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February 6, 1948

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Armour)

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Summary:

Three representatives of displaced persons of the Baltic States bring a petition for President Truman.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

Memorandum of Conversation, by the Assistant Secretary of State for Political Affairs (Armour) □□

[Washington,] February 6, 1948. □□□

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Participants:

The Lithuanian Minister □□□

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The Latvian Minister □□□

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The Acting Estonian Consul General □□□

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A-A-Mr. Armour □□□

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EE-C. Burke □□ □□

The three Baltic Ministers called on me this morning at their request. The Lithuanian Minister stated that their purpose in calling was to request me to transmit to the President a petition signed by prominent representatives of political, economic, and cultural life of the Baltic States.[1] All of the signers of the petition are residing outside of the Baltic States at present. The Minister said that the knowledge that this petition had reached President Truman would encourage all displaced persons from the Baltic States to hope that their plight would receive the sympathetic support of democratic nations, particularly the United States.

I told the Minister that I would be glad to see that the petition is transmitted to the White House. I went on to say that the position of the United States Government in connection with the political status of the Baltic countries is well-known and has been reaffirmed from time to time. I said that this country has not recognized the incorporation of the three States into the Soviet Union. It had not been possible, however, to consider actively the question of the political status of these countries up to the present time due to the fact that the Government has been engaged in attempts to solve certain major post-war problems. I assured the Ministers, however, that the plight of the Baltic peoples was a matter of real concern to this Government. I reminded him that the United States participates in and is the chief contributor to the International Refugee Organization, and that the State Department is giving its support to the passage of legislation which would permit many displaced persons to take up residence in this country. This, I felt, would serve as testimony of the interest which this Government takes in the Baltic peoples.

The Ministers thanked me for receiving them, and Mr. Kaiv, the Estonian Consul General, asked if there would be any objection to the publication of the petition. I suggested that the petition first be submitted to the President for his information and possible comment and that they might consider publishing it at a later date after the President has had an opportunity to see it.

Norman Armour

[1] The petition or memorandum under reference here is described in the memorandum of January 19, 1948, from Chief of Protocol Woodward to Presidential Secretary Connally, FRUS 1948, vol. IV, p. 396.