

**March 24, 1958**

**Letter from Assistant Secretary of State for  
European Affairs C. Burke Elbrick, 'Draft NSC Paper  
Concerning Baltic States'**

**Citation:**

"Letter from Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs C. Burke Elbrick, 'Draft NSC Paper Concerning Baltic States'", March 24, 1958, Wilson Center Digital Archive, NARA, RG 59, Bureau of European Affairs, Office of Eastern European Affairs, Records Relating to the Baltic States, 1962-1967, Political Affairs General Policy Background.  
<https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/144965>

**Summary:**

Policy paper explaining the current status of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and the US policy of non-recognition of their incorporation into the Soviet Union.

**Original Language:**

English

**Contents:**

Original Scan

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE

B-890.2

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

TO: EE -  
Mr. R. E. Johnson

March 24, 1956

TO: O - Mr. Henderson *EW*  
FROM: EUR - C. Burke Elbrick *CE*  
SUBJECT: Draft NSC Paper Concerning Baltic States

Attached herewith is a draft of a paper on the Baltic States which is to be incorporated as an annex into an NSC policy paper dealing with the Soviet-dominated countries in Eastern Europe.

I have been informed that you have expressed an interest in this paper and your comments would be appreciated.

We hope to have the paper cleared in the Department for distribution by the NSC Planning Board by Friday, March 28.

Attachment:

Draft NSC Paper re  
Baltic States.

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No. 1 of 9 copies, Series B.ESTONIA, LATVIA, AND LITHUANIADistinguishing Considerations

1. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania lost their existence as independent nations in 1940, following a series of moves by the Soviet Union which constitute a classic example of the now familiar pattern of Soviet aggression. Mutual assistance pacts forced on all three nations in the fall of 1939 permitted the stationing of Soviet troops within their borders, while reaffirming Soviet respect for their sovereignty. In the following summer the Soviets demanded and secured the reorganization of the governments of the Baltic States, essentially on the grounds that the 1934 Entente of the three Baltic nations threatened Soviet security. This demand was accompanied by fresh infusions of Soviet troops. The new Baltic regimes proceeded to legalize the local Communist parties and to rig parliamentary elections, and in July the new parliaments voted for the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. Deportations were used in an effort to overcome opposition to Communist measures and to break the resistance of patriotic elements to the end of the Baltic States' national existence. These Soviet policies were temporarily suspended as a result of the Nazi invasion of the Baltic States in June, 1941, but were forcefully resumed with the return of Soviet armies in 1944. Economic, political, and social institutions in the Baltic States have been forced into the Soviet mold, and the three States now have the status of Soviet Socialist Republics.

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2. The U.S. Government condemned Soviet aggression in the Baltic States in 1940, and has consistently refused to recognize, de facto or de jure, the incorporation of these States into the U.S.S.R. This policy has been publicized on appropriate occasions since 1940.

3. The Baltic States have no organized governments-in-exile. However, the U.S. Government has continued to recognize the diplomatic representatives of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania appointed to the United States by the last free governments of these countries. Their diplomatic establishments in the United States and in a number of foreign capitals are maintained with money released by the U.S. Government from the blocked accounts of the free governments of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

4. There are occasional indications that the populations of the Baltic States have not acquiesced passively in the establishment of the Soviet order. It is clear that a strong anti-Soviet sentiment still prevails, although its expression is necessarily circumscribed.

Special Policy Guidance

5. The United States should maintain its policy of non-recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union and should avoid any steps which could reasonably be construed as de jure or de facto recognition. The United States should continue to recognize the diplomatic missions established here by the last free governments of the Baltic States.

6. A policy of non-recognition generally precludes contacts between the United States and the Baltic States of an official nature, and renders

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inapplicable most of the courses of action suggested with respect to the dominated countries. It need not, however, entirely preclude contacts of an unofficial nature, such as the private travel of U.S. tourists to the Baltic States and the travel, on business, of private groups such as American church representatives. The maintenance of such modest ties can serve U.S. interests, contributing to the preservation of at least a limited amount of contact between the peoples of the Baltic States and the West. Proposals for more meaningful exchange of a non-official nature must be examined on a case by case basis, in the light of their possible effect on the policy of non-recognition as well as any possible net advantage to U.S. interests.

7. The United States should encourage by any means possible the circulation of American informational media in the Baltic States and should continue its broadcasting services to the Baltic peoples. U.S. broadcasts should be designed to maintain an interest on the part of the Baltic peoples in the United States and the West generally, and in existing conditions and current developments in the free world. The U.S. Government should avoid making public statements which could readily be interpreted as inciting the Baltic peoples to open revolt or indicating that this country is prepared to resort to force to eliminate Soviet domination. The Government should discourage the use of its broadcast facilities to convey messages of exiled leaders, but should permit the diplomatic representatives of the Baltic States in the United States to send messages on anniversaries and other special occasions

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providing that the content accords with U.S. policy. On appropriate occasions the U.S. Government should publicly reiterate its policy of non-recognition of the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union, to demonstrate that the United States remains conscious of the plight of the Baltic peoples and still does not condone aggression against the smaller nations. The record of Soviet relations with the Baltic States should be used, as appropriate occasions arise, as an example illustrating the readiness of the Soviets to disregard clear obligations under existing treaties where such action appears to serve their purposes.

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