

Baltic nations void Washington summit

by Leo Scanlon

The foreign ministers of the three Baltic nations have formally declared that any bilateral agreements reached at the Bush-Gorbachov summit which involve "obligations or stipulations relating to the Baltic States" are null and void, since these would only affirm previous arrangements negotiated by the Soviet Russian and Nazi Third Reich "superpowers" 50 years ago. They state they will only welcome U.S.-Soviet agreements "that assist the Baltic states to restore their state independence," and assert that Mikhail Gorbachov has "no legal authority" to negotiate on behalf of the Baltic nations. Their bold intervention into the summit euphoria was completely blacked out in the U.S. news media.

The joint declaration was signed on May 26 in the Latvian capital of Riga by the three Baltic foreign ministers, Lennart Meri of Estonia, Janis Jurkans of Latvia, and Algirdas Saudargas of Lithuania. It is titled, "Declaration Regarding the Mandate of U.S.S.R. President Mikhail Gorbachov during the Upcoming Summit with U.S. President George Bush, Beginning May 30, 1990, in Washington, D.C."

One Molotov-Ribbentrop pact too many

The text reads in part: "Based upon the unshakable will of the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, which has been embodied in the legal acts of the Supreme Councils of the three Baltic states, we proclaim the following:

"On Aug. 23, 1939, the Soviet Union and the German Reich concluded the Molotov-Ribbentrop pact and signed its additional protocols, criminally dividing Central Europe into spheres of interest between the two superpowers, and assigning the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania to the Soviet Union's sphere of interest. As a consequence of this political deal between the aforementioned superpowers, the three Baltic states came under Soviet military occupation during June 15-17, 1940, and were subsequently forcibly incorporated into the U.S.S.R. Democratic nations have never recognized these acts of aggression *de jure*.

"In the meaning of this term, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania still continue to exist.

"The people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have re-

peatedly expressed their unbreakable and steadfast will to restore democracy, state independence, and the constitutional institutions which were destroyed as a consequence of this political deal between the two totalitarian powers. The Supreme Councils of the three Baltic countries have proclaimed as null and void the declaration, on joining the Soviet Union, which was staged under Soviet military pressure, and have adopted decisions, with great majorities, to restore (*restitutio ad integrum*) the Republic of Lithuania, the Republic of Estonia, and the Republic of Latvia, respectively on March 11, March 30, and May 4, 1990.

"Taking into account the acts of the freely elected legislative bodies of the three Baltic states, the signatories consider it necessary to emphasize:

"1) the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania are declaring that the President of the U.S.S.R. has no legal authority to represent them during the upcoming summit with the President of the United States in Washington. Any eventual agreement signed there will not be binding upon the Baltic states, and;

"2) that the governments of the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania will not recognize any obligations or stipulations relating to the Baltic states which may result from bilateral agreements concluded between the two superpowers during the upcoming summit in Washington;

"3) the three Baltic Nations will welcome agreements between the U.S.A. and the U.S.S.R. that assist the Baltic states to restore their state independence, eliminating the unsolved problems left after World War II and thus creating a fundamental lasting peace."

Demonstrations and appeal to Vatican

The Joint Baltic American National Committee, representing the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian American Councils, held a very visible series of marches and demonstrations throughout the June summit in Washington, D.C., beginning with a Memorial Day rally to commemorate those American soldiers who have fallen in the fight for freedom.

The campaign was supplemented by a series of television advertisements, newspaper ads, and a vigorous intervention into the call-in talk shows which had been rigged by C-Span to showcase Soviet propagandists. The most hard-hitting advertisement was an appeal to Pope John II, reminding the Pontiff that "Western authorities did little or nothing to bring down the Wall of Shame" in Berlin. The ad beseeched the Pope to intercede against the "enigma . . . [exemplified by] the shameful 50-year-old Ribbentrop-Molotov pact." The Pope was urged to make a gesture that would undermine press speculation that "the Vatican is supposedly unwilling to sacrifice its *Ostpolitik* for the sake of Lithuania's freedom."

The advertisement concludes: "If the aspirations of our nation flounder, not only Lithuania, but also, and above all, the entire cause of Christian Civilization itself will suffer."