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Baltic Freedom Day, 1987

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Historians of the 20th century will chronicle many a tragedy for mankind—world wars, the rise of Communist and Nazi totalitarianism, genocide, military occupation, mass deportations, attempts to destroy cultural and ethnic heritage, and denials of human rights and especially freedom of worship and freedom of conscience. The historians will also record that every one of these tragedies befell the brave citizens of the illegally occupied Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Each year, on Baltic Freedom Day, we pause to express our heartfelt solidarity with these courageous people who continue to prove that, despite all, their spirit remains free and unconquered.

On June 14, 1940, the Soviet Union, in contravention of international law and with the collusion of the Nazis under the infamous Ribbentrop-Molotov Non-Aggression Pact, invaded the three independent Baltic Republics. The imprisonment, deportation, and murder of close to 100,000 Baltic people followed. Later, during the Nazi-Soviet war, the Nazis attacked through the Baltic nations and established a Gestapo-run civil administration. By the end of World War II, the Baltic states had lost 20 percent of their population; and between 1944 and 1949, some 600,000 people were deported to Siberia.

Totalitarian persecution of the Balts, this time once again under Communism, has continued ever since. While enduring decades of Soviet repression and ruthless disregard for human rights, the Baltic people have continued their noble and peaceful quest for independence, liberty, and human dignity.

This year marks the 65th anniversary of the *de jure* recognition by the United States of the Baltic Republics. The United States Government has never recognized, nor will we, the Soviet Union's illegal and forcible incorporation of the Baltic states. The United States staunchly defends the right of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia to exist as independent countries. We will continue to use every opportunity to impress upon the Soviet Union our support for the Baltic nations' right to national independence and to their right to again determine their own destiny free of foreign domination.

Observance of Baltic Freedom Day is vital for everyone who cherishes freedom and the inalienable rights God grants to all men alike; who recognizes that regimes denying those rights are illegitimate; who sees, shares, and salutes the Baltic peoples' hope, endurance, and love of liberty.

The Congress of the United States, by Senate Joint Resolution 5, has designated June 14, 1987, as "Baltic Freedom Day" and authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this event.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, RONALD REAGAN, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim June 14, 1987, as Baltic Freedom Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate remembrances and ceremonies and to reaffirm their commitment to the principles of liberty and self-determination for all peoples.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this thirteenth day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and eleventh.

Ronald Reagan