

# Lithuanian President still tells the truth

by Hartmut Cramer

If George Bush thought he could “buy off” the Baltic leaders by finally opening diplomatic relations, he has been mistaken. In an interview in the French daily *Le Figaro* Sept. 2, Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis, the most daring and outspoken of the Baltic leaders, leaves no doubt that the best of these leaders know that sticking to the principles of *unity of morality and politics* and *telling the truth* is the most effective weapon at their disposal.

“One might wish that the Baltic politicians continue to speak such a clear language as in the past; if they further refrain from realpoliticking, as Lithuanian President Landsbergis has often mocked the cowardly behavior of the western politicians, and stick to their policy of telling the truth no matter what—a policy which has just been proven to be the correct one in the long run—then the participation of these small countries in the international political arena is a gigantic gain for the entire world,” this author wrote in the Sept. 6 *EIR*. Fortunately, *EIR*'s forecast is being confirmed.

“The Westerners Haven't Even Lifted a Pinky for Us,” was the headline of the interview, accompanied by a smiling photo of Landsbergis showing the V-sign as he was talking to his people. Echoing U.S. political prisoner Lyndon LaRouche, for whom the political fight against the East-West condominium is primarily a *cultural* one, Landsbergis, an outstanding musician and a rather good chess player, lectured on statecraft, describing the strategy he and his friends used against the Soviet oppressors as “cultural resistance.”

## The political and cultural fight

“Contrary to what one might believe, I took part in preparing the recent events already in the last decades,” Landsbergis told *Le Figaro*. “I wasn't passive. In my lectures on history of music and on art, and in my journalistic articles, I always had in mind those values which we have to defend: the very values, which are opposite to those the Soviet Union wanted to impose upon us. My colleagues in the university and myself, we did not defend our music for music's sake, or our art for art's sake. Above all we wanted to deliver the proof, that Lithuania existed as a historical and cultural entity. Above all, our fight was a political one.”

Reviewing the “very tragic night” of Jan. 12-13, 1991, when Soviet Interior Ministry special forces brutally deployed their tanks against unarmed civilians at the TV tower in Vilnius, killing 14 and wounding over 400 people, Lands-

bergis said: “I tried to reach Gorbachov in the Kremlin, but there was only one of his aides, who told me that it was totally out of the question to wake him up during the night. In desperation, I called the White House in Washington. And there, I got only the answering machine. At that point, I really had the feeling of having been abandoned by the West as well as by the East.”

Landsbergis stated that it was during that night, when he and the people who protected the parliament had to face the Red Army without international support, that Lithuania became sovereign and its army was created. “In that night, I was out amidst the crowd of our people, and, in front of a priest, our guards and myself prayed. That act gave birth to our army; the army as sign of a state, an army to defend the state.”

During these critical moments, Russian President Boris Yeltsin “was the only one who helped us and he did so immediately. He called on the Russian soldiers not to raise their hands against Lithuanian civilians and not to participate in the oppression of people who legitimately hoped to gain their independence.” Landsbergis added that Yeltsin “was the first to recognize our independence, the only one who didn't let us down during the dramatic events of January 1991, and during the coup in Moscow, we have again found ourselves to be on the same side of the barricades. He fought, whereas the westerners cautiously waited to see which way the wind would blow. In fact, the West was ready to accept the power of the coup plotters.”

Landsbergis said that this did not surprise him, since the West had betrayed the Baltic people in the 1950s, during the partisan struggle against the Soviets, and had done virtually nothing in the last three years to support Lithuania's fight for independence. The way Yeltsin acted, he explained, “who has the first place in our heart,” might surprise those in the West who hope to manipulate the Russian President. “For him, as for us, politics has to be linked to morality. For him, as for us, politics cannot be reduced to a simple pragmatic calculation, a simple strategy.” He added that the West had underestimated Yeltsin. Yes, he was termed a populist, Landsbergis said, but “I also was given all these names. I was an extremist, a nationalist, a provocateur. . . . All these cliches were only used to disguise reality.”

## A snub to Bush

To drive that point home, Landsbergis, after Bush had again nervously looked to Gorbachov before finally announcing Sept. 2 that he would send diplomats to the Baltic states, left for a state visit to Hungary just *before* Bush's envoy arrived in Vilnius, effectively telling him he had more important things to do.

How long will Bush and others have to cope with such refreshing “open diplomacy”? When asked how long he would stay on as President, Landsbergis told *Le Figaro*: “For as long as is needed to accomplish the work. An artist always feels very well when his work is finished.”