Commission that would examine the events of World War II in the Baltic region. The Lithuanians and Latvians are already indicated that they favor this proposal as does the AJC.
- Work with the Baltics in a joint effort to examine the cause, consequences, prevention and prosecution of hate crimes. The Joint Partnership Commission could announce a one-year program of joint work with recommendations to be delivered to the Commission.
- Invite Latvia and other Baltic states to participate in the Washington conference on Holocaust era assets.
- Continue to pursue property restitution by Latvian authorities to Jewish groups from which communal property was confiscated during the war.

Developing a Public Profile

Objective: Get our side of the story out to preempt conservative criticism that we have not been tough enough on the Russians. Be prepared for questions on the Baltic issue when the Senate resumes debate on enlargement next week.

- Meet with the CEEC on this issue (perhaps at Deputy Secretary level).
- Background a sympathetic journalist on what we are doing.

- Develop fact sheets on what Latvia has and has not done on the minority issue.
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United States Department of State

Washington, D.C. 20520

April 23, 1998

INFORMATION MEMORANDUM

S/S

~~CONFIDENTIAL / NODIS~~

DECLASSIFIED

PER E.O. 13526

2016-03/4-M-1 (2.64)

6/12/2013 v2

DECL: 04/12/08

TO: The Secretary

FROM: EUR - Eileen Malloy, Acting
S/NIS - Ross Wilson, Acting

SUBJECT: Strategy on Latvia

SUMMARY

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April 23, 1998

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- Background a sympathetic journalist on what we are doing.

- Develop fact sheets on what Latvia has and has not done on the minority issue.
- Do tough Qs and As in advance for the Senate debate on enlargement.

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Latvia

New Legislation Proposed: On April 15, the Latvian Cabinet proposed new legislation abolishing the "window" system of naturalization (which limited naturalization by age, with the "window" of those eligible to naturalize opening incrementally over a period of ten years), granting citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia and modifying draft Labor and Language laws to meet international standards. This is a major breakthrough for the Government, but will face a rocky road in the Latvian parliament. Passage will likely depend on our strong and vocal support for the bills, and on moderated Russian rhetoric.

Primakov letter to Albright: On April 14, FM Primakov sent Secretary Albright a second Latvia letter, which crossed in the mail with her letter on the same subject and included a list of six issues on which the Russians want Latvia to make progress. The newly-proposed Legislation will address 5 out of 6 of the Russian demands, and Latvia is already making progress to address the 6th demand. In some cases, the Russian demands go beyond OSCE recommendations. Attachments 1 and 2 outline Latvian progress in addressing OSCE Recommendations and Primakov's demands.

Attachments:

1. Latvian Progress on Key OSCE Recommendations
2. Latvian Progress on Key Issues Identified in 4/14 Primakov Letter.
3. Van der Stoel announcement

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PER E.O. 13526

2016-0314-M-1 (2.66)

6/12/2023 *vr*

*Talking Points prepared for Dep Sec Talbot's
Moscow Trip - Mtg w/ Primakov*

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

Talking Points

- Hope you agree that Latvian Cabinet's proposed changes in Latvia's naturalization and citizenship legislation were a very positive development; clear Latvia beginning to make important progress.
- Van der Stoel publicly welcomed the Latvian government's action. A very good sign. Our long-standing position has been to encourage prompt implementation of OSCE recommendations. Show OSCE works.
- The President wrote Ulmanis two weeks ago and urged dialogue between Latvia and Russia as well as prompt implementation of OSCE recommendations.
- Thanks to effort on all sides, we believe many of the issues Primakov raised in his April 14 letter have been addressed by the proposals announced April 15 by the Latvian cabinet, including:
 - Proposal to abolish "window" naturalization system and to grant immediate citizenship to stateless children.
 - Proposal to provide additional language training; tests have already been simplified and the pass rate was 98 percent last year;
 - Proposal to amend language law so it will conform with international standards;
 - Proposal to amend labor laws to comply with international legal norms.
- On the issue of participation in municipal elections raised in Primakov's letter, we note that OSCE has not made any recommendations on this matter. Fixing the window problem, however, should also solve problem of disenfranchisement.
- We agree with Van der Stoel that a Latvian commitment to speedier and genuine social integration could help establish a firm basis for inter-ethnic harmony.
- Clearly Latvian Government and Ulmanis will have a tough job working their proposed changes through the Latvian parliament. Nothing would do more to complicate their job than an atmosphere of continuing rhetorical confrontation.

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2016-0314-M-1 (2.67)

6/12/2023 VZ

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

- Latvian Government has taken a bold step; what we all need to do is support it; any pressures against Latvia now would only be counterproductive.
- We will continue to work with Ulmanis and the Latvian government to help get these forward-looking proposals enacted into law. Encourage you to do the same.
- Let's keep our eye on the common goal. If the Latvian government can secure passage of all the proposals it announced this week, they will have enacted the essential OSCE recommendations.

(if raised, sanctions against Latvia):

- Madeleine very glad to hear in your April 14 letter that Russian government not contemplating comprehensive trade sanctions against Latvia. But even existing boycotts and threats are causing significant harm to the process of solving this issue. Hurts all residents of Latvia, including Russian minority. Complicates passage of legislative changes. Time to stop rhetoric and start dialogue. Time to welcome the changes and encourage them constructively; not to harm them recklessly.

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Watch Out For:

Primakov may argue, as he did in his April 14 letter to the Secretary, that Latvia is "pursuing a deliberate policy of discrimination against minorities."

- There is no systematic pattern of human rights violations in Latvia.

Russia has called for a G-8 statement on Latvia.

- Continuing inflammatory rhetoric and boycotts will make any G-8 consideration of this issue impossible.

Primakov may note his dissatisfaction with the situation of Russian-speaking minorities in Estonia.

- If currently pending legislation is passed, Estonia will have addressed all 30 of the OSCE's main recommendations.

Latvian Progress on Key OSCE Recommendations

OSCE Recommendation	Latvian Response	Evaluation of Progress
<i>Eliminate "window" system of naturalization</i>	4/98 Latvian Govt proposes legislation to abolish window system	In Progress Requires approval of Saeima
<i>Grant immediate citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia since 1991</i>	4/98 Latvian Govt proposes legislation to grant immediate citizenship to stateless children born in Latvia since 1991.	In Progress Requires approval of Saeima
<i>Simplify language, history tests required for naturalization</i>	1996 Multiple choice test for history/culture introduced 1997 Both test simplified: pass rate for the language test jumps from 92% in 1995-6 to 98% 1997; Passing rates on history/culture tests increased from 89% in 1995-6 to 96% in 1997; OSCE mission input considered	Complete More work needs to be done to educate the public about the testing process, passing rates
<i>Bring proposed language law/labor law into conformity with international standards</i>	4/98 Latvian govt notes plans to propose amendments bringing both laws into compliance with int'l legal norms.	In Progress Requires approval of Saeima
<i>Document non-citizens so they can travel</i>	3/98 - validity of Former Soviet passports extended for travel to CIS states until 10/31/98; validity for re-entry into Latvia extended until 1/99.	In Progress Progress before 1998 desultory
<i>Establish office of the National Commissioner on Ethnic and Language Affairs</i>	1995 National Human Rights Office (NHRO) established	Complete NHRO seen as relatively inactive Further development would be useful
<i>Improve the implementation of national language training program</i>	National Language Training Program Established When	In Progress NHRO seen as relatively inactive Access to language training still problematic

Latvian Progress on Key Issues Identified 4/14 Primakov Letter

1. Elimination of the "window" system of naturalization and citizenship for stateless children.

- Addressed by legislation proposed April 15

2. Acceleration of naturalization, simplification of testing.

- Naturalization slow because few have chosen to apply.
- Legislation proposed April 15 would allow all interested and qualified applicants to apply without waiting.
- Required tests simplified in 1997; passing rates now above 95%

3. Amendments to labor law.

- Amendments proposed April 15 to bring law into compliance with international legal standards.

4. Amendments to language and education law.

- Amendments proposed April 15 to bring pending language legislation into compliance with international law.

5. ** Right to participate in municipal elections for permanent residents waiting for naturalization. **

- Proposed elimination of "windows" will eliminate enforced waiting period: all qualified applicants may apply to naturalize.
- Non-citizen voting rights unusual in any western society

6. Establishment of a mechanism to improve dialogue between Latvians and Russian minorities.

- The Latvian government has recently established a Ministerial-level integration council to draft a national program for social integration.

Italicized Issues Have Not Been Recommended by the OSCE