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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

August 26, 1975

ADMINISTRATIVELY CONFIDENTIAL

MEMORANDUM FOR:

ROLAND ELLIOTT

FROM:

JAMES CONNOR *J.C.*

The attached material was returned in the President's outbox with the following notation:

"Julius Rekestins is person letter should go to"

Please prepare appropriate letter - coordinating response with NSC.

Thank you.

cc: Don Rumsfeld

Mr. Rekestins address is:
Representative of American Latvian
Association in USA Inc.
Joint Baltic American Committee
22 Union S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 15, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO:

DICK CHENEY

FROM:

JACK MARSH *Jack*

Dick, the President brought to my attention the accompanying newsclip from the Grand Rapids paper of protesters on the Helsinki visit. He was desirous of writing to the leaders of this group to explain his position.

We made inquiry about some of these people in order to obtain an addressee, and there is some question in my mind as to whether the President will still want to send this letter. The leader, Silins Gunlis, apparently is a citizen of Canada, and is supposed to be a summer student at Western Michigan University.

The University records do not show this person to be a student.

You should also note that one of the other students name in the article is from Toronto. We believe that the letter will reach Gunlis through the address noted on the attached, but I would want to point out it apparently will not be going to an American citizen.

I would appreciate your running this by Brent for his approval of the letter and enclosures.

*Talk with Jack Stills.
Julius
person the should go to is*

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 14, 1975

MEMORANDUM TO: JIM CONNOR

FROM: JACK MARS 

I would appreciate your seeing that the attached letters are signed by the President and properly dispatched.

Thank you for your cooperation.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Dear Mr. Gunlis:

I noticed an article in The Grand Rapids Press of August 1, 1975, relative to your participation in a public demonstration against the signing of the Helsinki Declarations.

Rest assured that I fully appreciate your concern over the position of the United States with regard to the Soviet relationship to Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

As you may know, on the day prior to my departure for the European Security Conference in Helsinki, I met in Washington with representatives of the Baltic Nations. I am attaching a four page statement that I issued subsequent to that meeting.

Included also is a complete transcript of my remarks at the Helsinki Conference.

I sincerely hope that these materials will give you a full understanding of my basic position with regard to the position of the United States and the peoples of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

With all good wishes, I am

Sincerely,

Mr. Silins Gunlis
Western Michigan University
Continuing Education Program
Attention: Dr. Jazeps Lelis
Kalamazoo, Michigan 49008

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By Joel Clark

"We're not asking anybody to start a war over this thing," said Silins Gunlis, 26, "but we are asking people to stand up and say that the Helsinki Pact is morally wrong."

Gunlis, a Toronto native taking Latvian culture courses this summer at Western Michigan University, was one of about 200 young persons of Baltic descent participating this week in a 72-hour Vigil of Conscience at the Calder Plaza.

The protest action was aimed against President Ford's signing of the "ersatz treaty" confirming postwar European boundaries and concluding the three-day Conference on European Security and Cooperation at Helsinki, Finland.

Vigil participants feel that by signing the agreement, Ford will have for now at least sealed the fate of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Gunlis and Janis Pavasars, 28, noted that the United States keeps the Baltic states on its legation list, despite the fact that the countries were not merely seized after the war, but also designated constituent republics of the U.S.S.R.

Among signs carried by the demonstrators was one stating, "There Are No Small Countries."

Most of those participating are also students at Western, and they were joined by their professors, who held classes here Thursday and Friday instead of Kalamazoo because of the vigil. About 40 local youths also took part.

The group began with a prayer meeting Wednesday and then quietly fanned out throughout the city to collect signatures on a petition urging passage of two congressional resolutions reaffirming U.S. recognition of Latvia, Estonia and Lithuania.

The Helsinki agreement, the young persons say, will legitimize the Soviet takeover of the three countries after the defeat of German troops there in 1944.

The countries fell to Germany in 1941, a



GR Press Photo by JAY C. ABBOTT

Vigil of Conscience Brings Youths to Calder in Helsinki Pact Objection

corollary to the German invasion of Russia. The Soviets had grabbed the states at the start of the World War II, despite granting them independence after World War I.

The students, most of them fluent in Latvian, estimated they would gather about 4,000 signatures by Friday, when petitions collected here and in other parts of the country will be telegraphed to Ford at Helsinki.

Against a backdrop of red-white-red Latvian, blue-black-white Estonian and yellow-green-red Lithuanian flags, the vigil participants, some equipped with sunburn lotion, studied and sang nationalist songs while awaiting their turns to collect signatures.

Gunlis explained that most knew the Latvian language because they are first-generation Americans, the children of

persons fleeing the Baltic states as Communist authorities assumed control.

Ruta Ozols, 21, also a Western student from Toronto, said she had little difficulty in obtaining petition signatures, except from government employees afraid of losing their jobs.

But, she said, "Some people say they aren't interested and say they'd give up Latvia any day."

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

8/21/75

TO: JIM CONNOR

FROM: JERRY JONES

I think this is more appropriately
in your area.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Julius Rekstins
Representative of
American Latvian Association in
USA Inc.
Joint Baltic American Committee
22 Union S. E.
Grand Rapids, Michigan 49503

Jim -

This is the man the President
is referring to --

Any reason to talk to Jack
Stiles now that we have the name?

Would Marsh prepare the
cover letter to Julius?

*Hand
Edith
prepare
then show to
Trudy
Scovcroft*

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

August 21, 1975

MEMORANDUM FOR: JERRY JONES
FROM: DICK CHENEY (dictated from Vail)

When the President was in Helsinki, there was a proposed letter to a protestor from Grand Rapids; he was not a student at the college in Grand Rapids. The President wants to send the material to the Latvian Association representative in Grand Rapids -- an old friend -- Jack Stiles knows the man; it's Julius something.