

*July 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994*

## Statement on Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty Headquarters Relocation

*July 5, 1994*

The Radios made a significant contribution to the victory of freedom during the cold war. All friends of liberty appreciate the strong support of the German Government and in particular the Bavarian officials over the last four decades. With this move, the Radios begin a new chapter in the continuing struggle to consolidate democracy throughout the former Communist bloc. I am grateful to President Havel

and the Czech Government for its generous offer and look forward to working with it to ensure the Radios' important work continues.

NOTE: This statement was included in a statement by the Press Secretary on the decision to accept the offer of the Czech Government to make the former Parliament building in Prague available to Radio Free Europe and Radio Liberty.

## Exchange With Reporters During Discussions With Baltic Leaders in Riga, Latvia

*July 6, 1994*

### *Baltic Nations and Russia*

*Q.* Mr. President, did you make any progress in your conversation with Mr. Yeltsin?

*The President.* I think we're making good progress. I think we're making good progress toward completing the troop withdrawals on schedule, working out some of the remaining controversies over the rights of Latvian minorities. I feel good about it.

We talked about that here, as well as about our economic cooperation. And this agreement is, I think, just the beginning of what will be a long and very deep relationship between these

two countries and with the United States and the Baltics generally.

*Q.* Did Yeltsin give you a firm commitment on August 31 withdrawal?

*The President.* Well, he certainly clearly wants to complete the troop withdrawal, and he's worked very hard. You know, this has been a priority issue between the two of us, and I think that it will proceed apace. I feel good about where we are right now.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:30 a.m. in the White Room at Riga Castle. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## The President's News Conference With Baltic Leaders in Riga

*July 6, 1994*

*President Clinton.* Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Last year I had the pleasure of meeting these three Presidents, President Ulmanis, President Meri, and President Brazauskas, during the opening of the U.N. General Assembly. It is a great honor for me to see them again here as the first American President to set foot on free Baltic soil. On

Monday, my country celebrated the birth of democracy in America 218 years ago. Today, on behalf of all Americans, I salute the Baltic countries for another birth of democracy. And I salute the Baltic people for the courage, the perseverance, and the discipline that made independence possible.

We have just had a very productive session. We noted the considerable progress made since we met last year and focused on the goals we all share: to expand democracy, security, and the broad integration of the Baltic countries with the West.

Much of our discussion focused on the hope for an historic withdrawal of the last Russian troops from Latvia and Estonia by August 31st. I congratulate President Ulmanis on the withdrawal agreement he and President Yeltsin signed in Moscow. The United States is prepared to double the level of assistance it is providing, up to \$4 million, to help Latvia to take down the unfinished radar structure at Skrunda.

President Meri and I discussed the status of the Russian-Estonian talks on the withdrawal agreement. I believe the remaining differences between the two nations are narrow and can be resolved with flexibility on both sides. I told President Meri of my intentions to discuss this subject with President Yeltsin at Naples.

To help reach this milestone the United States has more than doubled the housing vouchers we will provide to qualified Russian officers who want to resettle from Latvia and Estonia into Russia. The United States is also providing a \$2 million package of assistance as part of the international effort to restore the environment at the former nuclear training site at Paldiski, Estonia.

We also discussed the issue of ethnic minorities. I believe all three Presidents share my view on this matter. A tolerant and inclusive approach is needed to integrate these groups into the political and social life of all the countries. The progress made so far on troop withdrawals provides hope that the new democratic Russia, unlike the Soviet Union, can work with the Baltic countries for peace in the region.

The three Presidents and I discussed progress in developing active bilateral and multilateral defense relationships. I'm pleased that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were among the first states to join the Partnership For Peace with NATO. In recognition of their role I have asked the Congress in the budget for 1995 for \$10 million for the Baltic peacekeeping battalion and other peacekeeping troops in Central and Eastern Europe.

We also covered the remarkable progress the Baltic nations have made in reforming their economies. Supporting the economic reintegration of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the

West is a top priority of the United States. The hardships of transition are real, but the prospect of better times is visible. The trade and investment prospects are excellent. Just yesterday in Washington, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation signed an agreement with US West Telephone Corporation to ensure a \$200 million telecommunications deal with Lithuania.

Today we're announcing the American membership of the board of directors of the Baltic American Enterprise Fund, headed by Ambassador Rozanne Ridgway. Over the next several years, this fund will provide \$50 million to develop businesses in the Baltic States.

From our own history, Americans know that winning the fight for independence is followed by even more arduous and difficult struggles for economic stability and national security. The people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have hard work ahead. But our meeting today convinces me that that work can and will be done successfully.

*President Guntis Ulmanis of Latvia.* Mr. Presidents, dear audience, everybody who hears me today, I would like to welcome our guests to Latvia, President of the U.S.A. and the Presidents of Lithuania and Estonia.

I think that this is a historic event. It's one more step in the direction of consolidation of Baltic independence. In this connection, I want to announce that the three Presidents of the three Baltic States have just signed a common statement in which the course of events of today has been reflected, and the main problematic issues have been mentioned that either promote or interfere with the consolidation of Baltic independence and economic growth.

I fully agree to President Clinton about the viewpoints and measures and suggestions on which we have achieved mutual agreement. And I would like to lend emphasis on several issues that we discussed in greater detail.

The three Presidents of the three Baltic States consider the main issue being the security issue of the Baltic region. The security—and the main issue here is the further cooperation within the project of Partnership For Peace, promotion of activity within this project not only on our side but also on behalf of the U.S.A. and other countries as well as finding the demands that the members of the Partnership For Peace should meet.

We also talked about the duties and responsibilities of the member states of this project. Today we can point out that we have talked about the issues that support partnership should become only one stage in the course of consolidation of peace and security in the region. And the ultimate aim would be the guarantee of national security and joining the security structures.

We also touched the issues of economic growth. It's of course clear that we all want and we are all convinced that Russia will withdraw its army on the 31st of August, and we see no reasons why it shouldn't be completed.

The next issue we addressed was economic issues—economic problems in the Baltic States, and the main issue was the development of energy resources so that the Baltic States could irreversibly become independent. So economic independence is essential for national independence. We talked of gas and electricity and other energy sources. We touched also social issues, educational issues. We talked about how to stimulate the youth from the Baltic States to gain education not only in the Baltic States but so that they can access educational systems in other countries. We also think that the number of students now studying in the U.S.A. is much too little.

We also addressed the issue of the criminal situation and inner security of the Baltic States. And all the four Presidents supported the importance of this issue, and I understood that the President of the U.S.A. gave us all the grounds to think that the U.S.A. will participate in these processes also with practical assistance and also by sharing their know-how.

Speaking about security, we touched upon the issue of the army, about armament and about further possibilities to create normal mobile defense structures that could guarantee the security of the Baltic States.

Maybe one of the central issues today was the relationship with Russia. We touched upon the issues about the withdrawal of the Russian troops, about the monitor system with regard to Skrunda radar station, about the prospects of the situation in Kaliningrad region, and so on and so forth. It's clear that, speaking about the relationship with Russia, all the four Presidents came to a common agreement that this relationship should be normal, interstate relationship where the interests and rights of all countries should be respected.

I want to express once again my respect and gratitude to the U.S. President who found it possible to visit the Baltic States and talk to the three Presidents of the Baltic States and gave his viewpoint with regard to the further development of the Baltic States.

Thank you.

Now, I would like to invite you to ask questions.

*President Boris Yeltsin of Russia*

*Q.* Does your phone call to Mr. Yeltsin on the eve of your visit to Riga have certain concerns about the possible Russian reaction to this visit?

*President Clinton.* First of all, I called President Yeltsin to tell him where I was going on this trip and to talk about my firm conviction that we must continue with the schedule on Russian troop withdrawal. And that is something I've worked on since I first became President. I've worked very hard on it, and the United States has tried to support an orderly withdrawal in many ways, including funds for housing for Russian troops that are going back home to Russia as well as for dealing with specific issues like this Skrunda radar facility. So I wanted to just get an update from him about where he thought things were and tell him what I was going to do.

He raised the issue, which he always does, about being concerned about the condition—the living conditions and the political rights of Russian people who stay in the Baltic States and become part of the minority population of the new democracies here. And I reaffirmed the position that I always have taken, which is the position of the United States within the United States, which is that in democracies, minorities have to have certain rights to participate and are entitled to fair treatment, and that that was the position of the United States, but that I thought the troop withdrawal should continue on schedule. It was a very straightforward conversation, as all of our conversations are.

*Securing Baltic Independence*

*Q.* Mr. Clinton, you and your Baltic colleagues hope that things are going to go right in Russia. But supposing they don't? Supposing in 2 years' time we have a President Zhirinovskiy or some other hard-liner in Moscow? Can you now assure your Baltic colleagues here that America will not permit them again, either by

subversion or bullying or any other means, to come back under Moscow's sphere of influence?

*President Clinton.* Well, sir, the whole purpose of the Partnership For Peace was to move toward that sort of security. Everybody who signed up for the Partnership For Peace had to, as a condition of its participation, recognize the territorial integrity and the independence of all the participating countries, and we now have 21 nations doing that.

I think it is obvious from all the actions the United States has taken on security, on political matters, on economic matters, that we are trying to do everything we can to secure the independence of the Baltics. I also think it is obvious that we should deal with the world as it is and deal with people based on what they say and do. And I think that's where we are now.

I don't think you should predict the worst in any country. And I can only report to you that we are laying the foundations that I think are most likely to guarantee the long-term security and independence of these nations.

#### *Haiti*

*Q.* We have had a—[inaudible]—policy that was announced in Haiti before you left. Right now you are talking about opening new safe havens. It seems sort of confusing to understand why this is going to somehow speed the leaving of the military dictators, what one has to do with the other. Do you have confidence at this point that your policy is really going to lead to the departure of these people?

*President Clinton.* I think the answer to that is yes, I believe it will. But in May when I announced the original policy of ending direct return, I said we would seek participation as we needed it from other countries, and that's what we're doing. And I think that it's an appropriate thing to do. But I also think the sanctions are having an impact.

#### *Russian Withdrawals*

*Q.* Mr. President—[inaudible]—President Yeltsin's wish to tie troop withdrawal from Baltics with the situation of Russian minorities in these countries—I mean, Latvia and Estonia. Thank you.

*President Clinton.* We believe the two subjects should not be linked and that the withdrawal should continue, but we do support appropriate protections and rights for Russian minorities.

*Q.* Did you get assurance from the Baltic Presidents that Russian minorities would be treated properly and they would be nondiscriminatory? Apparently, they don't feel that way now.

*President Clinton.* I thought that their statements to me over lunch were quite forthcoming about that. I felt good about it. I believe—let me say—let's look at this in the context of where we are. There is an agreement with Latvia for withdrawal of Russian troops by August 31st. The troop withdrawals have been completed in Lithuania. There are remaining differences to be resolved between Estonia and Russia. President Meri and I discussed that in some detail today, and I think the differences are narrow and will be bridged in the appropriate timeframe. And I'm going to do what I can to be helpful in that regard.

#### *Role of Baltic Nations*

*Q.* Mr. President, what is the role of the Baltic States in this post-Communist situation in Europe, and what is the main motivation of your arrival to Latvia today?

*President Clinton.* Well, the role of the Baltic States in the post-Communist world is, first and foremost, to provide a free and good existence for the citizens of the nations to people who live in Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia. But I think that the role of the Baltic States is greater than that. First, the Baltic States have agreed to participate in the Partnership For Peace. Secondly, the Baltic States have achieved a degree of economic stability and success that is much admired throughout Europe and indeed throughout the world, different in different countries, perhaps there's a higher growth rate in one country, a lower inflation rate in another country, but certainly, more success than many other countries have had in converting from a Communist economy to a more open market economy. I think that's also very important.

I came here today because the Baltics are important to the United States. We have one million Americans who have roots in these three nations. We have always recognized these three nations as independent nations. We never recognized the loss of freedom and independence in the Baltics. And we have supported and admired the remarkable transformation in these nations in the last few years.

So I came here to try to build on the successes of the end of the cold war, to enhance

our security ties, to enhance our political cooperation, to enhance your economic development and our economic partnership because those things are important to the United States and important to the rest of the world.

#### *Russian Withdrawals*

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—President Yeltsin—[inaudible]—withdrawal in Estonia? And are you taking anything to Naples that you can tell President Yeltsin?

*President Clinton.* I'm going to Naples, and I'm going to discuss with President Yeltsin the conversation I had with President Meri. And I will continue to do what I have done on this for a year and a half now, to push in a deliberate and firm way and to offer all the incentives we can offer to continue the troop withdrawals.

It's been one of the great successes of the post-cold-war era, a success not just for these countries but a success for Russia as well, in making clear its intentions and making possible its participation in the world in a broader way. But I think it would be wrong to characterize our role as brokers. These are two independent nations. They have to reach agreement between themselves, and I'm confident that they will. If we can assist in that, we're going to do everything we can to assist. But they will have to make the decisions, and I think they will.

Q. Can we get President Meri's reaction? President Meri?

*President Clinton.* Please! [Laughter] Do you need English?

*President Lennart Meri of Estonia.* No, I need your question. [Laughter]

Q. Are you as confident as President Clinton seemingly is that Russia will withdraw all of its troops from Estonia by August 31st?

*President Meri.* Well, let's have it clear why August 31st is so important, not only for Estonians, not only for Latvians but also, and in the first place, for Russia. You see, it is a highly symbolic date, meaning that the last ruins of World War II will be dismantled in Europe, that Europe will enter a new era where we will be in a position to build a security system which will be open, a free market system which will be open, and first of all, of course, a democratic society. That is the meaning of August 31st. It will be a first day of a new Europe, or if not, it will be just an example that we have some problems still to solve. And those are by no means Baltic problems. They are European problems, which means they are global problems.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 60th news conference began at 1:40 p.m. in the State Room at Riga Castle. President Ulmanis spoke in Latvian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

## Remarks to Citizens in Riga

July 6, 1994

Today we celebrate a moment of renewal. Today we remember your courage. Today we rejoice, for only one force rules in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and that force is freedom. Thank you, President Ulmanis, for your gracious words and your warm welcome to this beautiful capital. And my thanks, also, to President Meri and President Brazauskas for your contribution to this historic event. To the people of these lands, to those gathered in this square, to those listening or watching from afar, to all who have kept the faith, I am deeply honored to stand before you, the first President of the United States to set foot on free Baltic soil.

Today we remember, we remember an August day just 5 years ago when the peoples of your nation joined hands in common cause. From Tallinn to Vilnius, a million strong, you reached across the boundaries of fear. And here in this square, sheltered by the Freedom Monument, that human chain found its center. You showed the peoples of the world the power of the Baltic way.

Now today, I stand with you here. And on behalf of all Americans, I proudly take a place in that unbroken chain for freedom. The chain stretches back to your grandparents exiled to the wastelands of Siberia, many never to return; back to your fathers, men who took to the for-