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Baltic Freedom Day, 1986

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The United States was born in a War of Independence against an oppressive rule. We stood up for inalienable rights given by God and declared that governments that systematically violate those rights lose their claim to legitimacy.

It is a tragedy of our time that many peoples continue to live under the brutal totalitarian rule of the Soviet empire. We will expose the inhumanity of the oppressors and speak out on behalf of the oppressed. We will denounce tyranny and champion the cause of its victims.

Baltic Freedom Day provides these opportunities. On this day, we observe the anniversary of the callous and treacherous subjugation of three independent and freedom-loving states. Forty-six years ago, invading Soviet armies, in collusion with the Nazi regime, overran and occupied the Republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Through police-state tactics, the occupation and subjugation continue. Soviet outrages against these peoples have included massive deportations from their native soil to concentration camps in Siberia and elsewhere. At the same time masses of Russians have been uprooted from their homes and relocated in the Baltic nations in an effort to eradicate the cultural and ethnic heritage of the Baltic peoples. Against all recognized principles of international law, justice, and humanity, the Soviets have continued their domination over Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia. The United States has never recognized their forced incorporation into the U.S.S.R. It is illegal, indefensible, and iniquitous.

We are engaged in a very real struggle to focus the world's attention on one of the gravest wrongs of our age—the stubborn and contemptuous Soviet disregard for the sovereignty of independent nations and the rights of oppressed peoples. As evidence, we hold up its first victims—the heroic Baltic nations we honor today. To do less is to acquiesce in injustice and to betray our heritage as champions of human freedom.

As a Nation, we are the standard-bearers of freedom and a beacon of hope to the oppressed. Ours is the mission of the prophet Isaiah, “to bind up the brokenhearted, proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.”

The Congress of the United States, by Senate Joint Resolution 271, has designated June 14, 1986, 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, 1986, 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 twelfth day of June, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and tenth.

Ronald Reagan