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The President's News Conference in Kennebunkport, Maine

1991-09-02

The President. Nearly 2 weeks ago, the world watched with fascination the courage of the Soviet people in foiling a cynical coup, a coup that, thank God, failed. We've marveled since at their efforts to build a new and democratic future. Major changes are now taking place in the Soviet Union, not the least of which is the establishment of new arrangements between the Republics and the central government.

While we await the final outcome, I welcome President Gorbachev's support for the concept that the Republics will be free to determine their own future. This new "ten-plus-one" agreement speaks eloquently to that. This is a watershed in Soviet political thinking, equal to the dramatic movements toward democracy and market economies that we are witnessing in the Republics themselves. The United States strongly supports these efforts.

The Baltic peoples of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and their democratically elected governments have declared their independence and are moving now to control their own national territories and their own destinies. The United States has always supported the independence of the Baltic States and is now prepared immediately to establish diplomatic relations with their governments. The United States is also prepared to do whatever it can to assist in the completion of the current process of making Baltic independence a factual reality. To facilitate this, I will be sending the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, Mr. Kamman, to the Baltics.

We also understand the enormous challenges that lie ahead for the Soviet people in meeting their own food and energy needs particularly and beginning true economic reform. Therefore, I'm sending Under Secretary of Agriculture Crowder with an experts' mission to survey with Soviet and Republic officials their critical food requirements for the coming winter, particularly in those Republics that are likely to be in the greatest need.

And in a month, a Presidential mission, led by Secretary of Agriculture Ed Madigan, will bring a delegation of senior private sector and Government officials to the U.S.S.R. to seek solutions to a winter food problem if we determine that one exists, and to continue our long-term efforts to help the Soviet Union and the Soviet people resolve problems in food distribution.

I've also asked Secretary of State Jim Baker and our AID Administrator, Mr. Roskens, to work with Project HOPE to augment and extend my Presidential initiative on medical assistance to the U.S.S.R. through the end of 1992.

We intend to work closely with Soviet and Republic officials in both of these efforts. This morning I talked to the President of Estonia and of Latvia, as I did to Mr. Landsbergis of Lithuania a couple of days ago, to tell him of this official position now being taken by the United States of America.

Now, I'll be glad to take just a few questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Amerikas Savienoto Valstu prezidenta paziņojums par Baltijas valstu neatkarību prezidenta preses konferencē Menas štata Kenebankportā 02.09.1991.

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Statement by the President of the United States of America regarding the independence of the Baltic States at the President's News Conference in Kennebunkport, Maine, 02.09.1991

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