

The original documents are located in Box D33, folder “Latvian Hall, Grand Rapids, MI, October 6, 1972” of the Ford Congressional Papers: Press Secretary and Speech File at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.

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9/27/72

Rep. Ford has been strong in his opposition to U. S. recognition of the Soviet occupation of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. In fact, he has consistently favored bringing up the Baltic States' question in the United Nations and requesting the Soviets to withdraw from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. Ford strongly supports H. Con. Res. 416, aimed at bringing the force of world opinion to bear on behalf of the restoration of their rights to the Baltic peoples. He has urged the observance of Captive Nations Week and has repeatedly expressed himself in the Congressional Record in espousal of freedom for Latvia and the other Baltic nations.

Rep. Ford has consistently favored a course of peace through strength. He has fought attempts to cut the muscle out of our national defense. He believes any move to chop back military outlays by \$30 billion indicates either ignorance or incredible irresponsibility. He feels that the only way to deal with the Soviet Union is from a position of strength.

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MINORITY LEADER

United States
House of Representatives

9/27/72

Paul

Bob Finch is going to appear at a Latvian meeting in Grand Rapids with Mr. Ford on October 6th. His office has asked that we send them about two paragraphs of Mr. Ford's accomplishments that would be of particular interest to this Latvian group so he can use it in his speech. They also want a biography.

Should be sent to:

Pam Rabbitt
360 Executive Office Building
Washington, D. C.

See the attached.

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CONGRESSMAN
GERALD R. FORD
HOUSE REPUBLICAN LEADER

**NEWS
RELEASE**

--FOR RELEASE ON DELIVERY--

October 6, 1972

Remarks by Rep. Gerald R. Ford at the Latvian Hall, Grand Rapids, Mich., 8 p.m.
Friday, Oct. 6, 1972.

Anyone who has ever known Latvian-Americans recognizes that they are the finest of people--honest, industrious, conscientious, and patriotic.

I would like to pay tribute to Latvian-Americans tonight as individuals who are dedicated to the highest American ideals--to the principles of freedom and justice.

It is in keeping with allegiance to those principles that Latvian-Americans have never given up their dream that their native land will once again be free. I share that dream. In that sense, I am a Latvian too.

We will never abandon that dream--none of us. That is why we observe Captive Nations week with all the fervor it deserves. That is why we repeatedly call for debate in the United Nations on the subject of Soviet imperio-colonialism and the injustice that is being done to Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia and all of the nations behind the Iron Curtain. I will never cease calling for the Soviets to withdraw from Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia. We must bring the force of world opinion to bear on the restoration of rights to the Baltic peoples. Our cry must always be...freedom for Latvia and the other Baltic nations, freedom for all of those who are suffering in Communist bondage.

I salute Latvian-Americans tonight, too, because they have always insisted that America should be strong. They have always believed that the way to peace is through strength. They have always known that the only way to deal with the Soviet Union is from a position of strength. For that reason they have backed those members of Congress who fight any attempts to cut the muscle out of our national defense.

Latvian-Americans know that America cannot retreat her way into peace. This is why I feel sure you are opposed to the proposed \$30 billion cut in our defense budget. You know that such a cut would put the United States in the

(more)

position of abandoning its commitments all over the world. You know that such a cut would make the U. S. militarily inferior to the Soviet Union. You know that it would mean slashing our strategic bomber forces, halting some of our missile programs, cutting our forces in Europe by more than half, reducing our Navy and Air Force tactical air wings by roughly a third, cutting the number of our aircraft carriers by more than a half, and reducing our armed forces by 40 per cent.

You are my friends. You and I are fighting for freedom together. I pledge to you tonight that I will resist with every last ounce of my strength any move to make the U. S. second to the Soviet Union in military strength. I place myself with you--on the side of liberty.

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