

Traveling the Road of Baltic Independence:
The Joint Baltic American National Committee and US Foreign Policy Rhetorics
During the Late Cold War

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“If I have seen further, it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.” —Sir Isaac Newton

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Dedication

To Christian,
ον αγαπησεν η ψυχη μου
and to Theodore and Mary,
η κληρονομια μου κυριου

Abstract

In the wake of the collapse of the USSR and the end of the Cold War, much scholarship has examined the role of US foreign policy in shaping the trajectory of the conflict, the reasons why the Cold War came to a close, and its lasting outcomes. Alongside these studies and the field of rhetoric's interest in examinations of Cold War rhetoric, there is ample room to examine the Cold War conflict through a perspective that values rhetorical materialism, animates the role of non-presidential figures in foreign policy decision-making, and seeks to examine how "middlemen" or third-party actors sought to manage global tensions. This dissertation examines the role of the central Baltic lobbying organization in the United States—the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC)—in the development of Baltic independence discourse and US foreign policy regarding the Baltics throughout the 1970s and 1980s. To do this, I assess four elements of Cold War Baltic-American advocacy: (1) JBANC's responses to suspicions of secrecy surrounding the leaking of the United States' purported Sonnenfeldt Doctrine of 1975 and the falsification of information within the US Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations's deportation of Baltic-American citizens; (2) JBANC's establishment of relationships with many congressional, Baltic, and US governmental actors that strengthened JBANC's transnational work and the ways the organization was able to increase its lobbying capacities; (3) the 1980s promotion and invention of Baltic-American holidays meant to elevate public recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltics; and (4) JBANC's use of the principle of self-determination within its discourse with various state and non-state actors, calling upon the concept as a unifying force within the international Baltic independence discussion. I argue that through its various lobbying efforts, JBANC sought to perpetuate the Cold War through bolstering narratives of East-West hegemony and US war-hawk attitudes for the sake of the Baltics, urging the United States to recenter the Baltics within its Cold War foreign policy in order to ensure their prioritization in the late-Cold War era. Rhetorical cartography reveals how this pro-Baltic position evolved and built upon previous Cold War issues, how JBANC conveniently fed into the US Cold War political machine, and how state and non-state actors became further interlaced during the late-Cold War years, creating multiple points of and moments of messy conduct that over time shifted US work and action. I contend that such an examination, the presentation of evidence and deeper dive into scenarios from the Cold War archival record, offers a fruitful theoretical and methodological perspective that enlarges and enriches our understanding of networked foreign policy communication, lobbying as public address, and rhetoric's function as a connector and mediator between civil society and the state.

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Abbreviations

ALA:	American Latvian Association
BAFL:	Baltic American Freedom League
CNCA:	Czechoslovak National Council of America
CPSU:	Communist Party of the Soviet Union
CSCE:	Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe
DNC:	Democratic National Committee
EANC:	Estonian American National Council
EU:	European Union
JBANC:	Joint Baltic American National Committee
LAC:	Lithuanian American Council
LIC:	Lithuanian Information Center
NATO:	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OSI:	Office of Special Investigations
RNC:	Republican National Committee
TAN:	Transnational Advocacy Network
UN:	United Nations
US:	United States
USSR:	Union of Soviet Socialist Republics

Chapter 1. Introduction

On April 21, 2023, Lu Shaye, China's ambassador to France, stated in a French TV interview that the countries in Eastern Europe that gained independence in tandem with the Soviet Union's fall were not entitled to their independence. These former Soviet states do not have what Lu said was "effective status under international law because there is not an international agreement confirming their status as sovereign countries." Alluding to Russia's war on Ukraine, the comments referenced many unspoken beliefs regarding the continued conflict and uncertainties regarding the area's complicated history. This came out further when, pressed on the history of Crimea, Lu responded that "it depends on how you look at the problem. There's history. Crimea was Russian at the start."¹ Understandably, the comments sparked outrage among many former Soviet states including the Baltics—Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, three countries that were incorporated into the Union of Soviet Social Republics (USSR) as part of their occupation by the Soviets directly before WWII. Seeming to disavow the independent status of the countries formerly incorporated into the USSR, Lu's comments revealed perceptions still commonly held by the public in both the United States and abroad regarding this region. They revealed how the independent status of post-Soviet Eastern European countries is still highly contested in our world today, even with the inclusion of many of these countries in the European Union (EU) and North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

¹ Le Monde with Agence France-Presse, "Chinese Envoy to France's Remarks on Ex-Soviet States Provoke Outrage in Europe," *Le Monde*, April 24, 2023, https://www.lemonde.fr/en/international/article/2023/04/24/chinese-ambassador-s-remarks-on-crimea-provoke-outrage-in-europe_6024027_4.html.

In response to Lu's so-called gaffe, governmental officials in Eastern Europe were not silent regarding the Chinese ambassador's position. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania summoned China and its diplomats to explain Lu's remarks with Lithuanian foreign minister, Gabrielius Landsbergis, noting that they would have to comment on whether the "Chinese position ha[d] changed on independence" and that the Baltic states must "remind them that we're not post-Soviet countries but we're the countries that were illegally occupied by the Soviet Union." Latvia's foreign minister, Edgars Rinkevics took to the social media platform X to state that the comments were "completely unacceptable," and Estonia's minister of foreign affairs, Margus Tsahkna, called them "false and a misinterpretation of history" and expressed that he wanted to know "why China has such a position or comments about the Baltic[s]."² While China tried to walk the statement back in the aftermath of the diplomatic firestorm, stating that these were Lu's personal, not official, views, the damage was done. For many, the interview's significance was symptomatic of the complexities of sovereignty and state formation in the post-Cold War period. It illuminated the reality that the formation of states relies on not only the influence of inside actors but also the recognition of outside ones. Likewise, it showcased the liminality of Eastern Europe today and the questions still raised regarding these countries' independent identities.

Further, along with the articulation of these complexities and ensuing discussion of how post-Soviet states fit into the political and foreign policy landscape of the post-Cold War world, many of Lu's comments attacked the legitimate status of these states. People connected with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have continually had to advocate for broader international support of their fight to achieve and maintain independence from Russia and have had to rely upon a

² Steven Erianger, "China Tries to Limit Damage From Diplomat's Comments that Riled Europe," *New York Times*, April 24, 2023, <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/04/24/world/europe/china-ambassador-soviet-states.html>.

variety of rhetorical actors, techniques, and situations to make their case. During the last decades of the Cold War in the United States, much of that work was carried out by non-state actors and organizations that advocated tirelessly to sway US foreign policy towards the region and garner greater governmental support of the Baltic states' independence. However, this less-appreciated aspect of late-Cold War history is often glossed over in popular Cold War foreign policy literature regarding this region and the end of the conflict.³ More often, the rhetorical narratives that explain the end of the Cold War center mainstream state and presidential actors and historical accounts that emphasize the growth of internal nationalist sentiments as the catalyst for the reinstatement of Baltic sovereignty. This dissertation takes a different approach. I argue that scholars can better understand how the Cold War unfolded the way that it did by especially regarding the reinstatement of Baltic independence and examining how these discourses were animated, justified, and circulated over many decades, looking at the role of the advocacy of ethnic lobbying groups and diasporic organizations in creating the conditions for Baltic independence.

The Origin Story of Baltic Independence

The Baltic independence movement during the second half of the twentieth century is especially interesting as it is part of a much more complicated story about the Baltics' decades-long relationship with the USSR. Thrust into the Eastern Bloc right before the beginning of the Second World War, the Baltics were subsumed into the Soviet Union in a move that cemented

³ For the purposes of this study, I use the phrase "late Cold War" to refer to the period between the 1970s and 1990s which started as a period of demobilization and culminated in the retrenchment of superpower rivalry in the early 1980s, lasting until the collapse of the USSR at the end of the decade. In many ways this era started out in a transition, bridging the winding down of détente and the building up of rapprochement.

Hitler's and Stalin's short-lived alliance during the years leading up into war and allowed the USSR to expand its borders. This almost restored the Soviet Union's territory back to the point where the borders of Tsarist Russia had been in 1914 as the Baltics had been under Russian rule since the 1700s.⁴ However, while the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact between Hitler and Stalin's regimes in 1939 is often not situated as part of the United States' collective memory of the Second World War or even common knowledge for most living outside of the borders of Eastern Europe, it is extremely important for understanding the greater story of the Baltics and their reestablishment of independence at the end of the twentieth century. Setting the stage for a double occupation during World War II by both the Soviets and the Nazis, this pact wrote and reconfigured the trajectory of twentieth-century Baltic history. It established the three countries as part of the USSR at the beginning of the Second World War while also providing motivation for their later Nazi takeover in 1941 and their subsequent Soviet reoccupation. This pact's significance and magnitude dictated not only the trajectory of WWII but also the fate of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania for the next half-century. As I learned during my own time living in the Baltic states, in order to trace the history of the region and the ways in which this Hitler-Stalin agreement set the stage for how foreign policy was conducted in relation to these three states during the remainder of the Cold War, one must first look at why the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its components mattered and the repercussions that erupted from its signing on the eve of World War II. All later discussions of the reestablishment of independence and actualization of national identity for the Baltics were built upon the bedrock of this Nazi-Stalin agreement and presupposed that those who lived in its shadow needed for it to be disavowed and rejected.

⁴ George Gömöri, "A Pact that Started World War II," *Hungarian Review* 3 (2015): 69.

The overt terror of the Stalinist regime in the 1940s and 1950s thrust Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the depths of the Soviet system, resulting in the political imprisonment and death of thousands of Balts.⁵ The communist party within these countries became one with the rest of the USSR—the branches of the communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU) in the Baltics were led by individuals appointed by Moscow who consequently answered to the first secretary. In true Soviet fashion, the three countries experienced many purges of their communist party leadership over the course of multiple decades. While a post-Stalinist, Khrushchevian thaw brought about some intra-Party and policy changes within the three countries and certain reforms helped the Baltic countries improve their production and standard of living in comparison to the rest of the USSR, their economic and political developments were meant to benefit the whole of the Union and not the Baltic states in particular.⁶ It was not until the 1960s that the Baltic countries started to emerge as leaders of the “Soviet West” and ties between the Balts and countries outside of the USSR started to flourish.⁷

The Baltic capital cities of Tallinn, Estonia; Riga, Latvia; and Vilnius, Lithuania exemplified this state of affairs, making greater contact with the West—Western cultural trends, figures, and ideas—than the rest of the Soviet Union, providing the opportunity for Baltic isolationism to end and Sovietization of the Baltic countries to be undone. In many ways, the Baltic countries sought to be a cultural refuge and intellectual haven within the USSR, becoming the place where the publication of many Western and anti-Soviet authors took place and where

⁵ Artis Pabriks and Aldis Purs, *Latvia: The Challenges of Change* (London: Routledge, 2002), 36-40.

⁶ Ago Pajur and Tonu Tannberg, eds., *Eesti Ajalugu VI. Vabadussojast taasiseseisvumiseni* (Tartu: Ilmamaa, 2005), 300.

⁷ William Risch, “A Soviet West: Nationhood, Regionalism, and Empire in the Annexed Western Borderlands,” *The Journal of Nationalism and Ethnicity* 43, no. 1 (2015): 63-81.

Russian academics and cultural icons were allowed to live. The works of Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Alexander Solzhenitsyn, and others were translated and disseminated within the Baltics starting in the 1960s.⁸ The famous Russian semiotician Yuri Lotman, who was ostracized throughout the USSR due to his Jewish heritage, took on a professorship at the University of Tartu, and the renowned Joseph Brodsky, a future Russian Nobel Prize laureate, lived in Vilnius during this era, as well. Additionally, the Baltics became the primary point of departure for Soviet citizens traveling to the outside world. A passenger ferry service between Helsinki and Tallinn initiated in 1965 was the only direct line of any mode of transportation from the Baltics to the world outside the Soviet Bloc until the very last years of the 1980s.⁹ It was from this time onward that the East-West, Baltic-American diasporic community began to flourish and that the boundaries between these two worlds—the divide between political understandings, ideals, and worldviews—began to open up.

Due to these connections and flexibilities, by the middle of the 1960s and through the latter years of the 1980s, Balts were, by and large, able to have some contact and form of correspondence with relatives in the diasporic, refugee Baltic communities in the West. These family members and friends who had emigrated from the countries in the transitional war years decades prior became their link to the fact that “free, uncensored Baltic culture existed outside the boundaries of the USSR.”¹⁰ It became common knowledge in the Baltics that many in the West were standing alongside Balts living in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the Cold War, advocating for these countries to regain independence and follow their desires for what, during

⁸ Daniele Monticelli and Anne Lange, “Translation and Totalitarianism: The Case of Soviet Estonia,” *The Translator* 20, no. 1 (2014): 100.

⁹ Andres Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), 150.

¹⁰ Kasekamp, *A History of the Baltic States*, 150.

this era, became known as the realization of national self-determination. Raised as both Balts and Americans, the members of these diasporic communities became involved in these political movements as ethnic identity was “part of [their] spirit, [their] soul.”¹¹ Baltic Americans and Baltic sympathizers in major cities all across the Western world took on this fight as their own, with vibrant diasporic communities in cities such as Stockholm, Toronto, Sydney, Chicago, and New York becoming major congregational points for the advocacy community. As the original Baltic languages were stifled during the years of Soviet rule in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, the number of Estonian-, Latvian-, and Lithuanian-language publications produced by refugees abroad exceeded the number in the homelands. The invention of language schools, restaurants and bakeries, cookbooks, cultural artifact museums, newspapers, and other events stateside especially championed the national identity of the three individual Baltic states as well as the region at large.

Thus, the growth of Baltic ethnic consciousness within the United States became a major connection point between the East and the West, where the Baltic culture flourished abroad. As they created their Baltic-American identity, diasporic communities of Balts in the West worked both to memorialize their Baltic origin stories and to allow for the evolution of those stories across generations, creating ever new narratives of what it meant to be from the Baltics. They then continually found ways for those narratives to be used in political environments. Their involvement within the lobbying process generated the conditions that enabled them grow, evolve, and strengthen, even as it begat their formation in the first place. Thus, Baltic

¹¹ Correspondence from Bodin Washington Reyman Info Arkus New York to Lindner Info Griffiths “Young Leaders Emerging in Baltic Movement,” 13 August 1985, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

communities arose as a political lever within the constructs of the Cold War and grew into a major point of interest for the public diplomacy of the United States. For example, Radio Free Europe and Radio Free Liberty capitalized upon the Baltic-American transnational connections during this time, spending a large amount of resources researching these countries and the interests, considerations, and ideals of the Baltic people, studying what programs, information, and connections with the West would yield the most fruit in strengthening Baltic-US relationships and weakening Baltic-USSR ones.¹² All the while, the diasporic communities' continual emphasis, education, and focus on the effects of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, as well as the maintenance of the United States' non-recognition policy towards the Baltics, became a central feature of US diplomatic discourse regarding the Baltics during the last three decades of the Cold War. This angered Soviet authorities to no end, as they waged an ideological propaganda battle both within and outside the United States aimed against Baltic-American diasporic groups throughout these years, claiming those parts of Baltic diaspora communities in the West, especially within the United States, were part of "imperialistic circles fanning the Cold War" and "bourgeois nationalists from Baltic emigration that took part in various kinds of anti-Soviet provocations and opposed any contacts with the Soviet Union."¹³ Muscovite media frequently published articles in the Soviet press stating that while these centers of Baltic interests in the West were seemingly created "for the alleged purpose of studying the Baltic languages and the history of the Baltic nations," they were "in effect busy doing something else" and "us[ing]

¹² Publications Department, Research Bulletin, HU OSA 300-8-41, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

¹³ "Under the Mask of Learning," 4 June 1974, translated by Kristen M. Einertson, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 14, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

every means at their disposal” to “slander those in the Soviet Baltic republics.”¹⁴ For all the difficulties that Baltic independence supporters within Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania gave the Baltic Soviet parties, the press seemed especially seemed to emphasize stories of Baltic-American supporters meddling with Soviet affairs.

While murmurings of the reestablishment of Baltic independence began to gain further traction within the Baltic states themselves at the (then unknown) close of the Cold War, these efforts were mirrored and propped up by those within the Baltic-American diasporic community and individuals who firmly established themselves as key Baltic advocates in the United States. Through their official means and channels, as well as their congregation into formal organizations and lobbying entities in the United States, Baltic-American supporters were able to advocate for a livelier discussion within foreign policy circles and the ways in which the fight for Baltic independence could be supported stateside. However, through this advocacy and their fight for the reestablishment of Baltic independence—stripped from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania with the continuation of the Cold War—Baltic Americans propped up long-standing Cold War narratives of East-West hegemony and US war-hawk attitudes, hoping that the Baltic states and their issues might become more centered within US foreign policy but very possibly contributing more to the continuation of hostilities than to their end.

The Purposes of this Study

When examining this critical period of late-Cold War transnational interactions and the role of US foreign policy rhetorics in shaping the trajectory of the conflict and the reattainment

¹⁴ “Journal Hits ‘Baltic Research Centers’ As Unscientific,” *Moscow TASS in English*, 11 October 1978, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 14, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

of Baltic independence, much research has been dedicated to the various reasons why the war ended and its lasting outcomes. To name just a few examples, on the USSR's side, examinations have largely centered around the failed ideological project of the Soviets, the role of *perestroika* and *glasnost*, the state of the economy, interethnic tensions across the bloc, and the inefficiency of state institutions that eventually brought about the Soviet Union's collapse.¹⁵ On the US side, studies of the late 1980s and early 1990s have often focused on the impacts of President Ronald Reagan's "roll-back" foreign policy strategy, President George H.W. Bush's attempts to change the world's international order, and the slow but sure transformation of US political thinking and values towards the end of the conflict, looking at how these factors greatly impacted US strategic thinking.¹⁶ No matter the specifics, though, late-Cold War scholarship on foreign policy often has one thing in common: these studies place an especially great focus on the decisions of major state actors in Moscow and Washington, D.C., analyzing the role of major Soviet and American

¹⁵ Vladislav Zubok, *Collapse: The Fall of the Soviet Union* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2021). Philip Hanson, *The Rise and Fall of the Soviet Economy: An Economic History of the USSR from 1945* (London: Routledge, 2014). Mark R. Beissinger, *Nationalist Mobilization and the Collapse of the Soviet State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). Rasma Karklins, *Ethnopolitics and Transition to Democracy: The Collapse of the USSR and Latvia* (Baltimore: Woodrow Wilson Center Press; Johns Hopkins University Press, 1994). David Pryce-Jones, *The War That Never Was: The Fall of the Soviet Empire, 1985–1991* (London: Phoenix, 2001). Astrid S. Tuminez, "Nationalism, Ethnic Pressures, and the Breakup of the Soviet Union," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 4 (2003): 81–136. Ronald Grigor Suny, *The Revenge of the Past: Nationalism, Revolution, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1993); Edward W. Walker, *Dissolution: Sovereignty and the Breakup of the Soviet Union* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003). Valerie Bunce, *Subversive Institutions: The Design and the Destruction of Socialism and the State* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999). Stephen Kotkin, *Armageddon Averted: The Soviet Collapse, 1970–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

¹⁶ James Mann, *The Rebellion of Ronald Reagan: A History of the End of the Cold War* (London: Penguin Books, 2010). Peter Schweizer, *Victory: The Reagan Administration's Secret Strategy that Hastened the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Atlantic Monthly Press, 1996). Nina Tannenwald and William C. Wohlforth, "Introduction: The Role of Ideas and the End of the Cold War," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 3–12. Kaarel Piirimäe, "Gorbachev's New Thinking and How Its Interaction with Perestroika in the Republics Catalysed the Soviet Collapse," *Scandinavian Journal of History*, published online August 2020, <https://doi-org.ezp1.lib.umn.edu/10.1080/03468755.2020.1784268>; Nina Tannenwald, "Ideas and Explanation: Advancing the Theoretical Agenda," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 2 (2005): 13–42.

politicians in the creation of international relations. They also traditionally study the Cold War through the dualistic comparisons and Manichean dichotomies of a USSR vs. the United S, East vs. West, North vs. South, good vs. evil, moral vs. amoral, communism vs. capitalism framework that have affirmed the war's foundations, in part because such "scholarship was part of the Cold War discourse itself" not only from 1948–1991 but also during the past 30 years of post-Soviet analysis.¹⁷

Rhetorical studies has placed great emphasis on the role of US presidential public address in determining what moves the West was going to make throughout the war. Such scholarship has also analyzed the Cold War through examining the conflict's rhetorics as representations of the metaphors, dueling ideologies, myth making, visuality, spatiality, and propaganda that guided the trajectory of twentieth-century US-USSR dynamics.¹⁸ These studies have taken a vested

¹⁷ Martin H. Folly, "Review Essay: Cold War Dichotomies," *Journal of American Studies* 34 (2000): 508. Jane L. Curry, "Cold War: False Dichotomies and Real Problems," *The Soviet and Post-Soviet Review* 22, no. 2 (1995): 148–56.

¹⁸ For examples of rhetorical scholarship on the Cold War see, for example Timothy Barney, "Diagnosing the Third World: The 'Map Doctor' and the Spatialized Discourses of Disease and Development in the Cold War," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 100, no. 1 (2014): 1-30. Timothy Barney, "'Gulag'-Slavery, Inc.: The Power of Place and the Rhetorical Life of a Cold War Map," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 16, no. 2 (2013): 317-353. Timothy Barney, *Mapping the Cold War: Cartography and the Framing of America's International Power* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2015). Timothy Barney, "Power Lines: The Rhetoric of Maps as Social Change in the Post-Cold War Landscape," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 95, no. 4 (2009): 412-434. Ernest G. Bormann, John F. Cragan, and Donald C. Shields, "An Expansion of the Rhetorical Vision Component of the Symbolic Convergence Theory: The Cold War Paradigm Case," *Communication Monographs* 63, no. 1 (1996): 1-28. Denise M. Bostdorff and Steven R. Goldzwig, "Idealism and Pragmatism in American Foreign Policy Rhetoric: The Case of John F. Kennedy and Vietnam," *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 24, no. 3 (1994): 515-30. Denise M. Bostdorff, *Proclaiming the Truman Doctrine: A Cold War Call to Arms* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008); H.W. Brands, "The World in a Word: The Rise and Fall of Détente," *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 1, no. 1 (1998): 45-60. Wayne Brockriede and Robert L. Scott, *Moments in the Rhetoric of the Cold War* (New York, NY: Random House, 1970). John F. Cragan, "The Origins and Nature of the Cold War Rhetorical Vision 1946-1972," in *Applied Communication Research: A Dramatistic Approach*, ed. John F. Cragan and Donald C. Shields (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, Inc., 1981), 52-53. Zoë Hess Carney and Allison M. Prasch, "'A Journey for Peace': Spatial Metaphors in Nixon's 1972 'Opening to China,'" *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 47, no. 4. (2017): 646-664. Travis Cram, "'Peace, Yes, but World Freedom as Well': Principle, Pragmatism, and the End of the Cold War," *Western Journal of Communication* 79, no. 3 (2015): 367–86. Jason Edward, review of *Out of the Shadow: George H. W. Bush and the End of the Cold War*, by Christopher Maynard, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 4 (2009): 655–658. Randall Fowler, "Art of the Arms Deal: Reagan, AWACS, and the Rhetorical Presidency," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 105, no. 3 (2019): 273-296. Randall Fowler, "Lion's Last Road, Eagle's First Flight: Eisenhower and the

interest in what the foreign policy “logics” of the Cold War were and how rhetoric itself was at the heart of the conflict, indicative of the expanding and contracting tensions that enlarged and decreased over the course of nearly fifty years.¹⁹ Rhetorical studies has contrasted the Cold War as fought through the clash of words, images, cultural worldviews, and ideologies exchanged

Suez Crisis of 1956,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 20, no. 1 (2017): 33–67. G. Thomas Goodnight, “Ronald Reagan's Reformulation of the Rhetoric of War: Analysis of the Zero Option, Evil Empire, and Star Wars Addresses,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 72, no. 4 (1986): 390-414. Lynn Boyd Hinds and Theodore Otto Windt, *The Cold War as Rhetoric: The Beginnings, 1945-1950* (New York, NY: Praeger, 1991). Robert L. Ivie, “Cold War Motives and the Rhetorical Metaphor: A Framework of Criticism,” in *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, eds. Martin J. Medhurst et al., (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1990), 74–75. Robert L. Ivie, “Literalizing the Metaphor of Soviet Savagery: President Truman’s Plain Style,” *The Southern Speech Communication Journal* 51 (1986): 91-105. Robert L. Ivie, “Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention of Cold War ‘Idealists,’” *Communication Monographs* 54 (1987): 165-182. Robert L. Ivie, “Speaking ‘Common Sense’ About the Soviet Threat: Reagan’s Rhetorical Stance,” *The Western Journal of Speech Communication* 48 (1984): 39-50. Robert J. McMahon, *The Cold War in the Third World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Martin J. Medhurst et al., eds., *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1990); Martin J. Medhurst, “Eisenhower’s ‘Atoms for Peace’ Speech: A Case Study in the Strategic Use of Language,” in *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, Robert L. Ivie, Philip Wander, and Robert L. Scott (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1990), 29-50. Martin J. Medhurst, “Afterword: Rhetorical Perspectives on the Cold War,” in *Critical Reflections on the Cold War: Linking Rhetoric and History*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst et al. (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), 266-270. Martin J. Medhurst, “Rhetoric and Cold War: A Strategic Approach,” in *Cold War Rhetoric: Strategy, Metaphor, and Ideology*, ed. Martin J. Medhurst, et al. (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 1990), 19-27. Shawn J. Parry-Giles, “Rhetorical Experimentation and the Cold War, 1947–1953: The Development of an Internationalist Approach to Propaganda,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 80, no. 4 (1994): 448-467. Ned O’Gorman, *The Iconoclastic Imagination: Image, Catastrophe, and Economy in America from the Kennedy Assassination to September 11* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2016). Ned O’Gorman, “‘The One Word the Kremlin Fears’: C.D. Jackson, Cold War ‘Liberation,’ and American Political-Economic Adventurism,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 12, no. 3 (2009): 389-427. Ned O’Gorman, *Spirits of the Cold War: Contesting Worldviews in the Classical Age of American Security Strategy* (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2011). Kenneth Osgood, *Total Cold War: Eisenhower’s Secret Propaganda Battle at Home and Abroad* (Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas, 2006). Shawn J. Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War, 1945-1955* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002). Allison M. Prasch, “Reagan at Pointe du Hoc: Deictic Epideictic and the Persuasive Power of ‘Bringing Before the Eyes,’” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 18, no. 2 (2015): 247-276. Allison M. Prasch, “Toward a Rhetorical Theory of Deixis,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 102, no. 2 (2016): 166-193. Allison M. Prasch, *The World is Our Stage: The Global Rhetorical Presidency* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 2023). Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, “Reagan’s Strategy for the Cold War and the Evil Empire Address,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 19, no. 3 (2016): 427–64. Valery Lynn Schrader, review of *Reagan at Westminster: Foreshadowing the End of the Cold War*, by Robert C. Rowland and John M. Jones, *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 14, no. 3 (2011): 575–8. Laura A. Stengrim, “One World: Wendell Willkie’s Rhetoric of Globalism in the World War II Era,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 21, no. 2 (2018): 201–33. Odd Arne Westad, *The Global Cold War: Third World Interventions and the Making of Our Times* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 2007).

¹⁹ See especially Mary E. Stuckey, “Competing Foreign Policy Visions: Rhetorical Hybrids after the Cold War,” *Western Journal of Communication* 59, no. 3 (1995): 214-227. Thomas Kane, “Foreign Policy Suppositions and Commanding Ideas,” *Argumentation and Advocacy* 28 (1991): 80–91.

between the US and USSR with the previous “hot” world wars.²⁰ While this is true, it is also true that the Cold War was fought through the materialization of these issues in the people and places implicated in the conflict, the buildup of weapons and technologies in order to bring about Mutually Assured Destruction, and the shifting of geographic boundaries around the world. Rhetoric was not just a “cause” of the conflict but also the conflict’s “effect”—its ongoing organizing and orientational mechanism.

Therefore, alongside these previous studies, there is also room to examine the Cold War through different, critical perspectives that value rhetorical materialism by highlighting the shared responsibility that multiple state and non-state actors in the United States held in perpetuating the Cold War and advocating for its continuation, animating the incremental and slow build of foreign policy positions and decision-making over many decades of the twentieth century, and seeking to examine how “middlemen” or third-party actors sought to manage global tensions by destroying previously existing bifurcations of the Cold War in order to triangulate the conflict between not just the United States and USSR but also other geographic areas of the world. The expansion of this historiographical work is already being done in other areas of scholarship that seek to complicate notions of the Cold War by carefully “dissecting” the conflict and looking at it through a “kaleidoscopic multiplication of prospects, contextualizations, methodological approaches, and meanings” that situate it in “longer-term perspectives of international and global transformations.”²¹ This dissertation joins these analyses, aiming to

²⁰ Prasch, *The World is Our Stage*, 14-15.

²¹ Federico Romero, “Cold War Historiography at the Crossroads,” *Cold War History* 14, no. 4 (2014): 686-703. Romero cites other instances of such studies including Prasenjit Duara, “The Cold War as a Historical Period: An Interpretive Essay,” *Journal of Global History* 6, no. 3 (2011): 457-480; Silvio Pons, *The Global Revolution. A History of International Communism 1971-1991* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Michael H. Hunt, *The*

better understand how a small but mighty ethnic lobbying organization and diasporic community tried both to disrupt and to reinforce the seemingly static positions of the Cold War's two global powers in different times and different places. It seeks to capture aspects of Eastern Europe's Cold War, looking at the intersection and divergence of this region's interests in comparison to the United States and USSR.²² In much of the ideological criticism of Cold War myths produced in rhetorical studies, there is a narrative of polarization communicated about the United States' and the Soviet Union's position towards each other. While the following work joins with the discipline of rhetorical studies in seeing many of the same pragmatic and ideological controversies at the heart of the conflict (i.e. the competition between "offensive" and "defensive" policies²³ and the further growth of anti-communist sentiments during the 1980s²⁴), it adds another layer of complication on top of the normative United States vs. USSR paradigm, exploring how the war's two superpowers did not always work at odds with one another or seek to undermine one another but instead waxed and waned in their collaboration on certain issues and the ways in which they responded to key areas of foreign policy in which they were both interested within the constructs of the war. Further, this dissertation seeks to look at how some of the normative ideologies, myths, and narratives of the conflict got entrenched and justified, how they were circulated and mobilized, and how they intermingled and compounded on top of one

American Ascendancy: How the United States Gained and Wielded Global Dominance (Chapel Hill, NC: University of Carolina Press, 2007).

²² Elidor Mëhilli et al., "Centering Eastern Europe's Cold War through the Wilson Center Digital Archive," *Wilson Center*, August 31, 2023, <https://www.wilsoncenter.org/blog-post/centering-eastern-europes-cold-war-through-wilson-center-digital-archive>.

²³ O'Gorman, "'The One Word the Kremlin Fears,'" 390.

²⁴ Rowland and Jones, "Reagans' Strategy for the Cold War."

another over the course of many decades.²⁵ Rhetorical studies' analyses of the Cold War can be enlarged to include the movement of these ideologies, myths, and narratives and examine the role of additional actors and subjects that are part of the Cold War milieu, especially embracing the wide array of alternative transnational, cultural, and social influences on the trajectory of the conflict, looking at how it operates on overlapping planes of the local, regional, and national.²⁶

While many of the ideological characterizations and the creation of worldviews regarding the war stayed the same across its long timeframe,²⁷ the actors who perpetuated these messages differed, working throughout varied times and contexts in order to support and build upon preexisting US foreign policy positions. The Cold War messaging stayed the same, but the mouthpieces changed—sometimes prioritizing unseen and unlikely voices. In order to trace the relationship between these changing actors, messages, times, and places, the following study also offers up to rhetorical studies the phenomenon of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) as a useful concept in viewing this work, as it provides a three-part process of strategic rhetorical action as a way to trace how these foreign policy connections were forged, established, and

²⁵ Allison M. Prash and Sara L. McKinnon, "Introduction," in *Reassessing Foreign Policy Rhetorics in the Global Era: Concepts and Case Studies*, ed. Allison Prash and Sara L. McKinnon (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2024), 2. Some of the ideologies, myths, and narratives of the Cold War that rhetorical studies has focused on include "illness" and "containment" (Barney, "Diagnosing the Third World"), "us" vs. "them" (Barney "Power Lines"), the "One World" vision (Bormann, Cragan, & Shields, "An Expansion of the Rhetorical Vision" and Stengrim, *One World*), practicalities and pragmatism (Bostdorff & Goldzwig, "Idealism and Pragmatism," Cram, "Peace, Yes, but World Freedom as Well," Fowler, "Art of the Arms Deal," Ivie, "Speaking 'Common Sense,'" Rowland and Jones, "Reagan's Strategy"), "container" and "journey" (Carney & Prash, "A Journey for Peace"), the United States as an "agent for peace" (Brands, "The War in a Word" and Fowler, "Lion's Last Roar," Medhurst, "Eisenhower's 'Atoms for Peace' Speech," O'Gorman, "The One Word the Kremlin Fears"), "good" vs. "evil" (Goodnight, "Ronald Reagan's Reformulation"), power politics and "savagery" (Ivie, "Metaphor and the Rhetorical Invention," Ivie, "Literalizing the Metaphor of Soviet Savagery," O'Gorman, *Spirits of the Cold War*), and propaganda (Parry-Giles, *The Rhetorical Presidency, Propaganda, and the Cold War*, Parry-Giles, "Rhetorical Experimentation and the Cold War").

²⁶ Romero, "Cold War Historiography at the Crossroads," 686. Prash and McKinnon, "Introduction," 3, 8.

²⁷ Stuckey, "Competing Foreign Policy Visions."

maintained.²⁸ All in all, the bringing together of these perspectives and the strength of applying a rhetorical material approach to such Cold War topics allows for further examination of how these Rhetorics traveled, traced, and compounded on one another, likewise analyzing how greater networks of the development of Cold War foreign policy were built and maintained.

This project additionally contributes to scholarship that examines the role of lobbying institutions on policymaking in the United States—scholarship that has grown considerably in the wake of the Cold War with increased interest in analyzing the influence of less-often-considered players in the political arena. It is now commonly acknowledged that lobbying institutions in general play a large role in both domestic policy and foreign policy. Within this scholarship there is especially large concern about ethnic lobbying groups, entities that had once long been underappreciated and “failed” to be mentioned in policy-making literature, even though these groups’ strong community ties, identity formation, and motivations are acknowledged as especially unique.²⁹ Because ethnic lobbying entities usually have vast transnational communication networks that they can draw upon and leverage in the political sphere (even being said to exert a disproportionately large influence on their surrounding environment), they are seen as often and effectively shaping foreign policymaking.³⁰ Yet studies regarding this influence have acknowledged there is additional work to be done in order to better understand ethnic lobbying groups’ influence over long periods of US policy decisions, extended

²⁸ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998).

²⁹ Ghada Hashem, review of *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups*, by Janice J. Terry, *Arab Studies Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (2006): 69. William M. LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door? Ethnic Foreign Policy Lobbies and the Cuban American Case,” *Foreign Policy Analysis* 16 (2020): 438. Tony Smith, *Foreign Attachments: The Power of Ethnic Groups in the Making of American Foreign Policy* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 2, 59. Patrick J. Haney, “Ethnic Lobbying in Foreign Policy,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedias, International Studies* (2017): 3, <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190846626.013.14>.

³⁰ Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 3; Stephen M. Saideman, “The Power of the Small: The Impact of Ethnic Minorities on Foreign Policy,” *SAIS Review* 22, no. 2 (2002): 93.

foreign policy debates, or complicated international conflicts where the United States is heavily involved, such as the Cold War. Further, these studies have not dived more deeply into the aforementioned aspect of transnational networks nor sought to articulate exactly how these groups bring together people, locations, and discourses across the globe in order to enact change. Related to this, the significant role of diasporic identity within the ethnic lobbying strategy still needs to be attended to in order to examine the intertwining relationships between ethnicity, constituent action, and the shaping of international affairs.³¹

The following project brings these areas of scholastic interest together, not merely taking a look at the role of ethnic lobby groups within the US foreign policy landscape of the late Cold War. It seeks to complicate the normative narratives regarding who shaped 1970s and 1980s US foreign policy. Furthermore, this project will interrogate how these ethnic lobbyists advocated for particular ends and fed into preexisting narratives and ideologies of the Cold War in order to perpetuate the conflict for the “good” of the Baltics. By studying the significance of ethnic lobbying as rhetorical, the influence of these entities in navigating the twists and turns of US foreign policy can be better positioned within the larger Cold War story. Thus, the project also provides insight into how ethnic lobbying groups navigated the East-West divide during the Cold War by engaging the complex governmental and institutional environments of this time. Finally, by explicitly locating the moments of overlap between US ethnic lobbying, diasporic constituents, and communities abroad, this study paints a picture of how political change occurred and public problems were sorted through during this era. In so doing it demonstrates the

³¹ Shubha Kamala Prasad and Filip Savatic, “Diasporic Foreign Policy Interest Groups in the United States: Democracy, Conflict, and Political Entrepreneurship,” *Perspectives on Politics* 21, no. 3 (2023): 831-848; Charles King and Neil J. Melvin, “Diaspora Politics: Ethnic Linkages, Foreign Policy, and Security in Eurasia,” *International Security* 24, no. 3 (1999/2000): 108-138.

importance of non-US and -USSR states in the end of the Cold War, contributing to scholarship that examines the overlap between the collapse of the USSR and burgeoning independence for states within Eastern Europe. Specific to the Baltics, it contributes to an emerging area of scholarship inside and outside of rhetorical studies that focuses on the influence of the triangular relationships in the late-Cold War era that existed between Moscow, D.C., and the Baltics towards the conflict's end.³²

To accomplish this intervention, this dissertation examines the role of the central Baltic interests lobbying organization in the United States—the Joint Baltic American National Committee (JBANC)—in the development of Baltic independence discourse and US foreign policy regarding the Baltics throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In analyzing JBANC's placement within the last decades of the Cold War, it seeks to answer the following questions: What rhetorical strategies did JBANC deploy in its efforts to focus US foreign policy on achieving Baltic independence in the late-Cold War era? What institutional relationships did it forge, and how did these communicative networks shape the US foreign apparatus during that period? What does JBANC, as a case study, tell us about the role of ethnic lobbying and diasporic organizations in shaping the US foreign policy establishment and, more generally, can greater attention paid to the experiences and activities of such actors affect current scholarly understandings of the motives, drivers, and outcomes of the Cold War? In the following

³² Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 1)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 5, no. 4 (2003): 178–256. Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 2)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 6, no. 4 (2004): 3–64. Mark Kramer, "The Collapse of East European Communism and the Repercussions within the Soviet Union (Part 3)," *Journal of Cold War Studies* 7, no. 1 (2005): 3–96. Kristina Spohr, "Between Political Rhetoric and Realpolitik Calculations: Western Diplomacy and the Baltic Independence Struggle in the Cold War Endgame," *Cold War History* 6, no. 1 (2006): 1–42. Una Bergmane, *Politics of Uncertainty: The United States, the Baltic Question, and the Collapse of the Soviet Union* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2023).

chapters, I answer these questions and argue that through its various lobbying efforts, JBANC sought to perpetuate the Cold War by bolstering narratives of East-West hegemony and US war hawk-attitudes for the sake of the Baltic states, urging the United States to recenter the Baltics within its Cold War foreign policy in order to ensure their prioritization in the late-Cold War era. Rhetorical cartography reveals the ways in which this pro-Baltic position evolved and built upon previous issues of the Cold War, the ways in which JBANC conveniently fed into the US Cold War political machine, as well as the ways in which the state and non-state actors became interlaced during the late-Cold War years, creating multiple points of and moments of messy conduct that, over time, shifted US work and action. In so doing, this project enriches our understanding of networked foreign policy communication, lobbying as public address, and Rhetoric's function as a connector and mediator between civil society and the state.

I analyze four examples of Cold War Baltic-American advocacy: (1) JBANC's response to suspicions of secrecy surrounding the leaking of the United States' purported Sonnenfeldt Doctrine of 1975 and the falsification of information within the US Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations's (OSI) deportation of Baltic-American citizens to the USSR; (2) JBANC's establishment of relationships with many congressional, Baltic, and US governmental actors that strengthened JBANC's transnational work and the ways the organization was able to increase its lobbying capacities; (3) the 1980s promotion and invention of Baltic-American holidays meant for image-making to elevate public recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states, all the while raising cultural awareness regarding these three countries' fight for independence; and (4) JBANC's use of the principle of self-determination within its discourse with various state and non-state actors, calling upon the concept as unifying force within the international Baltic struggles for independence. The study of these examples offers a greater

understanding of the ways in which Rhetoric evolves over many periods, locations, and peoples to encompass a wide scope of influences and to respond to a variety of contexts. Looking at these rhetorical activities locates rhetorical strategy within a complex cartography of power relations. The interactions of the rhetorical actors I examine here enabled the movement of borders, the redefinition of the nexus of East and West, and the rallying of people. Diasporic organizations like JBANC helped shape US foreign policy toward the Baltics between the 1970s and 1980s, and the connections present between the United States and the Baltics during the time would be factors that contributed to the eventual breakup of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. By looking at these historical instances and studying the ways in which JBANC challenged, held steady, and swayed the trajectory of US governmental decision-making, this dissertation sheds light upon foreign policy creation, state formation, and international relations within the transitional late-Cold War era. A study of JBANC uniquely allows rhetoricians to see how oft-overlooked peripheral state and non-state actors and rhetorical activities such as the lobbying done by US diasporic groups aimed to influence US Cold War foreign policy by bringing states like the Baltics back into Cold War conversation so that the United States could join them in their fight for independence and serve as a protector of these “captive nations.”

In the remainder of this chapter, I contextualize the claims of Baltic independence, explaining the previous events, times, places, and organizations that are necessary for an intellectual grasp of the upcoming scenes of the late-Cold War Baltic-American context. In what follows, I first present the grounds on which the original iteration of Baltic independence was granted, looking at what the establishment of relations between the Baltic states and the United States looked like. After this, I dive into the historical legacy of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, considering the effects of this treaty and its secret protocols on Baltic history and the rest of the

Cold War. I then examine the role of the Welles Declaration—the United States’ non-recognition policy regarding the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states—on US foreign policy, considering not only its effects on the constructs of the Cold War but also the various factors this policy considered. Finally, I present the background of the Joint Baltic American National Committee and look at how it was created out of three Baltic parent organizations that sought a greater presence within Washington, D.C., and the governmental apparatus of the United States. To conclude, I preview the remaining chapters of the dissertation, including a discussion of my theoretical and methodological lenses and a presentation of the buffet of activities that I will analyze throughout this project, all of which pertain to JBANC’s late-Cold War advocacy.

Baltic Independence and Relations with the US

The three Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania first emerged as independent states within the European landscape in the late nineteen-teens, heavily influenced by key turning points of the early twentieth century such as the 1917 Russian Revolutions and the Great War and motivated by their growing nationalism and desires for allyship with the West. Through establishing themselves as separate entities from their historic German and Russian rulers, the Baltics curated a specific set of memories, stories, and inclination towards sovereignty that would set the scene for the rest of the century. This wealth of knowledge regarding what independence looked and felt like between 1918–1939 would be knowledge that reappeared as part of public discourse years later during the final years of the Cold War.³³ Such independence was initially conceptualized in the aftermath of the spring 1917 Bolshevik Revolution in Russia,

³³ Toivo V. Raun, “Baltic Independence, 1917-1920 and 1988-1994: Comparative Perspectives,” *The National Council for Soviet and East European Research* (June 30, 1994): 1-13.

when it became apparent that the Provisional Government that took over after the Russian uprising was unable to maintain its authority in its territories flanking the Baltic Sea. Very quickly the political leaders and population of this area determined that they did not need to be fully dependent on a Russian government to function.³⁴ Although there was a desire for Baltic self-rule well before this critical historical period, there were no opportunities to seek separation. Even after the Revolution, the Bolsheviks fought hard for control of the three Baltic states, throwing them into war and a chaotic power struggle during the years following this world-changing event. At the same time, German forces were still vying for political control over the region, as well, continuing to take land from south to north towards the end of World War I and pushing the Bolsheviks back in the process. It was only after Western Allies applied pressure to the postwar situation that the German forces began to retreat and more unified Baltic governments came into existence, motivated more than ever by their desires to keep invading forces at bay.³⁵

Throughout these three countries' fights for and establishment of independence, the Allies and the United States helped to encourage and support the states' withdrawal from Russian and German influence. While the United States was not particularly motivated by a specific policy or reasoning in its assistance of the Baltic states, it is almost certain that it did not want to see Germany gain eastern territory upon the end of the war nor did it want the Bolshevik Russian influence to spread further and further west. Altogether, the United States surely wanted

³⁴ Dovile O. Vilkauskaitė, "From Empire to Independence: The Curious Case of the Baltic States 1917-1922," Honors Scholar Thesis, (University of Connecticut, 2013), 12. Bronis J. Kasias, *The Baltic Nations: The Quest for Regional Integration and Political Liberty* (Pittston, PA: Euramerica, 1976).

³⁵ Andrew Parrott, "The Baltic States from 1914 to 1923: The First World War and the Wars of Independence," *Baltic Defense Review* 8, no. 2 (2002): 144-157.

to avoid engaging in another expensive conflict in its interactions with the Baltic region, instead seeking to exert some semblance of influence in the area in order to sway the way the area responded to the German and Russian aggressors without the direct involvement of troops. To do so, the United States backed and assisted the Baltics through means other than military intervention, such as giving the states resources via Scandinavian countries and distributing humanitarian aid through organizations such as the American Red Cross, YMCA, YWCA, and the Mission of American Relief Administration.³⁶ Stateside, due to the large influx of Baltic immigrants and descendants in the United States at the time and the growing influence of the Baltic-American community, calls for increased American support of the Baltic independence movements gained traction quite quickly due to a variety of lobbying efforts throughout the late nineteen-teens.

Some of these US-driven initiatives started early on within the trajectory of the first iteration of Baltic independence. As far back as 1915 American Lithuanians began to circulate petitions that initially called for increased American support for an autonomous Lithuanian state. This first American-Lithuanian petition to President Woodrow Wilson contained one million signatures.³⁷ Over the next couple of years these demands became more urgent. On June 10, 1916, the Lithuanian Alliance of America created a resolution asking the US government to recognize Baltic independence, the states' right "to be independent and choose any form of government which these races consider best suited to themselves."³⁸ That year the US House of

³⁶ Parrott, "The Baltic States," 155. Ēriks Jēkabsons and Kristīne Beķere, "A Century of Relations Between Latvia and the USA," in *Latvia and the United States: Bringing Friendship into the Next Century*, eds. Kārlis Bukovskis and Mārtiņš Vargulis (Rīga, Latvia: Latvian Institute of International Affairs, 2022), 17.

³⁷ Albert N. Tarulis, *American-Baltic Relations 1918-1922: The Struggle Over Recognition* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1965), 2.

³⁸ Tarulis, *American-Baltic Relations*, 3.

Representatives, further encouraged by President Woodrow Wilson, issued a proclamation declaring November 1 “Lithuania Day.” This was the first official act of the US government recognizing the existence of a Baltic nation. The proclamation noted that November 1 should be set aside so that “citizens of this country may give expression to their sympathy by contributing to the funds now being raised for the relief of the Lithuanians in the war zone.”³⁹ On December 10, 1918, the US Senate followed the act up with another resolution, recognizing the *de facto* independent rights of all Baltic nations. However, the issue of *de jure* recognition remained.⁴⁰ Because of this discrepancy and the unyielding desire of Baltic independence movement activists to gain further support from the United States, the three states sought stronger diplomatic ties. However, not all efforts were successful. For example, even though American Lithuanians who were part of the American Lithuanian National Council continually petitioned the US State Department for further assistance in the Baltic struggle, going so far as to request that American troops be sent to Lithuania as a further demonstration of US solidarity, the US government never responded to their inquiry.⁴¹

The growing independence movements in all three Baltic countries began to focus more centrally on gaining the full support of the US in order to affirm the states’ position. In March 1921, the director of the department of politics and economics of the Latvian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ludvigs Seja, was sent to the United States with the hopes that he could attain *de jure* recognition. Seja noted the importance of such a task and articulated the hope that Latvia—

³⁹ “Conditions of Lithuanians in Countries of War.” 64th Congress, First Session, S. Res. 140, H. Res. 258; Congressional Record, 53, 4595; 53; 9386; 53; 11404-11405. As cited in Tarulis, *American-Baltic Relations*, 4.

⁴⁰ Jēkabsons and Beķere, “A Century of Relations Between Latvia and the USA,” 18.

⁴¹ *Foreign Relations of the United States*, 1918, Volume II, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States: Russia, eds. Joseph V. Fuller and Tyler Dennett (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), 845-849, <https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1918Russiav02/d1012> [accessed 27 October 2023].

alongside the other Baltic states—had in terms of gaining US support, as the American position to the Baltics up to this point had been favorable. Thus, the states felt that by attaining the full recognition of independence, they could solidify a strong Baltic-American relationship and be assured that “in the future she will not deny us political and moral support either.”⁴² Support grew slowly, though, and it officially took the United States until 1922 to extend full recognition to the Baltic states, in part because it did not want to sever any of the ties it had maintained with Russia during WWI.⁴³ Despite this frustration, the eventual confirmation was seen as a final solidification of independence that the three states needed to stabilize their political status . It further showcased the significance of strong Baltic-American lobbying efforts.⁴⁴ When independence was finally achieved and recognized by Russia, Germany, and the US, the Baltic states enjoyed their newfound sovereignty for twenty-some years, becoming essential players in the burgeoning European geopolitics of the interwar period, even joining the League of Nations. This political culture and political thinking “countenanced a very powerful, activist, and intrusive central government,” once again, features that would be later resurrected within the populace during the late-Cold War era.⁴⁵ Throughout the 1920s and 1930s relations between the Baltics and the United States quickly developed, leaving a lasting imprint on the countries. The strong diplomatic relationships between the Baltic states and the United States were long remembered as part of the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian independence narrative, affirming the three

⁴² Jēkabsons and Beķere, “A Century of Relations Between Latvia and the USA,” 18.

⁴³ Vilkauskaite, “From Empire to Independence,” 28.

⁴⁴ Eric Allan Sibul, “The Origins of Estonian Diplomacy, 1917–1922: The Roles of Kaarel Robert Pusta, Antonius Piip, and Jaan Poska,” (Master of Arts Thesis, San Jose State University, 1989).

⁴⁵ “Hearing before the Subcommittee on European Affairs of the Committee on Foreign Relations United States Senate, 105th Congress, Second Session, July 15, 1998,” <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/CHRG-105shrg50539/html/CHRG-105shrg50539.htm>.

countries' ties to others around the world and their recognition as distinct and separate countries that were part of neither German nor Soviet spheres of influence.

The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its Secret Protocols

Yet this independence was stripped away as part of a secret addendum to the seemingly benign non-aggression pact that Germany and the Soviet Union signed just before the onset of World War II. While the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was on its face an unexceptional agreement between two major European powers, underneath the surface it was a settlement that would profoundly shift the trajectory of Baltic history. Etched in history as one of the darkest events of modern international diplomacy due to the havoc that it wreaked on Europe's geopolitical lines, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact (also known as the Nazi-Soviet or the Hitler-Stalin Non-aggression Pact) was signed on August 23, 1939.⁴⁶ What followed its signing was not only the rapid outbreak of war in Europe but also the occupation of the Baltic states and other sectors of Eastern Europe for nearly half a century. More specifically, this treaty, made between Hitler and Stalin and signed by German Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop and Soviet Foreign Minister Vyacheslav Molotov, placed the three Baltic republics of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania squarely within the Soviet sphere of influence. This resulted from the USSR's intention to "increase the number of Soviet republics" and squash the influence of outside powers in the Baltics.⁴⁷ Despite this, from all public appearances, the pact's public clauses included the written guarantee of peace between Germany and the USSR, promising neutrality in the event of

⁴⁶ David Wedgwood Benn, "Review Article: Russian Historians Defend the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact," *International Affairs* 87, no. 3 (2011): 709.

⁴⁷ Seppo Myllyniemi, *Die baltische Krise 1938-1941*, trans. Dietrich Assmann (Stuttgart: Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 1979), 43.

war. Further, the pact committed each government to neither making itself an ally nor coming to the aid of the other's enemies. Yet it also contained three "secret" protocols that partitioned the Baltic states, Finland, and Poland into geographic sectors over which Germany and the USSR would rule.⁴⁸ These protocols stated that Germany and the USSR intended to divide Eastern Europe up between themselves, allowing the Soviet Union to gain a long-desired foothold in the Baltics.⁴⁹ Within a year of the pact's signature, Stalin annexed the Baltic states while the rest of Europe collapsed into war.

As far as the Baltic states were concerned, the part of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact that was deemed the most influential on the republics' future was its embedded "secret protocols." In the first protocol, Finland, Estonia, and Latvia were determined to be part of the Soviet sphere, with Lithuania being left as German territory. The second protocol decided that Poland would be split between both the Soviets and the Germans. The third and final protocol affirmed that the USSR had rights to Bessarabia, a region that lies in modern-day Moldova and Ukraine. It would not be until later that an additional secret supplementary protocol would be made, deciding that Lithuania would be designated as part of the Soviet sphere of influence along with the rest of the Baltics.⁵⁰ Thus, the spoils of Hitler's and Stalin's "devils' alliance" by and large came from the signing of these protocols, initiated by the Soviets and agreed to by Hitler and Ribbentrop.⁵¹

⁴⁸ "Secret Supplementary Protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Non-Aggression Pact, 1939," September 1939, History and Public Policy Program Digital Archive, Published in *Nazi-Soviet Relations, 1939-1941: Documents from the Archives of the German Foreign Office*, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/110994>.

⁴⁹ Saulius Sužiedėlis, "The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Baltic States: An Introduction and Interpretation," *Lituanis: Lithuanian Quarterly Journal of Arts and Sciences* 35, no. 1 (Spring 1989), <https://vilnews.com/2011-06-the-molotov-%E2%80%93-ribbentrop-pact>.

⁵⁰ Jane Degras, ed., *Soviet Documents on Foreign Policy, 1917-1941*, vol. 3 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1953), 377.

⁵¹ Roger Moorhouse, *The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin, 1939-41* (London: The Bodley Head, 2014), 36.

However, both sides understood and agreed that the protocols were to be “strictly secret,” with the Soviet Union especially wanting the arrangements to be swept under the rug.⁵² Less than a year later the pact’s implications would come to fruition when, in mid-June 1940, the Soviet Union started to present its ultimatums to the Baltic governments, stressing that they needed to state which side of the war they supported.⁵³

The military occupation of the Baltic states officially began when the Red Army marched into Lithuania on June 15, the same day that the armed forces of Nazi Germany marched into Paris. The occupation and subsequent Sovietization of the Baltic states, as well as the Soviet seizure of Bessarabia, marked the culmination of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the full realization of Soviet hegemony in the Baltics, as well as in other key parts of Eastern Europe.⁵⁴ In many ways, the cunning Soviet and Nazi non-aggression treaty constituted both countries’ successes at the beginning of World War II. However, this Hitler-Stalin alliance was short-lived, with the Baltic republics becoming occupied by Germany between 1941 and 1944 after Operation Barbarossa and the German invasion of the USSR, which commenced in June 1941. By 1944, the Soviet Union re-occupied and “liberated” the three republics, returning them to the influence of the USSR.⁵⁵ The following decades that the Baltic states would spend under Soviet occupation would prove to be some of the most horrific and violent years of their history.

Mass deportations of people from their homes in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were just one of the many horrors that these three countries experienced under the secret protocols. These

⁵² Moorhouse, *The Devils’ Alliance*, 39.

⁵³ Sužiedėlis, “The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Baltic States.”

⁵⁴ Sužiedėlis, “The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the Baltic States.”

⁵⁵ Yulia Nikitina, “Russia and the Baltic States: Problematizing the Soviet Legacy Discourse,” *Nationalities Papers* 42, no. 1 (2014): 2.

deportations started just a few weeks before the German attack on the USSR in June 1941 and would last throughout much of the remaining 60-year occupation of the countries. Before Nazi troops would arrive in the republics upon the commencement of Operation Barbarossa, the Soviet secret police targeted entire classes and occupations of people, sending tens of thousands of Balts off to Siberia, never to see their families or homeland again.⁵⁶ Such terror might help to explain why the people in the Baltics were “almost joyful[]” in their reception of the Wehrmacht Nazi military in 1941 and then subsequently devastated by the 1944 Soviet reoccupation of their countries.⁵⁷ Although their appreciation for the Nazis is often perceived as uncanny to outsiders, the Balts saw the Germans as a strong regime that could protect them from the profound fear that the USSR had instigated within the states. Yet the Germans brought with them death and destruction, as well, including the killing of what some scholars estimate is 90% of Jews from the Baltics.⁵⁸ Between 1940 and 1953 and during the time when the Balts were occupied by the Soviets, Germans, and Soviets again, more than 200,000 are estimated to have been deported from the Baltic states—over 10% of the entire adult Baltic population.⁵⁹ Of these, at least 75,000 Balts are estimated to have been sent to the gulag camps in Siberia.

Despite the traumas endured during WWII, Soviet Russia refused to confirm that the secret protocols existed, even after the documents were found in Germany following the end of World War II. In the Soviet period, the USSR state created firm boundaries around what was an

⁵⁶ Gömöri, “A Pact that Started World War II,” 69.

⁵⁷ Gömöri, “A Pact that Started World War II,” 69.

⁵⁸ United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Latvia,” *USHMM*, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/latvia>; United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, “Lithuania,” *USHMM*, <https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/lithuania>.

⁵⁹ Stephanie Courtois et al., *The Black Book of Communism: Crimes, Terror, Repression* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

acceptable historical narrative. Using texts, political announcements, cultural practices, and commemorative practices that “tightly controlled the remembrance” of the past, the USSR effectively policed counter-narratives of the past and thrust them to the margins of society.⁶⁰ One narrative that was silenced throughout most of the remainder of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states was the acknowledgement of the secret protocols within the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Another was the narrative that the USSR was “occupying” the countries, with the Soviet government instead claiming that the three republics had entered the Soviet Union of their own free will.⁶¹ Vyacheslav Molotov, the Soviet Foreign Minister who signed the pact and lived in the USSR until his death in 1986, repeatedly denied the existence of the protocols and staunchly argued that the Baltics were rightfully Soviet satellite states.⁶² Despite the Soviets’ outright denial of the secret, it would only be a matter of time until the Baltic states took the knowledge of the secret protocols into their own hands. In the late-Cold War years the resuscitation of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and secret protocols became a central feature of Baltic identity and a crucial aspect of the arguments made around the world for the Baltic states’ reinstatement of their independence.⁶³

⁶⁰ Daina S. Eglitis and Laura Ardava, “The Politics of Memory: Remembering the Baltic Way 20 Years After 1989,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 64, no. 6 (2012): 1034.

⁶¹ Aro Velmet, “Occupied Identities: National Narratives in Baltic Museums of Occupations,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 42, no. 2 (2011): 189.

⁶² James V. Wertsch, “Blank Spots in Collective Memory: A Case Study of Russia,” *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 617, no. 1 (2008): 58-71.

⁶³ Kristen M. Einertson, “The Return of the Secret: The Protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, Baltic Independence, and US Foreign Policy Rhetoric in the Late 1980s,” in *Reassessing Foreign Policy Rhetorics in the Global Era: Concepts and Case Studies*, eds. Allison Prash and Sara L. McKinnon (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2024), 119-140.

The Welles Declaration

Part of the reason why the United States was ready to lead an international pro-Baltic-independence movement at the of the Cold War was that it had long held a policy of non-recognition regarding the Baltics' incorporation into the USSR. This policy originated soon after the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and came in the form of the Welles Declaration, a document that laid out US policy towards Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Issued on July 23, 1940, by acting US Secretary of State Sumner Welles, the declaration was the US diplomatic document that most clearly condemned the June 1940 Soviet occupation of the Baltics that came from the inclusion of the secret protocols within the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. Refusing to diplomatically recognize the Baltics as part of the Soviet Union, the Welles Declaration became known as the "non-recognition policy" of the United States, which continued uninterrupted until the reestablishment of Baltic independence in 1990 and 1991. Promoted by Loy Henderson, a senior US diplomat specializing in Soviet affairs and married to a Latvian woman, the Welles Declaration arose out of the earlier 1932 Stimson Doctrine.⁶⁴ This initial statement, put out by the US Department of State, articulated that the United States would never recognize the change in political status of a territory achieved by forcible seizure.⁶⁵ Evolving from both President Franklin Roosevelt's attitude regarding territorial expansion and the United States' governmental concerns regarding postwar border planning, the doctrine would ultimately become the unofficial

⁶⁴ US Embassy in Estonia, "How Loy Henderson Earned Estonia's Cross of Liberty," <https://web.archive.org/web/20100527100428/http://estonia.usembassy.gov/root/pdfs/history-articles/how-loy-henderson-earned-estonia.pdf>.

⁶⁵ US Department of State, "Stimson Doctrine, 1932," <https://2001-2009.state.gov/r/pa/ho/time/id/16326.htm#:~:text=Since%20calls%20for%20a%20cessation,Japanese%20might%20impose%20upon%20China>. Robert Vitas, *The United States and Lithuania: The Stimson Doctrine of Nonrecognition* (New York: Praeger, 1990), 35.

position of the United States regarding the Soviet annexation of the Baltic countries. Due to both the Stimson Doctrine and the Welles Declaration, the small Baltic countries located within the periphery of Europe and with whom the US never had deep relations before the Second World War became important elements to Washington's foreign policy maneuvers and the country's attempts to influence and restrict Moscow's movements during the early years of World War II.⁶⁶ Additionally, they became essential pieces of the United States's broader foreign policy strategies during the height of the Cold War as well as its late-Cold War end game, paving the way for the Baltics' eventual reestablishment of independence.⁶⁷

Thus, the Stimson Doctrine and the Welles Declaration set forth the United States' non-recognition policy of the Soviet annexation of these three countries and represented the strength of Roosevelt's overall attitude regarding forcible territorial expansion. This was a welcome and needed development, as despite the worsening European situation of the 1930s, the United States' earlier appeals to leave the Baltics alone went largely unheeded. This included Roosevelt speaking out against European territorial aggrandizement in 1937 during his *Quarantine the Aggressor* speech and his 1939 ultimatum to Hitler and Mussolini specifically referencing the three Baltic countries.⁶⁸ When Soviet aggression spread south from Finland to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the summer of 1940, it was obvious that the United States' previous warnings meant nothing to the dictators in Europe. Much more needed to be said and done if the United

⁶⁶ John Hiden, Vahur Made, and David J. Smith, "The Baltic Question and the Cold War," in *The Baltic Question During the Cold War*, eds. John Hiden, Vahur Made, and David J. Smith (London: Routledge, 2008), 3.

⁶⁷ Hiden, Made, and Smith, "The Baltic Question and the Cold War," 3.

⁶⁸ John McV. Haight Jr., "Roosevelt and the Aftermath of the Quarantine Speech," *The Review of Politics* 24, no. 2 (1962): 233-259; Franklin D. Roosevelt, "Message to Adolf Hitler and Benito Mussolini," 14 April 1939, online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, *The American Presidency Project*, accessed October 21, 2022, <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/message-adolf-hitler-and-benito-mussolini>.

States hoped to continue its diplomatic relations with the Baltics. Following the spring 1940 German invasion of Denmark and Norway, Roosevelt issued Executive Order 8389, which regulated transactions in foreign exchange and the export of coin and currency, freezing all the financial assets of occupied European countries that were located in the United States.⁶⁹ This was extended to the Baltics after the USSR invaded them, protecting not only the United States' financial interests in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania but also the ongoing trade that occurred through Baltic-owned shipping vessels that were located in US-controlled ports.⁷⁰ While this action was relatively insignificant, it articulated the United States' intentions to support the three states. Additionally, Welles crafted his declaration in July, clearly stating the United States' overall non-recognition policy:

During these past few days the devious process whereunder the political independence and territorial integrity of the three small Baltic Republics – Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania – were to be deliberately annihilated by one of their more powerful neighbors, have been rapidly drawing to their conclusion.

From the day when the peoples of these Republics first gained their independent and democratic form of government the people of the United States have watched their admirable progress in self government with deep and sympathetic interest.

The policy of this Government is universally known. The people of the United States are opposed to predatory activities no matter whether they are carried on by the use of force or by the threat of force. They are likewise opposed to any form of intervention on the part of one State, however powerful, in the domestic concerns of any other sovereign state, however weak.

These principles constitute the very foundations upon which the existing relationship between the 21 sovereign republics of the New World rests.

The United States will continue to stand by these principles, be of the conviction of the American people that unless the doctrine in which these principles are inherent

⁶⁹ “U.S. Freezes Funds of Baltic States,” *New York Times*, July 16, 1940, 8.

⁷⁰ Jonathan L’hommedieu, “Roosevelt and the Dictators: the Origins of the US Non-Recognition Policy of the Soviet Annexation of the Baltic States,” in *The Baltic Question During the Cold War*, eds. John Hiden, Vahur Made, and David J. Smith (London: Routledge, 2008), 35.

once again governs the relations between nations, the rule of reason, of justice and of law – in other words, the basis of modern civilization itself – cannot be preserved.⁷¹

Alongside the Welles Declaration, the United States also announced that it would continue to maintain relations with the diplomatic representatives of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the Soviet occupation. While the US Department of State pulled its own representatives from the Baltic states, calling the ambassadors to Latvia, Estonia, and Lithuania to return home for “consultation,” it continued with its diplomatic relations with the three countries through embassy staff present in the United States who continued to work a Baltic desk and met with Baltic Americans concerned about their homelands.⁷² Meanwhile, Latvia and Lithuania maintained missions through their legations in Washington, D.C., and Estonia’s consulate in New York City, issuing passports, interacting “with Baltic ethnic groups in the country to get US politicians to champion their cause,” and hosting Baltic independence day events.⁷³ The US received diplomats from these missions who were either appointed by the Baltic governments that were in office before the 1940 annexation or senior members of the Baltic diplomatic service who were allowed to appoint their successors, seeing their job as

⁷¹ "Welles Declaration, Department of State Press Release, 'Statement by the Acting Secretary of State, the Honorable Sumner Welles,'" July 23, 1940, *Wilson Center Digital Archive*, NARA, RG 59, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/document/144967>.

⁷² Bertram D. Hulen, “U.S. Lashes Soviet for Baltic Seizure,” *New York Times*, July 24, 1940, <https://timesmachine.nytimes.com/timesmachine/1940/07/24/96929901.html?pageNumber=1>; Paul A. Goble, “The Politics of a Principle: US Non-Recognition Policy Before, During and After the Recovery of Baltic Independence,” in *The Baltic Question During the Cold War*, eds. John Hiden, Vahur Made, and David J. Smith (London: Routledge, 2008), 46; Robert Keatley, “Homeless Diplomats: Their Lands are Gone, Their Mission Remains,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 1973, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

⁷³ Norman Kempster, “Annexed Baltic States: Envoys Hold On to Lonely U.S. Postings,” *Los Angeles Times*, October 31, 1988, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1988-10-31-mn-344-story.html>; Robert Keatley, “Homeless Diplomats: Their Lands are Gone, Their Mission Remains,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 1973, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary; “Baltic States’ ‘Ghost Missions:’ 40-Year-Old Rebuke to Soviet,” *Washington Bureau of the Sun*, April 22, 1981, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

“Keepers of the Flame”—“spokesmen for people who cannot speak for themselves.”⁷⁴ The United States also reviewed budgets prepared by these Baltic missions that used monies from the Baltic government accounts in the United States that had been frozen at the time of Soviet occupation in accordance with Executive Order 8389. Thus, the Baltic missions in the United States were funded by Baltic governments at all times, even during the 1980s when Lithuania’s mission ran out of money and the Estonian and Latvian legations covered the third country’s expenses until the end of the Cold War. Additionally, all throughout the Cold War the US Department of State kept the flags of the Baltic countries flying in the Main State lobby alongside the other countries of the world that the United States recognized. Along these same lines, the US Department of State required that all US maps that featured the Baltics note that their incorporation into the Soviet Union was forcible and not recognized by the United States. The State Department also prohibited any senior US governmental officials from traveling to these countries while they were under Soviet rule. For example, no American ambassador to Moscow ever went to Estonia, Latvia, or Lithuania during the time of the occupation, and only junior officials regularly visited all three for the purposes of reporting on current events or taking part in regional meetings.⁷⁵

Yet the United States’ non-recognition policy also left lots of wiggle room for interpretation, and those with US-Baltic interests often claimed that the declaration was frequently and hypocritically modified over time to suit the relational needs of the United States

⁷⁴ Judith Stahl Viorst, “Baltic States: Status Without Substance,” September 5, 1965, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary; Robert Keatley, “Homeless Diplomats: Their Lands are Gone, Their Mission Remains,” *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 1973, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

⁷⁵ Goble, “The Politics of a Principle,” 46-47.

and Moscow. While the United States maintained diplomatic relations with the Baltics in Washington, D.C., through both its own staff and Baltic-designated personnel, it never fully recognized any Baltic governments in exile. The US State Department also did not implement any specific actions in accordance with its non-recognition policy such as going to war for the Baltics or sending in troops to confront German or Soviet forces. This gave Washington “enormous latitude in deciding how to approach the government of the occupying power” and also allowed Washington to choose how to amplify or stifle its expression of the non-recognition policy when needed. Yet even while orchestrating the careful negotiations that characterized the Cold War and the ever-in-flux state of US-USSR relations, the United States still stood behind its policy regarding the Baltics throughout the entirety of the conflict. It also was diligent in its implementation of Baltic-centric programs that underlined the US concern for these states as a whole, such as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty broadcasting that was available in the three states and in their respective languages.⁷⁶

While the United States’ articulation of and adherence to this non-recognition policy was certainly a long-game strategy, it was fairly easy for the US government to stick to the policy without much consideration, as it did not require many (or any) proactive measures and was more of a principled stance. Nevertheless, it certainly played a major role in the “survival and reemergence of Baltic statehood” and also demonstrated the United States’ ability to stick to a principled position of foreign policy for an lengthy period of time that included many challenges and questions regarding the true meaning of the doctrine.⁷⁷ Thus the Welles Declaration not only provided much of the basis for foreign policy action regarding the Baltic states during the Cold

⁷⁶ Goble, “The Politics of a Principle,” 47-49.

⁷⁷ Goble, “The Politics of a Principle,” 45.

War but also underscored these three countries' relationships with the United States and Russia for the entirety of the twentieth century. Further, it defined their differences and meaningful separation from the rest of the Eastern bloc and the whole of the USSR, a distinction that would continue to be leveraged by those who were strong proponents of the need for the reinstatement of Baltic independence and the Baltics' separation from the Soviet Union.

Background of the Joint Baltic American National Committee

One of the advocacy organizations that concentrated its efforts advocating for the Welles Declaration and focused its work on keeping the US government accountable to this foreign policy measure was the Joint Baltic American National Committee, the central Baltic-American lobbying organization within the United States. On April 27, 1961, three of the major Baltic organizations in the United States—the American Latvian Association, the Estonian American National Council, and the Lithuanian American Council—consolidated their efforts and came together to form a new group meant to serve as the lobbying arm of the Baltic-American community. Through this group, the Baltic-American community intended to more closely “monitor US government actions on the Baltic States” and to generate and disseminate “information to interested agencies and congressional offices” regarding topics surrounding the Baltics, more squarely establishing itself within the US foreign policy political milieu.⁷⁸ In the three parent organizations' official document of declaration that established JBANC, the groups highlighted the importance of such endeavors, commenting that due to Lithuanian, Estonian, and Latvian Americans having firsthand knowledge of the communist exploits in the Baltics and

⁷⁸ Baltic Freedom Day Invitation, 14 June 1989, Box 2, Folder 28, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

their opposition to the ideology, system, and methods of communism, the Baltic immigrant community at large desired to raise its voice in favor of US support of the Baltic independence. JBANC was supposed to renew “protests against the wanton destruction of the freedom and independence of the Baltic states and against their continued occupation” as well as unite “efforts for the restoration of the independence of the three Baltic states and their re-establishment as free and democratic republics.” Within these efforts, JBANC also desired to center the “universally recognized principle of self-determination” at the forefront of this advocacy, arguing for the Baltic states’ need to shed their past and the “common tragedy of a forcible occupation by the Soviet Union” in order to once again regain the worth of their “very physical existence and cultural identity.”⁷⁹ Thus, JBANC would serve as the uniting voice for the activities of Americans of Baltic heritage and be a voice to coordinate and consolidate common Baltic interests in the United States.

The three parent organizations behind JBANC had previously been established as representative organizations for the Baltic-American community and entities that supported the cultural activities and interests of Balts living in the US. The oldest of the three, the Lithuanian American Council (LAC) was founded in 1915 to spread information about Lithuania and its people, not only representing Americans who were of Lithuanian descent but also disseminating information in English regarding issues that took place in Lithuania and Eastern and Central Europe in general.⁸⁰ Similarly, the American Latvian Association (ALA) historically utilized its

⁷⁹ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Declaration by the Estonian National Committee in the United States, the American Latvian Association in the United States, and the Lithuanian American Council, to form the Joint Baltic American Committee,” April 27, 1961, <https://jbanc.org/about/>.

⁸⁰ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “The Lithuanian American Council,” May 21, 2020, <https://jbanc.org/members/>.

US platform to facilitate cultural activities and cooperation of the American-Latvian community, promoting the study of Latvian language, history, and culture. Since its establishment, it sought to equip newly arrived immigrants with resources and to provide humanitarian aid to those living in Latvia, as well, more generally working to promote “understanding and support for Latvia through information efforts in the US.”⁸¹ These tasks stayed at the forefront of ALA efforts over the past century as thousands of Latvians made their way to the United States over the course of this time—not only after World War I and World War II but once again upon Latvia’s reestablishment of independence after the end of the USSR’s occupation of the country.⁸² The youngest of the three Baltic organizations, the Estonian American National Council (EANC) was established on July 19, 1952. Its background indicates that it was created for a twofold purpose: not only did the organization desire to “provide a free voice for the Estonian people and fight for independence of Estonia and human rights for its people,” but it also wanted to “preserve the Estonian cultural heritage in the United States and provide mutual assistance for the ethnic group members.” This group deemed itself a necessity at the start of the Cold War because “Estonians in their homeland could not speak freely for themselves” and because Estonian cultural heritage needed to be preserved.⁸³ Working to support Estonian cultural activities and organizations in the United States, as well as to create awareness and support for Estonia among all Americans, the EANC devoted its efforts to ensuring that the “security and stability as well as the economic and

⁸¹ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “American Latvian Association, Inc.,” May 21, 2020, <https://jbanc.org/members/>

⁸² American Latvian Association, Inc., “About Latvians in the US,” 2020, <https://alausea.org/en/about-us/about-latvians-in-the-u-s/>.

⁸³ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Estonian American National Council, Inc.,” 21 May 2020, <https://jbanc.org/members/>

cultural viability of the Republic of Estonia” could prevail.⁸⁴ Similar to how its sister organizations focused their time and energy on the building of transnational ties between the United States and the Baltic states, the EANC ultimately worked to provide people in the United States with a connection to the Estonian community. Altogether, these three parent organizations behind JBANC were created with the intention of strengthening the platforms for Baltic education, appreciation, and advocacy in the United States and to be a place in which the Baltic-American community could unite.

After the organization’s inception, JBANCs framework mainly consisted of the three chairs of these organizations meeting at least once a year to develop united policies and joint projects that could better further the goals of LAC, ALA, and EANC. Over the course of the next decades of the Cold War, these Baltic-American entities kept working to grow their Washington, D.C., influence such as JBANC’s location in Rockville, Maryland, outside the nation’s capital, and its hiring of a public relations director in the early 1970s. During these beginning years, JBANC sought to promote not only the importance of the understanding, recognition, and knowledge of Baltic history for the Baltic-American community but also the critical nature of American foreign policy decisions on the three states during their occupation by the USSR during the Cold War. To achieve these ends JBANC hosted two Baltic American Information Conferences in the late 1960s and early 1970s and encouraged the United States’ commemoration and support of extremely relevant dates of Baltic history: June 14th, which marked the day when the Soviet deportations from the Baltic states started; the original Baltic Independence Days on February 16th, February 24th, and November 18th, respectively; and

⁸⁴ Estonian American National Council, 2021, <https://www.estosite.org/>.

August 23rd, the anniversary of the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.⁸⁵ It also organized a 50th anniversary celebration of the US recognition of the independence of the Baltic States in 1972, which recalled the establishment of diplomatic relations between the US and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania after the collapse of the German and Russian empires surrounding World War I.⁸⁶ Besides these events, JBANC cultivated its transnational ties with the Baltics, bringing together members of the Baltic-American community and Balts living in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to promote certain foreign policy angles that it thought that the United States should adopt. This included pushing for the initiation of Radio Liberty into the Baltics and advocating for the funds designated for Voice of America to support broadcasts in the three Baltic languages.⁸⁷ Likewise, Balts applied pressure on their Baltic-American counterparts, wanting to know what they, “their compatriots in the free world are doing; what moves or actions on the part of the free governments and peoples are [being] taken to help them in their present situation” in order to “improve[] their fate,” “their political future.”⁸⁸ In turn, Baltic Americans responded with enthusiasm for the job, noting that advocating for those in the Baltic states was a natural response to the Cold War situation as one day they believed independence would prevail:

⁸⁵ John B. Genys, “The Joint Baltic American Committee and the European Security Conference,” *Journal of Baltic Studies* 9, no. 3 (1978): 246.

⁸⁶ US Department of State, “A Guide to the United States’ History of Recognition, Diplomatic, and Consular Relations, by Country, since 1776: Lithuania,” *Office of the Historian, Foreign Service Institute*, <https://history.state.gov/countries/lithuania#:~:text=Diplomatic%20relations%20were%20established%20on,the%20new%20rank%20of%20Minister.>

⁸⁷ Genys, “The Joint Baltic American Committee and the European Security Conference,” 246. Kristen M. Einertson, “Transmission Across the East-West Divide: Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty’s Cold War Broadcasting at Home and Abroad,” in *The Palgrave Handbook of Non-State Actors in East-West Relations*, eds. Péter Marton, Gry Thomasen, Csaba Békés, and András Rácz (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-031-05750-2_58-1.

⁸⁸ “Conditions in the Baltic States and in Other Countries of Eastern Europe: Hearings Before the United States House Committee on Foreign Affairs, Subcommittee on Europe, Eighty-Ninth Congress, First Session, on May 17-18, 1965,” HU OSA 120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

“freedom must come from within the respective countries. The only way we can help is to be their mouthpiece to the Free World. By bringing their oppression to light, we can help give them the spirit and the vigor to survive.”⁸⁹

One of JBANC’s most prominent forays with the US governmental structure involved the events that led up to and took place during the 1973 Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE). This conference, which stemmed from preliminary consultations between the United States and USSR in the winter of 1972-1973, occurred in Helsinki and included 35 states. Due to JBANC’s strong organizational structure and support of over a million US citizens of Baltic descent, it quickly identified the “possible dangers” of the US participating in such a conference and thus took “appropriate, albeit limited, action to guard against Russian objectives to gain approval of their aggression against the Baltic States.” More specifically, JBANC looked on with skepticism at the potential impacts the conference might have on United States’ recognition of the legal status of the Baltic states. While the CSCE conference concluded with the Helsinki Final Act in 1975, JBANC inserted itself as part of the entire diplomacy process between 1972-1975, building up its lobbying reputation in Washington and growing in its advocacy work that intersected with the US governmental sphere. JBANC’s members attended the CSCE conferences in Helsinki and Geneva and met with Vice President Gerald Ford and other US government officials in the White House, State Department, and US Congress in anticipation of the conference’s outcomes.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Kathleen Tyman, “The Angry Young Baltics” *Washington Times*, March 8, 1985, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

⁹⁰ Genys, “The Joint Baltic American Committee and the European Security Conference,” 246.

Part of the reason for this marked shift in JBANC's involvement in US foreign policy included the change of broader diplomatic trends in the 1970s that reflected the United States' preference towards détente and its uptake of a seemingly more peaceful (and sometimes idealistic) outlook in the European theatre regarding the way that Americans were going to conduct its international relations. Of course, such a position was influenced and pushed in part because of the United States' own involvement in Vietnam during this time. Thus, this "change of tone toward the Soviet Union" within the US foreign policy milieu pulled JBANC deeper and deeper into the political sphere, with the ethnic lobbying group consistently "tugging at the American arm" on behalf of Americans of Baltic descent who worried about the United States' plans concerning the Baltic States and other captive nations.⁹¹ The US Chief of Foreign Affairs, Martin Hillenbrand, as well as US Secretary of State, William Rogers, often spoke during these years about "old" Cold War policy and their hope for "new and unexpected" horizons in the war, which was in part what caused this alarm as the United States might be willing to change its policy on Baltic recognition in favor of more détente-focused measures. However, despite these allusions to large-scale shifts, Hillenbrand also paradoxically made firm statements that the US had "no plans to change its policy of *not* recognizing the Soviet annexation of the Baltic States," leaving JBANC confused regarding what the future of Baltic-American relations would hold.⁹² Although Hillenbrand never came outright to comment on the status of the Baltics, he affirmed that such changes would hopefully only generate positive changes for the status of nations in Eastern and Central Europe, stating "in so far as Europe itself is concerned, we hope that the

⁹¹ Genys, "The Joint Baltic American Committee and the European Security Conference," 246. David Green, "3 Ethnic Groups Seek Detente Action," *Detroit News*, April 14, 1975, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 14, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

⁹² Genys, "The Joint Baltic American Committee and the European Security Conference," 246.

discussions that are now underway of bi-lateral character will continue, looking toward a possible European security conference. And, if that should come about—and we hope it will—we can discuss a lot of problems involving the future of Europe.”⁹³ Even so, JBANC warily watched and readied themselves for any possible change to the US non-recognition policy, making this the cornerstone for their Baltic-American advocacy.

JBANC’s commitment was, on the whole, widely supported by Baltic Americans who viewed themselves as essential to carrying out this task, based on their ethnic heritage and embeddedness within an extensive political network that bridged the East-West divide through activism. They self-identified as “Baltic Yuppies,” who were the new leaders of the Baltic movement, many times giving up successful jobs to become fully immersed in Baltic-American political activities—capitalizing upon their background as children of first-generation émigrés who, through their parents, were taught the old languages, sang the old songs, and cared enough about Baltic issues to bring them to the forefront of US society.⁹⁴ “We feel we are the last of a culture and when we die there’s nobody like us,” Baltic Americans commented in a *Washington Times* article. “Being Latvian gives me a certain identity and a political consciousness,” they noted, clearly understanding their “job to inform and educate the government agencies, the Congress and the general public of the situation in the Baltic states,” “creating a Baltic presence so that people don’t forget about Soviet occupation.”⁹⁵ As détente emerged as US policy during the Cold War, JBANC saw the need to continue to advocate for the United States’ adherence to

⁹³ "State Department's Briefing on Foreign Policy," PR 23 (1972), 29-31.

⁹⁴ Correspondence from Bodin Washington Reyman Info Arkus New York to Lindner Info Griffiths “Young Leaders Emerging in Baltic Movement,” 13 August 1985, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

⁹⁵ Kathleen Tyman, “The Angry Young Baltics.”

the Welles Declaration and its previous commitment to the forging of strong relationships with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Outline of Chapters

In this introductory chapter, I have presented the background information necessary to understand the political scene into which JBANC stepped, including the previous establishment of pre-WWII US-Baltic relations, the general outline of Baltic history during the Cold War, and the important policy frameworks that steered the relations between these countries. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania's burgeoning independence that came to fruition following the Bolshevik Revolution provided the firm foundation on which Baltic-American relations would sit for the rest of the century. Both the unofficial and official recognitions of the US government of Baltic separation from Germany and Russia solidified the type of relationship that would grow between the four countries over the course of the 1900s. This relationship would stay strong even after the Hitler-Stalin pact threw the countries back into the sphere of Soviet influence. Thus, the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the effects of its secret protocols, and the plotting of Hitler's and Stalin's plans for Eastern Europe (as realized through the agreement) cast a long shadow and oversized influence on Baltic history during the nearly 50 years that passed between the signing of the treaty and the end of the Cold War. The ways in which the pact's protocols reconfigured the geographic borders of the region and changed the trajectory of Baltic history were not easily forgotten by either those in the Baltics or Baltic sympathizers around the rest of the world—the influence of the pact, secret protocols, and United States' position towards the region will reappear many times throughout this dissertation. However, this version of history could not be openly discussed within the Baltics. The Molotov-Ribbentrop narrative was central to JBANC's

advocacy for the Baltic states. Additionally, the Welles Declaration—built upon the non-recognition of the Soviet occupation and annexation of the Baltic states—served as the primary means by which foreign policy was constructed between the United States and the Baltics. JBANC, in its inception and spinning off from its three parent organizations, took it upon itself to pressure the United States to abide by this policy and ensure that the declaration would not be compromised through later foreign policy development. The various snapshots that this dissertation examines all center around this goal of JBANC and the ways in which the organization sought to present the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the non-recognition policy as the main binding agents within its advocacy for US support of the realization of Baltic independence. Each of the following chapters takes a closer look at the ways in which JBANC employed crafted rhetorical strategies and positions, generating further discourse and discussion regarding the path forward for the Baltics. These strategies cultivated JBANC’s collaboration with state and non-state actors to increase the transnational ties between all these countries, cast doubts on the motives and means of both US and Soviet foreign policy making, manage public memory regarding the Baltic states (in both the United States and abroad), and promoting the strategic uptake of discourse regarding self-determination.

Chapter two outlines the usefulness of a Rhetorical cartographical methodology for this project and discusses rhetoric as an object of analysis in this dissertation. First, I present how the theoretical lens and methodology of Rhetorical cartography can help trace the ways in which these rhetorical strategies function, demonstrating the “grid of intelligibility” that occurs when civil society organizations interact within these complex institutional relations. I suggest how this Rhetorical cartographical method is the best fit for my dissertation as it provides scholars with the opportunity to read texts and understand them as detailing the composition of Rhetorical

connections, highlighting the positionality of the objects, scenes, and actors within these scenarios, and looking at that positionality and relationality over many times, spaces, and places. Here, I also discuss R/rhetoric as an object of analysis, showcasing how my reading of the archival materials looks at Rhetoric as a mode of coercive and enabling power at play within the constructs of US foreign policy. In this second chapter, I also provide a deeper dive into the phenomenon of Transnational Advocacy Networks (TANs) and the ways in which entities such as JBANC developed transnational working relationships while also embedding themselves in the foreign policy establishment of their host country.⁹⁶ This continual strengthening of ties within the diplomatic structure and advocacy work contributes to the vast institutional complexity at work in the creation of foreign policy. My dissertation looks at the ways in which one organization tried to steer US foreign policy regarding Baltic independence, showcasing how rhetorical action responded to the contingencies of foreign policy development during the Cold War. This opening chapter highlights how multilevel actors work within the intersection of civil society and the government in order to influence governmental decisions for the sake of their own interests and priorities.

In the chapters that follow, I then build on these concepts of civil society, transnational advocacy networks, and governmental and non-governmental interconnectedness to explore how JBANC advocated for US support of Baltic independence, taking a front-row seat in steering the discussions that supported the development of US-Baltic foreign policy during this era. Chapter three looks at JBANC's rhetorical strategies in pressuring the US government to reject the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and the OSI cases of Baltic deportation. It examines how the Baltic

⁹⁶ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*.

lobbying organization leveraged its suspicions of secrecy on the part of the US government and the US government's interaction with the USSR government to persuade the United States to adopt an even stronger position regarding its support of the Baltic region than laid out in the Welles Declaration. The chapter also looks at the ways in which JBANC's fanning of these suspicions preyed on the fears and worries of the Baltic-American and Baltic populations.

Chapter four examines the role of JBANC's networked and interconnected relationships with the three Baltic states and the US Congress throughout this period. In its commitment to the mediation and transnational interjoining of the various voices, agents, individuals, and groups, JBANC presented itself as a central organizer and the main cog in the wheel of Baltic-American foreign policy development. In doing so, it gave those inside and outside the US government its vision of Baltic-American collaboration and thus created a solid foundation upon which JBANC could build the rest of its advocacy efforts.

In chapter five, I present the ways in which JBANC promoted and invented Baltic-American holidays to elevate the public's recognition and strengthen the American commitment to a version of Baltic cultural heritage, all the while generating a broader commemoration of some of the most influential dates in Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian history. Looking at the role of public memory and public commemoration in JBANC's focus on these various dates, I provide readers with an understanding of how these various holidays represented a retelling of the story of Baltic history and offered up a concrete connection to why these dates were so significant for Balts living in the Baltics as well as the Western world. These dates also offered an extremely rich rhetorical opportunity for JBANC to spread its message, creating points of remembrance and continual interaction with the US government and American audience, ensuring that the Baltic realization of self-determination was never pushed to the wayside or

fully forgotten within the context of US foreign policy development during this time but instead remembered and elevated within the US cultural imaginary. By working with colleagues to generate public-facing movements and opportunities to commemorate International Black Ribbon Day, the original independence days of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and Baltic Freedom Day stateside, JBANC both supported the recognition of these dates within the Baltic states and strengthened the numerous and interwoven ties that existed between itself as an organization and other countries. These activities also boosted its own representational claims and ensured ethnic identities and politics were represented in and for Congress.

Chapter six finally analyzes JBANC's use of the principle of self-determination within its discourse and presents how that discourse changed over the course of the 1970s and 1980s. In an effort to unify state and non-state actors in the United States and Baltics around the issue of Baltic independence, JBANC invoked the concept of self-determination as a positive force and affirmed the need for the US government to enact concrete actions in support of the principle. This harnessing affected the ways in which the conflict was fleshed out and reflected upon in the years directly following these three states' re-attainment of their separation from the USSR. By utilizing this principle, JBANC capitalized on one of the greatest ideological principles of the time and, in the process, was able to glide more easily through the US governmental policy-making system, deemed an insider with invaluable credibility.

The concluding chapter of this dissertation then summarizes the study and discusses how my analyses of these situations offer new theoretical and methodological insights for studying the role of ethnic lobbying entities within public address scholarship and their contribution to the creation of foreign policy. By examining JBANC, rhetorical studies scholarship on the Cold War can expand in order to include less-often-seen non-state actors that worked with and without the

three branches of the US government in order to push explicit foreign policy agendas. JBANC easily fit its message into the rhetorical “logics” of the Cold War—working within the conservative strictures of US foreign policy in order to promote the Baltics, entrenching itself within the heart of the conflict, and ensuring its issues were conceived as part and parcel of the hegemonic ideologies and war-hawk attitudes that guided the US late-Cold War political agenda. Baltic Americans sought to prop up Cold War narratives as long as they supported the Baltic states and worried that a dissolution of the Cold War during *détente* put Baltic priorities on the back burner of US foreign policy. Yet in advocating for the Baltics and supporting preexisting Cold War frameworks, JBANC also introduced new actors into the mix and widened the US perspective regarding public imaginaries, conceptualizations, and histories of the Eastern Bloc, ensuring that the Cold War was perceived to be not just a conflict between United States and the USSR but rather a conflict that implicated other countries and geographic regions of the world, as well. Thus, this study highlights the ways in which state and non-state actors worked to perpetuate the Cold War and slowly built up late-Cold War foreign policy in order to support both US and Baltic interests. Through the dissertation’s offerings, scholars of rhetoric can better understand how normative ideologies, myths, and narratives of the Cold War became central to the continuation of the conflict and how transnational ties between East and West were strengthened in order to support such messaging. The typical narratives of American-Soviet polarization were broken apart through JBANC’s involvement in foreign policy creation, and new places, peoples, and situations were introduced as central to the war’s trajectory. Through a discussion of their study’s contributions, I wrap up the project by offering some insight into how ethnic foreign policy lobbyists continue to work within the East-West milieu of today and play into the buildup of a “new” Cold War, suggesting avenues for future research and ways that

rhetorical studies scholarship can continue to expand in order to reconceptualize US, USSR/Russia, and Eastern Europe historiography and analysis.

Chapter 2. The Transnational Advocacy Network of Baltic Independence

As the twentieth century came to a close, it brought about many changes to global and transnational politics. Actors of foreign policy, which were previously conceived solely in terms of states and governing officials, began to be reconceptualized in a manner that considered the impact of transnational civil society organizations. These organizations and the interconnected web of relations spun out from them reframed debates regarding international issues—they changed the terms, norms, sites of importance, and configuration of participants within the foreign policy sphere. In many cases, as non-state actors became further entrenched in the growing civil society environment within the United States, vast networks between individuals, groups, and (the) state(s) were formed. Further, these networks bled outside geographical and US-centric boundaries in order to forge more connections across the globe. The rise of these intergovernmental and transgovernmental relationships and connections, then, began to inform the ways in which technologies of governmentality were leveraged within issues regarding the policy of state-state issues. Yet what was the character and shape of these technologies? What tactics and strategies did the organizations and their interconnections use to thicken, deepen, and broaden transnational ties? And what impact did these transnational connections have on the creation of foreign policy during the late-Cold War period? Employing a Rhetorical cartographical methodology and using this reading strategy to analyze the following scenes found in this dissertation, I argue that JBANC's placement within the greater web of transnational advocacy networks provides scholars with a stronger understanding of how foreign policy is communicated across domestic and international borders, mobilized through the spread of information and narrative, and strengthened through the negotiation of political priorities.

Further, by using Rhetorical cartography, I look at how a variety of actors produced and implemented foreign policy rhetorics over different times and spaces. This approach offers a theoretical and methodological framework in which we can analyze the complex site of deliberation that existed within late-Cold War foreign policy and better assess how nongovernmental actors such as JBANC contributed to such decisions, seeking to recenter the Baltics within US-USSR Cold War discussions and make the fight for independence of these “captive nations” a transnational endeavor. It is in this richness—through this ability to trace and translate the map of interconnected workings between state and non-state actors—that scholars can better understand how actors of foreign policy relate to, connect with, and function alongside others invested in similar realms. Ultimately, this approach invites scholars to consider the ways in which this interconnected network led to the distinct formation of argumentative and persuasive means that bubbled up for the purpose of Baltic independence and were activated in and through speech during the decades of the late Cold War.

Through carefully situating its movements during the 1970s–1980s, this study looks at the ways in which the Joint Baltic American National Committee formed, maintained, and grew its interconnected domestic and international web of influence in order to sway US foreign policy in the last years of the Cold War. By forming coalitions across state boundaries, JBANC used its intimate understanding of the issue of Baltic independence to help those stateside in the United States become more acquainted with the narrative, histories, and stories of the three Baltic countries and the Baltic region as a whole. In doing so, the organization centered itself within a highly complex site of diverse actors, interests, and agendas within the US foreign policy sphere, straddling geographical and ideational boundaries and bringing these elements together to offer both short-term and long-term strategies for the ways in which the United States

could continue to support the Baltic fight for independence from the USSR. The transnational element of its work and relations—its bringing together of actors in the United States and all three Baltic states and their continual work with each other to further the ongoing process of building a more interconnected US-Baltic experience—offers an especially productive site for R/rhetorical analysis as it explains how JBANC formed coalitions across geographical lines and looks at the role that communication played in establishing these coalitions.

This chapter explains the reading strategy of Rhetorical cartography and the particular usefulness of this methodology for tracing the evolving and changing foreign policy landscape of the late Cold War. Through this explanation, a twofold description of how rhetoric is an object of analysis emerges in this dissertation. Through outlining R/rhetoric as both a produced strategy and the backbone of the apparatus that produces it, the scenes that will be explored in the following chapters can be seen as moments that emulate these two R/rhetorical registers at the same time. Hence, I outline the rhetorical activities and advocacy strategies of JBANC as a way to map out the power relations that constituted the institutional—governmental and non-governmental—networks and decision making that defined the late Cold War. JBANC's function as part of transnational policy advocacy networks—a concept that is fleshed out in the latter part of this chapter—helps to characterize this work, demonstrating its positionality within the ideological state apparatus.

By following the activities of JBANC during this era, I shed light on both the trajectory of Baltic independence and the building of lobbying and advocacy networks within the late-Cold War era while simultaneously illuminating the ways in which these connections stretched far beyond times, spaces, and places in order to collectivize the wide sprawl of people interested in this foreign policy issue. As a discipline, Rhetoric is uniquely qualified to interrogate how these

relational, historical, spatial, and temporal axes implicate each other. A *Rhetorical* use to transnational advocacy networks does not simply identify that these components are present in the analyses; it asks how these components interact with each other, play off one another, and inform each other. It interrogates the realities of these interconnected elements and relationships. This Rhetorical approach to foreign policy also thickens our contextual understanding of how more particular and isolated scenes within this broader landscape looked, analyzing smaller interrelated places, contexts, events, and texts within the broader scope of this project as a whole. In doing so, it encourages academics to consider the totality of various factors on specific texts and instances of rhetoric within the political landscape of this East-West conflict. Here my aim is to add to preexisting conversations surrounding what rhetoricians conceive the impact of transnational networks and non-state actors to be on the rendering and communicating of foreign policy.

A Late-Cold War Rhetorical Cartography: Mapping JBANC

Rhetoric connects the spheres of civil society and the state by working “spatially to make links between populations in different places through a shared emphasis on similar forms of conduct.”⁹⁷ It is imperative, therefore, that rhetorical scholars have a way to identify and evaluate such points of connection. Ronald Walter Greene’s Rhetorical cartographic method works to those ends on at least three levels. First, it draws the lines and nodes of connectivity demarcating the contours of a governing apparatus, thus allowing structural and affective relationships to be mapped and analyzed. Second, it highlights how “Rhetoric contributes to

⁹⁷ Ronald Walter Greene, *Malthusian Worlds: U.S. Leadership and the Governing of the Population Crisis* (New York: Routledge, 1999), 4.

the regulation of a governing apparatus by supporting and/or challenging the particular forms of articulation holding a governing apparatus together.” Greene notes that Rhetoric “functions as one of many technologies that make up a governing apparatus.” Therefore, its specific work can be isolated for critical study, especially when it comes to understanding how institutions, and not just people, get activated as agents of government. As part of this process, the method focuses on mapping how “discourse strategies, populations, and institutions exist independently of one another but are brought together for a particular purpose.” Finally, Rhetorical cartography is a grounded critical method for studying political change. As Greene explains, “a cartography of how the elements of a governing apparatus come together avoids positioning the historical forces of capitalism, white supremacy, and/or patriarchy as the deep structure(s) of a governing apparatus but instead maps how they are transformed, displaced, deployed, and/or challenged by a particular governing apparatus.”⁹⁸

In using and being a part of rhetorical technologies, actors “distribute discourse strategies, institutions, and populations onto the terrain of a governing apparatus.”⁹⁹ They are an “ensemble of practices, technologies, discourses, programs of actions, institutions, and procedures dedicated to improving” a population, and a governing apparatus serves as a complex site of deliberation and contestation, intervening in, circulating, and regulating a public problem.¹⁰⁰ Civil society organizations—and the actors involved with them—are part of a governing apparatus seeking to work above, below, and at the level of the state. In doing so, these organizations’ rhetorical practices produce a “grid of intelligibility” that creates a

⁹⁸ Greene, *Malthusian Worlds*, 7-8, 11.

⁹⁹ Greene, *Malthusian Worlds*, 8.

¹⁰⁰ Greene, *Malthusian Worlds*, 4-5.

conceptual framework for how governmental and non-governmental agents work together to develop, negotiate, and change political priorities. Similarly, tracing the rhetorical texts of these civil society entities can help scholars theorize how governing apparatuses engage society and understand how they relate to, connect with, and function together alongside arenas, agents, actors, and spheres in the process.

My project builds on these concepts by demonstrating how JBANC not only situated itself within this complex framework of institutional relations and served as part of the governing apparatus but also exemplified the types of transnational work being done across East and West boundaries in the late-Cold-War period and the degree to which transnational advocacy networks were leveraged. This can be seen through its relationships between Americans, Baltic Americans, and the Balts living behind the Iron Curtain. Furthermore, by examining the rhetorical strategies that JBANC employed and using a Rhetorical cartography methodology to map and analyze them, I can demonstrate how these rhetorical activities ultimately shaped the late-Cold War foreign policy agenda.

Mapping the articulations within an apparatus allows us to see how R/rhetoric is operative at multiple distinct “levels” of foreign policy development. On the one hand, (seen throughout this dissertation as “little-r” rhetoric), organizations like JBANC strategically leveraged already available political language in order to weigh into already established structures. On the other, (depicted as a “big-R” Rhetoric), these organizations and the relations between them became powerful agents who also constructed additional networks of affiliations and alliances. The profit of Rhetorical cartography is that it allows us to see how these two registers are related to one another as well as how both are animated by and result in different types of power.

Studying the activities of lobbying organizations such as JBANC through a Rhetorical cartographic method offers a powerful alternative to more traditional public address scholarship's approach to the study of foreign policy as produced, implemented, and communicated solely by the US president or other prominent governmental actors. A Rhetorical cartographic method takes into account the Rhetorical work of non-governmental actors, reveals a foreign policy apparatus that is full of transnational work and negotiation. This reconceptualization of the foreign policy process invites scholars to consider the role of other rhetorical agents in the development of Cold War-era political agendas, agents such as members of Congress, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and the Department of State as well as lobbyists, cultural institutions, interest groups, citizens, and non-citizens. These individuals and organizations can be seen as ever-connected interlocutors who work together as part of formal and informal intergovernmental infrastructures that ultimately create and implement foreign policy.

Weaving together rhetorical connections from the 1970s and 1980s and observing the ways in which JBANC leveraged its intergovernmental relationships and intersections with the US government, the Baltic-American diasporic community, and Baltic-based groups, my Rhetorical cartography reads JBANC as part of a greater interconnected civil society framework and an organization that interfaced with the US government in order to influence and direct foreign policy agendas and decisions in the late-Cold War era. This influence was meant to reprioritize the small Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and emphasize the placement of this geographic region in the middle of US-USSR tensions. In doing so, JBANC fought for the neoconservative continuation of the Cold War in order to achieve the Baltics' aims, perpetuating US Cold War hawk ideology. Rhetorical cartography—as Heather Hayes

says following Ronald Walter Greene—provides an understanding of the transnational circulation of this communication and gives readers the possibilities for rethinking traditional speaker/audience distinctions.¹⁰¹ By analyzing texts and using them to create points on a larger conceptual map, this method describes the multidimensional aspects, contexts, and consequences of speaking and writing.¹⁰² Just as methods of cartography have the unique ability to help translate issues of transnational circulation and assist scholars in reading maps and understanding them as a “form of discourse,” a Rhetorical cartographical method likewise provides scholars with the opportunity to read texts and understand them as detailing the composition of rhetorical situations, highlighting the positionality of the objects, scenes, and actors within these scenarios.¹⁰³ In this vein, Rhetorical cartography helps to track the encounters and intersections of people, places, and ideas, placing these points onto new conceptual maps of rhetoric that represent the relational and implicated aspects of texts’ and actors’ various levels of intersection, highlighting their “multiaccentuality,” or differing relational character.¹⁰⁴ Further, such mapping forces scholars of rhetoric to assess the “sub-national, transnational, continental, and intercontinental configurations of people, territory and practices” in order to demonstrate how the relationships between these actors and their rhetorical strategies interact with levels of governance, such as governmental institutions and

¹⁰¹ Heather Hayes, *Violent Subjects and Rhetorical Cartography in the Age of the Terror Wars* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016), 47.

¹⁰² Ronald Walter Greene, “Another Materialist Rhetoric,” *Critical Studies in Mass Communication* 15, (1998): 35.

¹⁰³ John Pickles, “Texts, Hermeneutics and Propaganda Maps,” in *Writing Worlds: Discourse, Text, and Metaphor in the Representation of Landscape*, eds. Trevor J. Barnes and James S. Duncan (London: Routledge, 1992), 194.

¹⁰⁴ V. N. Voloshinov, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986), 81.

authorities that, in turn, contribute to the messiness of the makeup of civil society.¹⁰⁵ In this way, Rhetorical cartography can trace how actors move seamlessly within these situations and boundaries of association and also examine what compels this movement and how these movements change across time, space, and place. Mapping these directions of Rhetoric is essential to better understanding the influence of JBANC in the late-Cold War era and its placement within American civil society and foreign policy decisions of the time.

The rhetorical maps of the Cold War offer a close parallel to the kind of discourse-oriented analysis offered by the method of Rhetorical cartography. Both outline the contractions and expansions of international relations in the last three decades of the twentieth century and offer a means to analyze the evolution of US foreign policy during this time. Within rhetorical studies, the method of Rhetorical cartography has been generated in order to draw such connections, creating maps of how the invention, circulation, and regulation of public problems are articulated and held together by a governing apparatus, as well as how this “governing apparatus exists within a specific historical conjecture.”¹⁰⁶ Ronald Walter Greene created this method, speaking to how it could perform a geographical project of mapping the multidimensional effects of rhetoric, highlighting how these conceptual maps that rhetoricians trace reveal the interconnectivity of the lines between rhetorical strategies, actors, and spaces. He, along with Kevin Douglas Kuswa, further developed the method in later works, explaining how the method was linked to rhetoric’s function and investigation of the “organization and

¹⁰⁵ Ronald Walter Greene and Kevin Kuswa, “From the Arab Spring to Athens, From Occupy Wall Street to Moscow’: Regional Accents and the Rhetorical Cartography of Power,” *Rhetorical Society Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2012): 273.

¹⁰⁶ Greene, *Malthusian Worlds*, 11.

historical dynamics of a governing apparatus.”¹⁰⁷ There are numerous ways in which this mapping of Rhetorical cartographies can explore technologies of governance and the way that governing apparatuses form and function;¹⁰⁸ however, using this method alongside the study of foreign policy texts and intertwining relationships of the late-Cold War period is especially salient due to the conflict’s political particularities.

Calling upon other scholarly work that has also employed a Rhetorical cartographical methodology will be critical to my project’s context, as these works have paved the way for the importance of cartography’s work in the field and the usefulness of this approach in analyzing transnational relationships. This varied research also demonstrates the differing ways in which scholars map moments of rhetoric, discourse, and conversation upon one another. Rhetoricians such as Greene, Kuswa, Barney, and Hayes all illuminate the nuances of this method and help readers to see how the variations of rhetorical situations overlap upon one another and exhibit movement and change.¹⁰⁹ These scholars have utilized cartographic approaches to study the “circulation, symbolicity, and production” of other texts and documents, creating a web of association, showing how certain actors connect to others, who has had the capacity to make these linkages, and how concepts are attached to one another.

For instance, Heather Hayes’s reading of violence in regard to the Middle East and the War on Terror does just this, mapping moments in the global terror wars in order to examine the governing apparatuses that emerged from these varied rhetorical interactions. In her book *Rhetorical Cartography: Mapping the Terror Wars*, she demonstrates how this method can

¹⁰⁷ Greene, “Another Materialist Rhetoric,” 21-22.

¹⁰⁸ Hayes, *Rhetorical Cartography*, 52.

¹⁰⁹ Greene and Kuswa, “From the Arab Spring to Athens.” Barney, “Diagnosing the Third World,” 5. Hayes, *Rhetorical Cartography*.

evaluate how governing apparatuses use rhetoric as one of many technologies of governance to demonstrate their power and violence. Similarly, in their reading of the Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street movements, Greene and Kuswa consider how Rhetoric and the relationships that surround it do not just occupy one place and time but instead “travel[] beyond its own location, pulling and pushing different places, people, and practices into ‘maps of power,’” re-drawing a conceptual cartography of how actors and their actions and technologies relate to one another.¹¹⁰ Rhetorical cartography can allow for an examination of these technologies, as it assists rhetoricians in “understanding the integration of power/knowledge in society—what possibilities for change” can occur and “what intervention strategies might be considered appropriate to effect social change.”¹¹¹ The Rhetorical analysis of legal and governmental documents, instances of public address, cultural artifacts, and archival records can do just that as collectively they can depict which “technologies of deliberation are mobilized for social change,” demonstrating why it is important for cartographical methods and mapping processes to trace the interlocking features of the political and social realm.¹¹² Thus, the method of Rhetorical cartography is critical to the examination of technologies of governance within the foreign policy agendas of the late-Cold War era. A Rhetorical cartographical methodology not only traces the social and political overlaps within the ever-increasing integration of non-governmental actors of this time but also details the discursive tensions, boundaries, and lines at work behind US foreign policy decisions in the years leading up to the end of the Cold War.

¹¹⁰ Lawrence Grossberg, *Bringing it All Back Home: Essays in Cultural Studies* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 22. Greene and Kuswa, “From the Arab Spring to Athens.”

¹¹¹ Raymie E. McKerrow, “Critical Rhetoric: Theory and Praxis,” *Communication Monographs* 56 (June 1989): 91.

¹¹² Hayes, *Rhetorical Cartography*, 55.

By looking at the wide-ranging contexts and consequences of rhetorical texts, these scholars all demonstrate how connected the lines can be between actions and events on the ‘Rhetorical map’ and the usefulness of Rhetorical cartography in tracing these points of movement and intersection. In utilizing this method, I will be able to answer my discipline’s call to further integrate this approach within the field of communication and rhetorical studies and to stretch existing theories on how governing apparatuses emerge as modes of distributing power. Within this dissertation, I hope that my execution of the method to elucidate the role of the Joint Baltic American National Committee and its lobbying of the US government to continue to strengthen the country’s relationships with the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and advocate for greater US support of Baltic independence.

Rhetoric as an Object of Analysis

A Rhetorical cartographical methodological approach is employed in this dissertation to account for the role of JBANC in relation to the formation of US foreign policy toward the Baltics from the early 1970s through the late 1980s. However, my analysis is not limited to mapping this organization’s communicative activities and relationships. I also highlight the different ways in which rhetoric itself appears and plays a role in constituting this governing apparatus. To begin with, throughout the following chapters and examples of JBANC’s advocacy for Baltic independence, there are multiple instances of a disparaging narrative of rhetoric that depicts rhetorical strategies as a force that perpetuated the secrecy and uncertainty of the Cold War. JBANC and the United States at large forcefully articulate this understanding of rhetoric in their characterization of the Soviet Union’s relationship with the Baltic states and the USSR’s denial of the existence of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. It

sees rhetoric as a “cause” of the conflict, something applied that created material consequences. In this way the description of rhetoric in the archival materials I call upon for my examples and evidence is often “mere rhetoric,” pejorative strategic and deceptive moves that paint a picture of rhetoric as narrative invention meant to further the USSR’s side of the conflict.¹¹³ This projection of rhetoric is perpetuated throughout the textual records I have consulted for this project and understandably demonstrates the position of JBANC and other members of the intergovernmental structure throughout the late-Cold-War era.

The actors’ own theories of rhetoric need not distract us from the way their rhetoric worked in practice to constitute various power relations. Thus, instead of seeing rhetoric as a “cause” of the conflict, my reading of the archival materials looks at Rhetoric as an action or activity that organizes the political context. Rhetoric can be a symptom of something prebuilt, a glimpse into the larger structures at play within the creation and curation of US foreign policy, especially within such an instrumental time. It is a clue to the nature of the political process and what possibilities were possible in the 1970s and 1980s. Thus, this dissertation examines how US support of Baltic independence can be traced as a foreign policy position that evolved and solidified over the course of the last two decades of the Cold War. I highlight the thick and thin spots of the Rhetorical maps that supported or resisted Baltic independence within the United States’ foreign policy structure. I also trace how methods of advocacy continually inform, rewrite, and influence one another.

¹¹³ Such designations reflect common perceptions regarding rhetoric communicated in Plato’s *Gorgias*, indicating that rhetoric is a kind of persuasion that moves people according to the mere appearance of things. Plato, *Gorgias* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019).

Across this dissertation R/rhetoric operates at two levels and registers, demonstrating a dualistic analysis. There is both a look at rhetoric as the persuasive discourse mobilized by JBANC's cohort of organizations and actors (little-r rhetoric), and a broader look at the networks that such Rhetorical actions mobilized at opportune moments (big-R Rhetoric). Each of the following chapters implicitly toggles between these two registers, namely, the rhetoric that is the persuasive messaging employed by those in relationship with JBANC as well as the Rhetoric that served as a resource for that persuasive messaging. Instances of persuasion and strategically deployed discourse are seen in the symbolic politics, marketing, and speeches (to name just a few examples) in JBANC's late-Cold War work. In that sense, to return to Greene's Rhetorical cartographic project, my method aims to map the overall contours, character, and communicative networks of the US foreign policy apparatus during that period.

As systems are made of many parts and many interactions, they are held together both spatially and temporally. This aspect of space and time becomes significant for this dissertation as it holds the two registers of big-R and little-r R/rhetoric together. Very much invested in the rhetorical concept of *kairos*, or the examination of how rhetors take advantage of opportune moments to use particular strategies in their communication on certain issues, this study sees opportune timing as important for both the implementation of strategic rhetoric and the creation of Cold War Rhetorical conditions.¹¹⁴ It is a two-part process where a "person does

¹¹⁴ "*Kairos* is an ancient Greek word that means 'the right moment' or 'the opportune time.' The two meanings of the word apparently come from two different sources. In archery, it refers to an opening or 'opportunity' or, more precisely, a long tunnel-like aperture through which the archer's arrow has to pass. Successful passage of a *kairos* requires, therefore, that the archer's arrow be fired not only accurately but with enough power for penetration. The second meaning of *kairos* traces to the art of weaving. There it is the 'critical time' when the weaver must draw the yarn through a gap that momentarily opens in the warp of the cloth being woven. Putting the two meanings together, one must understand *kairos* to refer to a passing instant when an opening appears which must be driven through with force if success is to be achieved." Eric Charles White, *Kaironomia: On the Will to Invent* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987), 13.

not merely adapt their arguments to audiences” but where “environment(s) must also co-adapt,” becoming participatory in the generation of rhetorical possibility.¹¹⁵ Thus, *kairos* binds these two notions of R/rhetoric together, serving as a double helix in which one can view JBANC and its role within the US Cold War foreign policy environment. By reading the following scenes and examples of JBANC’s lobbying through this strategy, R/rhetoric can be seen as something that happens at opportune moments and something that opportune moments create, highlighting both the strategy of JBANC’s “politics” and the greater effects these “politics” had on the landscape of Cold War perceptions and worldviews, the American imagination, and ingrained ideologies. In JBANC’s case, its interplay with R/rhetoric generated material consequences but also contributed to Cold War stasis as it used its lobbying position to seek a continuation of the conflict as long as the Baltic states were still occupied by the Soviet Union.

This distinction and relationship between R/rhetoric is important to consider because while the archival materials I studied explicitly discuss the term, the main usage of “rhetoric” by JBANC and those involved in the foreign policy contexts of the late-Cold War era describe the concept as important purely because it created the strategy and competition between the dichotomous sides of the conflict. Yet this dissertation also looks at how the rhetorical actions of JBANC and other actors connected to each other to constitute the field of foreign policy work.¹¹⁶ By figuring out how discursive formations come to be, especially by thinking, as

¹¹⁵ Diane Marie Keeling and Marguerite Nguyen Lehman, “Posthumanism,” *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication*, April 2018, DOI: 10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.627.

¹¹⁶ This study is possible and worth engaging in part because of the vast archival records available within the JBANC materials located in the University of Minnesota’s Immigration History Research Center Archives (IHRCA) as well as the Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archive (OSA) and its Records of Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty Research Institute, which provide scholars with a unique perspective into the interests, angles, and workings

Greene encourages,¹¹⁷ about their articulations and conjunctures, it is possible to trace, explain, and critically evaluate how foreign policy decisions changed during the late-Cold War period and how rhetoric played a significant role in those changes. More specifically, I am interested in JBANC as a way to account for the role of transnationally connected diasporic lobbying and advocacy groups like JBANC during this period and showcase the significance of their Cold War involvement and public address actions of lobbying for the field of rhetorical studies. How did JBANC's rhetorical strategies help forge its position within transnational advocacy networks, its relationships with the Baltic and Eastern European diasporic communities, and its presence within the intergovernmental and transnational political structures? And, ultimately, was this organization as influential as it wished to be in shifting the foreign policy decisions of the United States of this time? A Rhetorical cartographical method and investigation can help answer these questions by assessing the organization's activity vis-à-vis the activities of adjacent and competing actors. Ultimately, I seek a better understanding of the Rhetorical mechanisms forming the centers of power that moved the United States' late-Cold War foreign policy toward the Baltics in order to build upon the traditional bipolar frames of the conflict,

of such an organization. However, it is important to note that this type of study could also be conducted on other important strains of Cold War advocacy networks as well as advocacy networks that are not US-centric. For example, a similar study could include scholars looking at the increase of civil society influence within the USSR during the last few decades of its existence or the role of other non-state actors on the trajectory of the conflict in other sites around the world. Yet the accessibility of studies might be hindered by locational, language, and archival constraints—the feasibility of my own project has been made possible in part due to the location of the IHRCA, my Latvian- and Russian-language abilities, and knowledge about JBANC outside this dissertation. Thus, this dissertation can serve as just one glimpse into the realities of the influence of these sorts of organizations during the late-Cold War period and help illuminate scholars' understanding of how these groups, peoples, interests, and advocacies influenced the trajectory of East-West relations and helped to precipitate the end of a global conflict that spanned nearly half a century.

¹¹⁷ Greene, *Malthusian Worlds*, 11.

making the war into a more multilateral and multipolar crisis that emphasized the importance of other states within the Cold War, as well.

The Networked Character of Foreign Policy Development

In order to conceptualize the ways that civil society, or the network of non-governmental associations and their internal and external bonds, interacted with the United States' government system and its transgovernmental institutions during the Cold War, it is first important to understand the evolution of the concept in the United States over the course of the twentieth century.¹¹⁸ This examination is important for this dissertation project as it provides us with a starting point to better understand our object of study—JBANC—and helps to frame the ways in which this institution fits into the greater landscape of what was happening with civil society and non-governmental organizations at the time. By the mid-1900s, civil society organizations had significantly grown in size and stature within the US governmental system, primarily shaped by citizens' desire for increased resources and systems that could combat societal issues. With this change also came the increase of representational politics and thus the promotion of community niches within the broader political structure, furthering the specific agendas and interests of constituents. Unlike the formalized civil society associations of old, these “vast” and “unstructured” entities did not just represent the work of one group but instead demonstrated how shifts in public opinion could occur through more

¹¹⁸ Definition inspired by Gerard A. Hauser, *Vernacular Voices: The Rhetoric of Publics and Public Spheres* (Columbia, SC: University of South Carolina Press, 1999), as cited in Gerard A. Hauser and Chantal Benoit-Barne, “Reflections on Rhetoric, Deliberative Democracy, Civil Society, and Trust,” *Rhetoric & Public Affairs* 5, no. 2 (2002): 267.

expansive projects.¹¹⁹ In turn, the influence of these movements across wide swaths of society solidified a new liberal turn and the role of grassroots protest, activist networks, and professional protest efforts in lobbying the government, working for change, and educating and influencing the public to adopt certain positions of thought and action. Just as the great wars of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries brought significant change to the fabric of civil society, the longest war of the twentieth century once again spurred an evolution within this arena.

With the ebb and flow of the Cold War, the influence of civil society organizations also shifted. The increase of social movements' influence on the trajectory of all politics was palpable, and citizens became more open to seeing their national and transnational neighbors as "brothers" or "sisters" who could share in moral undertakings. Americans became interested in swaying governmental action by working through dense transnational networks that not only gave them presence in the various levels of the political work that was occurring within their communities but also intertwined US public and foreign affairs with the causes, interests, and pleas of constituents.¹²⁰ In this way, modern civil society associations were even more influenced by the interests of common people and seen as sites that "blur[red] the boundaries between private and public activity," serving as intermediaries between the official business of government and the personal affairs of the individual.¹²¹ In turn, the US government took an increased interest in investing itself as part of niche constituent concerns and broad societal

¹¹⁹ Theda Skocpol, *Diminished Democracy: From Membership to Management in American Civic Life* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma, Press, 2013): 136-138.

¹²⁰ Theda Skocpol, "Civil Society in the United States," in *The Oxford Handbook of Civil Society*, ed. by Michael Edwards, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011).

¹²¹ Richard Dagger, *Civic Virtues: Rights, Citizenship, and Republican Liberalism*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 198-199.

issues, showcasing an eventual high level of interdependency between state and non-state actors, with each of them becoming completely entwined with the other entity.

Due to this level of interconnection, political actors started to interact within and between several networked arenas at the same time. Because the intertwining of civil society, social movements, the state, and other public arenas represented “multiple, overlapping and interpenetrated public spheres,”¹²² the coming together of these entities “form[ed] the webs and establish[ed] the legitimacy of network governance.”¹²³ Thus, the shifting and nebulous boundaries of these areas have proved to be fruitful spaces for research regarding the ways in which actors transition between these multiple situations, enacting their work in all of these arenas at the same time. One of the reasons they can do this is that since political action simply does not exist in isolation, decisions surrounding public and foreign policy result from both state and non-state intervention. In the new liberal turn, power can be exercised from within non-state networks and be created as a direct reaction to the state. Such reactions may include non-state actors working to change political discourse, raise awareness of the legitimation of their collective action, and initiate protests, just to name a few activities.¹²⁴ Thus, the relationship between state and non-state entities is not necessarily a predictable or traditional interaction but rather filled with multiple points and moments of messy conduct that have the ability to shift the direction of governmental work and action. This perspective on the

¹²² Sandra Braman, “Interpenetrated Globalization: Scaling, Power and the Public Sphere,” in *Globalization, Communication and Transnational Civil Society*, eds. Sandra Braman and Annabelle Sreberny-Mohammadi (Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press, 1996), 34.

¹²³ Zornitsa Keremidchieva, “Administrative Arguments and Network Governance: The Case of Women’s Health,” in *Networking Argument*, ed. Carol Winkler (London: Routledge, 2020), 257.

¹²⁴ J. S. Dryzek, “Political Inclusion and the Dynamics of Democratization,” *American Political Science Review* 90, no. 1 (1996): 483.

flexibility of governmental strategies demonstrates that political power has an element of movement and is often exercised within modern liberal democracies as the “shifting of alliances between diverse authorities” during moments of policy change.¹²⁵

Similarly, networks of non-state actors began to form transnationally, as well, constituting more distinct “demand[s] for a radical extension of democracy across national and social boundaries.”¹²⁶ As associations began to more formally adopt systems of shared values, cultures of commitment were established across many peoples, times, and places, transgressing the state in order to more easily bridge boundaries and governance distinctions. This allowed civil society organizations to operate beyond the confines of national societies, politics, and economies. Of course, globalization also had a profound impact on this, making issues and events of far-away peoples relevant in a way that was never before possible, “leading to the diffusion of forms of organization and strategies.”¹²⁷ Increases in transnational networking opportunities also contributed, with non-state organizations more easily able to transfer information between themselves and collect and distribute resources to which they may not have otherwise had access.¹²⁸ Over all, the transnational reach of non-state actors significantly expanded over the course of the twentieth century, providing yet another opportunity for intergovernmental actors to play in a “multi-level game.”¹²⁹

¹²⁵ Nikolas Rose and Peter Miller, “Political Power Beyond the State: Problematics of Government,” *British Journal of Sociology* 43, no. 2 (1992): 272.

¹²⁶ M. Kaldor, “Transnational Civil Society,” in *Human Rights in Global Politics*, eds. T. Dunne and N.J. Wheeler (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), 195.

¹²⁷ Anders Uhlin, *Post-Soviet Civil Society: Democratization in Russia and the Baltic States* (London, Routledge, 2006), 29.

¹²⁸ Michael Schudson, *The Rise of the Right to Know: Politics and the Culture of Transparency, 1945–1975* (Cambridge, University of Harvard Press, 2015), 243.

¹²⁹ D. della Porta, and H. Kriesi, “Social Movements in a Globalizing World: An Introduction,” in *Social Movements in a Globalizing World*, eds. D. della Porta and H. Kriesi (London: Macmillan, 1999), 6.

The involvement of diasporic communities and their employment of ethnic lobbying groups in US politics during the mid-twentieth century demonstrated these shifts, calling upon their transnational ties in order to leverage their non-state actor position. While ethnic groups' influence on US foreign policy has been a feature of the political landscape ever since the country's inception, by the mid-1900s a new "Stage II" of intervention occurred.¹³⁰ This is when various strains of diasporic groups of European Americans that were once divided came together to promote US internationalism during the heart of the Cold War, "providing a firm domestic underpinning to US steadfastness in fighting Soviet communism."¹³¹ Even as many ethnic interest groups joined together around anticommunist values, however, their increased involvement in US political advocacy meant that tensions between their specific priorities increased, as well. After all, through diasporic influence, state and non-state actors in ethnic homelands would call upon distant "ethnic population[s] as a source of influence" in foreign policy development, bringing about "various and multifaceted outcomes."¹³² For example, during the Cold War Greek Americans lobbied the US government to place arms embargoes on Turkey, Cuban Americans helped ensure the United States remained anti-Castro, Italian Americans spent much of their bandwidth urging relatives in Italy to vote for the US-preferred party of the Christian Democrats, Polish Americans became more and more vocal about the

¹³⁰ In Tony Smith's pivotal *Foreign Attachments*, he articulates that a history of ethnic groups' influence on US foreign policy can be divided into three periods: Stage 1 from the 1910s through the 1930s, Stage 2 during the Cold War, and Stage 3 after the Cold-War.

¹³¹ Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 54.

¹³² Charles King and Neil J. Melvin, "Diaspora Politics," 114, 118.

Poles' waning religious freedoms, and Jewish Americans viewed US-supported stability in the Middle East as a means to achieve security for Israel.¹³³

As for Americans of Eastern European ancestry (the category under which JBANC falls), the Cold War elevated concerns of independence and Russification of culture, providing the grounds on which Eastern European ethnic and national identities could be fused together.¹³⁴ With this fusion came increased solidarity not only across specific Eastern European-American diasporic niches but also between the groups as a whole, forming a unique connection among Eastern Europeans in the United States. Even so, the general anticommunist demeanor of these entities often misaligned with US politicians, who saw such zealous advocacy as “imped[ing] better relations with Moscow,” especially during Henry Kissinger’s effort to establish détente with the USSR.¹³⁵ Nevertheless, despite this rub between the interests of Eastern European Americans and the US government, the rise of ethnic identity groups possessing “greater access, more legitimacy, and a heightened ability to influence the foreign policy process in the United States” could not be suppressed, demonstrating their important role in steering the direction of the conflict.¹³⁶ Through agenda setting, framing (shaping perspectives of issues and influencing the terms of the debate), information and policy analysis (acting as information providers), and policy oversight (monitoring government policies pertaining to their agenda and reacting to those policies), diasporic organizations were

¹³³ Paul Watanabe, *Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy: The Politics of the Turkish Arms Embargo* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1984). Thomas Ambrosio, “Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy,” in *Ethnic Identity Groups and U.S. Foreign Policy*, ed. Thomas Ambrosio (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2002), 7. Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 55, 57.

¹³⁴ Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 57.

¹³⁵ Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 57.

¹³⁶ Ambrosio, “Ethnic Identity Groups,” 10.

able to use their multifaceted connections to impact even the earliest stages of US Cold War foreign policy decision-making.¹³⁷ Thus, a study of JBANC places it in the middle of this pre-existing environment, showcasing how it (like others) relied heavily on its deep networks and transnational bonds to contribute to foreign policy conversations.

Besides the ways that US diasporic organizations emulated these characteristics of changed civil society entities, though, the evolution of twentieth-century international relations and foreign policy were also greatly affected by global governance strategies that became more and more prevalent due to the shifts of the 1970s. The networks that grew between local and international actors meant that civil society organizations, such as diasporic communities, could make the case for broadening the global affairs field to include non-state actors such as themselves.¹³⁸ As discussed, this increased interconnection not only elevated international collaboration, creating cooperative interdependency across networks of governmental and non-governmental actors, but also broadened the scope of activities that could have an effect on foreign policy decisions in the first place. It fundamentally changed the patterns of interaction that occurred across state boundaries.¹³⁹ For example, instead of prioritizing the discussions, conversations, and formal negotiations that happened behind closed doors and between diplomats in enacting foreign policy, international relations was created through more flexible means and global partnerships, prioritizing group interests over those of the individual. This created an environment in which it was said as early as 1976 that “ethnic composition” within

¹³⁷ Ambrosio, “Ethnic Identity Groups,” 2.

¹³⁸ Jinseop Jang, Jason McSparren, and Yuliya Rashchupkina, “Global Governance: Present and Future,” *Palgrave Communications* (2016): 1–2.

¹³⁹ Jang, McSparren, and Rashchupkina, “Global Governance,” 2.

the United States was “the single most important determinant of American foreign policy.”¹⁴⁰

Thus, multi-actor configurations within ethnic groups significantly broadened the scope of both 1) the types of policy that foreign affairs could prioritize and 2) the ways that the policy was advanced. This strengthening of ties within the diplomatic structure highlighted the vast institutional complexity at work in the creation of foreign policy agendas and the ways that multilevel actors leveraged their relationships internal and external to governmental institutions to significantly steer the mid- to late-twentieth-century US political system in favor of their own interests and priorities.

Scholars such as Michel Foucault have noted some of these ways in which civil society has changed and gained a stronger influence and importance within liberalism’s framework, affecting the modalities of governance and ways foreign policy was enacted. Foucault himself wrote extensively about this in his lectures, encouraging scholars to gain a better understanding of the interconnected webs of civil society in today’s world so that a richer conceptualization of the work of governing and the state could be generated. As Foucault stated, civil society is “something which forms part of modern governmental technology” and ought to be given considerable thought within the broader theories on the reach of governmentality.¹⁴¹ In *The Birth of Biopolitics* lecture series, Foucault further asserted that the liberal art of government is dependent on the rationality of the governed and that this liberal rationality is characterized by concerns of “how to model government, the art of government” and the ways in which civil

¹⁴⁰ Nathan Glazer and Daniel Patrick Moynihan, eds., “Introduction,” in *Ethnicity: Theory and Practice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1975), 23.

¹⁴¹ Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979*, translated by Graham Burchell, (London: Palgrave, 2008), 297.

society might meet these concerns.¹⁴² By placing civil society and the state together in tandem, Foucault drew the attention of many to think about these intergovernmental relationships as not just important for the analysis of large-scale issues of political power but also critical to smaller-scale studies on how civil society works to regulate the state and can utilize its own unique, local, and accessible technologies of governmentality in order to do so.

Transnational Policy Advocacy

The late-Cold War period provides ample evidence, examples, and strategies that scholars can use to study the effects of this transition from civil society to social movements and the role of non-state actors on the creation of foreign policy. However, a more specific understanding of what the nature of these relationships between the state and non-state spheres looks like can be offered by harnessing the phenomenon of Transnational Advocacy Networks—communicative structures made up of “actors working internationally on an issue who are bound together by shared values, a common discourse, and a dense exchange of information and service.”¹⁴³ Exploring this phenomenon can be particularly useful for this rhetorical organizational study, as it helps to conceptualize how ties between non-state actors and intergovernmental and transgovernmental networks are created and cemented, a worthy endeavor since these contributors had especially high levels of involvement and prevalence within this era of changing international politics and the reconfiguring of the foreign policy landscape. The object of this study, JBANC, is just a piece of a larger transnational advocacy

¹⁴² Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics*, 312; Mitchell Dean and Kaspar Villadsen, *State Phobia and Civil Society: The Political Legacy of Michel Foucault*, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2016).

¹⁴³ Margaret Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” *International Social Science* 5, no. 159 (1999): 89.

network puzzle, illuminating one of the cogs in the wheel of foreign policy of the late-Cold War era, providing us snapshots of places in time where various layers of relationships, values, and goals sit on top of each other, complicating how the organization attempted to further the development of US support for Baltic independence during the last two decades of the Cold War. By looking at one key rhetorical actor in the network, we can see how this ethnic lobbying group managed various aspects of transnational relations within the Cold War and helped facilitate the growth of the Baltic independence movement abroad.

Since the publication of Keck and Sikkink's seminal work on Transnational Advocacy Networks, *Activists Beyond Borders*, the understanding and application of the mobilization, strategies, tactics, and impacts of these networks has been significantly enriched.¹⁴⁴ Even so, the continued analysis of these networks in conjunction with the end of the Cold War is still a relevant project due to many non-state actors' and organizations' increasing success in lobbying within the global political sphere during this notable period of history. Not only did these entities balance East-West power, but they also rallied for and garnered the support of foreign governments and/or international institutions.¹⁴⁵ In many ways, Transnational Advocacy Networks serve as an intermediate structure between domestic civil society and international politics, areas of public discourse that stretch beyond the bounds of nations and states.¹⁴⁶ They direct their messages towards specific audiences in order to get members of governing entities to pass particular laws for particular purposes. This is why applying the

¹⁴⁴ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*.

¹⁴⁵ Christopher L. Pallas and Elizabeth Bloodgood, "From Transnational to Transcalar: Re-envisioning Advocacy in a Changing World," *E-International Relations* (2022): 1.

¹⁴⁶ David J. Norman, "Building Democratic Public Spheres? Transnational Advocacy Networks and the Social Forum Process," *Global Networks* 17, no. 2 (2017): 300.

moniker of Transnational Advocacy Networks to organizations working during the late-Cold War era can especially help shed light on and describe the links established between actors in civil societies, states, NGOs, and international organizations at this critical point, explaining how the local and international became enmeshed. Further, the relations that were strengthened between all these moving parts were ultimately a key factor in the newfound dialogue and communicative exchange that occurred regarding transnational issues within the late-twentieth-century environment.

Together the actors within these networks forged new connections and inserted themselves within the construction of Cold War foreign policy. They continually arranged and rearranged the interconnections between the institutions of this policy area, enmeshing state and non-state actors who operated in conjunction with but also in opposition to one another.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, while transnational advocacy networks greatly helped NGOs and other organizations embedded within this framework gain a higher level of visibility and the ability to influence the international policy process,¹⁴⁸ they also obscured the foreign policy playing field. These networks' depth and complexity grew over time, emphasizing the need to more closely analyze their workings, successes, and failures. Thus, these networks are important to our deeper understanding of the functions of nongovernmental, intergovernmental, and transgovernmental structures, as the non-traditional actors with global ties that worked within these networks were also the ones that especially mobilized information in strategic ways. Thus, this unique approach within preexisting political systems helped create new issues and

¹⁴⁷ Sean Aday and Steven Livingston, "Taking the State out of State-Media Relations Theory: How Transnational Advocacy Networks are Changing the Press-State Dynamic," *Media, War, and Conflict* 1, no. 1 (2008): 101.

¹⁴⁸ Alan Hudson, "NGOs' Transnational Advocacy Networks: From 'Legitimacy' to 'Political Responsibility'?" *Global Networks* 1, no. 4 (2001): 333.

categories of interests that were used to “persuade, pressurize, and gain leverage over much more powerful organizations and governments.”¹⁴⁹ For this reason, these networks dramatically ballooned in the “speed, density, and complexity” of their international linkages over the same time period as that which my own study analyzes, giving us important insight into what the landscape of foreign policy looked like in the 1970s–1990s.¹⁵⁰

Yet despite these entities’ proliferation at the end of the twentieth century and their increased visibility and influence on events of significant international political consequence, scholars have been slow to recognize the significance of these networks and their important role in the changes that occurred within world politics during the time.¹⁵¹ This may be attributed to these structures’ messiness and seeming disorganized chaos. It is hard to categorize these structures within the usual definitions, and further, their tendrils often reach beyond the simple promotion of policy change, instead working all the while to influence other institutional and principled decisions and ways of thinking within the normative box of world politics.¹⁵² It is for this reason that the network concept is so useful to such a study, as it “stresse[s] the fluid and open relations among committed and knowledgeable actors working in specialized issue areas.” In opposition to hierarchies and/or markets, networks are “based upon trust, cooperation, loyalty and reciprocity between the constituent parts” and are “characterized by voluntary, reciprocal and horizontal patterns of communication and change.”¹⁵³ This characteristic of advocacy and employment of the concept within Transnational Advocacy

¹⁴⁹ Keck and Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” 90.

¹⁵⁰ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 18.

¹⁵¹ Keck and Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” 89.

¹⁵² Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 11.

¹⁵³ Hudson, “NOGS’ Transnational Advocacy Networks,” 334; Keck and Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” 91.

Networks also speaks to the promotional component of these entities—an interest in how exactly their defense of certain causes and propositions ultimately speaks for entire swaths of people, allowing them to be the stand-in for persons or ideas on the world stage.¹⁵⁴ Through their inside connections and ability to coalesce peoples, these networks bring together a wide variety of interested parties, constantly reconfiguring the landscape of how relations move and function between them.

Finally, the transnational angle of Transnational Advocacy Networks is important, as well, as it references the multiplicity of channels that exist among these parts. In tackling this part of the equation, theories of Transnational Advocacy Networks make a point to look at how the overlap of societies and the blurring of domestic and international lines occur between different spheres of politics.¹⁵⁵ They demarcate an ongoing process that varies due to the constant transformation of “actors, issues, institutional frameworks, shared histories, and discourses.”¹⁵⁶ In looking at how issues spread around the globe, the strategies used to frame certain information and beliefs across different societies, and the organization of individuals and groups around these issues, a more holistic lens can be applied to studying the interactive dimensions present within the international issues. The applications of both the network and advocacy concepts within the transnationally realm, then, can help bridge the divides between studies comparing international to national actors and global to domestic issues and instead make scholars more cognizant of how the development and sharing of advocacy strategies occurs within environments surrounding large-scale issues. Further, when talking about these

¹⁵⁴ Keck and Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” 91.

¹⁵⁵ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 38.

¹⁵⁶ Julie Gilson, “Transnational Advocacy: New Spaces, New Voices,” *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 36, no. 4 (2011): 301.

structures, transnational advocacy networks cannot be reduced to their components but instead ought to be analyzed by looking at them as a whole. Scholars must have an awareness of the moving parts and be able to take a macro view of what is going on throughout a process that often spans many years, peoples, and locations. This reduction avoidance must be done carefully, however, as the activists who work on behalf of the networks and make these networks work and function should not be completely lost or tossed by the wayside, either.¹⁵⁷ A study of JBANC can serve as a ripe site for the further examination of these networks as it keeps all of these dualities in mind: it takes a bird's-eye view of the issue of Baltic independence within the landscape of US foreign policy but also considers the smaller actors and connections present within the broader webs of communicative exchange.

Scholars have noted that Transnational Advocacy Networks use many different methods and tactics to influence discourse, procedures, and policy. However, some similarities have been noted, as well; for example, Transnational Advocacy Networks are often concerned with value-laden issues.¹⁵⁸ For one, these networks often enact their advocacy by framing issues of interest to make them more comprehensible to target audiences and so that those issues will also receive attention, making them more likely to be taken up by institutional venues.¹⁵⁹ Consequently, Transnational Advocacy Networks interpret issues in simple terms, using dualist frames of right and wrong in order to stimulate people to take concrete action.¹⁶⁰ Generating and organizing their highly specific and unique information, presenting it in a way

¹⁵⁷ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 13.

¹⁵⁸ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 16.

¹⁵⁹ Keck and Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics," 90.

¹⁶⁰ Margaret E. Keck and Kathryn Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society," in *The Social Movement Society: Contentious Politics for a New Century*, eds. David S. Meyer and Sidney G. Tarrow (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 1998): 225.

that serves as the foundation for their campaigns and a “valuable currency” that can be deployed to others, is central to their function and explicitly articulates a rhetorical message that supports their end goals.¹⁶¹ To do this they have to make information highly interesting—unique enough to stand out in the communicative chaos of specialized interests. This often complicates the expectation of how issues will be discussed and provides a disruption within the broader socio-political environment. Additionally, in “marketing” this information for broad and mass audiences, Transnational Advocacy Networks that work within democratic environments still have to keep the interests of specific policymakers in mind. They need to look for favorable arenas in which to fight their battles, paying attention to specific political opportunities that will best fit their agenda, all the while seeking to broaden their networks’ scope and density to maximize access.¹⁶² They have to ensure that the communicative power they leverage is subject to criticism by those who are internal to the debate and who stand to be affected by the decision-making process.¹⁶³ Both effective policy implementation and an assessment of their own democratic inclinations must occur.

Alongside this, Transnational Advocacy Networks also serve as regulators of norms and discourse within policy debate, bringing new ideas to the table and serving as a source of information and testimony.¹⁶⁴ For one, in order to help principled ideas become accepted by a broad range of actors, Transnational Advocacy Networks have to work to transform the ideas

¹⁶¹ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 17. For an example of such framing see Emily Cury, “Muslim American Policy Advocacy and the Palestinian Israeli Conflict: Claims-making and the Pursuit of Group Rights,” *Politics and Religion* 10, no. 2 (2017): 417–439.

¹⁶² Keck and Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society,” 217.

¹⁶³ Norman, “Building Democratic Public Spheres?” 303.

¹⁶⁴ Keck and Sikkink, “Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics,” 90.

held by individuals into collective beliefs and norms.¹⁶⁵ Testimony and stories by people whose lives have been affected by the issue do just this, making a problem real and also flexing the credibility and reach of the network by employing first-hand experiences.¹⁶⁶ Through this, the information that Transnational Advocacy Networks leverage can lead to the establishment of new legal frameworks, positing ways in which states should behave and “translating” their communicative power into the creation of binding laws.¹⁶⁷ Further, to influence discourse, procedures, and policy, Transnational Advocacy Networks may engage with and become part of larger policy communities that have similar institutional structures and/or perspectives and values.¹⁶⁸ Because groups and actors in a network share values and exchange information/services with one another, these networks constantly have the opportunity to grow and become denser and denser, revealing thicker and thicker webs of formal and informal connections.

More specifically, Transnational Advocacy Networks achieve these methods by working a variety of different angles and organizing their information and communication in certain ways to try to target these avenues of advocacy. They use information politics by moving information to places where it will have the most impact within the sphere of politics,

¹⁶⁵ Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink. "From Santiago to Seattle: Transnational Advocacy Groups Restructuring World Politics," in *Restructuring World Politics: Transnational Social Movement, Networks, and Norms*, eds. Sanjeev Khagram, James V. Riker, and Kathryn Sikkink (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002): 14.

¹⁶⁶ Keck and Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks in the Movement Society," 224–226.

¹⁶⁷ Norman, "Building Democratic Public Spheres?" 303. For examples, see Noha Shawki, "Organizational Structure and Strength and Transnational Campaign Outcomes: A Comparison of Two Transnational Advocacy Networks," *Global Networks* 11, no. 1 (2011): 97–117. A. Orsini, "Multi-Forum Non-State Actors: Navigating the Regime Complexes for Forestry and Genetic Resources," *Global Environmental Politics* 13, no. 3 (2013): 34–55. and L. Wallbott, "Indigenous Peoples in UN REDD+ Negotiations: 'Importing Power' and Lobbying for Rights through Discursive Interplay Management," *Ecology and Society* 19, no. 1 (2014): 1–14.

¹⁶⁸ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 11.

which ensures that they are able to work quickly and efficiently to promote their message. The employment of symbolic politics is also helpful in that it utilizes symbols, actions, and stories to leverage a message for an audience far away or unfamiliar with a situation. Finally, their use of leverage politics calls upon powerful actors to enact influence and to push the message that they share with weaker actors of the Transnational Advocacy Network.¹⁶⁹ Together, these three uses of types of politics can ensure that their message will be heard and get to the right people at the right time.

By using information politics, Transnational Advocacy Networks bind their various moving parts together, creating a coherent message and narrative. Although Keck and Sikkink note that informational exchanges can be informal because they utilize telephone calls, email and fax communication along with the circulation of newsletters, pamphlets, and bulletins, this sort of information is still crucial to the inner workings of the network, as these mediums spread information that might not have otherwise been available.¹⁷⁰ This information can then be more easily disseminated across various and expansive geographies, social structures, and peoples. Through the information provided by non-state actors—testimony, stories, and messages surrounding shared principles (all of which might need to be translated)—smaller components of narrative work together in an attempt to persuade people and stimulate them to act. Further, this framing and the putting of issues in terms of right and wrong aims to create clear, powerful messages that can speak to broader global constituencies and do not just concern one small group of people. Although issues might be niche and highly specific, networks must continually make them relevant to broader audiences and groups of people.

¹⁶⁹ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 22.

¹⁷⁰ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 26.

Additionally, through leveraging information politics, networks have to uncover and investigate problems, serving entities that can alert the press and gain the attention of policymakers. Thus, this information helps nongovernmental actors spin themselves as legitimate players within political scenes and aids them in connecting with “like-minded groups at home and abroad,” helping them to forge links with others.¹⁷¹

The use of symbolic politics by Transnational Advocacy Networks calls upon symbols and the harnessing of powerful symbolic events to grow their relational capacities and to strengthen their persuasive aims. Through this employment of little-r rhetoric, the careful transformation of people, events, or places into important symbols that mean other things, networks are able to create more public awareness about their issues and create an elevated level of urgency and necessary investment in their specific campaign. Often this is not just one event or thing “but the juxtaposition of disparate events that makes people change their minds and act.”¹⁷² Through repeated interaction with and communication of a repeated symbol, values held by Transnational Advocacy Networks can be crystallized into the solid beliefs of a broader population.

Lastly, Transnational Advocacy Networks leverage politics to ensure their political effectiveness and solidify the targeted pressure and persuasion of powerful actors who can enact their will. To gain influence, networks must work with powerful people and institutions to gain influence beyond their direct abilities. Through securing more visible allies, Transnational Advocacy Networks can access higher levels of change and those in charge of decision making. Even so, they still must demonstrate their ability to mobilize their own

¹⁷¹ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 29.

¹⁷² Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 30.

members and rely on their own actors to affect public opinion in order to establish credibility. By enacting moral leverage over those in powerful positions and by preying on the values of “right” and “wrong” furthered through their strategic framing, Transnational Advocacy Networks can either strengthen or weaken perceptions of the state. They can build up messages that communicate states are in violation of rights and not living up to their claims or credit states for their actions, motivating policy and behavior.

All in all, this constant transformation of these networks’ identities and interests for different audiences is extremely interesting to the field of rhetoric, as it binds network members together in different ways and constantly rewrites how messages, symbols, and actors are utilized and play off one another. These three areas of politics directly connect to rhetorical action, shedding light on the things people write and say about certain topics in order to address certain audiences. They are examples of little-r rhetoric that have different political effects and are used for different ends. These permutations of communication and their different use within different situations are also complicated by the context and places where Transnational Advocacy Networks become the most deeply ingrained within the preexisting governmental system. In terms of predictability and knowledge regarding where these networks might appear, many scholars have noted that Transnational Advocacy Networks seem most likely to emerge in conjunction with issues where channels between domestic groups and their governments are blocked or hampered, where activists foresee networking as central to their mission and campaign, and where international contact creates the space for network formation and strengthening.¹⁷³ Likewise, the success of Transnational Advocacy

¹⁷³ Keck and Sikkink, *Activists Beyond Borders*, 18–19.

Networks seems to be tied to organizational structure and strength. Social movements are important to their work and pave the way for Transnational Advocacy Networks to shape political outcomes and utilize the processes and mechanisms at play between these various organizational links.¹⁷⁴

Yet even with these conclusions regarding the workings of Transnational Advocacy Networks, there are still a number of limitations present in analyses that focus on this area. For one, studies on Transnational Advocacy Networks have often centered non-governmental organizations as their primary actors and have not gone the further distance to concentrate on the broader networks and connections that stem from the non-governmental organizations' influence and relationships —big-R Rhetoric. Second, many studies have primarily concentrated on low- and middle-income countries of the global South and have not considered the importance of locations within networks or the ways in which networks can work in not just environments of North-South but also South-North, South-South, and North-North.¹⁷⁵ Additionally, the conceptualization of transnationalism has often needed to be clarified in these analyses and should not be seen as a synonym for “global” or “international” but instead as a complex way to map a process that embraces spatiality, characteristics of social formation, and subtle and direct forms of symbolism.¹⁷⁶ As discussed, transnational relations ought to be conceptualized as connections that are produced through multiple social relations and iterations of power, continually forming and reforming over the years. My study then, can serve as an

¹⁷⁴ Shawki, “Organizational Structure and Strength and Transnational Campaign Outcomes,” 113.

¹⁷⁵ Pallas and Elizabeth Bloodgood, “From Transnational to Transcalar,” 3.

¹⁷⁶ Gilson, “Transnational Advocacy,” 295.

illumination of this point, exemplifying the multiplicity of ways in which TANs connect, ebb, and flow over different contexts, peoples, and time periods.

The concept of Transnational Advocacy Networks is important to my own study not only because of the overlap of the time periods in which Transnational Advocacy Networks became greater features of political life and the time period in which JBANC was most actively fighting for greater US support of Baltic independence but also because of the various ties JBANC has around the world and their assistance in forging connections not only between the United States and the Baltics but also between the Baltics and each other. While JBANC did not leverage its actions to address a primary audience of the United Nations, like many of the Transnational Advocacy Networks explored by previous research, they did directly address a primary audience—US Congress—in a similar manner, looking to create discursive conditions and help curate social norms in order to pressure the government to maintain its commitments. They drew from other sources and fielded their relationships in order to reach specific ends and realize their specific goals. They were part of greater Transnational Advocacy Network structures, helping to produce a means of strategic persuasive rhetoric. JBANC demonstrates that governance goes beyond the confines of state government and that these other components of the institutional structure are what helps to reinforce the positions that governments ultimately support.

Thus, the research you'll find in the following chapters looks at instances of JBANC involvement and helps to answer questions related to the nature of its work, examining exactly what role it played in the creation of late-Cold War foreign policy of the United States. In some of the following chapters, a closer look is taken at the strategic examples of instrumentalization that JBANC used and crafted for particular audiences with a particular purpose. However, in

other parts discussion is given to how JBANC's activities are part of larger and complex discursive formations, detailing how JBANC took advantage of these discursive formations to attune itself and be part of Rhetorical shifts and movements of the times. This allowed JBANC to weigh in and influence the ways in which all three branches of the US governmental system interfaced with Baltic issues during the late-Cold War era, accentuating the Baltics in various ways over the decades and shifting each iteration of how they came and went as a high and low priority of US Cold War foreign policy interest. Throughout the political landscape of the late Cold War, JBANC brought some aspects of the Baltic independence movement up to the surface while burying others, continually refocusing the United States' perspective on the importance of this region within the US-USSR conflict. Ever since Keck and Sikkink's influential theorizing of Transnational Advocacy Networks, other studies have suggested additional lines of inquiry and ways that the theory of Transnational Advocacy Networks could be further complicated, articulating some of the ways that I just mentioned and opening the door for other applications, as well. I believe this study's positioning and subject matter can help address some of the questions that have been explicitly and implicitly posed, namely "when and how do [Transnational Advocacy Networks] influence the political process and shape political outcomes?"¹⁷⁷ and how do Transnational Advocacy Networks transform the "terms and nature of the debate" to challenge the delineated borders of state and non-state influence?¹⁷⁸ Instead of just looking at the internal organization, fundraising structure, leadership structure, etc. of Transnational Advocacy Networks, I am studying them by looking at other ways in which their networks are structured. By employing this phenomenon and

¹⁷⁷ Shawki, "Organizational Structure and Strength and Transnational Campaign Outcomes," 98.

¹⁷⁸ Keck and Sikkink, "Transnational Advocacy Networks in International and Regional Politics," 90.

situating it within rhetorical methodologies, the character and traits of Transnational Advocacy Networks can help cast a spotlight on the work of JBANC.

Conclusion

In examining how the United States and its government interfaced more and more with the work and goals of ethnic lobbying groups as well as transnationally connected advocacy networks in order to help it steer its Cold War political positions, one can start to see, through the lens of Rhetorical cartography, how state and non-state actors worked in tandem to influence the direction of foreign policy during the last decades of the Cold War. The interconnected relations between these different peoples, groups, and governmental and nongovernmental affiliates created a vast playing field on which the issues of Baltic independence were navigated. They also formed the very environments in which these issues were discussed, both in the United States and across the world—including in the Baltic states themselves. Through the Rhetorical analysis of how these relations, discussions, conversations, advocacies, and deliberations interfaced with one another, one can better understand the implications of these factors and their influence on the Baltic agenda within United States' governmental deliberation. Such an approach will not only reveal the rich context that informed the scenes you will encounter in the following chapters, but it will also provide a glimpse into the complexity of the political East-West landscape during the end of the Cold War conflict, the gray area that existed between these sides, and how these dynamics played into the resolution of the war. Every instance that I dive into in this dissertation will illuminate these dynamics in different ways, but the R/rhetorical significance of them all is great, both individually and in totality. In the analysis chapter that follows, JBANC's response to the

rhetorical employment of secrecy in the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and the Office of Special Investigation cases is seen as necessary for bolstering the Baltic-American position and understanding these situations as part and parcel of détente. JBANC strongly challenged and resisted these two cases of changing Baltic foreign policy, leveraging the United States' use of these strategies to advocate for a stronger US response of supporting the Baltic fight for independence and the region's desire to separate from the USSR.

Chapter 3. Suspicions of Secrecy: Resistance to the 1970-1980s Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and Office of Special Investigation Cases

In the middle of the 1970s, the US government's dedication to the Baltics seemed to start to waver, especially in regard to its long-held commitment to the Welles Declaration and the non-recognition of the Soviet occupation of the region. The firm foundation of relations between the United States and Baltic states, established well before World War II and subsequent double occupations of the Baltics by both the Nazis and Soviets, showed signs of crumbling. The United States was in the middle of the Cold War and busy engaging in foreign policy pursuits and debacles across the globe. However, its uncertainty regarding the future of US-Baltic relations was significantly, and understandably, worrying to those members of the Baltic diasporic community stateside who worried that détente was creating the conditions for "the Baltic issue ... fading from US attention" and who imagined "much of the Cold War rhetoric...gone."¹⁷⁹ These beliefs were bolstered when, in December 1975, Helmut Sonnenfeldt, counselor at the State Department, joined US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger on a trip to London where all the US ambassadors to Europe came together for a diplomatic strategy meeting during the height of the Cold War. After the official meeting ended, some ambassadors stayed late into the evening for a casual chat with Secretary Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt. They discussed various European political developments and tactics regarding the war. Over the next few weeks, some of the ambassadors who were present at the chat asked Sonnenfeldt for a summary of the conversation that evening. However, when Sonnenfeldt provided them with the information, it was leaked to

¹⁷⁹ Robert Keatley, "Homeless Diplomats: Their Lands are Gone, Their Mission Remains," *Wall Street Journal*, March 20, 1973, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

the media, creating chaos and wreaking havoc, as the conversations that night apparently detailed a new foreign policy doctrine regarding the United States and Eastern Europe. Known as the “Sonnenfeldt Doctrine,” this new framework suggested that the United States would make a significant change in its foreign policy and recognize the USSR’s influence over Eastern Europe and the countries it was occupying within the Eastern Bloc. This would supposedly encourage a more “organic” relationship to develop between those countries, the United States, and the USSR and would disrupt the non-recognition policy that the United States had developed in regard to the Baltic states, stating that the United States condemned what was considered to be the illegitimate 1940 Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania that stemmed from the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and encouraged the Baltic re-assertion of independence.¹⁸⁰

In response to the major change in foreign policy position, Gunars Meierovics, Chairman of JBANC, wrote to Secretary Kissinger, urging him to clarify Sonnenfeldt’s remarks. He encouraged him to explain whether this doctrine was a “new official United States policy toward the Eastern European governments.” Further, Meierovics encouraged Kissinger to walk the statements back, “clear up” the matter, and alleviate the fears of Baltic-American citizens who read about the leak. This Baltic-American concern especially centered around the ways in which the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine represented a departure from the United States’ foreign policy and its decades-long “non-recognition” statement.

¹⁸⁰ Wilson Center, “United States Non-Recognition Policy,” *Wilson Center Digital Archive*, <https://digitalarchive.wilsoncenter.org/collection/279/united-states-non-recognition-policy#:~:text=In%201940%2C%20the%20United%20States,of%20the%20three%20Baltic%20states>.

As a result of this pressure, Kissinger ended up walking Sonnenfeldt back on the doctrine in statements made to Congress's International Relations Committee in March 1976. Asserting that Sonnenfeldt's language was "unnecessarily elevated and complicated," Kissinger assured the committee that Sonnenfeldt was actually referring to the reestablishment of a more "historic relationship" between the USSR and Eastern European states where the USSR would not be so dominant and the Eastern European countries would be able to develop more in line with their national inclinations and their desire for self-determination. Further, he stated that the United States would support these countries' continual fight for independence from the USSR and would not be adopting the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine or straying from the United States' previous support of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian independence in the Baltic region.

In both the case of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and JBANC's resistance to an equally alarming issue—the US Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations's (OSI) deportation of Baltic-American citizens to the USSR—state secrecy appeared as an important theme and was situated as part of JBANC's response to these two occasions. Due to the fear of state secrets that were part of both the leaking of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and the obfuscation embedded within the governmental support of the OSI cases, JBANC capitalized upon the opportunity to advocate for greater transparency within US-Baltic foreign policy. In this chapter, I explore two aspects of JBANC's response: first I specifically look at how the rhetorical tactics of leaking and obfuscation created an environment of suspicion, which JBANC then leveraged to challenge the US government's secretive foreign policy toward the Baltics. These *occultic* rhetoric devices, meant to promote mystery and obscurity, significantly changed the political atmosphere surrounding these issues as they opened the door for JBANC to challenge the ways in which the US government was handling the situation. Because of the ways in which they

insinuated the presence of US hesitation and/or uncertainty regarding the Baltic region, leaking and obfuscation in these scenarios paved the way for JBANC to engage with the US government on these the issues of Sonnenfeldt and the OSI cases, questioning the United States' dedication to previously entrenched Baltic foreign policy positions and asserting that the US government needed to affirm the Baltics' need to pursue self-determined independence more publicly. In doing so, JBANC called upon information politics and the highlighting of testimony, stories, and messages surrounding shared principles to try to sway the US government to better support its non-recognition policy during a changing era of the Cold War, when the Baltics seemed to cease to be as much of a priority of US foreign policy. Although the issues of Baltic independence were certainly burgeoning during this time and the Baltic states' relationships with the USSR were definitely niche topics within the context of US politics in the 1970s, JBANC worked to continually make them relevant to broader audiences and groups of people to gain the attention of the press, policymakers, and wider swaths of the public. In doing so, JBANC attempted to recenter the Baltics as part of the Cold War political conversation, drawing the US public's attention back to the European theatre after the United States' long focus on the Vietnam War. With its interaction with the OSI cases, JBANC also sought to address the judicial branch of the US government, making the issues of the Baltics a part of conversations at that time regarding the reach (and potential overreach) of this area of the federal government. JBANC ensured that issues of US Cold War foreign policy regarding the Baltics were not just a problem of the US executive branch or the Department of State but rather a topic involving all areas of the US governmental system.

Second, in looking at these cases, I examine how Rhetoric in these instances consisted of more than just a series of tactics but rather a series of power relations that necessitated the

Rhetorical response in the first place: this set of investments, interplay of actors, and interweaving situations not only involved JBANC but also complicated the relationship of the United States, USSR, and the Baltics at this time. In doing such work, this chapter provides examples of how JBANC pushed back on US foreign policy, corresponded with US officials, and provided a voice for public concerns, largely using the fears and worries that were already present within the Baltic-American community to bolster its claims regarding the bubbling up of the visibility of information regarding the US foreign policy towards the Baltic states. By drawing a map and examining the Rhetorical cartography of the publicity effect of the larger assemblage—i.e. what the consequences were of JBANC making things “public” at this time and bringing these pieces of the Baltic independence issue together into greater focus within the broader discussion—I will demonstrate that the revelation of information regarding this policy issue was not necessarily liberating for the Baltic or American public.¹⁸¹ All in all, JBANC’s interactions with the three branches of US government shaped the ways in which that government enacted and communicated foreign policy.

These situations, especially when analyzed side by side, reveal how in its response to *occultic* rhetorical tactics, JBANC challenged, negotiated, and changed the path of US-Baltic foreign policy, advocating for greater US support for the reinstatement of Baltic independence. The ethnic lobbying organization inserted itself into discourses regarding one of the mainstream rhetorical hooks of the time, anti-Sovietism, which the concept of secrecy directly fed, challenging the United States’ own employment of the tactic in multiple instances, trying to encourage the governing apparatus to embrace a clearer and more transparent foreign policy

¹⁸¹ Greene, “Another Materialist Rhetoric,” 31.

position. By analyzing these moments of US government-JBANC interplay between the mid-1970s and 1987, this chapter toggles between the two registers of R/rhetoric that this dissertation explores. Not only does it take a dialed-in look at *how* exactly an environment of secrecy and suspicion was cultivated within both the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and OSI cases, and what JBANC did in return to take advantage of this environment, but it also digs more deeply into how the relationships elaborated upon in this chapter inductively gesture to the larger mechanisms of Rhetorical production at play. Namely, JBANC was able to take advantage of the US environment of détente and USSR demands for Baltic extradition to elevate its demands of the US government and seek out greater fulfillment of its objectives. In both of the situations we will explore in the following pages, the larger Transnational Advocacy Networks that connected JBANC with the other actors of US foreign policy decision-making had to answer directly to Baltic-American concerns in these public-facing conversations, raising the bar for the US governmental response and demanding a stronger articulation of the US stance on Baltic independence during this time.

To take a closer look at these R/rhetorical elements, this chapter starts off by focusing on the rhetorical background of leaking and obfuscation and their connection to *occultic* rhetorical strategies. It then looks at how these strategies are especially employed within scenarios of foreign policy communication, particularly during the Cold War. By mapping the Rhetorical cartography of the era, including the changing landscape of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and the OSI cases of the late-Cold War period, scholars can better understand how JBANC advocated for US support of Baltic-centered narratives and used its uncertainty, suspicion, and resistance to these situations to further its reach, message, and impact on Baltic-based foreign policy.

Leaking and the Presence of Secrets

Leaks have been a perennial characteristic of politics, rhetorically shaping and creating political knowledge and control surrounding key policy issues. When information is disseminated and leaked into the public, that knowledge immediately changes the construction of reality, manipulates attitudes, and impacts decision-making and diplomatic maneuvering that inherently affect the flow and shape of political information. Leaks are rhetorically potent, constituting “a strategic alternative to the risk-filled public forum” where “the disclosure of sensitive, classified, or misleading information is thought inappropriate or untoward.”¹⁸² They take away the moment in which information has to be decidedly “made public” by an official in charge, enabling those in political power to instead engage anonymously with a constituency and offer up insider knowledge in a “risk-free” manner that they know will most certainly influence the future policy-making process. A leaker’s anonymity allows the information to be released without them having to be responsible for “picking up the pieces” in the aftermath of the information’s spillage.¹⁸³ Thus, leaks are moments of great rhetorical timing, creating situations where discourse will inevitably peak surrounding a certain issue and “bubble up” with discussion (including governmental and public responses) before dying back down again. Leakers are aware of the utility of this heightened discussion and certainly harness it for their own political means, whether for official or unofficial interests.

¹⁸² Keith Erickson, “Presidential Leaks: Rhetoric and Mediated Political Knowledge,” *Communication Monographs* 56 (1989): 200.

¹⁸³ Rahul Sagar, *Secrets and Leaks: The Dilemma of State Secrecy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2013), 6.

Because of the wide variety of advantages that leaks have, leakers may choose to disclose information for a variety of different reasons. In his 1974 book, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, Morton Halperin sought to identify reasons why a leak might occur, including (1) “to get a message through,” (2) to “undermine rivals,” (3) “to attract the attention of the president,” (4) “to build support,” (5) “to ensure implementation,” and (6) “to alert foreign governments.”¹⁸⁴ Later modifications to this taxonomy by theorists included the consideration of other factors and also indicated that the reasons for leaks were not mutually exclusive, with leaks often accomplishing many aims at once.¹⁸⁵ However, despite the reasons for leaking, whether leaks are planned or not (designated as “official” or “unofficial”), whether they are authorized and distributed by the White House or by others, and whether the leaking of classified information is meant for good or for ill, there is consensus that the existence of leaks and the insinuation and revelation of state secrecy due to leaks create serious implications for democracy.

Some of these implications surround the ways that the public and government interact with one another and respond to the presence of leaks, with both entities being invested in how they can harness state secrecy and leaked information for their own benefit. For one, leaking is often a rhetorical strategy taken by those who are dissatisfied with decisions being made by a government and who have reason to believe that public attitudes will be favorable to an alternative viewpoint. Thus, leaks both inform the public about political issues that are up for

¹⁸⁴ M.H. Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1974), 184–189.

¹⁸⁵ S. Hess, *The Government/Press Connection: Press Officers and their Offices* (Washington, DC: The Brookings Institution, 1984).

decision and encourage that public to make their views known regarding the subject.¹⁸⁶ After leaked information makes its way to the public, the leak can then serve as the impetus for the public to organize itself and provide a response to the disseminated information. In this way, leaks effectively disperse power instead of centralizing power, taking information out of the hands of only a few and putting it into the hands of many.¹⁸⁷ The rise of instances of political leaking, especially during the mid- and late-Cold War years, provided the opportunity to do just that as it involved the public in political decisions that were previously controlled by the government alone. These instances began to provide a “new dimension of representation to public and political life,” offering the public both a form of “counter-democracy” and “monitory democracy” that kept public interests as the central focus of political decision making.¹⁸⁸ As leaks also tend to enliven the public’s drive to generate attitudinal resistance,¹⁸⁹ they provide leakers with the opportunity to gauge the effects of official or unofficial information. Not only does this minimize problematic instances later on, but it also provides a presidential administration with the opportunity to go back and later clarify leaked information with on-the-record remarks that come in direct response to the public’s issues with the disseminated information. This rhetorical timing creates *kairotic* moments to speak about certain political issues, ensuring that content is taken seriously and distorted as little as possible by the press.

A leak’s presence also inherently reveals a secret’s presence, creating a moment in time that designates a “before” and “after” when the information was released, causing a public to

¹⁸⁶ Halperin, *Bureaucratic Politics and Foreign Policy*, 190.

¹⁸⁷ Sagar, *Secrets and Leaks*, 5.

¹⁸⁸ Atilla Hallsby, “Psychoanalysis against WikiLeaks: Resisting the Demand for Transparency,” *Review of Communication* 20, no. 1 (2020): 71; Schudson, *The Rise of the Right to Know*, 234–239.

¹⁸⁹ Erickson, “Presidential Leaks,” 205.

look at a leak and its effects retrospectively. With leaks come a reconceptualization of reality and realization of the likely implications that certain information has had on decision making up to the point at which the information is released. The presence of leaks raises certain questions regarding how that knowledge has affected the events that led up to the moment in which a public is “read into” the situation. This can support a sense of paranoia and general suspicion on the part of the public regarding the government’s work and posits questions surrounding the ways in which the leaked information has changed the political atmosphere.¹⁹⁰ In this way a public response to leaking not only demands a greater level of transparency from the government in order to answer for the information that was kept hidden but also demands an explanation for the ways in which that hidden information changed the trajectory of history and will account for the future. It is not enough for a government merely to confirm the existence of the secret in the first place as leaks also cause the public to demand more information regarding how that secret informed other political decisions and moves. This can create a never-ending battle of demands and explanations on the part of the public and government respectively, an unbreaking cycle of the “public appetites that feed transparency as well as the countervailing forces against it.”¹⁹¹ Further, the suspicion of secrecy and presence of a leak heighten a public’s awareness and speculation regarding the likelihood that other information has also been hidden from them, “being more consequential for a population than the justification for its concealment.”¹⁹² Thus, the leak creates ample opportunity for suspicions to percolate and a distrust of the government to be established and/or more firmly entrenched within political

¹⁹⁰ Richard Hofstadter, *The Paranoid Style in American Politics and Other Essays* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965).

¹⁹¹ Hallsby, “Psychoanalysis against WikiLeaks,” 70.

¹⁹² Einertson, “The Return of the Secret,” 126.

discourse. Within the Rhetorical milieu of other rhetorical devices that likewise position a public and a government against one another and elevate state secrets and mystery, leaking especially capitalizes upon the need to reveal what is going on “behind the scenes” and the demand that the public be a more central part of the democratic process.

Obfuscation as occultatio

Another rhetorical form that similarly generates suspicions of secrecy regarding the government’s decision-making process comes through the utilization of *occultatio*, or strategies and devices that are meant to publicly embrace an air of mystery and to maintain distance between a speaker, their subject, and their audience. This specific categorization stems from an etymology of *occultic* social ritual that Joshua Gunn, through his book *Modern Occult Rhetoric*, presents and posits as a contraction between what is actual and what is uttered, between reality and representation. *Occultatio* serves as a tactic that uses ambiguity of language to produce occluded meanings that in turn create situations where it is impossible to gain any clear idea what is going on. Many specific tropes have been categorized under *occultatio* as an umbrella term, including rhetorical devices such as *apophasis*, *paralipsis*, *praeteritio*, *parasiopeis*, and *occupatio*. In their article “*Occultatio*: The Bush’s Administration’s Rhetorical War,” which presents the cluster of these terms as part of this broader category of *occultatio*, Conley and Saas note that these devices similarly serve as ways to enact an “indirect, even covert form of influence” that create “habituated performances” of rhetorical trope.¹⁹³ Despite their various definitions and nuances, altogether these concepts attempt to “advance nefarious ends” and

¹⁹³ Donovan Conley and William O. Saas, “*Occultatio*: The Bush Administration’s Rhetorical War,” *Western Journal of Communication* 74, no. 4 (2010): 331–332.

harness a layer of opaqueness advantageous to the speakers who enact them.¹⁹⁴ With Gunn's observations that the *occult* has evolved to become a more "ubiquitous theological form" within our society today,¹⁹⁵ Conley and Saas call upon *occultatio* as a category meant to acutely describe the ways in which spurious practices of maintaining separation create a particular orientation of speaker, subject, audience. *Occultatio* continually works to create divides between those who are suspicious of what information is being purposefully withheld from them and those who are in charge of that information but refuse to disseminate it to the public.

In this way, *occultatio* especially emphasizes a relational quality between those who utilize this technique and the audience who experiences the effects of this tactic, setting up a hierarchical structure and institutional arrangement of those on either side of the strategy. When those in authority harness *occultatio*, they underscore the struggle of divided subjectivity present between themselves and hearers, highlighting a "master and slave" dialectic and creating further rhetorical construction of a relational structure.¹⁹⁶ Further *occult* rhetoric tends to draw attention to the imbalance within relationships that surround secrecy, authority, and imagination, as *occultic* devices inevitably produce "hierarchical relationships between those who claim to understand *occult* texts and those who struggle for understanding."¹⁹⁷ Thus *occultatio* continually and inherently creates mystery and a separation between those who wish to know the secrets and the limited few who are read into the situation. The *occultist* is often in control of the secret and decides how to disseminate that information to others. In other instances, *occultic*

¹⁹⁴ Conley and Saas, "*Occultatio*," 331.

¹⁹⁵ Joshua Gunn, *Modern Occult Rhetoric: Mass Media and the Drama of Secrecy in the Twentieth Century* (Tuscaloosa: The University of Alabama Press, 2005), xxvii.

¹⁹⁶ Andrew Cross, "Neither Either Nor Or: The Perils of Reflexive Irony," in *The Cambridge Companion to Kierkegaard*, eds. Alastair Hannay and Gordon D. Marino (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 129.

¹⁹⁷ Gunn, *Modern Occult Rhetoric*, 81.

rhetoric is utilized as a way to detract from the fact that both those in authority and those under the authority are not completely read into the situation, serving as a way for the speaker to save face and maintain the relational quality between them and their audience, even when in reality both they and their hearers are on the same level.

Obfuscation can be seen as another rhetorical device that falls under the category of *occultatio*, as it—similarly to the other aforementioned devices—also hides ideas in language. At its core it presents a misleading narrative meant to muddy the true intentions of the speaker. When utilized as a tool to exploit and ultimately mislead a generally less-informed audience, an asymmetry of power is created, and the hierarchical relationship is supported by those inside and outside the governmental system. Because *occultatio* produces mystification as part of its rhetorical form, the use of obfuscation likewise attempts to conceal and distract from substance or meaning. While a speaker might be able to feign concern and appear as though they are speaking genuinely with an audience, their use of obfuscation still ensures they can be vague, confusing, opaque, ambiguous, or misleading regarding the issue at hand, ultimately maintaining distance between them and the hearer. This strategy, like other *occult* methods, suppresses the invisible and conceals the invisible, providing a screen that shields an audience from the reality of a particular situation. Just as other tactics of *occultatio* are “inherently disreputable,” the strategy of obfuscation is one of particular strategic opaqueness that supports *occultatio*’s betrayal of “the aims of democratic communication—precision, transparency, and accountability.”¹⁹⁸ Like Gunn notes, this particular strategy and way of complicating a discussion presents a contraction between representation and reality, actuality and perception.

¹⁹⁸ Conley and Saas, “*Occultatio*,” 331.

This is especially problematic in situations of democratic decision as *occultatio* inherently has a disdain for openness, accountability, opposition, and due process. It makes a mockery of the democratic system, serving as a co-constitution of imperial governance and mass mystification, adding to unresolved public trauma and the social phenomenon of injustice. When operating within the space of policy, *occultatio* captures tactics that have the potential to be a haunting presence within civic life for years and years, elevating the frustration that a public might experience with regard to certain issues and thus furthering the pressure that a public might put on a government in the face of its use of this device.

As a technique, obfuscation as *occultatio* is often utilized by political candidates and public officials when they pretend to care about issues important to the public while avoiding any commitment to specific details, timelines, or promises. It comes across as a mind-numbing, bureaucratic use of language that raises issues but avoids solving them. As previously mentioned, it can also serve as a tactic meant to present the appearance of knowledge when there is no knowledge to be had or a strategy leveraged to maintain a sense of authority in the face of insecurity. Even if there is little political information within a situation worth hiding or covering up within a moment of public discourse, obfuscation can generate cloudiness surrounding an issue, either deliberately or inadvertently putting space between the speaker, the knowledge, and the audience. In this way, obfuscation, similarly to leaking, elevates the suspicions that a public might have regarding secrecy within the government or the presence of hidden information that is purposefully not being shared. Because of the distance within the speaker-hearer relationship, obfuscation as a tool harnessed within political power structures can generate even more wariness and uncertainty regarding the way that the government is handling a situation or politicians' and bureaucrats' ability to move forward in making political decisions. As a

rhetorical strategy, obfuscation almost immediately creates a situation where many will doubt that the governance of those who utilize this tactic will be in the public's best interest.

Leaking and Obfuscation Within Foreign Policy

As previously mentioned, both leaking and obfuscation were common rhetorical tactics within the mid- and late-Cold War era as the US government got mired more and more deeply in the conflict and needed to manage numerous foreign policy agendas at once. Because of the plurality of the United States' international relations and various policies that it was trying to balance at the same time, leaking became an increasingly used rhetorical tactic meant to assist the governing apparatus with its foreign policy proposals and decisions. It served as a sounding-board technique and a way to generate a response from the public regarding potential foreign policy moves and tweaks that the United States was debating making at the time. Numerous presidents who served during these eras were known to initiate and/or permit official White House leaks in order to do just that. For example, both Johnson and Nixon were famous for leaking conciliatory foreign policy proposals prior to official announcements, as they saw that this strategy ensured that certain proposals were taken seriously and would not be mistaken by the US public as contradictory messaging or propaganda purely meant for a Soviet audience.¹⁹⁹ It was a way to keep an eye on public opinion without writing anything in stone, especially with regard to either expanding or diminishing the scope of the war, either move being something that would naturally upset a good portion of the US population at the time.²⁰⁰ By leaking, the

¹⁹⁹ Erickson, "Presidential Leaks," 207.

²⁰⁰ Morton H. Halperin and Daniel N. Hoffman, "Top Secret: National Security and the Right to Know," *Dissent Magazine* (1969): 241-242.

governing apparatus could gain a sense of where the contradictory moods exhibited by both the United States' various presidential administrations and the country fell and better predict how potential moves in the war might fare within external and internal public discourse.

Similarly, as administrations attempted to carry out their policies, obfuscation was often intentionally or unintentionally employed as a means of attempting to clue the public into what was going on while still maintaining a level of distance between them and the actual policy implementation. Knowledge of particular information surrounding the United States' international relations (and the Department of Defense or Department of State's implementation of those relationships) was often limited to those on a "need-to-know" basis in order to carry out certain campaigns.²⁰¹ In cases when that information was made available to the public, such as the reports in the late 1960s and early 1970s that broke the story that the United States was bombing Cambodia, political actors often offered up convoluted statements denying responsibility for public deception and giving a weak rationale for the decision.²⁰² Instead of clarifying those moments of foreign policy and shedding light on the United States' actions abroad, these instances of obfuscation and convolution muddied the waters even more and did not convincingly explain away the issue or even justify the secrecy and deception on the part of the US government. During this time obfuscation was a way to dodge the issue at hand and "prevent Congress and the public from performing their constitutional roles in declaring war, raising and supporting armies, debating policy guidelines, and evaluating the performance of elected officials."²⁰³

²⁰¹ Halperin and Hoffman, "Top Secret," 242.

²⁰² Halperin and Hoffman, "Top Secret," 244.

²⁰³ Halperin and Hoffman, "Top Secret," 245.

Perhaps some of this rhetorical behavior stemmed from the evolution of and departure from the foreign policy of détente characteristic of this time period. Both Johnson and Nixon built their legacy upon this détente standpoint, encouraged by Kissinger, leading the United States to adopt a more pragmatic and relaxed foreign policy that was meant to promote a peaceful and idealistic outlook on international relations. After more than two decades of US involvement in the Cold War, right as the nuclear dangers of the war peaked and interventionist escalation of the conflict in Vietnam continued in the mid-1960s, President Johnson was the first one to mention the concept in his attempt to “build bridges” between the East and the West.²⁰⁴ Nevertheless, Johnson’s inexperience in the area of foreign affairs meant that his notion of peace largely failed to motivate the American people towards an acceptance of détente.²⁰⁵ Nixon had more success, leading to (perceived) improvements in relations with the Soviet Union and China. However, these changes did not bring an end to the conflict overall, with the general climate of international relations across the globe remaining tense and many countries being suspicious of US détente efforts. Thus, Ford had an equally hard time selling a détente policy during his administration’s tenure since many thought that it was “not aimed at solving all the problems” of the war and that the USSR was benefiting from it more than the United States.²⁰⁶ In light of Ford’s inability to defend his position, his idealist policies largely fell out of favor, shifting once more the ways in which the United States conducted international relations, especially within the constructs of the late-Cold War era. This public distrust of peace negotiations and the tendency of US public opinion to swing back towards a more aggressive

²⁰⁴ Brands, “The World in a Word,” 47.

²⁰⁵ Richard K. Ghere, *Rhetoric in Human Rights Advocacy: A Study of Exemplars* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2015), 122.

²⁰⁶ Brands, “The World in a Word,” 53.

Cold War stance meant that careful communication had to occur in order to bring the public on board with the changes that the United States planned to make to the status quo that it had previously exhibited during the earlier parts of the war. Both political leaking and obfuscation during this time served as means to do that even though both tactics generated considerable concern on the part of the public and concerning what state secrecy was being enacted on behalf of the governing apparatus.

The combination of changing foreign policy, the presidential abuses of Johnson and Nixon, and increasing public interest in its “right to know” meant that especially during the 1970s and early 1980s, a considerable interest in the question of state secrecy arose within the public sphere. Journalists, policymakers, and scholars all became increasingly concerned about the ways in which sensitive information in the United States ought to be protected from foreign powers and enemies yet disclosed and still made accessible to its nation and constituents. Even while secrecy served as a shroud through which the government could ensure elite control over foreign policy, members of the public began to wield their knowledge of the presence of hidden information as a way to insert themselves into the conversation and ensure that their voice was heard. Through resisting the narrative provided to them by the US governing apparatus and insisting on a fuller declaration of transparency on behalf of policymakers, the US public was able to utilize its suspicion of secrecy to voice its concerns regarding the United States’ actions abroad. Even though leaking and obfuscation were commonplace rhetorical strategies implemented by those in positions of power, actors such as JBANC were able to push back on these tactics’ use alongside the communication of foreign policy agendas and argue for taking up alternative policy and changes to the United States’ position. Such actions provided both

“checks and balances” to policymakers and ultimately served as the democratic voice of public opinion regarding the United States’ stance on key Cold War foreign policy issues of the time.

Sonnenfeldt Doctrine

When Sonnenfeldt joined Kissinger for the ambassador’s diplomatic strategy meeting the weekend of December 13–14, 1975, and started discussing with these officials his ideas about the trajectory of Eastern Europe within the context of the war, it might have made sense for US strategy to change abroad. After all, Ford’s administration needed to work to create a different US foreign policy approach, seeing that peace negotiations were likely only to last so long within the context of the war and in the administration’s attempt to save face and reestablish global dominance in the wake of the failed Vietnam War. The twenty-eight American ambassadors who joined Sonnenfeldt and Kissinger to discuss the country’s general foreign policy strategy knew this well, being individuals who had the most intimate awareness of the ins and outs of US relations in Eastern Europe.²⁰⁷ Thus, Sonnenfeldt and his remarks at the get-together were only one small part of the agenda for that evening: he was said to have spoken only briefly before a two-hour discussion ensued that allegedly covered various European political developments and tactics regarding the United States’ position within the region. Further, while no transcript or official minutes were kept, Assistant Secretary of State Arthur Hartman’s aide was the only one who was reported to take notes on both Sonnenfeldt’s initial comments and the back-and-forth that ensued between him, Kissinger, and the other ambassadors. While no one intended to compile a report, the records were sent to Sonnenfeldt and Kissinger and eventually utilized in

²⁰⁷ Leo P. Ribuffo, “Is Poland a Soviet Satellite? Gerald Ford, the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, and the Election of 1976,” *Diplomatic History* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1990): 392.

an official State Department summary that was produced from the aide's recollection of the events. This compilation was eventually cabled to the participants of the Europe ambassador forum.²⁰⁸ In the process of communicating this information back to the weekend's participants, it was leaked to the media, detailing to the public the new "Sonnenfeldt Doctrine" that the United States was supposedly considering as part of its policy changes.

The *Washington Post* columnists who procured the leak, Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, wrote at length about how Sonnenfeldt had abandoned the US support of the "captive nations" of Eastern Europe. They stated in their coverage of the new doctrine that it would, in part, aim to create and support an evolution of the relationships held between Moscow and the Eastern European countries that the USSR was occupying. Because these relationships had historically threatened world peace due to their "inorganic, unnatural relationship" and general instability, Sonnenfeldt allegedly communicated that the United States intended to support Soviet power in the region and to keep an eye on the unwieldy nature of these relationships, as the continuing decay of Soviet support in areas such as the Baltics created a "a far greater danger to world peace than the conflict between East and West." Instead Sonnenfeldt felt that the United States should support a more fluent "union" of the region with the USSR and the Soviets' establishment of power in an "area of natural interest" for them and their country. Given President Ford's initial attempts to support Johnson and Nixon's previous foreign policy implementation, this doctrine also demonstrated the State Department's apparent practice of diplomatic détente within the Eastern European region. After all, within the December meeting and other State briefings around the same time, Kissinger and Sonnenfeldt had both stressed the

²⁰⁸ Ribuffo, "Is Poland a Soviet Satellite?" 392.

need for the United States “to come to terms with the Soviet Union as an emerging superpower.” Yet even so, the increasing presence of “sheer Soviet military power” had intensified the Eastern European desire to “break out of the Soviet strait jacket,” demonstrating the Soviets’ inability to acquire loyalty in the region in an “unfortunate historical failure.” Evans and Novak reported both Sonnenfeldt and Kissinger were quick to state that the United States would be sure not to excessively support the unification process in fear that such attitudes would actually reverse the desired outcome, with Kissinger asserting that the United States “must create the maximum incentives for a moderate Soviet course” that could in turn stabilize the Soviet empire within Eastern Europe and “preserve world peace.”²⁰⁹ However, the consequences of the adaptation of this policy could be detrimental for the work that the United States had already done in supporting the countries of this region. After all, this new diplomatic strategy would disrupt the non-recognition policy that the United States had developed in regard to the Baltic states after the signing of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and would significantly deteriorate the United States’ own relationships with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Thus, it was no surprise that despite Sonnenfeldt’s articulation of this new policy and Evans and Novak’s report that Kissinger seemingly supported it, many critics emerged from both within and outside of the administration. Even though Sonnenfeldt was known as “Kissinger’s Kissinger” and Kissinger’s “faithful mirror,” neither President Ford nor Secretary Kissinger seemed to know much about the doctrine, with them both suggesting in public responses that Sonnenfeldt must not have meant what he was quoted as saying.²¹⁰ It did not help much that

²⁰⁹ Rowland Evans and Robert Novak, “A Soviet-East Europe ‘Organic Union,’” *Washington Post*, 22 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²¹⁰ Ribuffo, “Is Poland a Soviet Satellite?” 392.

Sonnenfeldt was hardly visible to the public eye, with the *New York Times* calling him “one of the least known men in the Nixon administration” just a few years earlier.²¹¹ It also did not help that in the years leading up to the doctrine leak, conservative senators had opposed Sonnenfeldt’s appointment to a deputy secretary position within the Treasury, accusing him of leaking classified information. The FBI even went on to tap Sonnenfeldt’s home phone, looking for official signs of national distrust.²¹² The agency found nothing, and Sonnenfeldt continued his governmental career. Yet this suspicion followed him throughout much of his work in the 1970s, with analysts remarking that some of the continual resistance he faced was because he was a known supporter of détente, a policy that he had helped Kissinger engineer under Nixon as his administration avoided nuclear escalation.²¹³ This worry about détente and the State Department’s application of it within the Eastern European region fanned the flames of outrage over the United States’ alleged adoption of his new Sonnenfeldt Doctrine.

In response to the disclosure of this major change in the United States’ foreign policy position, many reached out to governmental officials asking them to clarify the remarks reported in the Evans/Novak piece, suspicious of what the United States was going to enact within Eastern Europe. Chief among them, JBANC wrote to Kissinger in the days following the article’s publication, urging the secretary to shed further light on Sonnenfeldt’s remarks. Gunars Meierovics, Chairman of JBANC—along with his public relations director and the directors of the respective Baltic parent organizations of the LAC, ALA, and EANC—specifically referenced

²¹¹ Douglas Martin, “Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Expert on Soviet and European Affairs, Is Dead at 86,” *New York Times*, November 21, 2012, <https://www.nytimes.com/2012/11/22/world/helmut-sonnenfeldt-expert-on-soviet-and-european-affairs-is-dead-at-86.html>.

²¹² Marvin Kalb, “The ‘Sonnenfeldt Doctrine’ That Wasn’t,” *Brookings Institute*, October 17, 2019, <https://www.brookings.edu/blog/order-from-chaos/2019/10/17/the-sonnenfeldt-doctrine-that-wasnt/>.

²¹³ Martin, “Helmut Sonnenfeldt, Expert on Soviet and European Affairs.”

the Evans-Novak column printed in the Washington Post, stating they “were shocked” to read the allegation that high administration officials thought that US policy towards Eastern Europe should change. Within the March 26, 1976, correspondence they wrote that JBANC “would be most appreciative, if [Kissinger] clarified the remarks attributed to State Department Counselor Helmut Sonnenfeldt” and whether the “remarks represent[ed] his own personal views, or represented a new official United States policy towards the Eastern European governments.” Further the authors urged that Kissinger respond with whether he, as the US Secretary of State, was following this doctrine in his own foreign policy work and whether he gave the “directive to implement the policy” to the US ambassadors of European nations.²¹⁴ Expressing that the publication of the article and the leaking of the Sonnenfeldt doctrine was extremely disturbing and that the Baltic-American communities that read about this change in policy were deeply concerned about its risk to the non-recognition policy with regard to the Baltics, JBANC stated that it hoped Kissinger could clear up the matter.

This Baltic-American concern especially centered around the ways in which the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine represented a departure from the United States’ previous foreign policy and its decades-long non-recognition strategy that entailed a refusal to acknowledge the legitimacy of the USSR’s occupation of Eastern European countries such as the Baltics. In conclusion the JBANC authors wrote that they hoped his “response [would be] prompt and reassuring that Mr. Sonnenfeldt’s doctrine [was] not the policy of the United States.”²¹⁵ Through this response to Kissinger and their suspicions regarding whether the doctrine had already been

²¹⁴ Correspondence from JBANC to Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, 26 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²¹⁵ Correspondence from JBANC to Henry Kissinger, Secretary of State, 26 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

implemented within foreign policy and to what degree Sonnenfeldt communicated the existence of a secret State Department agenda, JBANC made sure both to speak for its constituents and to leverage its unified position on the matter, demonstrating the alliance between the EANC, ALA, and LAC in its views. Further, JBANC as an organization made it clear that it would not stand idle as secret foreign policy agendas were implemented abroad in the countries and the region in which it was so closely tied. In this stated position JBANC put pressure on the State Department not to let Sonnenfeldt or the leak of the doctrine within the *Washington Post* column dictate the direction of the US stance towards the Baltics or other countries situated within and near the Eastern Bloc.

These concerns raised by Baltic Americans through the lobbying organization were similarly hailed by other members of the diasporic Eastern European community within the United States. Istvan Gereben, Executive Secretary of the Coordinating Committee of the Hungarian Organization in North America, expressed very similar sentiments and suspicions in his letter to President Ford, sent out the same week as JBANC's correspondence. Being sure to highlight that Sonnenfeldt's statement revealed "a philosophy which is contrary to the principle which is shared by every decent American: the principle of the right of self-determination," Gereben accused Sonnenfeldt and Kissinger of "disregard for history, morality and the preference of freedom over tyranny by millions of East Europeans." Further, he expressed that he was worried about the fact that "foreign policy options of this magnitude" were typically not debated within "secret regional briefings for Ambassadors" and that policy pivots like the doctrine could only be interpreted by those hearing of the leak as the mere communication and call for the implementation of practical policies that would then obtain these goals. In other words, Gereben feared that the policy had already been adopted by the United States and that

Eastern European Americans were only hearing of the change after it was already too late. The doctrine was seen as set in stone by the State Department and thus would need the full revocation of the President in order to assuage the concerns of those who believed that this policy was already being implemented within the region. If this was not the case, Gereben stated that Mr. Sonnenfeldt should be removed from his position “in which he [was] most influential in shaping [the United States’] policy towards the Soviet Union and East Europe” in order to project a convincing rejection of the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine.²¹⁶

Similarly, a letter sent to Myron B. Kuropas, the Special Assistant to the President on Ethnic Affairs, from the Czechoslovak National Council of America, raised concerns about the Novak-Evans article. Asserting that the article’s quotations of Sonnenfeldt and Kissinger suggested that the US government “accept[ed] and approve[ed] the perpetuation of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe” and believed that the Soviet Union should “acquire loyalty” from its Eastern European satellites, the letter’s authors shared that the policy “would be detrimental to the interests of the United States” and also result in an “even more dangerous situation for our European Allies.” Like Gereben, the Czechoslovak National Council of America wrote that the policy should be officially addressed and removed by the President and “not be overlooked,” as the article had already received “tremendous nation-wide publicity,” which was damaging to the aspirations of freedom and national independence of the peoples of Eastern Europe. Therefore, it hoped that the President or Secretary of State would issue a statement reiterating the United States’ “traditional policy,” which was the non-recognition of the inclusion of many of the Eastern European states into the Soviet sphere of influence. While

²¹⁶ Correspondence from Istvan B. Gereben to President Ford, 23 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

petitioning Kuropas, the piece of correspondence also highlighted President Ford's own words that he had previously adopted the policy "to support the aspirations for freedom and national independence of the people of Eastern Europe—with whom we have close ties of culture and blood—by every proper and peaceful means."²¹⁷ Asserting that this statement by the President could not align with the policy put forward in the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, this Eastern European-American advocacy group followed suit in calling for the policy's public termination.

Various US congressional representatives were also upset about the expression of the Sonnenfeldt leak, including Representative Frank Annunzio of Illinois. Saying that he was "most disturbed by the revelations" of the Evans-Novak column and Sonnenfeldt's alleged remarks, Annunzio remarked that he was "afraid that the American people can only conclude that a sell-out of the Eastern European peoples to their brutal Communist overlords is underway at the highest levels of the American Government." Quoting the letter that JBANC wrote to Kissinger, Annunzio went on to question how such policies could interact with the House of Representatives' resolution, H. Res. 864, passed on December 2 (the month during which the Kissinger-Sonnenfeldt-European Ambassadors meeting occurred). This resolution articulated that "no change in the longstanding policy of the United States on nonrecognition of the illegal seizure and annexation by the Soviet Union of the three Baltic nations of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania" had occurred and put forth a statement that the policy would continue to be the United States' position on the matter as it would not recognize "in any way" the annexation of the

²¹⁷ Correspondence from the Czechoslovak National Council of America to Myron B. Kuropas, the Special Assistant to the President on Ethnic Affairs, 27 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota. President Ford made this statement on the eve of his departure for the European Security Conference in Helsinki, Finland, in July 1975, which resulted in 35 nations from both the East and the West signing the Helsinki Accords that were meant to assuage Moscow's fears of US intervention and to showcase the USSR's democratic reform.

Baltics. In his remarks to the Speaker, Annunzio accused the US Government of “now advocating a secret policy of turning the nations of Eastern Europe into Soviet socialist republics,” while the House of Representatives had very recently put on record its contention that no changes were being made or would be made to the position. He stated,

I fear that current administration policies are weakening the determination on the part of the United States and its allies in the spiritual struggle with Communist totalitarianism and that Congress must continue to make its will known that this Nation will not undermine the precious spiritual values of democracy and freedom and will continue to strengthen the morale of the captive nations as they persist in their struggle to regain their national sovereignty and their rights to religious, cultural, and personal self-determination.²¹⁸

Annunzio backed up JBANC’s statements and responded to the leak, stating his concerns that the doctrine was not well received by many in the United States (including lawmakers and the public) and that this policy was not the best path forward for US-Baltic relations.

In response to these various complaints to numerous government officials, the Eastern European diasporic community started to receive comments in the form of letters and remarks directly addressed to those most concerned with the matter. Specifically responding to the letter JBANC sent to Secretary Kissinger, Nicholas Andrews, Director of the Office of Eastern European Affairs at the Department of State, wrote back to the organization. Assuring JBANC that “these irresponsible allegations are total fabrications and do not represent what Mr. Sonnenfeldt said to our Ambassadors in London,” Andrews articulated that the United States’ “long-standing policy toward Eastern Europe [had] not changed.” He asserted that not only would the United States refuse to accept a Soviet “domination” of Eastern Europe but that it would encourage the “greater Soviet acceptance” of rightful Eastern European “autonomy and

²¹⁸ Statement made by Representative Frank Annunzio in front of Congress, 23 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

independence.” Remaining dedicated to the United States’ previous foreign policy position, Andrews wanted to make sure JBANC knew that the State Department and US government were firmly committed to these policy goals and that the United States would “continue to conduct [its] relations with the countries of Eastern Europe accordingly.”²¹⁹

Likewise, in conversation with the letter from the Czechoslovak National Council of America, Helmut Sonnenfeldt wrote back to the authors, stating that he deeply regretted that an article that “distort[ed his] views on Eastern and Central Europe as well as casting doubt upon the well-established policies of our Government” had been written and widely distributed. Stating that he also regretted “repeated authoritative repudiations of the policy views falsely attributed to [himself],” he hoped that members of the organization would recognize that he, as a counselor for the Secretary of State and representative of the US government, “could not possibly hold such views.” Sonnenfeldt also appealed to his own personal experiences with the region, stating that because he was himself “a refugee from oppression in Europe,” he had always been “devoted to encouraging the independence, national identity, freedom, peace and normal relationships with the rest of the world of the peoples and countries of Eastern and Central Europe.” Thus, he was “proud to be associated with [the United States’] Government’s consistent and responsible endeavors towards these ends and [would] continue to devote [himself] to them regardless of any defamatory allegations to the contrary.”²²⁰ In sum, aiming to relieve some of the fears and suspicions of those who were attentively clued into the leak of the

²¹⁹ Correspondence from Nicholas G. Andrews to the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 7 April 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²²⁰ Correspondence from Helmut Sonnenfeldt to the Czechoslovak National Council of America, 5 April 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

doctrine, Sonnenfeldt expressed his positions on the matter. He tried to respond to the existence of the leak and clarify that he, too, felt that this new doctrine was not an accurate representation of either his views or the United States' position in the Eastern European region. While not directly addressing what type of new foreign policy *was* communicated to the ambassadors of Europe that fateful night in December, he assured his critics that the United States would not be easily driven away from its traditional foreign policy approach to the region, despite the appearance that the highest authorities were slowly considering and adopting changes.

Similarly, President Ford responded to those who reached out to him regarding the leak during his remarks to the Representatives of the Greater Milwaukee Ethnic Organizations on April 2, 1976. When speaking to this citizens' group within the community, he clearly laid out his views on US foreign policy as it related to Eastern Europe, stating that just as he expressed before his departure for the European Security Conference in Helsinki, it was the government's policy and his personal policy that he would "support the aspirations for freedom and national independence of the peoples of Eastern Europe" and that it would "remain [his] policy, regardless of what any Washington experts or anti-Washington experts may say or write." Further, making reference to the 1976 Bicentennial Anniversary within the United States a few times within his remarks, Ford reiterated that America still cared about freedom and independence just as much as it did in 1776, and that care also applied to the countries of Eastern and Central Europe that were under Soviet influence at the time. He asserted that "America's policy, toward Eastern Europe is fully, clearly and formally documented" and is especially a "creative and cooperative policy toward the nations" that asserts the United States' "most important ideals as a nation." Furthermore, it was a policy that was repeated in messages to Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian Americans who knew firsthand of Ford's "deep concern and

devotion and friendship with them.” He assured that while there was no “secret Washington policy, no double standard,” the United States would also not go on to “accept Soviet domination of Eastern Europe or any kind of organic origin” but would rather seek to be “responsive to and to encourage as responsibly as possible the desire of Eastern Europeans for greater autonomy, independence, and more normal relations with the rest of the world.”²²¹ He concluded that he as president would continue to uphold this policy, as reiterated in the remarks and justified through the United States’ actions—a policy from which he asserted the United States would not waiver—with patience, firmness, and persistence.

Around the same time, Secretary Kissinger also formally responded to the leaked doctrine in his comments to the International Relations Committee on March 29, 1976, clarifying Sonnenfeldt’s remarks in London. Explaining that while he was not present at the portion of the London meeting where Sonnenfeldt made his remarks to the European ambassadors, he understood that Sonnenfeldt gave his views of the evolution of Eastern Europe. According to Kissinger, the notetaker must have erroneously recorded and summarized what he thought Sonnenfeldt said, and that faulty summary was then leaked to Evans and Novak from the *Washington Post*. Kissinger said that this chain of events led to the leak and overall gave a very inaccurate depiction of what Sonnenfeldt meant, elevating suspicions surrounding what the US government was doing abroad. Assuring the committee that Sonnenfeldt’s language was “unnecessarily elevated and complicated” and that the relationship between the USSR and Eastern Europe that the counselor was trying to articulate was not necessarily an “organic” one,

²²¹ “Remarks of the President to Representatives of the Greater Milwaukee Ethnic Organizations,” 2 April 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

as Sonnenfeldt famously said, Kissinger articulated that Sonnenfeldt actually meant that a more historically accurate relationship should be curated within the region—a relationship in which the USSR could reside peacefully next to independent and non-Soviet countries. Additionally, Kissinger reported that the entire conversation was “taken out of context” and that “as far as the US is concerned, we do not accept a sphere of influence of any country, anywhere, and emphatically we reject a Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe.” By asserting that the conversation with Sonnenfeldt did not reveal any secret policies towards the Baltics, he tried to convince the public (including JBANC) that there was no need to worry about the government’s ability to handle the situation. Highlighting his own visits to Eastern Europe and respect for the region, Kissinger expressed that ultimately the State Department’s position was that it “welcome[d] East European countries developing more in accordance with their national traditions, and that [the United States would] cooperate with them.” In this sense he asserted that “there is no Sonnenfeldt Doctrine.”²²²

OSI Cases

Another concerning governmental development that occurred in the late 1970s regarding Baltic-American foreign policy was the creation of the US Justice Department’s Office of Special Investigations, or OSI. Established in 1979 in order to identify and expel Nazi collaborators living in the US, the OSI sought to “identify, and seek removal of, only those who

²²² “Unofficial Record of Kissinger’s Remarks to the House Committee on International Relations [Currently Known as Foreign Affairs Committee],” 29 March 1976, Box 15, Folder 21, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

assisted the Nazis and their allies in the persecution of civilians.”²²³ However, this work proved to be extremely difficult due to a variety of factors, including the fact that much of the relevant proof and evidence of the crimes had been destroyed in and after the war and the evidence that did survive was inaccessible and located within Eastern Europe, behind the Iron Curtain, until more than a decade after the OSI’s founding. Further, fear over how many Nazi persecutors had emigrated to the United States reached its peak in the late 1970s and early 1980s, with one of the OSI’s earliest directors propagating these anxieties when he stated that he believed approximately 10,000 Nazis had ended up in the United States—a prediction that was later considered to be extremely high. Yet this number of 10,000 stayed on the minds of the American public, becoming a widely circulated statistic that might also shed light on the OSI’s zeal for finding and “catching” Nazis, a passionate vocation that led them to be known as the United States’ “Nazi-Hunting Unit.” This statistic and the public perception of the number of Nazis and Nazi sympathizers who were living in the United States as well as the moral role of the OSI can also explain the size of the unit—the office had a staff of 51 people (including 20 litigators) at its largest point in 1983. This decreased significantly after the end of the Cold War, with the office only having 26 employees (including five litigators) in the early 2000s, when the Department of Justice created an internal history of the office. In 2010 the office was merged with the Domestic Security Section of the Department of Justice’s Criminal Division and made into a new unit.²²⁴

²²³ Judy Feigin and Mark M. Richard, “The Office of Special Investigations: Striving for Accountability in the Aftermath of the Holocaust,” US Department of Justice, Criminal Division, December 2006, p. iv, <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/projects/documents/confidential-report-provides-new-evidence-of-notorious-nazi-cases?ref=us#p=1>.

²²⁴ Judy Feigin and Mark M. Richard, “Office of Special Investigations”

As the OSI began its work in the late 1970s and early 1980s, it faced great criticism regarding various aspects of its cases. Some of these criticisms came directly from Baltic-American and other Eastern European émigré groups who greatly disagreed with the OSI's use of evidence from the USSR in prosecuting cases since the Soviet Union had a large interest in discrediting immigrants from the Baltic States, and these groups worried that Baltic Americans were becoming pawns in the greater US-USSR Cold War game. They suspected that the USSR had provided false information and forged documentation to achieve its aims in convincing the US government to deport Eastern Europeans, sending them back to the USSR. Further, they feared that the United States had forgotten about the Soviets' collaborative relationship with the Nazis in splitting up Eastern Europe, which led to further suspicions regarding why the Soviets were so eager to help and encourage the United States to convict these men decades after the end of World War II. As Mari-Ann Rikken, a future director of JBANC, stated, the USSR "wants the world to forget that the Soviets have blood on their hands, that they were allies of the Nazis for two years." In using Soviet evidence in the trials of these US citizens, "the Reagan administration will have fallen for a Soviet ploy to recognize Estonia as part of the Soviet Union."²²⁵ Further, many Balts and Eastern European Americans were concerned about the issue as "a possible means to drive a widge between the East European and Jewish communities in America, two of the most outspoken anti-Soviet groups."²²⁶ Despite statements from the OSI that it was "satisfied it has the right man" and claims from the office that "not once in 40 years has

²²⁵ Stuart Vincent and Ford Fessenden, "Linnas a Symbol of Controversy: Legacy of World War II A Primary Issue" *Long Island Newspaper*, March 20, 1987, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²²⁶ Kathleen Tyman, "The Angry Young Baltics" *Washington Times*, March 8, 1985, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

anyone proved a case of Soviet forgery or perjury by a Soviet-supplied witness,” these concerns still rose to the forefront of arguments made by Baltic Americans regarding the legitimacy of the evidence used in the trials.²²⁷ Obscure rebuttals by the OSI generally made this discourse all the more tense, with not only members of the Baltic-American community growing in their distrust of the office but also members of Congress becoming increasingly and deeply concerned about how the OSI intersected with Baltic issues.

Some of these concerns were clearly vocalized by congressional representatives who took on Baltic-American issues as their own and stepped into the spotlight as main critics of the OSI and its work. One example was Congressman John Ashbrook of Ohio, who went so far as to bring these issues to the Speaker of the House. Ashbrook commented in congressional statements that while “it is right that [the US Government] should” search for Nazi war criminals who have come here after World War II, the US government should also “make sure that no innocent persons are wrongly accused” and be aware that “evidence from Soviet sources is tainted by the Communist history of lies and forgeries.” Quoting a recent CIA report in his statement, Ashbrook reminded his listeners that the House Intelligence Committee found that “it [was] an established Soviet practice to employ forgeries in covert action and psychological warfare operations against the United States” and that US citizens had previously been “falsely accused of being a Nazi war criminal” before evidence proved otherwise. Based on this, Ashbrook stated that it was important that the US government not “condemn anyone based on Soviet evidence”

²²⁷ Ey Richard Lacayo, “Problems of Crime and Punishment: Should the U.S. use Soviet Evidence against Accused War Criminals?” *Time*, April 20, 1987.

and instead use “our basic American laws of evidence” within American courts.²²⁸ For Ashbrook, it was only this change in policy that would be able to ensure that the US government could stand firm in its intolerance of Nazi German and Soviet Russian crimes while still upholding its moral principles.

Besides the arguments that congressman Ashbrook articulated, those who were part of the Baltic-American community also challenged the use of a lower standard of evidence in these civil trials in comparison to criminal trials. This was because citizenship revocation and deportation were civil issues, and there was no way to seek penalties for crimes committed on foreign soil unless the suspect could be first established as a US citizen. Additionally, the Baltic-American community feared that in its prosecutions and potential deportation of US citizens back to the USSR, the US government would actually be going against the Welles Declaration and US non-recognition policy toward the Baltics, as it would not be sending Baltic Americans back to the Baltic states for further sentencing but would instead be sending them back to the USSR, the illegitimate occupier of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Because of this possible infringement of the Welles Declaration and the US non-recognition policy, JBANC became heavily involved in the various Justice Department cases that dealt with naturalized American citizens from Eastern Europe who were accused of Nazi war crimes. One such case was *United States vs. Kungys*, where a Lithuanian-born man was accused at age 67 of assisting Germans in arresting and executing communist party leaders and confining

²²⁸ John Ashbrook, “Soviet Evidence Has Always Been Fraudulent and Should Not Be Used in American Courts,” 28 May 1981, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

2,500 Jews during World War II.²²⁹ Kungys argued for years after the trial called for his denaturalization that the incriminating testimony against him was the product of the Soviet Union's effort to "safeguard its hold upon the Baltic states by discrediting émigrés from those countries," calling attention to the OSI's investigative techniques.²³⁰ In light of this case, John Genys, Chairman of JBANC, wrote to Nestor L. Olesnycky, Vice President of the Ukrainian National Association, asking for him and his organization to join JBANC in the *amicus curiae* brief being prepared on the matter. Genys wrote that the *amicus curiae* brief was supposed to shed some light on the issues of this case that in many ways represented the reality for all "naturalized American citizens who at one time resided in various parts of Eastern Europe and became wartime refugees or displaced persons." Further, Genys articulated that JBANC's involvement (and the pending support of the Ukrainian National Association) in the brief could "bring some of these issues to the attention of the United States Supreme Court" and enable the briefers better to state why there were issues with the evidence being presented against Kungys. Further, he stated that JBANC would be joining many other diasporic and national organizations such as the Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, and Belorussian groups that would also be among the *amici curiae* and that the Ukrainian association should join, as well, since "the issues the brief [would] address, [would] equally affect all of the said groups."²³¹ Through their collaboration on the *amicus curiae*, JBANC and other ethnic organizations were able to discuss the issues

²²⁹ Silvia Kučėnas, "Current Events: OSI Collaborates with KGB," *Lituanus* 30, no. 1 (1984), http://www.lituanus.org/1984_1/84_1_05.htm.

²³⁰ "Juozas Kungys Case," US Holocaust Memorial Museum, <https://collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn504400>.

²³¹ Correspondence from Dr. John Genys to Mr. Nestor L. Olesnycky, Esq., 30 September 1986, Box 50, Folder 2, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

surrounding using tainted and uncorroborated evidence from the USSR in US courts, as the US government could rarely prove without a trace of doubt the histories of these naturalized citizens without the use of USSR testimony in the cases. In the case of Kungys, the court would settle the case once and for all only after years of appeals and filings in 1988, with Kungys being allowed to remain in the United States. However, this was not the fate of all Baltic Americans who came under the scrutiny of the OSI.

Another series of correspondence regarded the case of Karl Linnas and his potential deportation to the Soviet Union. This case concerned an Estonian who was sentenced to death *in absentia* during the Holocaust trials held in Soviet Estonia during the 1960s after being brought up on charges that accused him of being a commandant of a Nazi concentration camp in Tartu. He had emigrated in 1951 to the United States, where he lived until the Office of Special Investigations of the US Justice Department prosecuted him. During this prosecution process, Victor Sestokas of LAC, one of the three JBANC parent organizations, wrote to various US government officials, senators, and congressmen, including members of the Senate Judiciary and Foreign Relations committees and the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, about the Linnas trial and his potential deportation. In these correspondences Sestokas highlighted his concern regarding the deportation of Linnas and encouraged a reconsideration of both his rights within the United States and the United States' relationship with Eastern Europe and the USSR, as Linnas was going to be deported to the USSR, Estonia's occupier.

In one such letter, that Sestokas sent to President Ronald Reagan on July 30, 1986, he commented that the case had the potential to be an egregious failure of the US justice system. He wrote, "It is outrageous that an American citizen can be railroaded by KGB furnished 'evidence' within the structure of our judicial system [and be brought] to the brink of deportation to the

USSR to face certain death.” He went on to indicate that it seemed that protocols were not followed as “Mr. Linnas ha[d] not even had the right to a jury trial nor was the evidence used against him subject to scrutiny according to the provisions of *our* legal system.” Sestokas was sure to juxtapose this decision by the United States and its use of the evidence in the Linnas deportation case with those of the Canadian government; Sestokas quickly reminded President Reagan that even the Canadians had “after thorough research, refused to collaborate with the ‘Evil Empire’ in persecuting their own citizenry.” Additionally, Sestokas concluded the letter with his final plea, indicating that “for the sake of universal justice and for the unfortunate victim of the unholy OSI-KGB *misalliance* who continues to suffer grievously, use your influence to prevent his deportation and to accord him fair legal treatment.”²³²

In letters addressed to Tom Lantos and John E. Porter, members of the Congressional Human Rights Caucus, Sestokas brought the issue to congressional representatives, as well, highlighting the issues regarding the United States’ use of the KGB-supplied evidence in the case. “You have done perhaps irreparable harm to this unfortunate victim of politically motivated persecution,” he accused, stating that “persons in your position should be well aware and recognize the spurious nature of ‘evidence’ provided by the KGB, particularly since you both are co-chairmen of the Human Rights Caucus.” However, beyond the issues in the case’s evidence, Sestokas also reminded the congressmen of the issue of Soviet deportation and how Linnas would be subjected to the “squalid conditions of human rights in the USSR and the relentless persecutions of minority nationalities who have been deprived of the basic human right to self-determination.” Further, if deported, Linnas would play into the Soviets’ “profound political

²³² Correspondence from Victor Sestokas to President Ronald Reagan, 30 July 1986, Box 50, Folder 2, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

interests” as Sostokas pointed out that his case “would only serve to furnish grist for their propaganda mills that constantly smear and discredit those who fled the horrors of communism.” Concluding the letter he proclaims, “will the idea of human rights be served by dooming this victim to *certain death*? By no means! You have done a grave disservice to your colleagues and to the American people in general, I certainly hope you will be able to redress the injustice.”²³³

The JBANC archival records show that Sestokas received just one response to his correspondence with various governmental officials regarding this issue. Matthew J. Rinaldo, congressman from New Jersey, responded to Sestokas, thanking him for his letter and concern regarding the manner. Rinaldo commented that he “underst[ood] and share[d his] concern about the possible fate of Mr. Linnas should he be deported to the Soviet Union as a Nazi war criminal.” Assuring Sestokas that he had taken action after receiving his letter, Rinaldo informed him that he contacted officials of the Department of Justice and was subsequently advised by these officials that “he would only be deported after all of the appellate provisions of the [US] judicial system had been exhausted,” with the US Court of Appeals considering his petition. Rinaldo was quick to assure Sestokas that he would “monitor this situation closely” and that he appreciated hearing from him on the matter.²³⁴

In response to the Linnas case, JBANC also developed a statement of principles relating to the OSI that articulated its stance regarding the office and its work. Recommending that the OSI should take a firmer stance on not letting deposition be taken in Soviet-occupied territories, that it should demand that USSR witnesses to the cases be brought to the United States in order

²³³ Correspondence from Victor Sestokas to the Honorable Tom Lantos & John E. Porter, 6 August 1986, Box 50, Folder 2, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²³⁴ Correspondence from Representative Matthew J. Rinaldo, 30 July 1986, Box 50, Folder 2, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

to give their testimony, and that no person should be deported to the USSR or other communist countries against their will, JBANC's main assertions within the statement surrounded the US government's foreign policy stance towards the USSR as well as how these relationships affected the United States' relationship to other states underneath the USSR's influence, such as the Baltics. Further stating that one of JBANC's highest priorities was observing the operations of the OSI and to "comment when appropriate," helping to keep them accountable, the ethnic lobbying organization made sure to articulate that "as Americans of Baltic heritage, we are most anxious that our people and our countries, victims of both Nazi and Communist tyrannies, not be further victimized by a selective legal process." Because the Baltic-American communities were especially "concerned with the prospect of Americans of Baltic descent being deported to Soviet-occupied Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuanian, or anywhere else in the USSR which would constitute an apparent violation of the long-standing US policy of non-recognition of the illegal occupation and annexation of the Baltic States by the USSR," JBANC stated that it needed to continue to monitor the situation and stay involved in the case and its results.²³⁵

Yet even with Sestokas and Rinaldo's concern, as well as JBANC's advocacy on the issue, Linnas was still stripped of his American citizenship and deported back to the USSR to face his fate. Although Linnas and his family denied the charges and argued that he never had the benefit of a criminal trial before a jury or an opportunity to confront witnesses who testified against him, he was still found guilty. Further, all the evidence against Linnas, including depositions from Soviet citizens, was evidence provided by the USSR under the country's

²³⁵ Joint Baltic American National Committee, "Statement of Principles Relating to the OSI," Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

agreement with the OSI.²³⁶ In 1986 a federal appeals court upheld the order for his deportation, relying upon the USSR's evidence of his war crimes with the US Supreme Court refusing to hear his final appeals and despite accusations of the falsification of his information on the part of the USSR. He died nearly three months after his arrival in the Soviet Union on July 2, 1987, at a prison hospital in Leningrad after the Soviet government commuted his death sentence to life in prison due to his poor health. Linnas became the second formerly naturalized American to be deported to the Soviet Union.

In the time surrounding the Linnas case, the LAC also prepared statements and correspondence with various arms of the US government regarding the OSI's tendency to rely on depositions approved by the KGB. Audrius Juskevicius, President of LAC, worked directly with JBANC to argue against these cases with a piece of correspondence sent on behalf of both groups. This letter noted the extreme concern that arose from Eastern Europeans-turned-Americans "who [were] nationally of those subjugated countries" and were then subjected to terror by "the oppressor's forces which found their way even into the American life through the OSI." The men explained that this development was especially problematic for JBANC and its colleagues as a "reliance upon Soviet sources [could] only aid the Soviet disinformation offensives in tainting nationality groups and denying American citizens the right to be tried under the American legal system." Further, they articulated that these actions by the OSI and the Justice Department were an especially important matter to the Baltic lobbying group, as the decision to send the accused Eastern European "criminals" back to the USSR to be tried by the

²³⁶ Robert Gillette, "Accused War Criminal Bound for a Soviet Fate: U.S. Due to Deport Man Who Was Sentenced to Death, Then Tried Later—Both In Absentia," 12 February 1987, *Times*, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Soviet government, instead of by their own Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian governments, was concerning from the point of view of the United States' non-recognition policy towards the Baltics.

OSI responded to the concerns of Baltic Americans and Eastern Europeans in a variety of ways. On April 29, 1987, just a week after Estonian Karl Linnas was deported to the Soviet Union, Director of OSI Neal Sher spoke to a women's group located in Rockville, MD, the location of JBANC's headquarters. In many ways this response by Sher was built on his utilization of *occult* rhetoric and obfuscation, dodging the issue at hand and the concerns that JBANC and its collaborators had raised. Standing behind his office and its decision to deport Linnas, Sher reminded his audience that despite those who were obviously "trying to derail the efforts of OSI," the OSI was confident that Karl Linnas had been found guilty of being the chief of a concentration camp in Tartu, Estonia, and that further, the "public [would] never know what fights [the OSI] were up against" in exploring these cases. Putting on the appearance of being concerned about the case and public reception of it, Sher noted that he felt it was important to come out and speak at events such as the Rockville gathering, as he had observed during his time as a director that it was difficult to get the word out to the media about the OSI's intentions and to communicate what the US courts found out about Linnas and his history before his time as an American citizen. Sher went on to comment that despite the defense argument that Linnas's evidence came from the Soviet Union and was therefore untrustworthy, the United States had still found "by beyond a responsible doubt that Karl Linnas was engaged in these terrible activities" and that other agencies within the US government were consulted before a decision was made. Citing that the State Department, the National Security Council, and the White House were all consulted in the case and that the OSI was not a "renegade outfit," Sher was sure to

emphasize that the decision to designate the country of deportation as the Soviet Union was up to more than just the Justice Department. However, this decision was still at odds with many within the public sphere who could not understand why the United States was seemingly unconcerned with the potential falsification of evidence. Instead, the director tried to take the blame off of himself for such decisions, stating, “I don’t go around making foreign policy,” and affirming that the State Department’s Chief Legal Office said that it did “not violate any U.S. foreign policy to deport this man to the Soviet Union.”²³⁷

In answering the arguments against using evidence from the Soviet Union to support the US trials, Neal Sher was also quick to address the concerns and to acknowledge that those who might be listening to him speak very likely disagreed with the OSI’s decision, yet he insisted that they were incorrect in their assessments. In his appeal he spoke to these concerns head-on, asserting, “Now, I’m not naive and certainly the people sitting in this building with concerns that you have are not naive about the Soviet Union, but the Soviet Union is not on trial. Karl Linnas is on trial.” Further, he asserted that it was important to direct strong emotions regarding these cases to the appropriate place and to think about the ways that Karl Linnas treated his victims, stating,

I for one, if I am thought to have any compassion in these cases, it’s not going to be for Karl Linnas. It’ll be for those who perished at his hands. There are no Jews from Estonia during the war who survived. None. There are none. An entire community, which of course was not too big to begin with, but nevertheless was wiped off the face of the Earth. Very, very significant. Not just bringing Linnas to justice, but the symbolism and the message that it sends. That the United States is not going to tolerate in its midst Nazi murderers, regardless of the present day political circumstances.²³⁸

²³⁷ “Director of OSI Speaks to Washington Area Women’s Group,” 29 April 1987, page 4–5, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²³⁸ “Director of OSI Speaks to Washington Area Women’s Group,” 29 April 1987, page 7, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Sher also emphasized the problem that he saw within the émigré Eastern European community regarding those who wanted to focus too much attention on Stalin and the USSR's crimes instead of Hitler and the Nazis' crimes. He mentioned that such sentiments perpetuated the argument that because Hitler and Stalin were allies, there should be more focus on "the people who committed crimes during the period of that infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact when the Soviet Union and Nazi Germany split up territory in the East and undoubtedly crimes were committed at the hands of those people" since those people should also be "gone after." Sher went on to state that this argument is completely "phony," as all those with that complaint would need to do is to provide evidence that some of those criminals who were to blame for the occupation crimes were in the United States. Yet Sher noted that in the end they ultimately cannot and that these critics provide nothing for the OSI to work with because when "you ask them to put up or shut up, they come away with nothing." Despite railing against opponents overly focused on the Hitler-Stalin relationship, Sher was sure to acknowledge that there were still legitimate and reasonable questions about the work of the OSI but that the office's work was both complicated and simple. He noted that at the end of the day it was "very important" that the United States send the "strong message" to both these men and their countries of origin that "you're not fit to claim the rights of United States citizens" and that the OSI needs to prosecute these individuals and deport them because "it is the right thing to do, and the world recognizes that." While the cases are difficult, emotional, and very frustrating (what Sher calls a "roller coaster"), the OSI asserted that it was dedicated to them and ultimately up to the work, full of intellectuals and government officials who include not only foreign affairs experts but also "some of the best historians in the world." With this, he ended his statements and pleas to the

American public, stating that while “time is against us,” “we’re not going to stop now.”²³⁹

Through his discussion of these points and supposed rebuttal to many of the arguments from JBANC and those affiliated with the organization, Sher still failed to address many of the actual concerns surrounding the United States’ interaction with evidence provided by the USSR or what the deportations of Baltic-American citizens meant for recognition of the Baltics as part of the USSR. This failed response and obscure messaging only further complicated the issue at hand.

Yet these claims from Neal Sher seemed to contradict other US governmental information regarding the Linnas case and the work of the OSI. For example, in a note later known as the “Buchanan Memo,” former White House Communications Director Patrick Buchanan stated that President Ronald Reagan opposed the deportation of Linnas and thought that “he should be tried in this country.” This opinion was apparently supported by Reagan’s closest advisors, as even Buchanan tried to dissuade Reagan from approving the Linnas case result, telling the President “that it was probably within his authority to block deportation.”²⁴⁰ Although the decision was ultimately left up to the OSI, the Department of Justice still tried to discount this testimony and Buchanan’s memory of the event, stating that it was inappropriate that Buchanan sent the memo. However, it was unclear whether Reagan had instructed Buchanan to release this information to the attorney general. Despite the uncertainty regarding the background of the memo, Buchanan was forthright in his previous attempts to calm the waters between the OSI and immigrant groups and frequently spoke of the need for the OSI to better

²³⁹ “Director of OSI Speaks to Washington Area Women’s Group,” 29 April 1987, page 13, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁴⁰ Ford Fessenden and Marie Cocco, “Disputed Memo Says Reagan Opposed Linnas’ Deportation,” *Newsday*, 18 March 1987, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

consider the stance of the American people. Earlier in 1987 he urged Attorney General Edwin Meese II to meet with US-based Eastern European groups who were opposed to the deportation of suspected Nazi war criminals, saying that such interactions were called for since as White House Communications Director he had received more than “15,000 letters and cards” relaying the concerns of Eastern European émigrés to the United States.²⁴¹ While this urging went unacknowledged at first, with Meese apparently avoiding a meeting for eighteen months, eventually the request was heeded, and a meeting was set up between Meese and Eastern European ethnic leaders, including the directors of JBANC’s parent organizations.

In the ethnic leaders' notes pertaining to the meeting, they noted their specific reasons for opposing the Linna's deportation and the general issue of prosecution of Baltic Americans in the United States. Commenting that this issue was of “great significance historically, legally, morally and even emotionally,” the leaders saw that deportations would “extend moral and legal equivalency to the Soviet Union through the U.S. justice system” and could cause the “grave long term consequences of lowering the high standards of democratic jurisprudence” within the United States. Further, they noted that the deportation would give a “major propaganda victory to the Soviets,” which was “an important goal of the Soviets” and the fulfillment of their desire to “discredit the émigré communities, not only in the West, but also in Soviet-controlled territories.”²⁴² Because of this, the leaders asked that the attorney general designate another country for deportation or ask the State Department to select another venue to which these criminals could be sent. Additionally, the directors of ALA, LAC, and EANC proposed that a

²⁴¹ Associated Press, “Buchanan Asks Meese to Meet on Nazi Cases,” *Los Angeles Times*, 13 February 1987, <https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-02-13-mn-2253-story.html>.

²⁴² “Meeting of Ethnic Leaders with Attorney General Edwin P. Meese,” 5 March 1987, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

new criminal statute be passed in order to allow suspected war criminals to receive fair trials comporting with American judicial standards. This would get rid of the gray area in which the US government was operating, as the lack of these standards and protocols was one of the reasons why there was so much uncertainty regarding these criminals' fates and the rules regarding what their deportations should look like. In response Meese made four points, largely acknowledging the directors' requests. He said he had no objection to changes in legislation that would allow war crimes trials in the United States and that he would appoint a special liaison to meet with US-Eastern Europeans about their concerns who could more frequently report back to the attorney general. While the directors were somewhat hesitant about these responses, Mari-Ann Rikken of JBANC noted the importance of these concessions and the meeting in general, stating that while a month prior the "topic was unmentionable," with the Linnas story being picked up by many smaller newspapers and discussed on the show *Larry King Live*, progress had been made.²⁴³ Further, she and the other directors saw that their work was not done, and they encouraged the public to send correspondence to representatives and senators asking that war crime trials be held in the United States and not in other countries. In urging their representatives to consider this proposal, JBANC and those affiliated with the organization could try to ensure that legislation be created to better articulate the possible issues that come up regarding war crimes trials and protect US citizens and immigrants who came to the United States in search of a democratic and free society.

²⁴³ Marianna Liss, "Balts, Ukrainians Meet with Meese to Discuss Concerns about OSI," *Ukrainian Weekly*, 15 March 1987, Box 21, Folder 5, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Similar to the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine, the OSI cases provided the basis on which JBANC could build its advocacy for why the United States 1) needed to be more transparent in its dealing with the Baltic states during this time and 2) needed to reject the growing desire for collaboration with the USSR that was gaining speed during the détente period. JBANC readily hopped on the anti-Sovietism bandwagon in its attempt to frame the Soviets as dishonest foreign policy partners, with whom the Americans ought not to get into bed. By trying to leverage the United States' democratic desire for transparency and position such transparency against the conspiratorial, clandestine Soviet-provided evidence in support of Baltic-American extradition, JBANC hoped that it could convince its counterparts in the US foreign policy milieu to better support Baltic independence. However, such appeals were rejected outright, showcasing JBANC's continual inability to influence the direction of US-Baltic relations and the growing tensions that sometimes existed between the Baltic-American community and its governing authorities. The rejection of JBANC's desire to strengthen the decades-long US non-recognition policy (which meant the potential undermining of such policy through the outcome of the OSI cases) also demonstrated a different tension between the United States and Baltic-American community. As we read about in the last chapter, Balts and Baltic-Americans were easily elevated within congressional space when it came to the Ad Hoc Committee's interest in JBANC's transnational ties, warmly welcomed into the public sphere and hailed as brethren who had similar American values. However, in the OSI cases, these same types of individuals were excluded from the US imaginary, tossed around by the USSR and US governments as disposable pieces of the complicated foreign policy puzzle—pawns in a greater Cold War game. In the course of just a couple of years, the differences in how Balts were represented outwardly and publicly within the United States changed, demonstrating how JBANC continually needed to

increase its lobbying efforts and seek to position members of both domestic and foreign communities at the forefront of its advocacy work, building its Rhetorical network up to favor a strengthened US position. Even when the outcomes did not favor JBANC's desires, the organization sought to utilize these tensions to its advantage and push its fellow actors in the governing apparatus to come to greater consensus regarding the region.

Conclusion

JBANC's response to rhetorical employment of secrecy in these cases and the Rhetorical cartography of how the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and the OSI cases were interwoven with the dynamic actors and concerns of the late-Cold War era reveals the ways this Baltic advocacy organization attempted to demystify the US government's actions towards the Baltic region. The organization continually argued for more transparency regarding where US-Baltic foreign policy was headed and positioned its response to the *occult* rhetoric surrounding these situations as one that could encourage the US government to more solidly state its intention regarding the future of the Baltics. In its discourse with the intensified state of secrecy that emerged through these cases, as well as the leaking and obfuscation that was embedded within these scenarios, JBANC strongly challenged and resisted these two cases of changing Baltic foreign policy. Because the use of leaking and obfuscation created an even richer environment of suspicion within the Cold War context, JBANC was able to leverage the United States' use of these strategies to advocate for a stronger US response of supporting the Baltic fight for independence and the region's desire to separate from the USSR. In analyzing the ways in which JBANC's arguments centered around the call for greater governmental clarity, one can see how this lobbying organization served as part of the complex, transnational governing apparatus that was characteristic of the

Cold War and precisely how JBANC helped curate and steer discussions of US-Baltic foreign policy during this time.

As rhetorical tactics, leaking and obfuscation are often employed within the political realm as ways for a government to manage various foreign policy concerns at the same time and assist with the implementation of foreign policy proposals and decisions. They are strategies meant to produce mystification as part of their rhetorical form; however, in doing this they also often generate wariness and uncertainty regarding the effectiveness of how a government handles situations and/or politicians make decisions. This is because these *occultic* devices of leaking and obfuscation create distance between the speaker, the subject, and the audience and often generate discussion regarding the presence of state secrecy and who is in control of policy issues. They are rhetorically powerful strategies insofar as they often generate moments of elevated discussion surrounding certain topics and offer reconceptualizations of reality, affecting the ways in which state information is understood and perceived.

However, while JBANC secrecy rejected in both of these cases, it was still used distinctively in both the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and OSI scenarios, achieving different aims within the US-Baltic-USSR debate. On the one hand, in the Sonnenfeldt doctrine, leaking and secrecy were ultimately used to bolster support for Baltic independence. The leaking of the initial Sonnenfeldt Doctrine conversations animated JBANC advocacy for renewed support for a US-supported independent Baltic statehood by opening a wedge between Kissinger, Ford, and others who were obliged to issue a response. With JBANC's rejection of the new supposed US foreign policy position and the ethnic lobbying organization's work to explain its detriment to the decades-long non-recognition policy, the US government ultimately rejected the proposal, affirming its pro-Baltic position and its desire to work with the Baltics as independent entities,

even throughout the changing political landscape of the détente period. It sealed up the issue in favor of the Baltic states, moving the issue forward in a productive manner. Even so, JBANC and Baltic Americans would not easily forget the issue, cited time and time again throughout their materials as a time when the United States tried to demand “oppressed nationalities accept a permanent status within the Soviet monolith.”²⁴⁴ On the other hand, the OSI cases and the interface of secret USSR-furnished evidence within the trials of Baltic Americans rejected a pro-Baltic position, threatening to damage the long-established relationship between the United States and the Baltics. The OSI’s secrecy concerning the deportation of possible Nazi war criminals functionally obfuscated how the USSR leveraged Americans’ anti-Nazi attitudes to force policy actions that ultimately supported the Soviets’ occupation of the Baltic states. Here, the USSR scored a strategic victory as it successfully extradited members of the Baltics and sought to align itself with the United States on the basis of anti-Naziism, but to the detriment of the Baltic-American community. While the former Sonnenfeldt Doctrine moments illustrated how leaking became a functional “win” on behalf of Baltic independence, the latter offers a secrecy “loss” that worked against these same aims.

However, when positioned next to each other, these cases are not just relevant because of their connection through secrecy; ultimately both the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and the OSI scenarios belong to the same Rhetorical milieu, existing together as moments that are equally important to the shaping of the foreign policy apparatus during the 1970s and 1980s. Through its interaction with these two moments, JBANC leveraged its goals, in both instances, to orient the United States towards the position of gaining a stronger Cold War foothold vis-à-vis the open-ended

²⁴⁴ Mairo Kari, “Two Views on Baltic Independence,” *Washington Post*, 29 May 1984, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

status of Baltic statehood. The specific events that spun out from the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine leak and the Soviet demands for Baltic-American extradition were both utilized to accomplish seemingly unconnected geopolitical goals. Ultimately, through the work of JBANC and its relationship with other parts of the greater Transnational Advocacy Networks that connected the ethnic lobbying organization to the US government, the Baltics, and the USSR, these various scenes of foreign policy negotiation were dragged into public-facing conversations in order to achieve the larger, tectonic Rhetorical objectives for which JBANC fought.

Chapter 4. The Interwoven Fabric of Baltic Lobbying: JBANC's Relationships with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine, Congressional Representatives, and Baltic Dissidents

Throughout its late-Cold War advocacy tenure, JBANC established and built up many relationships with congressional, Baltic, and other US governmental actors. The ways in which JBANC forged and strengthened these connections over the course of its late-Cold War advocacy work evolved over decades; however, JBANC's commitment to transnational work and bringing together Baltic and American voices was crucial to its agenda and rhetorical strategy. Whether it was the organization's broader work in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine, its establishment of personal and 1:1 relationships with congressional representatives, or its utilization of its transnational ties with the Baltic states and people from them, JBANC saw the need to make itself known as the primary entity that stitched together actors and seemingly disparate pieces of the Baltic-American milieu in order to call upon various relational avenues to push its pro-Baltic-independence messaging out to the rest of American society. In advocating for a more Baltic-centered US Cold War foreign policy, JBANC did not just seek to inform congressional representatives and other governmental-affiliated individuals about Baltic issues through the formal lobbyist-lawmaker meetings that surely occurred; it also sought to illuminate "the Baltic question" through casual interactions and meaningful relationships that were forged and maintained beyond the constrained practices of D.C. politics. Within lobbying circles, much of these interactions go unrecorded and are not necessarily represented as part of the archival record as it is difficult to "control, or even monitor, informal discussions over caviar and cocktails, or influence exerted through social

friendships.”²⁴⁵ However, in curating congressional relationships and building up its allies within the US governmental infrastructure, JBANC was able to ensure that its voice was included as part of the changing late-Cold War era political landscape and that its message would better reach the various audiences it was addressing. As it interfaced with various state and non-state colleagues, JBANC’s dense professional networks allowed it to bring separate pieces of the Baltic independence advocacy project together in a way that benefitted constituents, Balts and US lawmakers alike invested in the issue. Through elevating these parts of the conversation and making the case for why these separate entities ought to work together, JBANC insinuated itself within the workings of Congress.

It relied on structures of leverage politics to apply targeted pressure and persuasion to powerful actors who could directly work with the ethnic lobbying group and on its behalf to enact JBANC’s political will. By making its allies more visible and working to become ingrained within higher and higher levels of the governmental system, JBANC sought to mobilize its own members and those connected with the diasporic community to affect public opinion and establish credibility. Thus, JBANC, and its leveraging of Transnational Advocacy Networks, furthered its strategic framing of Baltic issues in order to try to strengthen perceptions of their importance in the eyes of the state. By transgressing the traditional boundaries separating East and West, US and USSR, democracy and communism, JBANC broke through the established divisions of the Cold War to prioritize the Baltic states and expand political bifurcations. JBANC’s work in this area thus solidified its connections with the legislative branch and ensured

²⁴⁵ Norman J. Ornstein, “Lobbying for Fun and Policy,” *Foreign Policy* 28 (Autumn 1977): 160.

that connections could be made between US people, US states, and the US government and the peoples, states, and governments of the Baltics.

In taking a deeper look at what the dense weaving together of relationships looked like and who JBANC cultivated an especially close relationship with during the 1970s and 80s, the dimensions of political action and the terrain on which politics was played can be fleshed out. And in doing so, the Rhetorical cartography and mapping of JBANC's networks during this era can be further complicated and inscribed a bit deeper. As the Cold War raged, JBANC more solidly entered into the "complex [foreign policy] interplay among a number of government agencies including the President, Department of State, Pentagon, CIA, Congress, and National Security Council," facilitating the strengthening and weakening of certain ties in order to make the case for the United States' need to prioritize Baltic independence as part of its late-Cold War agenda.²⁴⁶ Through the intermingling of these relationships, with both those formally part of the US governmental infrastructure and those outside of its limits, this ethnic lobbying organization was able to keep those in its sphere better attuned to ways in which a greater US priority of Baltic interests within its foreign policy decisions could actually make a big difference for the direction in which the war was headed. This perspective was essential for those whom JBANC wished to address, as it was imperative that governmental leaders see how US decisions across not only months or years but also decades needed to be continually forged and sustained with the pro-Baltic position in mind. A pro-Baltic position was not in opposition to US foreign interests but supportive of them—congruent with the direction in which lawmakers were already trying to steer the country. By first working to establish solid interpersonal relationships with these actors

²⁴⁶ Janice J. Terry, *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East: The Role of Lobbies and Special Interest Groups* (London: Pluto Press, 2005), 4.

and then working to cultivate those relationships over long and sustained periods of time, JBANC made issues of pro-Baltic foreign policy more legible to both the US and international audiences, carefully laying one piece after another into the puzzle of the US foreign policy apparatus. In JBANC's own words, "If you want to find new friends you have to inform them."²⁴⁷ Just as JBANC's lobbying helped lawmakers, lawmakers helped JBANC's lobbying, with both together grinding out the necessary work needed to continually strengthen the United States' Cold War strategy and its trek towards the end of the conflict.

Such a focus is the reason why this chapter especially prioritizes a focus on the relational ecology of big-R Rhetoric within JBANC's late-Cold War work. While there is still some focus on the micro-level rhetorical strategies that JBANC employed in order to persuade its various audiences, the chapter paints a more holistic picture of how JBANC conceived powerful networks that would, in turn, create the discursive conditions necessary to achieve its ends. Specifically, this chapter illuminates the network that JBANC spun from out of its center and the way in which it placed many different actors over many different times, places, and contexts into conversation with one another and sought to orchestrate a new conversation of Rhetorical possibility. This type of work also returns later on in the dissertation, underlined by the organization's long trek towards achieving Baltic independence by inserting the Baltic-American community into pre-existing discourses regarding self-determination. By exploring the ways that JBANC inserted itself into the congressional landscape and made itself an essential piece of the governmental apparatus—being the premier voice for Baltic-American issues on the Hill, creating strong ties with specific lawmakers for mutual benefit, and leveraging its ability to

²⁴⁷ "Latvians Hold Conference on Information Dissemination," 31 March 1984, HU OSA 300-8-5, Box 1, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

connect one on one with Balts living behind the Iron Curtain—the rest of the analysis of the organization can unfold easily, as well, revealing how JBANC called upon these same actors and tropes time and time again in the various foreign policy scenes in which it found itself over the course of the 1970s and 1980s.

To explore JBANC's relational orchestrations, I begin this chapter by exploring the impact of ethnic lobbying in foreign policy, especially during the latter half of the twentieth century, shedding light on the ways in which these groups typically forged relationships within the intergovernmental sphere. I also focus on how these groups specifically worked to address multiple audiences in their advocacy work, seeking to overlap their interests with not only the US administration but also congressional representatives and establish rapport with the US audience. Here, I also discuss the importance of a transnational lens on this work and the various components that come into play when considering foreign policy influence.

Moving onto my analysis, through illuminating key moments from the archival record, I explore the nexus of JBANC's congressional and transnational relationships in its support of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine, a group organized for the purpose of materializing support for Baltic issues and the concerns of Baltic Americans. By working to establish this committee and making congressional lawmakers a part of it, the lobbying organization was able to further embed itself as part of the fabric of foreign policy decision making during some of the war's most critical years in the 1980s. It also called heavily upon the work of its constituents to drum up support for the Ad Hoc Committee in order to promote the importance of their work in the cause. My second section of analysis centers around an especially close relationship that arose out of the Ad Hoc Committee—one that JBANC would come to rely upon heavily throughout the rest of the Cold War. Senator Don Riegle of Michigan,

who worked closely with the lobbying group to advocate for an agenda that supported Baltic independence, used his positionality within Congress and his ties with the administration to bolster JBANC's case but also relied on JBANC to bolster his congressional position and Cold War foreign policy hawk stance.

Finally, I showcase instances where JBANC relied on its international relationships, too, forging transnational channels between the United States and the Baltics in order to bring these worlds together, having East meet West face to face. These relationships were established between Baltic dissidents (as well as others on the ground in the Baltic states who helped to facilitate the growth of Baltic nationalist movements) and the US Congress with the aims of strengthening the US perception of the need for a stronger pro-Baltic-independence foreign policy stance. It also materialized JBANC's strong advocacy claims by having people who came from behind the Iron Curtain in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania speak to the necessity of such foreign policy work, giving "a face to the name." Through leveraging these relationships and building a more closely connected transnational sphere, JBANC was able to give congressional lawmakers closer access to those who knew the Baltic situation firsthand and strengthened its own case for the importance of US-Baltic allyship.

Ethnic Lobbying in Foreign Policy

During the late-Cold War period of the 1970s and 1980s, the influence of ethnic lobbying groups greatly expanded within the US governmental milieu, representing a flurry of ethnic interest group activism that became part of the US foreign policy scene. This would be significant to the turns that the conflict would take as well as what post-war reconstruction would look like, as these lobbies would turn out to be "significantly superior to voter behavior and

opinion polls in their impact on foreign policy decision making.”²⁴⁸ Although mainstream foreign policy analysis did not necessarily pay much attention to who helped to invoke these changes, focusing more on the decisions made by governmental elites of the time, many of these “lines between foreign policy and domestic decisions...bec[a]me blurred” during this timeframe, with domestic interest groups starting to “take great interest in issues that once would have been considered purely in the foreign domain.”²⁴⁹ Thus, amidst the changes to American politics in the wake of Watergate, Vietnam, and the Civil Rights Movement, the involvement of ethnic group activism in foreign policy was just one place in which the landscape opened up, with these ethnic groups making the case for their ability to advise decisions in Washington due to their keen interest in the state taking its “proper course” in the Cold War.²⁵⁰ Looking back on this period, there has been some scholarly interest in the overall development and proliferation of lobbying during this time and the insertion of ethnic groups in the narrative of the late-Cold War and post-Cold War political environment,²⁵¹ yet questions still remain about why some ethnic lobbying entities were especially effective during this time, attempting to influence the direction that US foreign policy took during the last decades of the conflict.

Part of this influence can be traced back to the groups’ ability to target certain spheres and levels of the American political landscape and especially direct their efforts at building relationships within federal institutions. While the executive branch and State Department was seen to be overall “less receptive to ethnic lobbies’ requests,” these groups’ efforts to target

²⁴⁸ Talhami, review of *U.S. Foreign Policy in the Middle East*, 69.

²⁴⁹ Ornstein, “Lobbying for Fun and Policy,” 161-162.

²⁵⁰ Haney, “Ethnic Lobbying in Foreign Policy,” 3.

²⁵¹ For examples of such work, see LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door?”. Also, Julien Zarifian, “The Armenian-American Lobby and Its Impact on U.S. Foreign Policy, *Society* 51, no. 5 (2014): 503–512.

Congress have been especially effective. Here, these interest groups have been demonstrated to use four main ways of establishing and maintaining contact with their audience of congressional representatives, findings explained in David M. Paul and Rachel Anderson Paul's book, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*. These four ways are direct lobbying, grassroots lobbying, coalition building, and monitoring the policy-making process.²⁵² By direct lobbying, ethnic groups form relationships with and speak directly to decision-makers in order to persuade them to support their cause. Grassroots lobbying efforts, on the other hand, do not happen through leaders of interest groups directly appealing to Congress but instead through the leverage of members and supporters, who discuss with and explain to policymakers why they are pushing a certain proposal of foreign policy action. While this type of work is still mainly directed at the audience of congressional representatives, it also is meant to influence public opinion, as well, creating a wider network through which support can be given to the ethnic group lobby. Coalition building, then, is aimed at strengthening the ties of the ethnic lobby through its connections with other interest groups and foreign policy actors, as these additional voices help to "develop initiatives, plan strategies, and enact policies."²⁵³ Finally, by monitoring the policy-making process, ethnic lobbyists keep their eye on the minute changes occurring in the foreign policy landscape, ensuring that their access to policymakers is kept open and that they can make "their preferences known" as needed.²⁵⁴

Further, the confluence of interests between ethnic lobbying groups, the US administration, and policymakers is also important to consider when thinking about the

²⁵² David M. Paul and Rachel Anderson Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2009), 59.

²⁵³ Paul and Paul, *Ethnic Lobbies and US Foreign Policy*, 64.

²⁵⁴ Smith, *Foreign Attachments*, 122.

relationships that ethnic lobbyist groups are able to curate on and off the Hill. In the past when lobby groups have been analyzed, conventional wisdom has long held that cohesive community, strong organization, and concentrated constituency power were some major factors in why lobbyists were able to successfully achieve what they set out to do. The categorization of lobbies as “strong” or “weak” has often revolved around how politically active its members are and whether or not they vote in a concentrated bloc. Additionally, there has never been much agreement about how to measure the relative strength of ethnic interest groups, so smaller ethnic powers were simply thought of as being relatively unimportant within the US foreign policy milieu.²⁵⁵ Even so, in recent years the relative “strength” of the ability of these small ethnic lobbyists to play a part in the development of US foreign policy has been re-assessed. There is now support for the idea that even smaller groups might be able to organize and stay focused on issues more easily, contributing to their overly influential power.²⁵⁶ Besides this factor, small ethnic lobbyist groups are also seen to gain a significant advantage if the interests of the lobby and those of the US administration overlap. If an ethnic lobby is trying to leverage the same outcome for which others in greater positions of US governmental power are looking, then its ability to gain necessary access to policymakers increases. The stacking of these goals not only shapes the “lobby’s political opportunity structure” but also “determin[es] its success.”²⁵⁷ Thus, even when certain lobbies have previously been seen as “weak” due to their organization’s size, audience base, or knowledge of how to navigate D.C. politics, if their objectives are congruent with those of the White House, their potential to make political waves significantly increases.

²⁵⁵ Haney, “Ethnic Lobbying in Foreign Policy,” 7.

²⁵⁶ Saideman, “The Power of the Small,” 93–105.

²⁵⁷ LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door?” 452.

Similarly, the degree to which ethnic lobbying groups are able to develop mutually supportive relationships between themselves and policymakers has been shown to indicate the success of a group's efforts. Just like how ethnic groups seek out congressional representatives who will be sympathetic to their cause, policymakers intentionally look for and want to be paired up with those who can "provide valuable resources to policy makers" such as "information, votes, and campaign contributions" in return for their interest in a certain foreign policy angle.²⁵⁸ Lobbyists provide those within the governmental framework information about current or proposed laws, political information regarding the interests of constituents, and technical information about the implications of the proposed policy. They also involve themselves extensively within the lawmaking process from the very beginning of proposed legislation, bill drafting, the organization of congressional hearings, the offering up of testimony, and the provision of witnesses. All in all, they serve as the mechanism by which information can be transferred between groups and politicians, their staffs, and agents within the context of private meetings and venues meant to influence the direction of policy decisions.²⁵⁹ Thus, the acquisition of specialized information and use of communication in this information transference is paramount to the ways in which non-state actors can generate interest and influence regarding their particular issues. In his text, *Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy*, Paul Watanabe notes that due to these benefits, the relationships between policymakers and ethnic groups can be quite strong even in comparison to other lobbying entities, as ethnic lobbyists and lawmakers can form "symbiotic relationships" that are quite strong. Because of their usefulness,

²⁵⁸ Haney, "Ethnic Lobbying in Foreign Policy," 8.

²⁵⁹ John M. de Figueiredo and Brian Kelleher Richter, "Advancing the Empirical Research on Lobbying," *Annual Review Political Science* 17 (2014): 163–85.

policymakers often strongly support ethnic groups and, in some cases, may even “for their own purposes, aggressively court ethnic groups and encourage their activism” in order to solidify their relationship and ensure maintained interest and momentum.²⁶⁰ Thus, the networks that spin out from ethnic lobbyists often consist of not short-term relationships but rather long-term ties over a significant period of time between those who will work on legislative projects for years and decades at a time, ensuring that the efforts are able to be continuously built up through sustained action.

Playing off of this, besides just looking at the relational ties between lobbyists and Congress, there are other ways that scholars can study the success of ethnic lobbies and look at the complexity of the foreign policy process in order to explain how these groups have a sizable influence on US foreign policy decisions. For example, most studies regarding the impact of these groups look at their influence over the course of short time frames and do not analyze the ways in which the lobby changes over a long period of time or across a significant swath of a long, drawn-out conflict. However, a more “longitudinal” perspective on these situations can help reveal the connections “between policy outcomes” and “sources of influence.”²⁶¹ Further, US-focused studies often do not look at the impact of international events in swaying ethnic groups’ positions or how those events and positions then have a “direct impact on pending policy debates.”²⁶² Including snippets of these considerations within discussions of the overall growth of ethnic groups’ lobbying during the 1970s and 1980s can be especially important to map their

²⁶⁰ Watanabe, *Ethnic Groups, Congress, and American Foreign Policy*, 47–74, especially 53.

²⁶¹ A notable exception to this is LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door?” In this work, he raises concerns regarding the time frame of previous studies and offers reasons why specific international events ought to be analyzed in relation to studies regarding the impact of ethnic lobbying groups on the development of US foreign policy.

²⁶² LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door?” 438–39.

significance on how the direction of US foreign policy was impacted and developed in answer to these moments. It can also help to extend these studies so that they encompass greater portions of the transnational and international political scene occurring at the heart of these contexts.

Such work and inclusion of the international context within ethnic lobbying groups' relationships with Congress can also illuminate the networks present in our increasingly transnational world—shedding light on the ways in which geographies, peoples, and political interests are interrelated across the globe and are advocated for far outside their place of origin. Through enmeshing the local and global and through internationally elevating awareness of issues that concern faraway governments, people, and places, matters of foreign policy have, in recent decades, seemed less “foreign.” Our transnational world means that “political, social, and economic life is deeply imbricated across national boundaries”²⁶³ and that foreign policy actors constantly have to keep “one eye adrift on the possible horizon and the other firmly fixed on the here and now.”²⁶⁴ However, the transnational environment also makes it extremely difficult for scholars to identify the ways in which this occurs—the influence on foreign policy actors cannot be easily traced back to one person, place, thing, or context due to its dispersed, relational, and interconnected character. This is why, due to the complexity of the foreign policy process, there has been great difficulty establishing the causal relationship between ethnic interest group lobbying and policy outcomes.²⁶⁵ Yet even so, because no one particular person, place, thing, or context is predictive of how meaning flows, traffics, and moves, it is all the more essential that

²⁶³ Belinda A. Stillion Southard, “How Community Organizations *Do Care* as Foreign Policy Actors,” in *Reassessing Foreign Policy Rhetorics in the Global Era: Concepts and Case Studies* eds. Allison M. Prash and Sara L. McKinnon (East Lansing, MI: Michigan State University Press, 2024): 269.

²⁶⁴ Matthew Houdek, “In the Aftertimes, Breathe: Rhetorical Technologies of Suffocation and an Abolitionist Praxis of (Breathing in) Relation,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 108, no. 1 (2022): 67.

²⁶⁵ LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door?” 438.

scholars pay attention to how transnational forces are expressed through symbols and practices that create the communicative nodes of discourse.²⁶⁶ Further, instead of viewing the growing forces of globalization as damaging to the ability of an individual actor to make change, the rise of globalization also means that the possibilities of *who* and *what* carry the ability to construct meaning-making have significantly expanded. Instead of seeing our increasingly internationally connected world as more heavily constraining the helpless populations that have traditionally been perceived as having little influence on the world stage, the strengthening of relationships across the globe has meant that these same actors have more opportunities to find appropriate venues and contexts in which their messages can cut through other rhetorical clutter. While the advocacy of certain foreign policy angles can seem abstract and theoretical to the average citizen—often hard to conceptualize for the majority of the US public, for example—these issues are simultaneously grounded in very concrete events, people, and places that give issues of foreign policy a place and a name. Through harnessing tangible examples, found and established through interpersonal relationships, issues of foreign policy can become more legible to constituents and lawmakers alike. These issues are then in a position to be better taken up and proliferated across society through the elevation of their material importance.

One last factor to consider in analyzing ethnic lobbyist groups and the importance of their unique position at the nexus of the US administration and Congress is their third arena of relationships—relationships with the US population—that provide them with the opportunity to sway the political leanings of the general public. This last portion of the lobbyist network is essential to understanding its influence on foreign policy positions as by addressing a general US

²⁶⁶ Belinda A. Stillion Southard, *How to Belong: Women's Agency in a Transnational World* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2018), 10.

audience and ensuring that “lay” people are invested in their issues, these ethnic groups are able to bring a greater portion of the domestic and international audience on board to support their position. As mentioned previously, the overall number of lobbyists notably increased in both power and visibility on the political stage during the late-Cold War timeframe; however, ethnic groups stand out in their unique ability to persuade the general public to side with them on their issues. One reason for this is that they did not have to “fight against a tide of public opinion” regarding their areas of activism as there was really no “real tide of public opinion to overcome.”²⁶⁷ In the case of JBANC, the majority of the US “lay” audience did not have a readily formed opinion regarding Baltic independence; therefore, the organization could work with more of a “blank slate,” so to speak, using its platform to help educate and explain to Americans why they ought to be invested in such an issue. This would be essential to ensuring that the lobby’s policies were supported by public opinion and would help still the fears of policymakers, as these lawmakers are notorious for worrying that supporting certain lobbies’ demands could cause negative political repercussions for them if a large portion of the US population did not also support such policies.²⁶⁸ Thus, building strong relationships with the US population also has to be an essential part of the ethnic lobbying groups’ activist work, ensuring that their goals fall in line with the interests of both constituents and the policymakers with whom they created such strong ties.

²⁶⁷ Ornstein, “Lobbying for Fun and Policy,” 162.

²⁶⁸ LeoGrande, “Pushing on an Open Door?” 439.

Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States & Ukraine

One of the strongest relationships that JBANC built up between itself and the US governmental infrastructure during the late-Cold War era was through the creation of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine. Formed in 1981 during the 97th Congress, this committee organized with the purpose of “formaliz[ing] congressional support for Baltic, Ukrainian, and related issues, in order to bring these issues more systematically to the attention of the Congress, the government, the press and the public.”²⁶⁹ It also functioned to “raise the consciousness of the American public and the Congress, and to make the Soviet Union aware of the fact that people in public office [were] concerned about the fates of Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Ukraine.”²⁷⁰ Originating as a result of the efforts of Representatives Brian Donnelly of Massachusetts and Charles Dougherty of Pennsylvania, the group started as a bipartisan effort meant to gather members of Congress interested in Baltic and Ukrainian activism. Representative Dougherty was particularly interested in this effort as his interest in Baltic and Ukrainian matters grew due to the strong “activism of ethnic Ukrainians and Balts in his Philadelphia district” and his realization of the non-governmental efforts to further Americans’ knowledge about the struggles in these countries.²⁷¹ In their initial pleas to colleagues to join the committee, Dougherty and Donnelly stated that United States had the

²⁶⁹ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁷⁰ Algis Silas, “Committee on Baltic states, Ukraine needs active involvement of the community,” *Ukrainian Weekly*, 9 February, 1986, Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁷¹ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Ad Hoc Committee on Baltic States Formed in Congress,” Press Release, 12 June 1981, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

responsibility to fight Soviet aggression both within and outside the borders of the USSR and that it was ever more important that the United States and its government “keep our pledge to support those who refuse to let their own dreams of freedom die.” By encouraging their colleagues to join, the two representatives asked for other lawmakers to offer up their own ideas and initiatives for the future of the committee in order to find “legislative solutions” for the most pressing and immediate concerns of constituents of Ukrainian and Baltic heritage. Thus, the committee was formed with the mission to “formalize [the] interest in and commitment to the freedom [that those of Lithuanian, Estonian, Latvian, and Ukrainian descent] seek for their beloved homelands.”²⁷²

With the committee’s formation and the Baltic-American community’s role in its inception, JBANC immediately saw the benefit of the Ad Hoc Committee and the potential for strong relations to form between it, the ethnic lobbying group, and congressional representatives that were members of the group. In a letter to Representative Donnelly after the Committee’s inception, JBANC articulated gratitude for the endeavor, stating that it wanted to “express to [Donnelly its] appreciation for taking the initiative in forming the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine” and that it was encouraged by Donnelly’s previous “strong efforts on Ukrainian and Baltic Issues,” as it knew that he had earned the “full support of those ethnic Americans in [his] district.” Further it articulated that JBANC, as the main representative for the three nationally based Baltic organizations of the LAC, ALA, and the

²⁷² Correspondence from Brian Donnelly and Charles Dougherty to Congressional Colleagues, 3 February 1981, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

EANC, desired to meet with Donnelly to “discuss a number of current Baltic and related issues” and looked forward to a strong future of working together.²⁷³

While it was an informal and unofficial committee, the Ad Hoc Committee had consistent support across Congress, averaging 100 members at a time and undertaking “numerous actions on behalf of the Baltic and Ukrainian communities.” Some of these actions included the initiation of Baltic Freedom Day resolutions, informing Congress about the state of Baltic and Ukrainian political prisoners, and working closely with diasporic organizations to raise Baltic issues, serving as the main congressional contact point for groups such as JBANC. While the informality of the group ultimately meant that it had no budget or staff, the Committee was able to rely on the effort and administrative resources of groups such as JBANC and others in the Baltic and Ukrainian organizations to help it organize its efforts. Thus JBANC directly saw that “the amount of work the Baltic and Ukrainian communities [could] expect out of the Ad Hoc Committee [was] dependent upon the amount of effort the Baltic and Ukrainian communities and their organizations put into it.”²⁷⁴ Further, the Ad Hoc Committee most often took up issues when the Baltic ethnic lobbying group first raised an issue, serving as a reactionary entity rather than taking initiative to address Baltic and Ukrainian concerns. JBANC served the committee an easily digestible meal of palatable stories and concerns that the congressional entity could digest, parrot, and deal with but would not be overwhelmed by or turned off from.

²⁷³ Correspondence from the Joint Baltic American National Committee to Representative Brian J. Donnelly, 24 March 1981, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁷⁴ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

With this, JBANC viewed the work of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine as extremely important to Balts and Baltic Americans because of how the group was able to fight for Baltic-related issues within the governmental sphere and give publicity to issues that would have usually never been able to gain that level of respect in other circumstances. JBANC articulated time and time again that the presence of this Ad Hoc group did not merely “signif[y] that members of the U.S. Congress sympathize[d] with the plight of the Baltic people,” but additionally “the Committee’s presence serve[d] to remind everyone of the U.S.’ commitment to freedom and human rights of all peoples.”²⁷⁵ Further, the committee was responsible for many resolutions and negotiations between the United States and USSR on behalf of dissidents, negotiations that sought to ensure the reunification of families from the Soviet Union. And, perhaps most importantly, JBANC worked alongside the Ad Hoc Committee to ensure that the US government did not recognize the illegal Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania or divert from the 1940 Welles Document.

For these reasons—as well as the level of importance that the Committee held within the messy US-Baltic-USSR foreign policy milieu—JBANC saw the need to be part of the expansion of Ad Hoc Committee activity and to increase its membership and exposure, as more congressional representatives interested in associating with the organization meant more voices able to advocate for Baltic issues. It would often petition the Ad Hoc Committee to grow, stating that “JBANC, as well as the Baltic organizations and communities it represents, can and should take a more active and aggressive role in expanding the activities of the Ad Hoc Committee” and

²⁷⁵ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “4 Points Articulating the Importance of the Ad Hoc Congressional Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

helping the Ad Hoc Committee include a plan for growth in its petitions to other congressional members. As JBANC viewed the larger Ad Hoc Committee as important to the “successful implementation of [their] plans” and the “full cooperation and joint effort” between Congress and various individuals concerned with the interests of the Baltics, continual expansion and collection of congressional representatives was a chief concern of their Ad Hoc Committee relations.

Yet, perhaps even more importantly, JBANC began to emphasize the need for members of the Baltic-American community to be more involved in the committee’s actions and asked for constituents to write to their representatives, whether the lawmaker was part of the group or not, in order to encourage the committee’s work. Articulating the importance of such actions, the ethnic lobbying group noted that while “JBANC and central organizations [were] very effective in contacting and influencing individual congressmen, the real power [lay] in the hands of the constituency” and that “unless individual Balts and Ukrainians [wrote], call[ed] or visit[ed] their representatives in support of specific issues” the efforts of JBANC were meaningless. Thus, JBANC believed that members of the Baltic ethnic community in the United States needed first and foremost to “make sure [that their] views [were] fully and actively supported” in Congress. It would lean heavily on its constituents, asking for their help in persuading members of Congress to join the Ad Hoc Committee and to be vocal about their desires for more pro-Baltic American foreign policy, demonstrated throughout other chapters of this dissertation. One reason for JBANC’s concern regarding the increase of committee membership and its petitions to Baltic Americans to make their case to those in Congress surrounded the fact that every two years, following congressional elections, a number of members of the Ad Hoc Committee would naturally lose their seats, and new members would need to join the group in order to keep its

membership up.²⁷⁶ Thus, JBANC worked almost continually with the committee chairmen to identify members of Congress who might be interested in serving and then would initiate the sending of “Dear Colleague” letters from the committee chairmen to encourage others to join the group. JBANC would also write its own letters to these same members, introducing itself as the main Baltic ethnic lobbying group in the United States, providing facts about the Ad Hoc Committee, and detailing why congressional support through membership “mean[t] a great deal to Baltic and Ukrainian Americans.”²⁷⁷ In addition to reaching out to representatives themselves, they would also prepare lists of Balts and Baltic Americans in the “target districts” of potential Ad Hoc Committee members so that they could send informational packs to these community members and give them the tools necessary to lobby their representatives to join the committee, as well.²⁷⁸

In the congressional letters written to representatives not yet part of the Ad Hoc Committee, active members of the committee such as Representatives Don Ritter and Brian Donnelly would often offer a conception of the historical narrative of US-Baltic relationships and emphasize the number of dissidents and immigrants who lived in the United States, using these narratives and statistics as part of their pleas for more of their colleagues to take up these causes as their own. For example, in one such invitation letter, sent on August 2, 1983, Ritter and Donnelly wrote about the “harsh grip of Soviet rule” and discussed how the Baltic States and

²⁷⁶ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁷⁷ Correspondence from Joint Baltic American National Committee to Congressmen, 29 March 1985, Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁷⁸ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Ukraine were not only in a “desperate fight to retain their national identities, religion, culture, and traditions” but also had to deal with the Soviet Army and the KGB, who constantly kept a “close watch over all citizen movement and anyone who dare[d] to speak against the injustice of the Iron Curtain.” They then compared that situation to the Balts and Baltic Americans who lived in the United States, informing their colleagues that “hundreds of thousands of Americans of such heritage” were continually “troubled by the persecution of their families and friends remaining in Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and Ukraine” and continually “hope[d] for the day when their homeland [would] again be free.” Using this comparison between the countries and emphasizing that Balts and Baltic Americans were counting on US governmental intervention, the representatives tried to leverage the necessity of membership in the Ad Hoc Committee and specifically call upon the fact that “what we do in the U.S. Congress means a great deal to these people,” who “keep the lights of freedom glimmering.” Asking congressional members to consider whether any people in their district came from Lithuanian, Latvian, Estonian, and Ukrainian descent and if they did, whether they deserved a high level of support in Congress, Ritter and Donnelly continually called upon their colleagues to join the committee and to help direct “attention to their homelands” in a way that would not otherwise be possible within the congressional sphere.²⁷⁹

As mentioned, in tandem with the letters that the heads of the committee sent in an attempt to recruit more representatives, JBANC also sent out correspondence to potential members in order to highlight its relationship with the committee and put additional pressure on

²⁷⁹ Correspondence from Representatives Don Ritter and Brian Donnelly to Congressional Colleagues, 2 August 1983, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

members to join. Usually these letters emphasized the committee's role in serving as a bulwark against changing the United States' policy of non-recognition regarding the incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the USSR and the ways in which the coalition helped ensure that the US government continued to maintain this position. More specifically, JBANC highlighted to potential members how the bi-partisan committee helped "to focus congressional attention on the Soviet Union's illegal occupation of territory" and supported these states' fight for self-determination and struggle through human rights violations. Seeing itself as the primary voice for Balt émigrés in the United States, JBANC asserted within its correspondence that it was writing on "behalf of Baltic-Americans" living in the new congressional representatives' districts and thus was writing to "urge [them] to join" the committee for the greater benefit of the Baltic states. In its recruitment letters, JBANC asserted time and time again that membership and any support of the Ad Hoc Committee would not only be greatly appreciated but would also "aid the United States in sending a signal to the Soviet Union that the plight of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania [would] not be ignored."²⁸⁰

Upon the heels of these letters to congressional members, JBANC would also make follow-up visits to any of the "targeted" congressional offices that received letters and arrange meetings between local Baltic community representatives and their congressmen in Washington, D.C., so that those in Congress could see how active and engaged members of the community were. Another important aspect of JBANC's recruitment of additional members to the committee included its development of special Ad Hoc Committee press releases on each of the committee

²⁸⁰ Correspondence from John B. Genys, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee to Congressional Members, 9 August 1983, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

members that JBANC would then distribute to the congressional representatives' Baltic and Ukrainian constituents, "promoting their membership and activities on behalf of the Balts or Ukrainians." Members of Congress saw these releases as especially beneficial as they would create ties between the ethnic community and representatives, providing a foundation upon which they could create stronger relationships. These releases were so meaningful to lawmakers that they would be promoted to non-members of the Ad Hoc Committee or those considering membership, as such documents would serve as "free publicity" in their districts, something that JBANC knew was an important selling point to candidates who were up for re-election.²⁸¹

Congressional members often responded well to these pleas, seeing the work of the Ad Hoc Committee as work that they wanted to join and support. In one letter of response to JBANC informing the organization of his willingness to join the committee, Wisconsin representative Tom E. Petri stated that it was his "pleasure to be of service to the Baltic Ad Hoc Committee" and that he was glad to join a group of likeminded individuals who found issue with the Soviet Union's illegal seizure and occupation of the Baltic States and Ukraine, as those actions led to the countries being "forced to endure the denial of self-determination, and on-going human rights violations under the rule of the Soviet Union." Because Petri saw the "Ad Hoc committee as a mechanism which [would] allow members of Congress to focus their attention on the important issue of the illegal occupation of these states" and thus serve as a way for congressional members to ensure that "this occupation [would not be] accepted and forgotten," he enthusiastically

²⁸¹ Joint Baltic American National Committee, "A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine," Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

agreed to join.²⁸² Similarly, in a letter to the committee, Leon E. Panetta, representative from California, stated that due to his previous support of S.J. Res. 296—which designated June 14, 1984, as Baltic Freedom Day—he felt that he had a “long-standing commitment to the heroic struggles of the Baltic peoples” and desired to continue this support in the form of membership in the Ad Hoc Committee. Panetta asserted that because he “strongly supported this and other efforts to focus world attention on the continuing plight of the Baltic and Ukraine peoples” and because the United States “as the leader of the free world... has a profound obligation to promote and encourage respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms—including self-determination,” he felt this membership was not merely important but rather necessary to furthering the cause.²⁸³ In these ways, Panetta’s response to the committee’s encouragement of membership was also positive, in many places mirroring Petri’s correspondence in a sort of formulated response that expressed interest in joining the ranks of those already invested in the Baltic independence issue. Indeed, Panetta exhibited that a similar air of duty and patriotism was present in other representatives’ responses to the committee and JBANC’s petitions for membership.

Besides this work in trying to continually grow the committee and promote its efforts, JBANC would also consistently do things for the Ad Hoc Committee that ensured that the relationship between the two entities remained strong and that the committee had the support it needed to continue to work to raise the issues of Balts and Baltic Americans within the broader

²⁸² Correspondence from Thomas E. Petri to Algis Silas, Director of Public Relations for the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 23 January 1986, Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁸³ Correspondence from Leon E. Panetta to Sigrida Reinis, 14 June 1984, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

congressional structure. For example, JBANC “prepare[d] a list of long and short terms goals” that was presented to the committee; prepared “position papers, resolutions and plans of action that [could] be provided to the Ad Hoc Committee members on specific issues;” kept the Baltic community “up to date on Ad Hoc Committee activity by providing timely, detailed information to the Baltic organizations and press;” and met with Ukrainian representatives to “foster increased activity and cooperation from the Ukrainian American community.” JBANC also served as a liaison between Baltic Americans and Congress, encouraging and finding roles for community members to support the committee, such as contacting congressional representatives, spreading the word for help, and finding individuals interested in taking a more active role in the organization of events. For example, JBANC once again would encourage those who were part of Baltic community organizations such as language schools, cultural centers, and church associations to “write letters, in the organization’s name, to local representatives urging them” to continue to stay a part of or to join the Ad Hoc Committee, to help “disseminate information about Ad Hoc Committee to their organization members,” to “seek out individuals who would work as ‘project managers’ for the local Ad Hoc Committee recruitment campaign,” to “publish information about Ad Hoc Committee activities in their local newsletter, flyers, and newspapers,” and to “organize delegation which [could] visit local congressmen, either in their own districts or in Washington, D.C.”²⁸⁴ Further, JBANC would reference the importance of this sort of work time and time again to the Baltic-American community. It noted that even though it might seem mundane, such actions were necessary to the continued functioning of the

²⁸⁴ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

committee, citing that sometimes in the past when congressional offices rejected their appeals to join the committee, it was because “none of their constituents asked them to.” Once again pushing the constituent angle, JBANC helped to cultivate and create the Baltic-American community as one that was personally invested in issues of congressional support and even committee support, creating the constituency as one that was deeply immersed within the inner workings of the congressional sphere. Thus JBANC continually referenced the power of its constituent voices within its documentation about itself and its lobbying power and would use this narrative of constituency involvement to remind members in the Baltic-American community that often just one letter from a constituent could convince a congressman to join the committee or vote a certain way regarding issues of US-Baltic relations. Its relationship with constituents was strong, and JBANC knew this, asking them to rise to the occasion and do the work needed to keep inching the United States forward in its pro-Baltic positionality. JBANC saw that it was absolutely essential that individuals in the Baltic-American community take initiative in interfacing with Congress as well as the greater US public about Baltic issues, partaking in correspondence such as writing “letters to the editor” for their community newspapers and publications, promoting the Ad Hoc Committee’s work, and finding other non-Baltic-American allies within their communities who could also write to their representatives, encouraging them to join the committee and to stand up for Baltic issues.²⁸⁵ All in all, JBANC believed that these actions and the continued strengthening of relationships between itself, the Ad Hoc Committee, and the Baltic-American community could result in a “full and effective

²⁸⁵ Joint Baltic American National Committee, “A Proposal for Expanding the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine,” Box 28, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

campaign to increase Ad Hoc Committee membership and activity” that “require[d] cooperation and coordination between all Baltic and Ukrainian groups and individuals.” While sometimes JBANC thought that it had not “utilized [its] political strength to its fullest potential” as part of the committee, it did see that in general the campaign surrounding the Ad Hoc Committee and its overall success was able to “serve as a model for future activities” and ultimately demonstrate to “Congress that Balts and Ukrainians are a force to contend with and should be listened to.”

Often these efforts by members of the Baltic-American community to reach out to their congressional representatives were well received, highlighting the importance of the ways that constituents served as a middleman and essential links between JBANC and elected officials. In one response to a Baltic-American constituent, Washington state representative Al Swift thanked Mike Jansevics for writing to him and “bring[ing him] up to date on the status of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and the Ukraine.” Swift went on to state that his membership in the committee was inspired by many things, including his thoughts that Americans were “twice-blessed,” being “products of other cultures whose traditions and beliefs” were something to “take great pride in” and ought to be protected in order to ensure that these forms of identity could continue to live on and be shared with upcoming generations of Americans. Further, he stated that as the United States is the “product of people from many backgrounds,” the US government should be mindful not only that its country is “a home for people and cultures from literally every part of the world” but also that these various identities are unique and beneficial. Upon that basis, Swift commented that the United States should also be concerned for those whose identities were being attacked because they were not valued—as “for the most callous of reasons, the Soviets have tried to subsume many disparate people into the Russian ‘ideal’ of a faceless

Soviet citizenry.”²⁸⁶ Due to these reasons and his general outlook on the importance of the multiplicity of American identity, Swift stated that he was proud to have joined the Ad Hoc Committee and that that he had decided to take up this issue and support the group after he received Jansevics’s letter.

Beyond Swift, other members of Congress were similarly grateful for the involvement of Baltic Americans in the advocacy of the Ad Hoc Committee, thanking constituents for their correspondence and expressing their thoughts regarding the need for the United States to support the Baltic states. In a letter to John Berzups of Maryland, congressional representative Roy Dyson stated that he had recently started to share the concerns of his constituents regarding these issues and both co-sponsored the H.J. Resolutions to designate June 14th as Baltic Freedom Day and joined the committee upon the urging of his district, hoping that his involvement could yield some benefit to the cause.²⁸⁷ In a similar letter to John Berzups from another one of Maryland’s representatives, Michael Barnes, the congressional representative commented that not only could he be effective in addressing these problems through the Ad Hoc Committee but his work on the House Foreign Affairs Committee could also target some of these concerns. Moreover, he asserted that the committees could “work together to exert meaningful pressure on the Soviet government, and to sustain a strong protest against the illegal Soviet occupation of these areas,” strengthening the tactics and ways in which governmental officials could address these issues.²⁸⁸ Upon receiving letters from people in their districts, congressional representatives also connected

²⁸⁶ Correspondence from Congressional Representative Al Swift to Mike Jansevics, 27 January 1984, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁸⁷ Correspondence from Congressional Representative Roy Dyson to John Berzups, 25 January 1984, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁸⁸ Correspondence from Congressional Representative Michael D. Barnes to John Berzups, 13 January 1984, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

with constituents about their shared ethnic and cultural identities, finding common ground in their backgrounds and concern for those who still lived in the countries from which they had come. Representative Richard Durbin of Illinois responded to the letter of Anita Bedelis, Public Relations Director of JBANC, stating that he was especially encouraged by her letter as he, too, was the son of a Lithuanian immigrant and that he intended “to do all [he could] to promote sensitivity and understanding of the national aspirations of Ukrainian and Baltic peoples.”²⁸⁹ Representative Robert Mrazek likewise referenced his Czech descent as a reason for interest in the committee, although he ultimately declined the invitation to join. Even with this decision, Mrazek’s pride in his cultural heritage still seemed to greatly influence his response, as he said that his background made him “particularly sensitive to the Soviet domination of Central and Eastern Europe” and that he would look for ways to support “initiatives on behalf of the citizens of the Baltic States and their freedom from Soviet occupation.”²⁹⁰

In addition to this focus on ethnic backgrounds and shared experience, some members of Congress went further in their responses to correspondence regarding Ad Hoc Committee membership and their offers to help the group. In his response to a constituent letter, representative Dan Burton of Indiana mentioned to his solicitor, Erna Skrastins, that he would contact his Republican colleagues from Indiana and ask which of them were members, as he believed that at the time of his writing to her he was the “only one who [had] agreed to serve as a member of the Committee.” Further, he encouraged her in her letter writing, stating that he knew that some of his fellow representatives would not take the initiative to join a group like this

²⁸⁹ Correspondence from Congressional Representative Richard Durbin to Anita Bedelis, 24 January 1983, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

²⁹⁰ Correspondence from Congressional Representative Robert J. Mrazek to B. J. Maikovskis, 15 November 1983, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

unless they “received requests from their constituents.”²⁹¹ Thus, many representatives within Congress seemed to directly link their membership in the Ad Hoc Committee to the pleas of their constituents and of JBANC, expressing their concern over the actions of the USSR and their desire for the United States to intervene in the situation and advocate for the Baltics to gain a reinstatement of their independence.

With the pressure that JBANC was able to put on congressional representatives and its ability to mobilize the Baltic-American community to write to lawmakers, asking them to support the Ad Hoc Committee, the ethnic lobbying group demonstrated its ability to forge strong connections in the congressional sphere. By pairing together representatives and constituents, JBANC was the bridge between Baltic Americans and the US Congress, emphasizing the need for constituents to be the justification for congressional support of the committee as well as the specific efforts JBANC pushed through it. Hearing firsthand from constituents about the importance of US support for Baltic and Ukrainian issues and even being able to write themselves into the story as members of the Eastern European ethnic enclave, representatives were able to form a connection with the committee that further solidified their support for it and helped them be more invested in issues of the region.

A Cold War Foreign Policy Hawk

With its work in conjunction with the Ad Hoc Committee, JBANC was also able to forge even more personal and utilitarian relationships with specific lawmakers, providing itself with the opportunity to create even more long-lasting and sustained connections that could carry the

²⁹¹ Correspondence from Congressional Representative Dan Burton to Erna Skrastins, 29 November 1983, Box 21, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

organization through the rest of the Cold War. One such example of JBANC partnering with a policymaker and helping to shape him into a “friend” and “insider” that could have key knowledge on Baltic issues was the relationship between JBANC and Senator Don Riegle. Riegle, of Michigan, would likewise position himself as a close ally of JBANC and an individual whom JBANC needed for its work to be sustained in Congress throughout almost all of the 1980s. His membership in the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine affirmed these dual positions and afforded him various opportunities to address issues surrounding the Baltic states head-on within his congressional career, affirming the all-too-popular anti-Soviet stance of the time. Much of this effort was focused on bringing the Senate’s attention to and generating support for commemorations such as Baltic Freedom Day and Estonia’s, Latvia’s, and Lithuania’s independence days, about which you will read further in upcoming chapters; however, he also spoke about the individual struggles of the three countries and concerns that arose regarding their expression of national identity and fight for independence. By linking JBANC with his other congressional colleagues and articulating the ethnic groups’ position on the congressional stage, Riegle was able to address various audiences that JBANC did not have the immediate ability to target, giving the organization greater credibility and a wider spread while also building up his own professional interests and pursuits as a Cold War foreign policy hawk. This convenient “symbiotic relationship” benefitted both sides greatly, showcasing the strength of the growing lobbyist-lawmaker coupling of the time and demonstrating the effectiveness of the Ad Hoc Committee in drumming up support and creating long-lasting relationships regarding pro-Baltic endeavors. Through such ties, Riegle would become an essential part of JBANC’s “brand,” enthusiastically taking up its marquee topics and helping to

lay down the pieces for a systematic adoption of a more pro-Baltic US foreign policy position by the US Congress and administration.

One instance of Riegle using his positionality within the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine to advocate for JBANC's agenda is his remarks to the Senate during Captive Nations Week 1987. Addressing President Reagan, Riegle specifically referenced the need for the United States to support the captive nations of Eastern Europe honored throughout this week, a commemorative event that JBANC worked to support within the US political environment throughout the 1980s. Emphasizing that it was important for "citizens of the free world to honor the citizens of the captive nations who, at great personal risk and sacrifice, continue[d] to demand respects for their human rights," Riegle stressed the need for the United States to affirm its belief that these countries could individually express their national inclinations within the landscape of the Soviet Union and that people worldwide would pursue freedom of "thought, conscience, and religion."²⁹² Citing the Helsinki Final Act, signed thirteen years before his Senate speech, in connection to this commemorative event, Riegle mentioned that while these accords publicly affirmed the nations' expression of their own ideas and information within the Soviet Union, the achievement of such expression was not a given. Riegle noted that watch groups had to pop up in these countries of Eastern Europe in order to monitor the compliance of Soviet authorities with the provisions of the agreement and that the United States should thus also hold the USSR accountable to the accords. For example, many citizens of the "captive nations" countries were subjected to harsh prison terms in Siberia for exercising their rights granted in the accords, and through illuminating these specific cases of injustice, Riegle sought

²⁹² Statement made in front of the Senate by Don. W Riegle, Jr. for Captive Nations Week 1987, 24 July, 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

to ensure that President Reagan heard from him directly regarding the United States' need to continue to back up the actions and national inclinations of states such as the Baltics.

In his remarks, Riegle went on to reference various stories of the trials and tribulations of people within the captive nations, painting a picture of *why* the United States should support the week and continue to apply pressure to the USSR to uphold the Helsinki Accords. Stating that “despite the persecution of these human rights activists, their presence continues to be felt throughout the captive nations,” Riegle pointed out that while more and more public demonstrations were occurring within the Baltic states, the vitality of Helsinki-86 (one of the Baltic human rights watch groups that turned into a pro-Baltic-Independence organization) had grown significantly across the states. Riegle was sure to use this description of what was happening on the ground in the Baltics as the impetus for why the United States ought to “reaffirm [its] commitment to support the citizens of the world’s captive nations in their struggle to regain their basic freedoms.” Moreover, he argued that it should serve as the reason why the United States should strengthen its “resolve to ensure that the letter and spirit of the provisions of the Helsinki accords [were] honored by the signatory nations.” He felt that by better highlighting the work of Helsinki-86—work that JBANC surely told him about due to its strong transnational ties back to the Baltic states—to the rest of the US government, he could pique the interest of his fellow lawmakers and the presidential administration in discussing the need to keep supporting “individual liberties in the captive nations” and providing an opportunity for the United States to ultimately “play an important role in advancing individual freedoms throughout the world.”²⁹³

²⁹³ “Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 100th Congress, First Session,” 24 July, 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

As Riegle advocated for the individual Baltics states' expression of their identity and brought such concerns forth to Congress, he primarily worked with information he had gleaned from JBANC and other Baltic Americans. Another instance came through in his petition to Congress regarding the celebration of 600 years of Christianity in Lithuania. Within his address, Riegle highlighted the plight of Christians in the country and their struggle for religious freedom, urging the Senate to formally advocate for the right of Lithuanians to "celebrate the important role Christianity has played in their nation's history and culture." As he worked off of JBANC material underscoring the plight of Christians across the Baltic states, the ethnic lobbying organization gave Riegle the information he needed to speak about the issue to others invested in US-Baltic-USSR foreign policy environment. More specifically Riegle's address accompanied the Senate's unanimous approval of Senate Resolution 232, which asserted Congress's support for religious freedom in Soviet-occupied Lithuania and articulated the hope that the country would be able to celebrate the 600th anniversary of Christianity in the mainly Catholic state. Once again, Riegle capitalized upon the passing of a Baltic-focused resolution as an opportunity for him to speak directly to the executive branch, urging President Reagan, Secretary of State George Shultz, and other officials (namely those who were about to embark as part of the US delegation to the Vienna Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe), to be bold in their accusations that the Soviets had violated the right of religious liberty in Lithuania and throughout the USSR. In this appeal, he especially encouraged the US President to emphasize the fact that the USSR had pledged to "guarantee religious freedom as a signatory to numerous international agreements" and to leverage this material within the United States' negotiations with the country.

Riegle's petition hailed religious freedom as an essential way in which Congress could "continue to declare its support for the oppressed in Lithuania and throughout the Soviet Union,"

with the hopes that greater tolerance could be granted to those in Soviet-occupied states and that the boundaries of *glasnost* could be expanded. In order to defend this point, Riegle further focused on how the Soviet Union's violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Helsinki Final Act through its "on-going denial of religious liberty and other basic human rights" ought to be a concern to the United States. Providing examples of what this looked like in the Baltics, once again furnished by JBANC and members of the Baltic-American community, Riegle spoke about how "religious believers, both young and old" were routinely persecuted in the Baltic states, with children being "discriminated against by teachers and school administrators [who] would publicly ridicule them."²⁹⁴ Further, Riegle addressed how Christians seemed to suffer job discrimination across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and were forced to work on Sundays and religious holidays. As for those who had dedicated their entire lives to the faith, the state sought to control the amount of men who were admitted to the one seminary in Lithuania, and priests within churches were routinely penalized and punished for their affiliations, so much so that many of these men faced relentless persecution, receiving fines or being imprisoned in labor camps, and leaving their congregations without religious leaders. Riegle stated that 153 churches had been left without a priest and were unable to attain new ones due to the low seminary matriculation rates.

Riegle ended this statement by asserting that the actions that the US Senate was taking on "behalf of those struggling to secure their fundamental freedoms" were not in vain and should not be thought to have gone unnoticed by either Balts or those in other Soviet-occupied states.

²⁹⁴ "Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 100th Congress, First Session—Celebrating 600 Years of Christianity in Lithuania" 1 July, 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Besides this main focus on the practice of Christianity in the Baltics, Riegle also used the opportunity to remind President Reagan about the role that the United States had historically held in the Baltic region when it chose to intervene and advocate for the Baltics' right to celebrate their national identity. For example, he noted that the June 1987 Voice of America and Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty broadcasts that reported the news of Senate support for the "right of Latvians to publicly pay their respects to the victims of the 1941 deportations" were especially successful as this broadcasted news was thought by those involved in the Baltic-American sphere to have surely encouraged the 5,000 people who participated in a demonstration within Riga on that holiday by reassuring them that the United States supported their protests. Further, this was a significant turning point in the Baltic states' demonstration history as the Latvians and people associated with the June 1987 demonstrations were allowed to participate in the commemoration without any blowback from the local Soviet regime. As this ended up being one of the "largest, peaceful, anti-communist demonstration[s] to have ever occurred in the Soviet Union" and occurred in the weeks just prior to Riegle's congressional address, the Michigan senator asserted that the United States' support of other areas of Baltic identity, such as religious expression, would help the Baltics make progress in their other continued attempts to celebrate their national and independent identities. In this way, Riegle's reference of the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe broadcasts was meant to help encourage US lawmakers and the administration to provide unanimous approval for the religious freedom resolution, as the Lithuanian people would be heartened by the United States' actions and ultimately "strengthened" by the transnational support.

Much like with this Lithuanian event, Riegle took Latvian issues to his colleagues in the Senate, as well. On November 3, 1987, the senator brought forward the upcoming celebration of

Latvia's original independence day, informing his fellow senators about the upcoming commemoration and encouraging them to be aware of the holiday and the impact that it could potentially have on US-USSR relations as well as the trajectory of the region. Within a letter that not only he but also Senate majority and minority leaders Robert C. Byrd and Robert Dole, respectively, signed, Riegle highlighted how November 18th would mark the 69th anniversary of Latvia's founding and that credible news reports and "other sources inside Latvia" reported that there would be demonstrations within the country. Once again, this insider information to which Riegle had access through JBANC not only gave him the knowledge to be able to speak to his fellow congressional representatives about the issue but also positioned him as the one "in the know" regarding such problems. To solidify such a position and make a call back to his esteemed relationship with the Baltic-American community, Riegle also said there was enough information from these various sources to think that while the Soviets seemed to allow the June 14th demonstrations in the country, greater state punishments could occur in relation to the November independence day protests.²⁹⁵

Besides advocating for Lithuanian religious freedom, Latvian independence day celebrations, and other events and needs that required unique US Senate support for the Baltics, Riegle continually provided Congress with other insider perspectives of what was occurring "on the ground" inside and just outside the Baltic region and other states behind the Iron Curtain. He often highlighted not just the stories of Balts and Baltic Americans with whom JBANC had put him into contact but also relied on other Baltic-informed interlocutors who could testify to the

²⁹⁵ Correspondence from Senator Don W. Riegle, Jr. to Senate Colleagues, 3 November 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

situation in real time. For instance, on June 2, 1987, Riegle solicited Senator Carl Levin from Michigan to advocate within a congressional session for the world's "attention on the fate of the captive Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania." With Levin, a fellow staunch supporter of Baltic rights, by his side, Riegle once again petitioned their colleagues to join with them in cosponsoring the joint resolution to call President Reagan to issue a statement on July 29, 1987, officially noting that the United States supported the non-recognition of the forced incorporation of the Baltics into the Soviet sphere. He articulated that this type of support for the Baltics was crucial as within the "independent Baltic republics, the Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian people have been denied their basic rights, including the right to self-determination," but despite this denial, in recent years the Balts had been all the more "strengthened and reassured by the firmness of United States policy, which ha[d] consistently refused to recognize the forced incorporation of their nations into the Soviet Union." Additionally, Riegle reminded his colleagues that the joint resolutions surrounding Baltic Freedom Day had often called upon the President to issue a statement and that President Reagan had previously "reaffirmed the US position by officially informing all member nations of the United Nations of the US policy of nonrecognition." Getting another statement from Reagan, then, would be a continuation of these previous acts and would serve as a symbol to Balts and Baltic Americans of the United States' support of their states.²⁹⁶ Having Levin by his side underscored Riegle's petition all the more, affirming both his close relationship to the Baltic-American community and his ability to call upon others' support when needed to ask the US Congress for help in his endeavors.

²⁹⁶ "Congressional Record: Proceedings and Debates of the 100th Congress, First Session—S.J. Res. 152, A joint resolution expressing the sense of the Congress with respect to the freedom and independence of the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania; to the Committee on Foreign Relations" 1 July, 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In conjunction with the June 14, 1987, demonstrations within the Baltic states, Senator Riegle went even further in his Baltic advocacy, utilizing not just his relationships with JBANC and others close to the Baltic-American community to fortify his pleas to his own US Congress and administration but also his direct contact with other governments abroad. Most notably, Riegle took it upon himself to write his own letters to General Secretary Gorbachev, discussing the planned demonstrations in the countries and communicating to Gorbachev the United States' interest in the matter. On June 11 Riegle stated in his first letter that on behalf of his fellow senators, he wanted "to express [their] deepest concern over the continuing violation of human rights in the Baltic republics" and was "following with great interest the initiatives [Gorbachev had] undertaken to reform Soviet society." These actions had apparently given the senators hope that Gorbachev's "desire for greater openness and freedom throughout the Soviet Union" would lead to further commitment to protecting the rights of USSR citizens, yet they wanted to ensure that this commitment would also be extended to Baltic human rights activists who remained imprisoned, whose "freedom of expression [was] denied." Once again providing his acute knowledge of the situation, Riegle mentioned that he knew that the Baltic states wished to hold a "legal and peaceful demonstration" in Riga and that the United States hoped that such activity would be allowed, as the Baltic people ought to be able to "publicly commemorate an important chapter in their own history, which ha[d] never been officially acknowledged by the [USSR] government." Going a step further, Riegle also noted that besides just permitting this ceremony to take place, he also wanted the USSR to give "further indication of [their] government's interest in guaranteeing these freedoms." Again, using his connections to the Baltic-American community and his understanding of those communities, both in the United States and abroad, Riegle noted that the USSR's confirmation of such freedoms could come through the release of

Baltic prisoners. He ended his letter to Gorbachev stating just that, asking him to grant “full and unconditional amnesty to three prominent prisoners of conscience from the Baltic republics: Balys Gajauskas of Lithuania, Gunars Astra of Latvia, and Mart Niklus of Estonia.”²⁹⁷

After the protests occurred in mid-June, Riegle sent another letter to General Secretary Gorbachev, expressing his concern regarding the USSR’s treatment of those involved in the June 14th ceremonies and the consequences dealt to key organizers of the demonstrations. Serving as a follow-up to the previous correspondence, this letter asked Gorbachev to reflect upon the Soviet government’s reaction to protesters. Once again referring to his allyship with JBANC, Baltic Americans, and Balts, Riegle raised the fact that he “followed with great interest the events” of June 14th, stating that he knew of the arrest and conviction of key Balts who worked to create the successful demonstration. Namely, Riegle stated that Linard Grantins, who was one of the key organizers of the event, was arrested and convicted on charges of draft evasion. However, Riegle noted that he “found it an odd coincidence that Mr. Grantins, well-known for his human rights activities” would be charged with such a crime, noting that he and others in the United States who had followed the story thought that the “charges brought against him appear[ed] to be totally unjustified.” With his mention of this case and reference to his knowledge of it, Riegle applied further pressure on the Secretary General not only to respect the “human rights of its citizens” but also to release Grantins and not punish others involved in the demonstrations. Just like his previous correspondence before the event, Riegle noted that the USSR ought to be mindful of the Helsinki Accords and reassured Gorbachev that he, his fellow

²⁹⁷ Correspondence from Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr. to General Secretary Gorbachev, 11 July 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

lawmakers, and involved members of the Baltic-American community were, in fact, keeping an eye on such actions.²⁹⁸

Similarly, Riegle expressed his concern with the allowance of Baltic demonstrations in his garnering of broader Senate support to follow up his June correspondence with the Secretary General by writing an additional letter to Gorbachev regarding the upcoming August 23, 1987, protests in the Baltics. Written on August 18, just days before the anniversary, the senators reached out to the General Secretary, encouraging him to allow the planned protests to occur, expressing their “deepest concern about the continued suppression of debate on important events in Baltic history as well as efforts to restrain freedom of expression in the Baltic Republics.” Playing into Gorbachev’s articulated hopes for more *glasnost* and openness within the future of USSR, the senators expressed that because of the Secretary General’s “own apparent desire for a more complete and honest accounting of the Soviet past and, particularly, of [the USSR’s] relations with Poland,” they hoped “this attitude [would] be extended to include the history of the Baltic Republics,” as well. With this foundation, the senators went on to discuss the details of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols, making sure to show Gorbachev that they not only were concerned about the consequences that the pact caused within the Baltics but also found it problematic that the protocols were never published nor publicly acknowledged by the Soviet Union. Thus, the senators stated that the “desire of the Baltic people to publicly commemorate and shed light on this integral chapter of their own history” was both encouraged by the United States and should be allowed by the USSR. Further, Riegle and his fellow senators also mentioned that as they closely followed “recent events in the Soviet Union” and the various

²⁹⁸ Correspondence from Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr. to General Secretary Gorbachev, 15 July 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

demonstrations occurring in the Baltic states, they expected that Gorbachev would permit “the peaceful ceremonies in Vilnius, Riga and Tallinn” and that the USSR would “demonstrate the government’s desire to promote freedom of expression and assembly.” In relation to this encouragement, they reminded Gorbachev that these promises were part of the Constitution of the Soviet Union and that the USSR’s adherence to these standards would serve “as a further indication of [the USSR] government’s commitment to guaranteeing these freedoms.” Finally, the senators concluded the letter encouraging Gorbachev in his reform efforts, noting that they “have indeed brought about important changes in the social and intellectual atmosphere within [the USSR’s] country,” urging him to avoid “any interference with the peaceful ceremonies” and to consider the “publication and free discussion of all aspects of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.”²⁹⁹

This correspondence, initiated by Riegle, seemed to be greatly influential to both facilitating the protests in the Baltics and building up the confidence that the US Baltic-American community had in the US government. A press release issued by JBANC in response to the letter affirmed exactly this, summarizing the contents of the document and discussing the invaluable role that the letter had in steering foreign policy relations between these various countries. Noting that the letter, sent by Senator Riegle’s office, urged General Secretary Gorbachev not to interfere in the upcoming August 23rd demonstrations, the release primarily discussed how the secret protocols that were embedded within the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact ought to be allowed to be commemorated within the countries. With the continued pushing of boundaries by the Balts during their other demonstrations and protests, the release commented that the United States had

²⁹⁹ Correspondence from United States Senate to General Secretary Gorbachev, 18 August 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

strongly asserted that both “participants and the organizers of the gatherings” should not “suffer adverse consequences of any kind” and that the “Soviet Union’s Constitution would be upheld,” stating that the results of the demonstrations would communicate to both the Baltics and the United States the intentions of the Soviet government. Sent out to both US and Lithuanian press, the release served as both a wider dissemination of the contents of the letter and a transnational articulation of the strength of the relationship between Riegle, the US Senate, the Baltics, and the US Baltic-American community.³⁰⁰

In response to these various actions and congressional responsibilities that Riegle took on within the Senate, JBANC expressed its thorough appreciation of the Senator and the ways in which he petitioned Congress on behalf of Balts and Baltic Americans. On September 3, 1987, Mari-Ann Rikken, Chairman of JBANC, wrote to Riegle, stating that “on behalf of the Joint Baltic American National Committee and Baltic-American community, I would like to thank you for introducing the letter sent to General Secretary Gorbachev requesting that there be no interference in the August 23rd demonstrations in Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius.” She went on to state that Riegle was instrumental in helping the US Congress better understand Baltic issues and see the necessity of the United States backing up the Baltic peoples and providing them with a sign of visible solidarity in regards to the August 23rd protests within Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Further she articulated that this “visible solidarity” was extremely powerful and “made a difference in both the manner in which the gatherings were perceived and in the spirit in which they were held.” With Riegle’s help, the Baltics were affirmed in their “credible protest”

³⁰⁰ The Joint Baltic American National Committee, “U.S. Senators Urge No Interference with Peaceful Demonstrations in the Baltic States” Press Release, 18 August 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

occurring across the three Soviet-occupied countries. Further, these acts, which Rikken mentioned were displayed on front-page news publications throughout the world, were prominently advertised to the diasporic Baltic community not only in the United States but also in other prominent Western countries, which continued to garner support for the Baltic independence cause and affirm the trajectory of movements happening behind the Iron Curtain. Rikken stated that all of this could be partially attributed to Riegle's work and his initiation of a letter "which effectively reflected the United States' support for those seeking basic human rights and sovereignty in the Baltic States" and thus "drew mass media attention to the event." JBANC viewed its relationship with Riegle as hugely important to these events, reaffirming that his "attention made the difference" and noting that his actions "were appreciated by all," both in the States and abroad.³⁰¹ This transnational work that Senator Riegle facilitated in the 1980s emphasized the ways in which certain lawmakers not only made Baltic issues part of their congressional identity but also utilized their relationships with JBANC to strengthen their credibility and elevate their access to important information that, in turn, positioned them as political leaders and advocates for certain foreign policy agendas.

The Defense of Dissidents

However, JBANC's relationship with Riegle and their positioning of him at the front lines of congressional action were not the only way that the ethnic lobbying organization furthered transnational work. While congressional relationships were important and an integral part of JBANC's ability to insert itself into the US foreign policy decision-making process, its

³⁰¹ Correspondence from Mari-Ann Rikken to Senator Riegle, 3 September 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

relationships with other parts of the broader US-Baltic community were also essential to facilitating the deepening of the US audience's understanding of what was actually happening in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during this time. To do this, JBANC especially curated its relationships between the United States and Baltic dissidents in order to bring forth testimonies and firsthand experience of the issues in the Baltic region. Working through agents such as Senator Riegle and other congressmen, JBANC put these estranged USSR citizens into direct contact with US lawmakers, providing a wide swath of congressional representatives with access to those who were experiencing the tragedies in the Baltics firsthand. Many of these dissidents were also involved in curating anti-Soviet groups in the Baltics, such as Helsinki-86, and knew exactly what activism in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania looked like.

As early as 1985, JBANC set up an "Adopt-a-Dissident Agency" during its support of Captive Nations Week, where Baltic-American volunteers collected congressional signatures in support of Baltic dissidents who were arrested in their homelands.³⁰² By 1987, this program grew, and on October 6, 1987, three dissidents from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania appeared in the flesh before Congress, giving testimony to the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe in relation to the various protests that had occurred in the Baltics that year. In his testimony, Tiit Madisson of Estonia spoke about the August 23, 1987, protests and demonstrations that he stated were "an event of the first magnitude in post-war Estonian history, in both the quantitative and qualitative sense," and which caused "the official Soviet version of history pertaining to Estonia [to collapse] upon itself." Underscoring the fact that "for the first time in forty-three years of totalitarian rule," a "publicly planned mass demonstration dealing

³⁰² Kathleen Tyman, "The Angry Young Baltics," *Washington Times*, March 8, 1985, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

with the key issues of the Estonian people's destiny took place," he encouraged the United States to see what was happening in the Baltic states as the "beginning of multi-dimensional, genuine, self-initiated social-political activity."³⁰³

Further, Madisson expressed that he and fellow Balts specifically sought to organize a group called MRP-AEG before the demonstrations in order to target and persuade Soviet authorities to "publish the entire Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, including its secret protocols dividing Eastern Europe," noting that the mass demonstrations that occurred in Tallinn served as a reminder of that history and marked the 48th anniversary of the signing of the pact. As demonstrations were also occurring in Latvia during this same day, Madisson stated that those in Tallinn "could not betray this joint Baltic endeavor," as they "sensed that a historical moment was upon" the country and region as a whole. Going on in his testimony, the dissident from Estonia told the story of MRP-AEG and its plans, articulating that while both "nationwide television and the central press reacted vehemently to the plans for the demonstration, portraying these plans as external interference in the internal affairs of the Soviet Union," the group garnered reassurance from the US letters that Riegle and his colleagues had previously sent Gorbachev. Further, Madisson expressed that he thought it was "unlikely that everything would have gone so unexpectedly smoothly if demonstrations had not taken place in other parts of the world as well," such as the ones that had occurred in the United States. Moreover, he thought that the demonstrations would not have been so successful in the Baltics if "the international mass media had not devoted as much attention to the fate of the Baltics peoples." Referencing

³⁰³ "Testimony of Tiit Madisson in the United States Congress Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe," 6 October 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

the long history of Soviet rule, Madisson noted that the tragedies the Balts had endured were not to be disregarded, “in spite of the loss of about ¼ of its one million population during World War II and the Soviet Occupation” because “the spirit of the Estonians ha[d] not been broken.” Further, Madisson reported to Congress that “even though everyone who ha[d] openly opposed or criticized the all-encompassing falsehood and injustice upon which the existing system is based ha[d] been repressed by the Soviet authorities,” there had still been “a constant stream of new people joining the resistance and human rights movement,” and such efforts were being bolstered across the countries. With that knowledge, Madisson expressed that he was reassured about the future of the Estonian and Baltic peoples and thought that while it rested “upon public opinion in the free world as well as the positions taken by the governments of the United States, Great Britain, West Germany, France, and other Western nations,” the Baltic situation would continue to attract more attention if pressure from the West kept being applied.³⁰⁴

Alongside these statements from Madisson, another dissident, Roland Silaraups also used his time in front of Congress to emphasize the growth of the human rights and independence movement in the Baltics. Addressing Congress during the October 6th hearings, he also focused on speaking about the changes that occurred within the Baltics during 1987 and how these changes not only surrounded the protesting of previous human rights violations within the Baltics but also highlighted the ways in which human rights continued to be violated within the three states. Speaking through Ojars Kalnins, a translator from JBANC, Silaraups said that while expressing one’s opinions “independent of those held by the authorities” had grown easier in

³⁰⁴ “Testimony of Tiit Madisson in the United States Congress Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,” 6 October 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

modern-day Latvia and the expression of those opinions had not immediately led to the fear of arrest, there was still a superficial idea that “the campaign of ‘openness’ nor that ‘democratization’ ha[d] reached the Soviet” system. Further explaining this point, Silaraups went on to focus much of his statement on the fact that while apparent human rights changes had supposedly occurred in the country, the unprovoked trials and arrests of Balts continued. These actions by the Soviet state especially targeted those who were suspected to be involved in political activity, tried them on fabricated charges, and arrested and detained them “with the purpose of isolating [them] from society,” especially during the periods in which demonstrations occurred, namely the June 14 and August 23 holidays. In this sense, Silaraups noted that although demonstrations were allowed to happen, the KGB and militia still tried to disrupt the protests and expressed provocations and open threats against organizers, including himself, with governmental officials even breaking into apartments where organizers gathered, detaining them, and physically assaulting them. Thus, the Latvian dissident noted that “there [had] been no changes for the better regarding human rights” and that the situation could not be expected to change for the better unless “the question of self-determination” was addressed. The testimony went on to specifically outline a list of ways in which Latvians suffered the lack of basic human rights, including russification, the migration of Russians to Latvia, environmental exploitation, restriction of personal freedoms, restriction of religious freedoms, and a lack of freedom of the press. Ending his statement, Silaraups noted that the people in Latvia had suffered and would

continue to suffer as a result of these violations and needed the world to listen to their pleas for a reinstatement of independence and an end to Soviet occupation.³⁰⁵

Expressing a similar sentiment, Lithuanian Vytautas Skuodis also articulated his experiences within the Baltics in front of the US Congress, speaking about the ways in which the Soviet government targeted him as an enemy of the state. Detailing all of the charges of which Soviet authorities had accused him, Skuodis stated that he believed that it was due “to the pressure exerted by the US administration, Senate, and House on [his] behalf that [he] was allowed to leave the Soviet Union.” Additionally, Skuodis stated that he believed that “while some reforms [were] taking place in the Soviet Union, in the name of *perestroika*,” there should still be much concern among those in the West and countries that love freedom regarding human rights violations in the country. Things such as religious freedom within Lithuania were especially noteworthy, as the “Church [was] in a most precarious situation, as never before,” and the Soviet government was “trying by all means to divide the Lithuanian Catholic Church, to demoralize it and thus bring about its end from within.” Drawing the US Congress’s attention to specific instances of religious persecution within Lithuania, Skuodis stated that the United States should continue to advocate for issues in the Baltics as the successful August 23, 1987, demonstrations in Vilnius proved that there was a “strong longing for freedom in captive Lithuania” and that the “letter to Gorbachev from 20 US Senators urging him to allow the demonstration made it possible under conditions of dictatorship.” Thus, Skuodis noted that he was asked by his colleagues back home in his “enslaved Lithuanian nation, to raise the question

³⁰⁵ “Testimony of Roland Silaraups in the United States Congress Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,” 6 October 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

of the restoration of Lithuanian sovereignty in world political circles, so that the government of the USSR would be forced to admit the crimes of two of biggest war criminals of our day—Josef Stalin and Adolf Hitler, who by the Hitler-Stalin Pact of 1939, divided Eastern Europe.” By raising this issue in front of US lawmakers and further highlighting the presence of the secret protocols within the pact, the Lithuanian dissident believed that it was a “basic precondition to self-determination for the Baltic states” and that those in the United States should know that this self-determination was the desire of the Lithuanian people.³⁰⁶

In response to these three men’s strengthened relationships with US Congress and lawmakers, JBANC released a press release that articulated the significance of such testimony in front of the US legislature, telling how three Baltic dissenters were introduced within the US political sphere. After their testimony before Congress on October 6 and then on October 7, Madisson, Silaraups, and Skuodis were brought to a “members-only” reception where various congressional representatives could meet them face to face. Organized by JBANC, this meeting gave the congressional figures an “opportunity to personally meet the three Balts, all of whom had recently emigrated, or been expelled, from their homelands.” Senator Riegle’s role in generating this opportunity was also seen as hugely important for this meeting as “for the first time, the human rights activists were meeting the man who originally drew public attention to the massive public gatherings in the Baltic States on August 23rd.” Upon meeting him, the release noted that the three dissidents “expressed their countrymen’s thanks to Senator Riegle for the letter he initiated prior to the August 23rd demonstrations,” which Madisson, Silaraups, and

³⁰⁶ “Testimony of Vytautas Skuodis in the United States Congress Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe,” 6 October 1987, Box 22, Folder 25, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Skuodis stated helped Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians during the demonstrations with the view that “the letter [w]as a sign of solidarity between the nation best known for freedom and their own nations struggling for democracy.” Moreover, Madisson of Estonia even told the congressional representatives that he was “convinced that he was not arrested for his part in [merely] organizing the gathering” but because of the meaning of the demonstrations across the world, due to “the attention that Senator Riegle’s letter drew to the Baltic States.” After hearing about this and other details from the men regarding the demonstrations that had occurred that year within the Baltic region, the senators congratulated them on “their courage to protect human rights in their homelands” and “assured the human rights activists that they would continue to support the Baltic States’ struggle for freedom and would not lose sight of the true course of events within the Soviet Union.”³⁰⁷

In these instances of JBANC putting the US Congress into direct conversation with Baltic dissidents and providing the dissidents an opportunity to defend their work and states’ inclinations in front of the most esteemed of US lawmakers, Balts were elevated within the US governmental sphere and able to speak for themselves about what the support of the United States meant to them. This positioning of Balts within US foreign policy deliberation was a much different take on their importance within the US-Baltic-USSR milieu than what had been experienced previously and what JBANC had experienced within its prior advocacy work, juxtaposed with the scenes that we explore in the next chapter on suspicion and secrecy. Instead of being excluded from the US imaginary, by this point in the late 1980s Balts were on the whole

³⁰⁷ The Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Senators and Congressmen Congratulate Baltic Dissidents” Press Release, 8 September 1987, Box 18, Folder 24, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

included within the governmental decision-making environment, welcomed with open arms by congressional leaders who wished to hear from them directly regarding their experiences behind the Iron Curtain and promised their support for further Baltic efforts to move towards independence from the Soviet Union. Such alignment between JBANC's personalized relationship with the Balts and the US government's bureaucratic relationship with the Balts further highlights the congruence between both entities that had developed by this time in the Cold War conflict, but this was not always the case. As we see next, the embrace of JBANC's efforts to introduce the US government to the human faces behind the fight for Baltic separation from the USSR was not necessarily supported by previous congresses and administrations, further complicating the trajectory of JBANC's work and the uphill battle it sometimes had to fight during its trek towards being more included in the US-Baltic States foreign policy decision-making process.

Conclusion

Through these organizational alliances and the establishment of dense networks that brought together both state and non-state actors, JBANC was able to insert itself into the middle of foreign policy decision making and congressional deliberation regarding the Baltic states. By closely monitoring and advising the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine, JBANC established a way for members of Congress to become more closely linked to and invested in the issue of Baltic independence, working to advocate for this area of interest within their House and Senate positions. In the organization's direct work with certain legislators, such as Don Riegle, it made significant inroads with congressional leaders and the US administration and established itself as a serious contender within the foreign policy playing field. These

relationships were not merely a one-way street, however, as the senators and members of the house who worked closely with JBANC and supported its endeavors through joining the Ad Hoc Committee, for example, received great payback in return. They were able to position themselves as allies of the strong Baltic-American ethnic community and even characterize themselves as Baltic insiders “in the know” regarding the pressing issues happening on the ground in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the years immediately before the USSR’s fall. The Ad Hoc Committee also created the impetus for JBANC to more thoroughly solicit support from the Baltic-American community and those invested in Baltic issues, asking them to be a more direct part of the political process and write to their congressional representatives to ask them about involvement in the Committee. Due to this work, the bonds between Baltic Americans and those deeply embedded in the US political system were strengthened, and the Ad Hoc Committee continued to expand throughout the 1980s. Additionally, in JBANC’s leveraging of its relationship with key representatives from the Baltic states—including dissidents and Baltic nationalist movement organizers—the lobbying entity flexed its transnational connections and demonstrated its unique ability to bring the Baltic states and United States together in its care for these issues, physically orchestrating face-to-face meetings between East and West. In doing so, JBANC also showed the D.C. political world that it could strengthen its connections between those inside and outside the Iron Curtain, giving tangible examples to the theoretical issues that US foreign policy was trying to navigate.

These relationships, and JBANC’s work within these various interpersonal and organizational networks, created the connective tissue that helped bend the US government towards taking an interest in the Baltic states at this time. Not only did this require effort over the course of many years and decades, showcasing JBANC’s deep and long-seated desire to impact

certain US foreign policy moves during this late-Cold War era, but it also helps map *how* exactly the field of politics was curated to generate an interest in this policy area during this time—what the Rhetorical cartographical landscape looked like within the era and how rhetorical maintenance was inscribed on the system. The hand of JBANC was inserted within various decisions and points of discussion during these years, and the organization became a key influence on how the textual web of this discourse and discussion was woven throughout the period. When analyzing what the fabric of foreign policy consisted of during the 1980s, JBANC can be seen as highly involved in the deliberation process and able to connect multiple different actors and nodes of the network together. It not only established direct contact with individuals such as Riegle and other members of Congress but also helped these same members become more closely tied to Balts and Baltic Americans, assisting them in their own self-interested positioning as lawmakers with “firsthand knowledge” of the play-by-plays in the Baltic states. By feeding congressional lawmakers this key “insider” information regarding what was happening on the ground in the USSR during the 1980s and helping them better understand the ins and outs of a pro-Baltic-independence position, JBANC controlled who got connected to whom in institutional settings and how those relationships were forged. Likewise, the organization was able to further emphasize the interweavings of political, social, and economic life across state boundaries—highlighting the connections between people, places, things, and contexts across the world and underscoring their transnational implications.

In doing this, JBANC attempted to restructure the US foreign policy terrain, reworking the procedures of government deliberation in order to favor the Baltic position. The growth and solidification of a dense US-Baltic non-state and state network demonstrated how the relational complexity in the foreign policy milieu was curated to favor JBANC’s and Baltic Americans’

interests not only during the last few years of the Cold War but also over the course of the last few decades of the conflict. Through long-term, sustained, and close relationships, lasting change in the world of policy could happen and was built and preserved within the US foreign policy political environment. This benefitted members of Congress and JBANC alike, sewing together multiple areas of interests and political investment and highlighting the congruence between JBANC's, Congress's, and the administrations' foreign policy investment. In doing so, JBANC's influence on these professional networks brought together multiple pieces of the Baltic independence project, making these particular issues of foreign policy something that the American public could become invested in and support alongside the Balts and Baltic Americans working to enact change.

Chapter 5. An Era of Baltic Commemorations: The Rhetorical Invention of Baltic-American Holidays in the 1980s

Moving on with a closer look at JBANC's advocacy in the 1980s, much of the ethnic lobbying organization's work in this decade revolved around the promotion and invention of strategic Baltic-American holidays throughout the United States. These holidays were meant to elevate public recognition of the Soviet occupation of the Baltic states and to raise awareness of the three countries' fight for independence. As the Cold War heated up after a passing period of détente and the latter half of the 1980s brought with it the slow but sure Reagan-era rollback of global communism, JBANC focused much of its public-facing effort on generating US support for key Baltic dates and commemorative holidays. The organization saw recurring dates such as June 14—Baltic Freedom Day; the original Baltic independence days—February 16, February 24, November 18; and August 23—Black Ribbon Day, as important events worth strategically leveraging within American discussion of the fight for Baltic independence. By working with colleagues to generate public-facing movements and opportunities to commemorate International Black Ribbon Day, Baltic Freedom Day, and the original independence days of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania stateside, JBANC both supported the recognition of these dates within the Baltic states and strengthened the numerous and interwoven ties between itself as an organization and other countries. In doing so, JBANC joined with numerous international colleagues who were also concerned that these days were going unnoticed within the international diplomatic sphere and who especially wanted to strengthen the Baltic states' position and their plight for independence within US foreign policy discourse of the time.

Furthermore—all while keeping its ear to the ground regarding what was happening within Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on the celebration of these days—JBANC fought to place

the five dates centrally on the political calendars of those invested in Baltic-American foreign policy decisions. The elevation of these days within American society generated significant public discourse and discussion regarding the Baltic states and their journey towards separation from the USSR. The material events and timely occasions around which legislators, lobbyists, American and non-American citizens, and people within and outside of the Baltic diasporic community rallied and upon which they focused their attention also demonstrated the United States' solidarity with the Baltic states. The events gave something concrete for the United States to converse about in its foreign policy interactions with the USSR, systematically kept the plight of the Baltic states at the forefront of US foreign policy decisions at the time with a steady stream of commemorations occurring throughout the calendar year, and served as a way in which to better understand the burgeoning elements of *glasnost* and *perestroika* behind the Iron Curtain. In doing so, JBANC elevated its emphasis on symbolic politics and the harnessing of symbolic events in order to grow relational and persuasive capacities. This type of strategic little-r rhetoric served as a careful transformation and rewriting of Baltic people, events, and places into the US political context, creating more public awareness about the issues of Baltic independence and making the issue more urgent and necessary for the United States to focus upon in its Cold War foreign policy strategy. This did not occur through just one event or time but gradually recurred over many years of the 1980s, repeating the events and emphasizing its political value time and time again in order for this aspect of the Baltic independence Transnational Advocacy Network to become further crystallized and ingrained within the hearts and minds of a broader US population. In doing so, JBANC also focused its attention on connecting with a third area of government, the US executive branch, in order to make the "Baltic issue" a part of its agenda, as well.

The days' Rhetorical cartographical significance can be seen in how the dates generated the interest of those who were and were not previously part of the Baltic-American diasporic network. For one, the dates enabled those who were not previously invested in the Baltic independence narrative to become personally interested in a US-branded story of the Baltic heritage narrative and broader discourses of the time regarding why independence was so important to Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. By celebrating these days, the various factions of the American public who participated in these days' commemoration were able to count themselves among those who had a memory of key Baltic events and thus were able to fashion themselves as part of JBANC's new version of the Baltic-American imaginary. Additionally, when celebrated next to each other in a series of closely related holidays, these dates showcased the strength of the Baltic cultural heritage narrative in the United States. Thus, through its advocacy of the dates' celebration, JBANC was able to intentionally expand its constituent base, not only catering to those who *were already* part of the Baltic-American diasporic network but also becoming a representative for the wider swath of Americans who *became* invested in these issues as the days' national and international recognition grew. In doing so, JBANC utilized these commemorative events to strengthen transnational ties between the United States and the Baltics—people in all these places celebrated these days and (as the days generated larger and larger celebrations on both sides of the Atlantic) were bridged together internationally in their observances and discussions of their separate and collective commemorations. This further cemented the strength of the international Baltic diasporic community and the reach of the Baltic ethnic lobbying groups, much to the USSR's chagrin.

The little-r rhetorical invention and promotion of these various commemorative holidays within the US foreign policy environment was also especially strategic for JBANC as the

focused awareness of these dates stateside presented a complement and point of comparison to the ways in which these same dates were allowed to be recognized within the USSR. In many ways, JBANC and lawmakers strongly encouraged the United States' celebration of International Black Ribbon Day; the original Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian independence days; and Baltic Freedom Day because these days were not allowed to be openly commemorated within the Baltic states. Baltic Americans and their supporters saw it as the responsibility of a free and democratic United States to carry on the tradition of these holiday commemorations while their family members and friends who were still living in their home countries of the Baltics could not. The comparison and political analysis of the recognition of these days within Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania served as valuable support, evidence, and rhetorical ammunition that the United States could then highlight in its correspondence with Gorbachev during the late 1980s and further served as moments of encouragement for why and how the Baltic independence movement ought to continue to grow throughout this era. Additionally, in focusing on these days, a unique "brand" of Baltic-American heritage was invented and shared among the American public at large and those more closely affiliated with the JBANC constituency. Their buy-in and involvement in the holidays also changed the ways in which these sectors conceived both their role within the fight for Baltic independence and their relationship with the greater network of the Baltic diasporic community.

In order to better see the ways in which these commemorative days evolved and grew within the US and Baltic contexts, as well as the ways in which JBANC was involved in their promotion, it is important to see the differences in why these days originally stand out as significant events on the Baltic calendar. In the case of International Black Ribbon Day on August 23, the event brought together the Soviet diasporic community and was especially

emphasized as a way for the West to join Eastern European states in their protest of USSR occupation. JBANC utilized this day as an opportunity for the United States to join its international colleagues in discussing these countries' occupations and their origins in the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, signed on August 23. The public commemoration of the original independence days of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania was also essential to JBANC's advocacy work in the United States as the celebration of these three days was illegal in the Baltic states but able to continue stateside. Further, they provided a concrete opportunity for the US government to encourage the USSR to allow the celebration of these days in the Baltics, in hopes that the growing independence movement in these countries would contribute to the dissolution of the Soviet Union. The days and their observance in the Baltic states were a portal through which observers in the West could measure how "open" the Baltic states and Soviet authorities were to democratic change within the region. Thus, JBANC and its affiliates were able to persuade the US governmental apparatus to recall these days and position them as a central feature in their discourse with the Soviet Union and to encourage those invested in foreign policy to keep an eye on how demonstrations during these holidays looked transnationally. Finally, Baltic Freedom Day on June 14 was primarily a JBANC invention meant for US commemoration and recognition of the effects of the occupation as well as the human rights violations that had ensued. Over time the event became more transnationally recognized and stood as a symbol of the United States' solidarity with the Baltic states; however, its initial focus as a day within the United States provided the opportunity for JBANC to do some of its most public-facing work in D.C. and with governmental officials.

In all three of these cases—International Black Ribbon Day, the Baltic Independence Days, and Baltic Freedom Day—JBANC harnessed public celebration and US involvement in

the commemoration of these holidays to spread awareness regarding the USSR's occupation of the Baltic states and to encourage the growth of the Baltic independence movement in hopes it would lead to the realization of Baltic independence. In this chapter, I look at how the rhetorical invention of and focus on these holidays elevated the narrative of Baltic occupation within US political public discourse and swayed the US-Baltic foreign policy focus between 1986 and 1989. Serving as little-r instances of strategic rhetoric, the development and evolution of these dates on the political calendar were meant to create US solidarity with the Baltics and forge stronger transnational ties between the countries. Yet, as demonstrated in my other chapters, both registers of R/rhetoric are also at play here. In acknowledging and furthering education on these three days, JBANC helped to demonstrate the United States' dedication to encouraging the reinstatement of Baltic independence and its desire to create connections between Balts and their international allies. This chapter provides examples of how JBANC was intertwined with the celebration of the days throughout the late 1980s and how the Rhetorical conditions surrounding the commemoration of these dates and the foreign policy conversation surrounding them evolved throughout these years and among different audiences. Through archival records from JBANC, I trace the Rhetorical cartographical landscape of growth and change of these days over the years, taking readers from the commemoration of International Black Ribbon Day in 1986 through the resurrection of Baltic Independence Day celebrations in 1987 and 1988 to the US support of Baltic Freedom Day in 1989.

To do this, I first look at what these three holidays represented within the broader Baltic-historical context and the reasons why these dates provided such a rich rhetorical opportunity for JBANC to spread its message. Then I discuss how JBANC and its colleagues advocated for broader public commemoration of these holidays, leading to their growth and development over

the course of several years during the late 1980s in both the United States and abroad. I also look at how public criticism and comments were interwoven with these days and what points of discussion were most focused on within this discourse. Finally, I attend to the other foreign policy networking opportunities that came from JBANC's focus on the invention of these days and how these then opened the door for much of the ethnic lobbying organization's other foreign policy work.

Important Dates of the Baltic States' National Narratives

The invention of and spreading of awareness surrounding the holidays of International Black Ribbon Day, the original Baltic independence days, and Baltic Freedom Day were founded upon the desire to communicate the importance of these dates within the Baltic national narrative more broadly. Although these dates and the commemorative events that followed them were not central to the United States' own political calendar (or to many within the United States and the West), they became key to the Baltic struggle and those advocating for the reinstatement of their independence during the late-Cold War years. Further, their celebration and illicit commemoration within the Baltic states began to serve as a symbol of the independence movement and dissent efforts within the USSR. Their importance grew year by year, and with that growing focus came their greater rhetorical significance as these dates became increasingly central to foreign policy discourse of the time. By the end of the 1980s, these five dates were not only important to people in the Baltics but were also understood by those invested in US-Baltic foreign relations in the United States to be crucial to the realization of Baltic independence as well as the potential fall of the USSR.

The significance of the August 23 date for International Black Ribbon Day came in part from the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact on that day in 1939. Over the course of the Cold War, the symbolism of this day grew and grew as the date was considered crucially important to the history of the Eastern European region and seen as the point in which many countries of the area were designated as part of the USSR, even without their agreement. With the invention of the holiday in 1986, the selection of August 23 as the commemorative date was essential for this reason since it was a day that could resonate with many around the world, leading to the holiday's broader and transnational celebration—which was, in fact, one of its aims. Although the original International Black Ribbon Day was not solely focused on the need to advocate for the reinstatement of independence for states such as the Baltics, the Baltic adoption of this day by people within the three states and Baltic advocates in locations such as the United States focused primarily on what the disastrous effects of the Hitler-Stalin Pact were and the reasons why independence must be realized again. Further, the date's significance led to continued public education on what the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was and why everyone involved in the Cold War conflict needed to understand it and its secret protocols better.

The original independence days of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania on February 16, February 24, November 18, respectively, were also hugely important within the Baltic narrative as Balts remembered these dates throughout the Cold War as a key feature of the Baltic national story. The three days marked the dates in 1918 on which the countries declared independence from Germany and/or Russia upon the end of World War I. Faced with defeat after the war, the Germans had to abandon their occupation of these three states, having no choice but to return power to the provisional governments within the Baltics. Although Soviet Russia desired to take the countries over again, confused fighting ensued between Germany, Russia, and the three

Baltic states for a short period. Independence for the three states was eventually achieved. It was also maintained for almost two decades until the beginning of World War II and the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact in 1939. Yet despite the reintroduction of Soviet rule in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, these dates of independence continued to carry with them great significance for the three Baltic countries throughout the USSR's occupation even though it was illegal to celebrate the days while the countries remained incorporated into the Soviet Union. Any sort of display of Estonian, Latvian, or Lithuanian national pride would have sent offenders to their death and/or life in Siberian gulag camps. Even so, these dates reminded the Balts of their previous national successes in achieving independence, their decades of uninterrupted self-government, and the strength and identity of their countries. With the slight relaxation of Stalinist-era policies and Gorbachev's promise of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the 1980s, people in the Baltics began to commemorate these days anew, as did Baltic-diasporic communities around the world, including JBANC and its broader supportive Baltic community within the United States.

Lastly, June 14 surfaced as an important date for Balts within the context of the Cold War, and later for JBANC and others who were advocating for broader US support of Baltic independence, as it marked the day when Soviet deportations of Balts from their homes in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania started following the Soviets' occupation of the countries during World War II. Known as the "June Deportation," June 14, 1941, was the day when 43,000 Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians were forcibly packed up and sent to the gulag camps of Siberia. The event marked the beginning of an era of terror, torture, murder, and ethnic cleansing enacted by the USSR, culminating in a roundup of tens of thousands of Baltic families who were forced into cattle cars and transported to the furthest reaches of eastern Russia. These mass

deportations continued into the 1950s. Again, while June 14 was not allowed to be publicly commemorated within the USSR during the years of Soviet occupation, the date continued to live on as deeply symbolic for the Baltic narrative and the need to regain independence within Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. It was privately remembered by Balts even during the years in which no broader commemoration could happen. However, the 1980s and burgeoning independence movement in these states provided the opportunity for this date to be more widely recognized. JBANC helped to elevate this date's significance stateside and invent it into a holiday that could bring Balts, Baltic Americans, and Americans together in their remembrance of the occupation's effects and generate greater support for the Baltic reinstatement of independence.

Commemoration as Epideictic Rhetoric

Rhetorically speaking, these five significant dates and the surrounding commemorative events that stemmed from them both stateside and in the Baltics served as forms of epideictic rhetoric that worked to mold the communities of which individual Baltic and Baltic-American members were a part. As a form, epideictic rhetoric tends to “simply” present and visualize certain convictions of a community instead of making explicit arguments about them, causing commemorative situations to function as sites of civic discourse.³⁰⁸ Hailing from its Greek roots as the rhetoric of display and amplification, epideictic rhetoric “shapes and cultivates the basic

³⁰⁸ For a more thorough exploration of epideictic rhetoric, see Ekaterina V. Haskins, “Epideictic Rhetoric,” in *The International Encyclopedia of Communication*, ed. Wolfgang Donsbach (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008): 4238-40. On epideictic rhetoric's civic role, see Gerard A. Hauser, “Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 29 (1999): 5–23. Also Celeste Michelle Condit, “The Function of Epideictic: The Boston Massacre Orations as Exemplar,” *Communication Quarterly* 33 (1985): 284–99.

codes of value and belief by which a society or culture lives; it shapes the ideologies and imageries with which, and by which, the individual members of a community identify themselves; and perhaps more significantly, it shapes the fundamental grounds, the ‘deep’ commitments and presuppositions, that will underlie and ultimately determine decision and debate in particular pragmatic forums.”³⁰⁹ As a discourse it is concerned primarily with praise and blame, seeking to portray “a particular course of action as more attractive than others.”³¹⁰ In doing so, epideictic rhetoric is the backbone of commemorative strategies (such as public memory practices and societal attempts to preserve historical and cultural narratives), as it creates an understanding of collective civic identity. It stages experiences so that members of society can then either embrace or reject them on the basis of whether these interpretations of commemoration align with their understanding of history and culture. Because epideictic rhetorical forms ultimately encompass the acts and processes through which memories move—taking them beyond the remembering individual and generating interest in them within the collective community—they function as practices meant to enable and/or constrain the ways in which memory is seen.

When considering the role of public memory in commemoration and the articulation of national narratives, it is important to understand how a public is formed and created around the memories that it shares. While history is not identical to public memory when it comes to national storylines, these two categories are often—as Pierre Nora writes—“brought together in such a way as to become another point of reference for the nation.”³¹¹ Even so, history has a

³⁰⁹ Jeffrey Walker, *Rhetoric and Poetics in Antiquity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 9.

³¹⁰ Haskins, “Epideictic Rhetoric.”

³¹¹ Pierre Nora, “General Introduction,” in *Rethinking France: Les lieux de mémoire*, vol. 1, *The State*, ed. Pierre Nora (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001), xvi.

significant influence on the ways in which official memories are crafted and preserved as well as the ways in which an understanding of the past is shared with future generations. Renderings of history, while socially constructed, often create the foundation upon which public memory is built and conversed about within society. What this dialogue looks like, and the exact “how” behind the articulation and crafting of memory, is what, in part, so greatly interests rhetorical and communication scholars who have been long curious about public memory and its connections to meaning-making practices, tensions, contestations, and manifestations of interpretation. Just as public memory can be seen as something socially constructed, commemorative practices can be understood as rhetorical strategies that stem from and work alongside public memory to further a society’s adoption of certain narratives and story arcs. Public memory practices are ultimately “a key cultural technology of citizenship insofar as narratives and images of the past promote a consensual notion of collective identity.”³¹² Likewise, acts of recollection (and forgetting) push certain understandings of memory through the fabrication of ritual and celebration. The field of communication’s interest in this ritual and celebration, as well as other public memory practices, was solidified during the years of the late-Cold War period. This time saw a proliferation in many of the tensions that are further explored throughout this dissertation—namely the growing anxieties regarding the boundaries of nation states and the world’s continued fascination with certain regions’ national identities. The period also brought with it the “emergence of memory” and a sudden upsurge of public memorials and commemorations in locations such as the United States.³¹³ JBANC’s work and its pushing of the US and international commemoration of Baltic-

³¹² Ekaterina Haskins, *Popular Memories: Commemoration, Participatory Culture, and Democratic Citizenship* (Columbia, SC: The University of South Carolina Press, 2015), 4.

³¹³ Matthew Houdek and Kendall R. Phillips, “Public Memory,” in *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Communication* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017). doi:10.1093/acrefore/9780190228613.013.181.

centric holidays are no exception to this, serving as an example of an uptick in the building of public memory during this timeframe.

Much of communication's previous interest in and scholarship on public memory and commemorative practices has focused on the explicitly textual, materialistic, and physical manifestation of rhetoric. For example, it is no surprise that public memory directly intersects with public address and the work of rhetors. Public memory builds the foundation upon which speakers and writers develop their arguments and appeals and creates important context that public speakers have to consider when making their rhetorical choices. Public memory is both something that speakers have to navigate and something they shape through their speaking, "as individual moments of public address can seek to reconfigure the public's memory" when considering collective memory's handling of certain events and movements.³¹⁴ Similarly, public memory interests rhetoricians in terms of its intersection with *place* and the role of physical places in evoking particular memories.³¹⁵ When considering commemoration, memorials and other official places of remembrance are crucial to public memory as they are ultimately designed to "shape memory explicitly as they see fit, memory that best serves a national interest."³¹⁶ For instance, museums' curation of memory and representation of a particular interpretation of history also do this work—they serve as institutions that shape national identity through a writing and rewriting of the past. The physical and concrete textual manifestations of

³¹⁴ Houdek and Phillips, "Public Memory."

³¹⁵ Carole Blair, Greg Dickinson, and Brian L. Ott, *Places of Public Memory: The Rhetoric of Museums and Memorials* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2010).

³¹⁶ J. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 3.

public memory (through addresses,³¹⁷ memorials,³¹⁸ museums,³¹⁹ pageantry,³²⁰ photographs,³²¹ and even movies³²²) are some of the best examples we have of how texts, objects, places, and spaces help create and recreate societal recollection of memories.

Yet even with this focus on commemoration, rhetoricians could do more work to analyze the use of *time* itself as a commemorative tool and public memory practice. While much has been said about commemorative events and their constitution of important social movements, “during which some aspect of our culture is magnified and reflected back to us,”³²³ large swaths of the scholarship only examine the activities surrounding those events and not the significance of the dates themselves in generating public memory. This, however, is an important aspect to consider as the regular setting aside of a time, and the specifics of that time, are just as important as commemorative activities to the inscription of cultural values. While commemorative

³¹⁷ For an example of how public address and liturgies serve as a technology of memory, see Bradford Vivian, “Neoliberal Epideictic: Rhetorical Form and Commemorative Politics on September 11, 2002,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 92 (2006): 1–26.

³¹⁸ For examples of how memorials serve as a technology of memory, see Young, *The Texture of Memory*; V. William Balthrop, Carole Blair, and Neil Michel, “The Presence of the Present: Hijacking the ‘Good War’?” *Western Journal of Communication* 74 (2010): 170–207; Sonja Foss, “Ambiguity as Persuasion: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial,” *Communication Quarterly* 34, no. 3 (1986): 326–40; and Carole Blair, Marsha S. Jeppeson, and Enrico Pucci, Jr., “Public Memorializing in Postmodernity: The Vietnam Veterans Memorial as a Prototype,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 77, no. 3 (1991): 263–88.

³¹⁹ For examples of how museums serve as a technology of memory, see Greg Dickinson, Brian Ott, and Eric Aoki, “Memory and Myth at the Buffalo Bill Museum,” *Western Journal of Communication* 69, no. 2 (2005): 85–108; and Bernard J. Armada, “Memorial Agon: An Interpretive Tour of the National Civil Rights Museum,” *Southern Communication Journal* 63 no. 3 (1998): 235–43.

³²⁰ For an example of how commemorative pageantry serves as a technology of memory, see S. Michael Halloran, “Text and Experience in a Historical Pageant: Toward a Rhetoric of Spectacle,” *Rhetoric Society Quarterly* 31, no. 4 (2001): 5–17.

³²¹ For an example of how photographs serve as a technology of memory, see John Louis Lucaites and Robert Hariman, “Visual Rhetoric, Photojournalism, and Democratic Public Culture,” *Rhetoric Review* 20 (2001): 37–42.

³²² For an example of how movies serve as a technology of memory, see Barbara A. Biesecker, “Remembering World War II: The Rhetoric and Politics of National Commemoration at the Turn of the Twenty-First Century,” *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 88 (2002): 393–409.

³²³ J. R. Gillis, *Commemorations: The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), 5.

activities have been noted to “shift the interpretation of current events” and to “shape and reshape not only our understanding of the past but also of our present and future” through both social intervention and critique, those effects would not be possible without society first engaging in discourse regarding when those events ought to occur.³²⁴ Historical dates serve as a crucial organizing mechanism behind commemorations, and while the selection and highlighting of important dates within society is not without tension or controversy, it lays the groundwork for other public memory building to happen. The coordination of individual and group memories and the use of dates as foundational for official and unofficial commemoration thus creates the opportunity for national public forums (and in some cases international discussions) regarding the relationship between the past, present, and future.

In the instances of the resurrection, elevation, and invention of Baltic holidays within the US-Baltic discourse regarding independence, JBANC primarily centered its advocacy and rhetorical strategies around highlighting these dates within the political narrative of the time. Because the dates surrounding International Black Ribbon Day, the original independence days of the three Baltic countries, and Baltic Freedom Day were all uniquely important to the Baltics’ national stories and these countries’ individual identities—as well as their continued fight for the reinstatement of their independence—making the US audience better aware of their meaning was a critical part of JBANC’s work. Further, centering these days within the US foreign policy agenda and using them to continually, systematically, and seasonally apply pressure to the US governmental apparatus to better support the Baltic states was a key aspect of their commemorative usefulness. Although the five dates would not have seemed historically

³²⁴ Houdek and Phillips, “Public Memory.”

significant to many involved in the creation of Cold War foreign policy at the time, JBANC was keen to make sure that these dates became important markers and reminders of the work that had been done and needed to be done regarding the United States' support for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Further, the ethnic lobbying organization did not necessarily care *how* these dates were commemorated within the US and Baltic spaces but merely *that* they were commemorated and that in that commemoration further discussions could take place regarding the future of the Baltic states.

International Black Ribbon Day

One of the first commemorative holidays that began as a transnational endeavor meant to call greater attention to the Baltic struggle was International Black Ribbon Day, observed on August 23. This was an event intended to bring together the countries and citizens of the Western world and rally them around anti-Soviet sentiments, linking them to those behind the Iron Curtain, and to spread awareness of the effects of the Soviet occupation of these states. Initially organized in Canada in 1986 and promoted as an event to bolster North American awareness of the USSR's occupation of the Baltics, International Black Ribbon Day was centered around the commemoration of a date that would be recognized around the world and would emphasize the need for the reinstatement of the independence of Eastern European countries under the occupation of the USSR. In preparation for the 1986 commemoration of August 23, the International Black Ribbon Day Committee in Canada stated that it aimed to "promote both peace with freedom and an awareness of the continuing enslavement of Europeans by Soviet communists." Markus Hess, chairman of the committee, wrote in a letter to the various diasporic and immigrant groups in the United States, "This coming August 23rd - the anniversary of the

signing of the Ribbentrop-Molotov friendship pact - has been set as the first annual International Black Ribbon Day. On that terrible day, in 1939, Soviet communists and Nazis capped years of cooperation by dividing the territory of Poland and the Baltic states between them.” He went on to state in the announcement of International Black Ribbon Day that the committee would “condemn the enslavement of eastern Europe and demonstrate for peace with freedom for all peoples oppressed by Soviet communists today.”³²⁵ In that sense, the date was supposed to focus on not only the anniversary of the pact, which affected the specific countries of the Baltics and Poland, but also on the broader population of the millions of Europeans who had since become a part of Soviet rule following World War II.

International Black Ribbon Day was also conceived as a way for the West to join Eastern Europe in its protest of the USSR’s occupation of many countries. In his concluding thoughts within the statement, Hess called for “those citizens who cherish peace with freedom to stand with us and remember August 23rd. We call upon them to wear a Black Ribbon on that day to remember those who have lost their precious freedom and to cherish ours,” listing the support that the committee had garnered. This support came from organizations like the World Congress of Free Ukrainians, Hungarian Freedom Fighters World Federation, the Council of Free Czechoslovakia, and the members of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, who all saw a need for the commemoration of the date and had committed to helping Baltic Freedom Day be recognized among the countries of the free world.³²⁶ Together these organizations could work

³²⁵ “International Black Ribbon Day Committee Formed,” 10 April, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³²⁶ “International Black Ribbon Day Committee Formed,” 10 April, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

together to promote the day and to ensure that a commemoration would occur in the prominent countries of the West.

In another statement about the celebration of International Black Ribbon Day, the committee put focus on the day as a means to resurrect and illuminate the importance of the August 23 date within the West's calibration. Aiming to garner support for the day and to situate it in relation to other issues of the time, the statement highlighted that in "these days" (of the 1980s), "it seems that in order to have the world pay attention to your cause, one must resort to terrorism - to bombing, to the taking of hostages, to the killing of innocent people."³²⁷ The publication went on to articulate that while these events easily *drew* public attention, they also *took* public attention away from other issues going on in the world that might not be as easily made into media moments.

The western world - its governments, its media, its citizens - has forgotten the desperate plight of the millions of Balts and Eastern Europeans being held hostage by the Soviet Union. People are aware of such atrocities as the Holocaust, the hijackings of the [Palestine Liberation Organization], the bombings of the [Irish Republican Army] and the murders of every terrorist who, for whatever cause, kills innocent people. But how many know that 20% of the Baltic population was either killed or deported to slave camps, from where they [never] returned?³²⁸

Urging those "who wish[] to protest and draw attention to the desperate plight of the millions of people presently held captive in the Soviet Union," the statement reminded readers that taking action on "International Black Ribbon Day was a means by which the reality of the Soviet Union could be effectively and directly conveyed, not only to the media, but to the man on the street. It is an opportunity to make your neighbours, your co-workers, your friends aware of the true facts

³²⁷ "International Black Ribbon Day," Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³²⁸ "International Black Ribbon Day," Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

and the true nature of the Soviet Union.” In comparison to other practices and ribbon wearing of the time, such as the display of yellow ribbons upon the return home of hostages from the war, the black ribbon was meant to “draw attention to countless hostages in the Soviet Bloc who will never return.” The statement then concludes in great urgency, articulating that the magnitude of the day would “depend on maximum participation by all of us in the western world. Its success depends on your participation!!!”³²⁹

Additionally, the date was meant to show the solidarity of the countries who commemorated the occasion with “the millions who [had] suffered under Soviet occupation.”³³⁰ Intended to be celebrated by both Balts who were living in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania who were already emphasizing the local historical importance of August 23 as the signing date of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and supporters of Baltic freedom who were in the United States and other parts of the “free world,” this holiday was another instance of collaboration between the countries and one of the ways that JBANC encouraged the growth of the holiday and Baltic support of it stateside. In order to drum up excitement for the commemoration stateside during its years of commemoration, JBANC wrote to its various colleagues and supporters asking for their commitment to attend JBANC-sponsored protests on Black Ribbon Day. Inviting other Eastern and Central European diasporic counterparts, such as members of the Czechoslovak National Council of America (CNCA), to join it in its commemorations, JBANC leveraged its connections with other ethnic immigrant lobbying and representative groups in the D.C. area to convince

³²⁹ “International Black Ribbon Day,” Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³³⁰ “Demonstrations Occur in All Three Baltic Capitals,” page 8, found in the Joint Baltic American National Committee 1987 Annual Report, 1987, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

others to work alongside it in creating a public demonstration for the August 23 date. In doing so, JBANC also illuminated the similarities between Black Ribbon Day and other nationalist-centered commemorations that occurred around the same time, such as the August 21 “Soviet Day of Shame” that the Czechoslovakians designated as a day for remembrance after their 1968 invasion by the USSR.³³¹ By Rhetorically calling upon these similarities and emphasizing the transnational connections among these groups and between those still living under the Soviet regime in their home countries and Baltic Americans concerned with independence issues, JBANC was able to garner major support for the US commemoration of the date and to emphasize first and foremost the date’s relationship to the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its implications for the Baltics specifically.

Working to publicize the holiday, JBANC wrote letters to its contacts about the designation of the day, telling them about its organization of a motorcade through the streets of D.C. in order to draw broader attention to the date’s saliency.³³² Described as a “somber motorcade of cars decorated with black ribbons” driving by Embassy Row and other governmental buildings, the event was supposed to be part of “an ongoing effort of Eastern Europeans in the Western World to bring to the attention of the public the plight of these peoples.”³³³ The event was also pitched as a way for the US public to participate in a day that was wide reaching in its appeals, due to both its international character and its broad meaning.

³³¹ Correspondence from Joseph Hasek, Co-chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Czechoslovak National Council of America to Mr. Zinta Arums, PR Director of JBANC, 12 August, 1986, Box 50, Folder 2, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³³² Correspondence from Zinta Aruma, PR Director for JBANC to JBANC contacts, 31 July, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³³³ The Joint Baltic American National Committee, “International Black Ribbon Day Motorcade,” Press Release, 5 August, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

While the rest of the world recognized the day to be about the “millions of European people held hostage at this time by the Soviet Union,” JBANC specifically emphasized the fact that the commemoration took place on the same date as the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.³³⁴ Similar to the ways in which JBANC directly called upon its constituency to be involved in Baltic lobbying work, seeing the letters, correspondence, and involvement of “everyday” citizens as significantly more important to its cause than just the involvement of US lawmakers, International Black Ribbon Day was a commemorative date widely discussed among the Baltic-American community as an opportunity for all to show up and display their solidarity with members of the Eastern European diaspora. Because of this “grassroots” appeal to the broader public and the day’s recognition across both the Baltics and the United States as a remembrance of the pact’s signing, the event was ultimately publicized by JBANC as having “world wide effect[s] on both sides of the Iron Curtain.”³³⁵

However, despite the success of the 1986 motorcade, there was some discussion within the Baltic lobbying organization about whether JBANC ought to put forward the concentrated effort to push a US commemoration of the day in the future. Part of the reason for these concerns was that it was hard to organize a collective response from JBANC’s Washington, D.C., governmental audience since many in the district were gone during August on vacation. Second, the date of International Black Ribbon Day in mid-August was very close to Captive Nations Week, which occurred in the third week of July and was also a main advocacy event for the

³³⁴ Correspondence from Zinta Arums, PR Director for JBANC to JBANC contacts, 31 July, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³³⁵ The Joint Baltic American National Committee, “International Black Ribbon Day Motorcade,” Press Release, 5 August, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

lobbying group. While JBANC acknowledged that Captive Nations Week certainly could not replace the significance of Black Ribbon Day, many Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians in the United States already participated in that week, seeing it as an opportunity to demonstrate overtly against the occupation of the three Baltic countries by the USSR.³³⁶ JBANC was concerned there simply was not enough bandwidth to promote the US commemoration of multiple Baltic-centered holidays around the same time, especially as the group wanted to concentrate its efforts and resources on one event that could be the most fruitful for it as a lobbying organization.

However, despite JBANC's uncertainty regarding the usefulness of the event, it proved to be successful in its dissemination across the country. Due to the push by JBANC and its Eastern European diasporic colleagues for International Black Ribbon Day to be commemorated, a variety of media publications were put out in response to the event. Aiming to spread awareness about the effects of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact among US citizens and to increase the day's transnational appeal across a variety of contexts, these publications reported on the day's celebration in both the United States and the Baltic countries. This public response demonstrated overall positive feedback regarding the holiday and showed that JBANC and its allies were able to generate considerable support for the date. The transnational ties that were strengthened from the day's commemoration also revealed the ways in which Baltic-American relations were bolstered by American recognition of the day and the continued education of the American citizenry on the importance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact for the realities of the Cold War. Thus, continuing the commemoration of the event did not have to fall on JBANC's shoulders alone but was widely taken up around the country.

³³⁶ "Black Ribbon Day Discussion," in JBANC Summit Minutes, 7 March, 1987, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Called “a day of infamy” by the *Orange County Register*, August 23 was highlighted not only as an anniversary of the signing of the pact but also as a reminder of the “true” nature of the USSR and its government. Noting that the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was “an event that still has an impact today,” the article quickly emphasized that the geographical and geopolitical lines designated by the treaty were the primary support for the USSR’s occupation of the Baltic states and ultimately the reason why the United States and other Western countries ought to look at the USSR’s strong hold over them as merely as product of the USSR’s desire for increased size and scope in the twentieth century. Stating that the “frontiers outlined by the Hitler-Stalin pact remain the boundaries claimed by the Soviet Union to this day, though the United States and other Western countries have never recognized the annexation of the Baltic states,” the *Orange County Register* commented that the signing of the pact supported the USSR’s increasing power and political tactics in the region, also propping up its actions in the region after the war. Noting that perhaps the Nazis and Communists were not all that different in their approaches to the region and the horror they enacted there, the story concludes, “The Nazi-Soviet pact offer[s] the key insight, for those willing to learn or to remember, into the nature of both the Nazi and Soviet regimes — brutal, cynical, acquisitive and dedicated to dominance over the peoples they ruled. Although many things have changed since 1939, it is chastening to remember.” Reminding readers that the United States “had previously been sympathetic to the Soviets,” the story additionally urged readers to utilize the August 23 day to condemn the signing of the pact and to realize that it was this treaty that set up the Baltics and other states in the USSR for their near-

fifty-year occupation, leading to many of the atrocities before which the United States had previously turned its head and to which it never responded with action.³³⁷

Similarly, a story titled “International Black Ribbon Day Rally Observed in Boston” underscored not only the day’s emphasis on the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact but also its commemoration across the globe. Reporting the observance of the date in Boston and the collaboration among many different US-based Eastern European advocacy groups such as the Latvian-American Association, American-Ukrainian Congress, and the Latvian Press Society in America, the article detailed the extent to which the day emphasized the atrocities of the Soviet Union’s crimes against humanity, noting that “the western public either does not know or does not want to know that the Soviet Union is guilty of some of the worst crimes against humanity man is capable of committing; they either do not know or do not want to know that at the end of the WWII only one of two equally despicable tyrants was defeated.” Hitting upon the point that these crimes (which were perpetuated and furthered in Hitler and Stalin’s signing of the pact) were still were a main feature of the USSR in the 1980s and played into US-USSR diplomatic relations, the article highlighted that in many cases the Soviet Union had “use[d] the human rights of its captive people as a bargaining chip in its negotiations with the West today.” In doing so, and perhaps even reminding readers of the same US-Baltic “bargaining” negotiations the USSR pulled in conjunction with the OSI cases, the story noted the importance of the day in meditating upon such conclusions. Thus, the story states that Black Ribbon Day and its celebration in Boston, as well as other places in the US, gave “many individuals...who wished to protest and draw public attention to the desperate plight of the millions held captive by the Soviet

³³⁷ “A Day of Infamy,” 24 August, 1986, *Orange County Register*, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Union” an opportunity to show “that the sorrow of life under Soviet domination can be effectively conveyed” to the rest of the US and Western public.³³⁸ This day’s recognition in the United States, as well as the rest of the world, translated the memory of those lost to the signing of the pact to those outside of the immediate Baltic realm and helped to convey the legacy of what August 23 represented.

In response to the day’s 1986 celebration in Boston, D.C., and other cities, JBANC also released a press statement regarding the commemoration of the date across the United States. Deeming the “unique demonstration a success,” Zinta Arums, Public Relations Director for JBANC, noted that traffic in Washington, D.C., “came to a halt” with the passing of the JBANC-organized motorcade in the district and that “motorists and pedestrians stopped to view the police escorted” entourage that drove throughout the city in recognition of the day. With 25 “somber cars...decked in black ribbon and decorated with an assortment of related posters,” the lineup drew attention to the “thousands of people forcibly imprisoned behind the iron curtain by the USSR.” Further along in the statement JBANC notes that the day was also an opportunity to bring “together both native and succeeding generations of Eastern European Americans” such as Estonians, Latvians, Lithuanians, Hungarians, Ukrainians, and Poles, who all partook in the day’s commemoration and whose various diasporic groups sent representatives to be part of the JBANC-organized event. While the 1986 commemoration of this date was the first annual International Black Ribbon Day, as started by the Estonian Central Council in Canada, it had its dual purpose in not only generally recognizing the horrors of the USSR’s crimes but also remembering the day on which Hitler and Stalin divided “the territory of Poland and the Baltic

³³⁸ Isabel Rivero, “International Black Ribbon Day Rally Observed in Boston,” Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

States between them[selves].” Thus, the event could be remembered by “those who ha[d] lost their precious freedom” and those who could “appreciate their own.”³³⁹

The second year of the day’s commemoration in 1987 also seemed to be successful both in the United States and abroad, with more than 10,000 demonstrators taking to the streets in the Baltic republics’ capitals of Tallinn, Riga, and Vilnius to protest the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact.³⁴⁰ To the surprise of many, they were mostly left undisturbed and “by pre-Gorbachev standards, Soviet authorities showed admirable restraint;” however, there was an unequal application of leniency across the three countries, with Soviet police still photographing the protests’ participants, and in Riga many “protesters were detained or roughed up,” and “protest leaders were later placed under house arrest.” Such activity demonstrated the contradiction between Gorbachev’s announced policy of *glasnost* and the USSR’s continual efforts to “suppress the nationalistic, frequently anti-Russian sentiments that boil[ed] beneath the surface in the Soviet Union’s non-Russian republics.”³⁴¹ The United States had explicitly and outwardly supported the organization of these demonstrations, with the Voice of America, Vatican Radio, and other foreign broadcasting services helping to publicize plans for the protests on August 23.³⁴²

In 1988, the third year of the day’s celebration, the event grew even more, with tens of thousands of demonstrators reported to have poured into the streets of all the cities of the Baltics,

³³⁹ The Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Unique Demonstration a Success” Press Release, 3 September, 1986, Box 50, Folder 10, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁴⁰ “How much Baltic dissent will Gorbachev tolerate?” 26 August, 1987, *Philadelphia Inquirer*, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁴¹ “Testing Glasnost,” 26 August, 1987, *Los Angeles Times*, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁴² “Testing Glasnost,” 26 August, 1987, *Los Angeles Times*, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

both the capitals and the regional hubs along the coasts, marking a “landmark protest.”³⁴³ Since it was evident that the Soviet authorities approved these protests, the activities were said to have gone on for hours with over 100,000 demonstrators taking part in Vilnius, 40,000–60,000 joining in Riga, 10,000 gathering in Tallinn, and thousands of others protesting in the other, smaller cities.³⁴⁴ In Estonia, the crowds in Tallinn filled an auditorium so full that the crowds spilled out into an overflow ice-hockey rink that soon became “awash in a sea” of the iconic blue, black, and white Estonian flags.³⁴⁵ The largest of the gatherings in Vilnius centered strongly around the United States’ support of the event, with protesters reportedly hearing speakers read parts of a letter sent by the US senators denouncing the occupation of the Baltics, encouraged to show up to hear the reading in part because, like in years past, programs such as Voice of America and Radio Free Europe in the Baltic languages promoted the event.³⁴⁶ Underscoring the networked character of the commemoration and its steady growth over the years since its inception in the West and among ethnic lobbying organizations such as JBANC, the Rhetorical possibilities for intervention mobilized social change not only in the United States but also around the world. Unlike previous demonstrations in the Baltics that seemed to be “clandestinely planned by dissidents,” these demonstrations finally appeared to appropriately represent the USSR’s new policy of *glasnost* and had earned the “official blessing” of authorities, who “at some point in the

³⁴³ Gary Lee, “Baltic Protests Denounce Soviet Takeover in 1940: Moscow Approves Mass Demonstrations,” 24 August 1988, *Washington Post*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁴⁴ “Latvians Mark Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact Anniversary: A Preliminary Report,” 26 August 1988, HU OSA 300-8-47, Box 2, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

³⁴⁵ “Demonstrations on the 49th Anniversary of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact,” 26 August 1988, HU OSA 300-8-47, Box 2, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

³⁴⁶ Bill Keller, “Russians Say Western Radio Instigated Baltic Protests,” *New York Times*, 25 August 1987, HU OSA 300-120-5, Box 15, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

[previous] few months...began to relax the old limits.”³⁴⁷ Thus, these protests were reportedly allowed to take place, “even though many of the participants blatantly espoused” national sentiments and anti-USSR messages.³⁴⁸ However, this “outpouring of hostility against Soviet authority” also seemed to situate the Baltic States in an unwieldy position in relation to Gorbachev. As he was still “unwilling to renounce Stalin’s foreign policy moves such as the annexation of the Baltic states... refus[ing] to even acknowledge the existence of the secret protocol,” it confused many that he allowed the protests to continue. Further, the Soviet authorities in Moscow still seemed to stick to the “official view” that “there [was] not proof that the secret protocol [was] genuine, even though the opening of the Nazi archives in the early postwar years and the testimony of Germans involved in the policy seem[ed] incontrovertible.”³⁴⁹ While the allowance of the August 23, 1988, demonstrations centered around the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and these protests were seen as a step forward for *glasnost* and the overall growing movements to support the reinstatement of Baltic independence, it still did not yield a Soviet response to the pact or an acknowledgement of the impacts that the treaty had on the ongoing occupation of the Baltic states.

These transnational connections and success of International Black Ribbon Day were greatly emphasized in public reflections upon this day, showing how the Baltic celebration of the

³⁴⁷ Gary Lee, “Baltic Protests Denounce Soviet Takeover in 1940: Moscow Approves Mass Demonstrations,” 24 August 1988, *Washington Post*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota; Bill Keller, “Baltic Demonstrations: A Gamble for Gorbachev,” 25 August 1988, *New York Times*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁴⁸ Gary Lee, “Baltic Protests Denounce Soviet Takeover in 1940: Moscow Approves Mass Demonstrations,” 24 August 1988, *Washington Post*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁴⁹ Bill Keller, “Baltic Demonstrations: A Gamble for Gorbachev,” 25 August 1988, *New York Times*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

August 23 date was jointly commemorated in both the United States and the Baltics, demonstrating solidarity in US support for the realization of Baltic independence. As a *Washington Post* article noted in an August 24, 1988, piece titled “Baltic Protests Denounce Soviet Takeover in 1940,” the protests in the Baltics “featured the most open display of nationalist sentiment in the Baltic republics in years, with long-banned Baltic flags flapping in the wind and the crowds singing old national hymns.” Stating that the 1988 occurrence of the protests and their allowance by communist party officials “seemed to be granting a major concession to disgruntled activities throughout the region,” the piece noted that the evolution of the day and international commemoration of it over the course of the previous couple of years surely aided in the protests’ development in the Baltic states. Despite the fact that autumn 1987 was a period characterized by the Soviet jailing and punishment of those who participated in similar national protests and holidays (such as the commemoration of the original Baltic independence days), the August 1988 protests even included “some party officials [who] were reportedly among the participants.”³⁵⁰ Of course, some of this loosening up of Soviet response was encouraged by the continued commemoration of the days in the West and places like the United States, as well. Just as the letter sent by the US senators, “denouncing the ‘illegal Soviet occupation’ of the Baltics,” was read at the Lithuanian demonstration, the West’s remembrance of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact was an extreme morale booster to those hoping to demonstrate on this day throughout the Baltics.³⁵¹ As a western diplomat commented in the *Washington Post*

³⁵⁰ Gary Lee, “Baltic Protests Denounce Soviet Takeover in 1940: Moscow Approves Mass Demonstrations,” 24 August 1988, *Washington Post*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁵¹ Bill Keller, “Baltic Demonstrations: A Gamble for Gorbachev,” 25 August 1988, *New York Times*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

story that the communist party was “obviously trying to take the lid off the pot before it boils over” in “allowing the Baltic demonstrations to take place,” US support of the day and joint commemoration of it added heat to the fire.³⁵² It was clear to many eagerly watching the events in the Baltics and others invested in US-Baltic-USSR foreign relations that while Moscow had the power to stop the demonstrations if it wanted to, it decidedly allowed the protests to occur and in doing so, watched “the people [] move[] ahead of the Government.”³⁵³

Thus, the US and Baltic commemoration of International Black Ribbon Day in 1986–1988 proved to be catalytic for the growth of the Baltic independence movement brewing behind the Iron Curtain and the ways in which the United States advocated for the realization of this autonomy. By encouraging and creating opportunities for US commemoration of this day, JBANC was able to generate greater American awareness surrounding the implications of the August 23 signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the effects that this agreement had on Eastern Europe. Further, International Black Ribbon Day was able to tie together people in the Baltic states with Baltic Americans and other Americans in the United States who were invested in their plight. It was due to those in the United States who wanted to provide greater support to the demonstrators who were risking their lives to commemorate this day in the Baltics that the holiday was able to gain momentum and speed over time, leading up to the significant 1988 events that seemed to mark a new era and chance for change in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

³⁵² Gary Lee, “Baltic Protests Denounce Soviet Takeover in 1940: Moscow Approves Mass Demonstrations,” 24 August 1988, *Washington Post*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁵³ Bill Keller, “Baltic Demonstrations: A Gamble for Gorbachev,” 25 August 1988, *New York Times*, Box 42, Folder 92, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Baltic Independence Days

The various protests in the United States and within the Baltic states regarding International Black Ribbon Day, as well as the 1988 success of the demonstrations in the Baltics, spurred more support for the commemoration of other Baltic holidays. Specifically, anti-Soviet and pro-nationalist protests were organized to occur on the three original pre-WWII independence days of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and were similarly encouraged by the United States in its recognition of these dates. However, these demonstrations were met with various degrees of support and/or Soviet admission in the Baltics, with some of the protests hardly receiving any negative reaction from the authorities and other events completely being shut down.

During the Latvian celebration of the 69th anniversary of its declaration of independence in 1987 on November 18, there was much hope that the commemoration would be allowed to continue without Soviet interference. These protests in Riga turned out to be significant for the occupied country, with over 1,000 Latvians beginning the day of protest by gathering around the Freedom Monument in the middle of the city, which was then positioned on a street renamed “Lenin” during the Soviet occupation. Coming on the heels of both the Latvians’ first celebration of June 14 as Baltic Freedom Day as well as the August 23 designation of International Black Ribbon Day, Latvia's citizens had gained the confidence to partake in a November demonstration, this time centering the state’s original independence day. However, while they were allowed to protest in the morning, by the afternoon Western special correspondents reported that the middle of the city was sealed off by Soviet police and uniformed militia and plainclothes police officers made their presence known. Apparently Soviet authorities, including

the head of the KGB, Viktor Cherbrikov, had warned Latvians of the consequences of such actions in the days leading up to November 18, reminding Latvians of the “dangers of nationalism,” which was “inevitably manipulated by the West.” Authorities also put the head of the Helsinki-86 group, Janis Barkans, under arrest, as he had led the August 23 demonstrations in the country. Special history lessons were taught in the factories and schools of Latvia during mid-November, with “assistants” coming in to warn students not to go to the Freedom monument on November 18, as it “would turn out badly,” and telling workers that the West was engaging in a “crude interference” in the country. They even cited the American congressional resolution calling for the November 18 commemoration to be authorized and celebrated—the same resolution that Riegle worked on passing together with Senate majority and minority leaders—as an unnecessary action by the United States government to meddle with the Baltic situation. However, in order to show that more open expressions and demonstration were in fact allowed in this new era of *glasnost* within the USSR, Soviet authorities ironically organized alternative official demonstrations on November 18. Instead of positioning the gathering around the Freedom Monument and emphasizing the origin story of the Latvian state, these demonstrations happened at the statue of the Red Infantrymen in Riga, which commemorated the Latvian soldiers who guarded Lenin. While the actual Latvian independence gathering was said to have had at least 10,000 people in attendance, there were hardly more than 2,000 at the Soviet-organized event. Further, it was reported that no applause occurred at the alternative demonstration when Soviet authorities tried to condemn the United States’ role in interfering with the day, with demonstrators instead standing in silence, largely unmoved by the statements issued by communist party leaders. Later the Russian newspaper *Pravda* reported that the Latvian “provocation did not succeed” and that the “Latvian national dissidents” along with the

inhabitants of Riga could only be accused of partaking in “pathological hooliganism” and “the dangerous game of democracy” by allowing the independence day gathering to occur.³⁵⁴ The back and forth of these protests and counterprotests indicated the rhetorical mechanisms utilized on both sides of the “independence debate” in order to try to garner support for or turn the Balts against US commemorative involvement.

After the 1987 commemoration of these independence days and the challenge that Latvia faced in its commemoration due to the Soviets’ targeting of the date, one of JBANC’s smaller affiliates, the Lithuanian Information Center (LIC), put pressure on the US Department of State to explicitly discuss the repression of the Independence Day demonstrations with the USSR government. Following a six-person Baltic-American delegation that met with the Secretary of State’s office in 1987, Victor Nakas of the LIC requested that in diplomatic meetings with the Soviet Union, the United States bring up the names of a list of Lithuanian prisoners and the chronology of repressions directed at Balts who participated in the demonstrations in August and November of 1987 so that they could be discussed with Secretary Gorbachev. Writing to the Honorable John Whitehead, Deputy Secretary of State, asking him to follow up on these exchanges, Nakas also requested that Secretary of State George Shultz deliver a “public speech on US policy towards the Baltic States to a group of foreign policy experts or journalists” in early 1988 before the February celebrations of independence in Estonia and Lithuania. He stated that with the “US government giv[ing] greater prominence to the Baltic States as they commemorate[d] the 70th anniversary of their independence,” it would not just be honoring the desires of “Americans who care about the fate of these occupied countries,” but it would also

³⁵⁴ Slyvie Kauffmann, “Riga on War Footing for an Anniversary: Nationalist Fever in Latvia,” *Le Monde Paris*, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

reflect “the aspirations of the citizens in the Baltic States.”³⁵⁵ Such statements were also backed up in a letter from Lithuanians in the Baltics to the government of the United States articulating their desire for the United States to more openly support the Baltic independence movements.³⁵⁶

Just a couple of months after this initial meeting and letter exchange, in early January of 1988, the LIC reported that their sources in Lithuania knew that thousands of people were already planning to mark the 70th anniversary of Lithuania’s February 16 independence day in the Baltics and had committed to participate in demonstrations in Vilnius and throughout the country. Further, 125 citizens of Lithuania issued an appeal to Gorbachev not to interfere in the February commemorative ceremonies. Although this letter—that was being circulated around Lithuania for signatures—was confiscated prematurely during a January 8 raid on the Vilnius home of dissident Petras Cidzikas, who had previously been threatened with psychiatric detention for his role in collaborating with foreign correspondents during the November 1987 Latvian Independence Day demonstrations, news of its impact reached American audiences and was spread through JBANC.³⁵⁷ In the lead-up to the February 16 Lithuanian holiday, plans were made to lay flowers at various sites in Lithuania, such as at the graves of the signers of the Declaration of Lithuanian Independence, Vilnius’s largest Catholic cathedral, and the statue of a nationalist poet. A special mass was offered at St. Ann’s Church, and other religious ceremonies

³⁵⁵ Correspondence from Victor Nakas of the Lithuanian Information Center to the Honorable John Whitehead, Deputy Secretary of State, 26 January, 1988, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁵⁶ Correspondence from Lithuanians to the Congress of the United States of America, 26 November, 1987, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁵⁷ Lithuanian Information Center, “Lithuanians Plan Independence Rallies,” 26 January 1988, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

occurred at the various historical Catholic sites in Vilnius, as well, little-r rhetorical strategic moves meant to support the strengthening of religious identity there.³⁵⁸

Mirroring how important the symbolism of independence was within the Baltic states, the individual Estonian, Latvia, and Lithuanian independence days were heralded as significant dates within the US-Baltic foreign policy agenda and were highlighted by JBANC and the US government as significant holidays worth the official and public blessing of US political officials. The importance of these dates was evidenced in various correspondence between the US and Baltic legations during the 1980s, such as a February 9, 1988, letter from George Shultz, US Secretary of State, to Stasys Lozaraitis, Jr., Charge d'Affaires of Lithuania. Detailing how important Lithuania's independence date was to the United States, Shultz extended "his greetings and congratulations on behalf of the Government of the United States and the American people" on the seventieth anniversary of Lithuania, which was initiated on February 16, 1918, when the Republic of Lithuania was established. Shultz went on to mention that it was only after "Soviet forces invaded and illegally annexed Lithuania in 1940" that Lithuania's previously "democratic government based on political freedom for all citizens" was put to an end. Thus, on behalf of the United States, Shultz encouraged the celebration of Lithuania's independence day as it was a day worth commemorating within the arc of the Lithuanian national story. In concluding his letter, Shultz reminded Lozoraitis that "the United States unequivocally condemned the Soviet annexation of Lithuania" and that it "[had] neither recognized the forcible incorporation of Lithuania into the Soviet Union, nor [would]" do so. Here the message from the United States' government was strong regarding its intentions to keep holding to its Baltic non-recognition

³⁵⁸ "Lithuania: Commemorations of Independence Day," 25 March 1988, HU OSA 300-8-47, Box 2, Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

policy and to publicly celebrate and acknowledge the three countries' original independence days as not only their origination but also the beginning of their democratic inclinations. Weaving together the broader Rhetorical network of actors involved in the issue, Shultz also proclaimed that, from the perspective of the American people, there was a message of hope undergirding what happened, stating that "the courage and unyielding commitment to liberty demonstrated by the Lithuanian people, even after long years of foreign domination, inspire confidence that their cause will ultimately prevail."³⁵⁹

The United States' Senate followed this letter from the US Department of State up with another piece of correspondence to Secretary Gorbachev on February 11, 1988, also regarding the celebration of Lithuania's independence day. Signed by Senators David F. Durenberger, Frank R. Lautenberg, and Donald W. Riegle, Jr., this text referenced the embedded nationalism that was beginning to reemerge in the Baltic states and how those sentiments related to the Baltic commemoration of national holidays. They first referenced the International Black Ribbon Day celebration from the previous summer, mentioning that "we [the United States] know that national feelings run strong and deep among the Baltic peoples. This was made especially clear to us and to people throughout the United States when, on August 23, 1987, some 10,000 Balts gathered in the streets of Tallinn, Riga and Vilnius to peacefully commemorate the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and its secret protocols, which led to the occupation of the Baltic States by the U.S.S.R." Then by centering its message around the 70th celebration of Lithuanian independence on February 16, the letter urged the USSR to allow the peaceful celebration of

³⁵⁹ Correspondence from George P. Shultz, US Secretary of State to Stasys Lozoraitis, Jr., Charge d'Affaires of Lithuania, 9 February 1988, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Lithuania's original independence day to occur, addressing Baltic concerns that the ceremonies would not "be allowed to proceed unimpeded." The authors stated that the United States "was encouraged by the fact the August demonstrations were allowed to proceed" and hoped that the USSR "government [would] similarly respect the rights of the Lithuanian and Estonian people to mark their independence days in whatever peaceful manner they choose."³⁶⁰ In this sense, the senators made sure to leave the door open to the possibilities of whatever might come of the celebrations. They were deliberately flexible in their allusion to how these days' observance might generate other unanticipated consequences or effects in the region relating to the three states' desire for autonomy.

However, the letter also attempted to warn the USSR of what these celebrations might look like, so that it would know what to expect and also be aware that the United States was keeping its eyes on the activities of the day, watching to see if and how those plans would come to fruition. More specifically the senators noted that the United States had "learned that 41 Lithuanian citizens, including 10 priests, [had] issued an appeal to other Lithuanians to join them in commemorating their Independence Day at religious services" and that in Estonia, citizens had "announced the formation of the Estonian National Independence Party, to promote human rights and self-determination of the Estonian Republic." Further, they made it clear that they did not yet have full confidence in Gorbachev's hands-off approach to the region, warning him that "one report reaching the west indicate[d] that Soviet authorities [would] move to block these powerful ceremonies." Later citing a January *Pravda* report that stated that "Communist Party leaders in Lithuania had decided to intensify their efforts against 'bourgeois nationalism and clerical

³⁶⁰ Correspondence from United States Senate to General Secretary Gorbachev, 11 February 1988, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

extremism,” the senators commented that they hoped that the Lithuanian and Estonian people would be able to peacefully honor their national holidays. Throwing Gorbachev’s words back at him, they concluded the letter with a reference to the General Secretary’s November 1987 speech that marked the 70th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, reminding him that he “asserted that Soviet foreign policy under [his] leadership ha[d] remained in concert with ‘the basic course worked out and charted by Lenin’” and that this course was meant to honor the common, everyday person. The senators then commented, “As you know, when Lenin was at the helm of the Soviet Union’s Communist party, the U.S.S.R. signed peace treaties in 1920 with each of the three Baltic States, renouncing claims to their territory in perpetuity.” They ended the letter with this line: “Two decades later, Stalin violated this solemn commitment. We sincerely hope that the course set by Lenin will be the one which guides your response to the Baltic peoples as they seek to peacefully express their aspirations for human rights and self-determination.”³⁶¹ Making it clear to Gorbachev what their requests were, the senators—on behalf of the US government and its people (including the outspoken voices of Baltic Americans)—highlighted how the February 16 celebration of the 70th anniversary of Lithuanian independence would mark an important day in the US-Baltic-USSR international relations and had the ability to serve as proof of either Gorbachev’s support of the rise of Baltic nationalism, as expressed through these celebrations, or his resistance to the region’s expressions and aspirations for an assertion of re-independence.

The same sort of letter was generated from the House and addressed to Secretary Gorbachev, sent on February 23, 1988, one day before the 70th anniversary of Estonian

³⁶¹ Correspondence from United States Senate to General Secretary Gorbachev, 11 February 1988, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

independence. Communicating a similar message to the senators' correspondence, this document reflected concern regarding the "official harassment and abuse directed against individuals who have participated in public demonstrations." Listing the names of Estonian individuals who were allegedly victims of these actions by the Soviet government, the US congressional representatives stated that they had heard that some of these Estonians were being held in jail, called up for reserve military training, or were searched and questioned following their participation in the events. The lawmakers then concluded their letter with "we, as members of the United States Congress, urge you to prevent any official disruption of peaceful gatherings on Estonian Independence Day." Further, they made certain that Gorbachev knew that the US government wanted to ensure that he and his authorities would "prevent the harassment of any organizers or participants before or after these gatherings."³⁶²

Altogether the American focus on the ways in which the USSR interacted with the Baltic states and its citizens in their celebration of the Baltic independence days, as well the acknowledgement of these days stateside and within the community of which JBANC was a part, generated considerable support for these holidays. Their resuscitation within the Baltic states and the greater, international emphasis placed on these three dates was meaningful for the continued fight for Baltic independence as these days served as both a memory of the original independence attained by these three countries and motivation for the reinstatement of that autonomy from the USSR. This was not just the resuscitation of this memory for those in the Baltic states but also the generation of the memory of these events for the previously unfamiliar

³⁶² Correspondence from the United States House of Representatives to General Secretary Gorbachev, 23 February 1988, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

American audience in the United States. They also provided an opportunity for US lawmakers to speak up on behalf of the Baltic states, utilizing them as a pawn in their correspondence with Gorbachev and the USSR, and more strongly asserting the United States' support of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Through JBANC's international connections within the Baltic states and its work through organizations such as LIC and individuals such as Senator Riegle, it was able to encourage the push for the United States to take up this foreign policy position and focus on the celebration of these Baltic holidays within its transnational relationship.

Baltic Freedom Day

The last holiday that became a major focus for JBANC and served as an important date within the context of the United States' relationship with the Baltics and the development of foreign policy regarding the region was the invention of Baltic Freedom Day by the ethnic lobbying organization. This day was set aside to commemorate the June 14 deportations of tens of thousands of Balts to Siberia after the occupation of the Baltics by the USSR during World War II. For this reason, the day had long been significant for the Baltic states and their national narratives; however, JBANC's promotion of this day in the United States and utilization of it as a unique tool within its goal of strengthening of US-Baltic relations in the late 1980s meant that the holiday gained greater emphasis and an elevated meaning and level of importance within discourse of the late-Cold War era. What had initially been a day for silent remembrance in the Baltics was extended to become a day of international memorialization of the deportations, the adoption of Baltic public memory by a US audience.

In JBANC's attempts to leverage June 14 as an important date worth considering within the scope of US-Baltic relations, Senator Don Riegle petitioned for his congressional colleagues

to support a bill that would officially designate June 14 as “Baltic Freedom Day.” In a 1989 letter, Riegle emphasized the need for the US government to continue to support the commemoration of June 14. Writing that Baltic Freedom Day was “one of the most important dates in the history of the Baltic people,” Riegle stated that the repeated commemoration of the occasion over the past many years had resulted in the organization of peaceful and public demonstrations that had kept spreading all across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and included the participation of tens of thousands of Balts.³⁶³ Additionally, Riegle asserted that the joint US-Baltic commemoration of June 14 was crucial to the growth of the holiday since he had “heard from Baltic human rights activists that congressional expressions of support for the Baltic people last year had a profound effect on Soviet willingness to allow these demonstrations to occur.” His correspondence with fellow congressional representatives heralded the importance of previous Senate support for the day throughout the 1980s, as the day’s commemoration had previously, and would once again, “reassure the Baltic people of U.S. support as they continue[d] to test the limits of *glasnost*.”³⁶⁴ While the passing of an H.J. bill in Congress would seem to be largely insignificant to the way that Baltic Freedom Day impacted the trajectory of Baltic independence, the senator’s correspondence continually emphasized how US support for the day meant a lot to the Baltic states and impacted the USSR’s perception of these events, as well. The day had become an essential piece of the US foreign policy agenda regarding the Baltics. The repeated commemoration of June 14 and Congress’s continual support of the Baltic Freedom Day showed the effects that sustained pressure had on the Soviet Union and the ways in which

³⁶³ Correspondence from Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr. (D-MI) to the US Senate, 3 February 1989, Box 2, Folder 32, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁶⁴ Correspondence from Senator Donald W. Riegle, Jr. (D-MI) to the US Senate, 3 February 1989, Box 2, Folder 32, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

the growth of public and governmental US support for the Baltics had occurred and significantly increased over the course of the last several decades.

A few months later, Senator Don Ritter and Representative Dennis M. Hertel, the Co-Chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine and close allies of JBANC and Senator Riegle, had also written to their colleagues, urging them to support the resolution. Claiming that the declaration of the commemorative holiday in the United States would support the Baltic citizens in their “peaceful demonstrations by the thousands,” Ritter and Hertel stated that the Baltic states’ plight could no longer be ignored.³⁶⁵ They opened their letter by writing, “The Baltic States have moved to the center stage of world politics! They are the leading edge of *glasnost* and *perestroika* in the USSR. The eyes of the world are on Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia,” underscoring the importance of congressional support to the Baltic independence campaign and focusing on how US commemoration of the June 14 holiday was representative of that. The congressmen also alluded to how US support of the day could continue to foster *glasnost* within the USSR, as the “Baltic Freedom Day commemorations [were] a means of testing just how much openness there [was] in the USSR.” Additionally, the joint US and Baltic commemoration of the day had encouraged the Baltic protests and demonstrations to continue and to grow in size year after year. Over the course of the 1980s, the holiday had become a transnational endeavor, as the same sort of political activity that was happening in the Baltics was also occurring across the Atlantic in the States, with the US citizenry also taking to the streets on June 14 to protest the grievous effects that the occupation had had on the Baltic

³⁶⁵ Correspondence from Senator Don Ritter (D-MI) and Representative Dennis M. Hertel (D-MI-14) to the US Congress, 5 April 1989, Box 2, Folder 26, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

citizenry and the human rights violations that occurred underneath the USSR's rule.³⁶⁶ JBANC stated time and time again that the annual introduction and passing of the resolution in US Congress sent "a clear signal to the Soviet Union and the rest of the world that the U.S. government supports Baltic aspirations for freedom."³⁶⁷ Thus, it was necessary for JBANC and its allies to encourage lawmakers to support a public commemoration of the day in the United States.

On May 5, 1989, months after the H.J. Resolution 184 that declared June 14 "Baltic Freedom Day" was first introduced to the House, John Genys and Ginta Palubinskas, the Chairman and Director of Public Relations for JBANC, wrote a letter to the JBANC's supporters, urging them to encourage their Congress members to support the bill, emphasizing its importance for the Baltic people. "The United States Government has begun taking a deeper look at the Baltic States, viewing them as areas of critical importance in the coming years," they wrote, speaking to the United States' notice of the rise of "Baltic boldness" over the course of the previous year. "People have begun to discuss the Baltic situation with optimism and hope," they followed, stating that "it is against this backdrop that we urge you to encourage your Congressional representative." Once again leaning heavily on Baltic-American constituents to do some heavy lifting in order to achieve the goals of JBANC (calling back to the same strategies the group employed as part of its Ad Hoc Committee work, discussed in Chapter 3), the ethnic

³⁶⁶ Even a few years before the snapshot in time I depict here, in June 1980 demonstrations were an integral part of the Baltic-American diasporic advocacy strategy, occurring all over the US, including California. "Demonstrations, Speeches Mark Baltic States Anniversary," June 1980, HU OSA 300-8-5, Box 1 (2), Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

³⁶⁷ "Baltic Freedom Day," page 5, found in the Joint Baltic American National Committee 1987 Annual Report, 1987, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

lobbying group carefully cultivated its US audience to support these niche endeavors and asked it to speak directly to American lawmakers in order to bolster the case for why these issues ought to receive congressional support. While dedicating June 14 as Baltic Freedom Day was, at this point, an eight-year-long tradition, it could not be taken for granted by JBANC or assured that authorities would continue to heed the organization's lobbying efforts and their urging for various branches of government to outwardly support the commemoration. Some in Congress were opposed to the bill and made that known to JBANC, falling back on arguments regarding their disinterest in supporting the Baltics or their confusion in regard to why the United States had upheld its Baltic non-recognition policy for so long in order to express its dissent. As the central Baltic-interests lobbying organization in the United States, JBANC needed as many congressional members as possible to support the resolution, which Genys and Palubinskas wrote had helped to "send[] a clear message of [the United States'] support for the Baltic people's aspiration for independence" and provided the opportunity for the president to time and time again put his stamp of approval on the commemorative resolution. "For the tradition to continue, your support is necessary!" they concluded, making sure to explicitly mention that recipients of the letter should call their representative and ask them to co-sign the bill.³⁶⁸

After the bill's introduction and throughout its passage, JBANC did not slow its advocacy efforts and involvement in orchestrating the commemoration, continuing to promote the US recognition of Baltic Freedom Day on June 14 and making sure that it was highlighted at the highest levels of the US government. On May 16, 1989, Asta Banionis of the Baltic American

³⁶⁸ Correspondence from John B. Genys and Ginta T. Palubinskas to Friends of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 5 May 1989, Box 2, Folder 26, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Freedom League (BAFL), a partner of JBANC and co-sponsor of the commemoration of the day, wrote a letter to Sichan Siv, Deputy Assistant to the President, on behalf of both organizations, requesting a public signing ceremony for the resolution designating June 14 as Baltic Freedom Day.³⁶⁹ Speaking to the bill's bi-partisan support, Banionis stated that since "Baltic Freedom Day is one of the most important dates in the history of the Baltic people for it commemorates their struggle to survive Stalin's genocidal policies and the loss of their freedom," public support by the White House would be significant for the day's US and Baltic commemoration. Further, as "congressional expressions of support for the Baltic people last year had a profound effect on Soviet willingness to allow these demonstrations to occur," the outward visual symbol of the White House joining the congressional efforts to support the democratic movement of the Baltics would be extremely instrumental in moving forward Baltic expressions of autonomy and the resurgence of their celebration of national identity.³⁷⁰ By partnering together to push the commemoration of Baltic Freedom Day in 1989, Banionis of BAFL and JBANC could ensure that multiple streams of governmental and non-governmental visual support for the day could further encourage the USSR to allow the Balts to demonstrate on this day.

Besides garnering support within Congress to support the passage of H.J. Resolution 184, the bill designating June 14 as Baltic Freedom Day across the United States, JBANC also pushed for the organization of a formal banquet that could serve as an opportunity for the organization to brush shoulders with the very lawmakers who were advocating for legislative support for the

³⁶⁹ "Defense and Foreign Policy List (1 of 4)," Green, Max: Files, 1985-1988, Box 9, Ronald Reagan Presidential Library Digital Library Collections, <https://www.reaganlibrary.gov/public/2023-10/40-219-6927378-009-007-2023.pdf>.

³⁷⁰ Correspondence from Astra Banionis, Director of the Baltic American Freedom League to the Honorable Sichan Siv, Deputy Assistant to the President, 16 May 1989, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

day. Working together to put on the event, Senator Donald W. Riegle and Representatives Dennis Hertel and Don Ritter assisted JBANC and BAFL in hosting the Baltic Freedom Day reception.³⁷¹ In 1989 over 350 Baltic and government representatives gathered at the congressional event, which was slated to officially commemorate the 65th Anniversary of the recognition of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania by the United States through its creation of the Welles Document but additionally served as a visible commitment of the United States' continual support for its Baltic non-recognition policy and its foreign policy stance at the end of the 1980s.³⁷²

In a speech given at the reception by Dr. Juris Vidins, a Baltic doctor living in the United States, the Baltic immigrant placed great emphasis on the fact that the Western world must not forget about Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. Utilizing a reference to the United Nations passage of a resolution regarding the Palestinians earlier that year, who were also fighting for autonomy during this time, as well as the United States' concentration on the situation in Namibia, he commented that it was odd that "the question of [Estonians, Latvians', and Lithuanians'] more tragic fate [was] not even raised." If the West was disturbed by this fate, it must do something, he urged. Comparing the USSR to its German brothers of the World War II era, he posited that while "an international tribunal tried the Nazis," "their twin brother [was] alive and well and decorated with medals." Thus, in the name of "fundamental justice," the USSR must be brought to trial and stopped from continuing the horrific trajectory that forced Estonia, Latvia, and

³⁷¹ Program for 1989 Baltic Freedom Day Reception, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁷² "Baltic Freedom Day," page 5, found in the Joint Baltic American National Committee 1987 Annual Report, 1987, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Lithuania to endure the tenure of their occupation by the Soviets. Vidins concluded that while Baltic Freedom Day was meant to be a “national day of sorrow,” it could also prove to be so much more, serving as a “day of hope” that could bring about the “nations’ awakening” and their gaining of freedom once more. He concluded, “We straightened our backs and said no! to the regime. We will not be bent again! We will not be pushed back into the stifling and stagnant swamp... We shall triumph!”³⁷³

Another speech at the reception was given by Gunars Freimanis, a former political prisoner and poet, who told of his interactions with US-Baltic diplomatic channels in the early 1980s. He described that during his time as a political prisoner at the Perm prison campus, prisoners “were able to find out through indirect channels about various instances when the Free world took actions to defend persecuted Balts.” Asserting that this realization that the United States was on their side helped them “to endure under extremely harsh conditions,” Freimanis thanked JBANC and all those in the United States who “called upon authorities” to ask that he be freed from prison. Although he acknowledged that this effort was largely a transnational cause with both the United States’ Helsinki Committee as well as various other ethnic and diasporic organizations across the West fighting against the injustices dealt to Balts living in the three states during that time, he commented that such efforts significantly impact the trajectory of the Baltics’ fate. “I hope that organizations and governments of the world will continue with that same perseverance, to push for the end of colonization in the Baltic States and the restoration of their independence,” he concluded.³⁷⁴

³⁷³ “Address by Dr. Juris Vidins at the 1989 Baltic Freedom Day Reception,” 14 June 1989, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

³⁷⁴ “Address by Gunars Freimanis at the 1989 Baltic Freedom Day Reception,” 14 June 1989, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In response to the strong governmental support for Baltic Freedom Day and relationships that were leveraged to solidify a universal US commitment to commemorate the day nationwide, varied public reactions surrounding the Baltic protests emerged within US society. Some of these reactions encouraged the celebration of the day and supported the demonstrations that were occurring in both the United States and the Baltic countries at the time while others criticized the commemoration and Baltic actions. As such, the coverage of the events also highlighted public critiques of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and JBANC's platform within the United States, emphasizing claims why the United States governmental structure should not support Baltic Freedom Day or give it much attention.

One prominent criticism of the celebration of Baltic Freedom Day came from an Associated Press story, written by Tim Bovee and published on June 13, 1989. Titled "Groups Opposed to War-Crime Deportations Hold Capitol Reception," the piece attempted to highlight and discredit JBANC and Baltic-American advocacy ahead of the organization's Baltic Freedom Day reception and the day's commemoration within US society. One way of doing this was to highlight JBANC's work against the US Department of Justice and OSI cases in light of their intersection with the United States' non-recognition policy regarding the Baltics. Thus, by focusing on JBANC's opposition to the deportation of US-based suspects of Nazi war crimes to the USSR, Bovee suggested in his story that the Baltic organizations might be pro-Nazi and/or anti-Semitic, articulating the same arguments that the USSR was also trying to leverage against the Baltic-American community. When Bovee interviewed JBANC ally Senator Don W. Riegle as part of the piece, Riegle held strong to the notion that "the issue [of JBANC's opposition to the US deportation of Eastern Europeans was] dwarfed by the greater question of freedom for the Baltic nations," providing evidence that questions surrounding JBANC's interactions with those

accused of perpetrating Nazi war crimes were a separate issue and such concerns were merely detracting from the important celebration of the holiday. Riegle also noted that “the essential importance of these groups [JBANC], it seems to me, is to talk about and to express the national heritage of those individuals in this country who come from those areas of the world,” arguing that because the United States is a “melting-pot nation,” JBANC should be left alone to continue to do its work and to continue to advocate for a wider US commemoration of June 15 as Baltic Freedom Day.³⁷⁵

In response to the publication, Ginta Palubinskas, the Public Relations Director of JBANC, wrote a June 14, 1989, article for the Associated Press titled “Baltic-Americans Decry Soviet-style Propaganda On Eve of Tragic Anniversary.” This response came just a day after Bovee’s piece and underscored the ways the original story “attempt[ed] to cast suspicion on the Baltic-American community for its stand on deportation of alleged Nazis to the Soviet Union, as well as for its demand that such defendants receive criminal trials in the US.” Palubinskas additionally tried to equate Bovee’s writing with the typical actions of Soviet interference, stating that “we [JBANC] have come to expect attacks of this type from the Soviets. They usually coincide with major commemorations of genocide perpetrated by the Soviets. However, it is regrettable when such stories appear in the US press and cast suspicion on Americans of Baltic heritage.” Further, she stated that it was important for people in the United States interested in Baltic issues and their effect on the Cold War to realize that JBANC and Baltic Americans knew that these types of stories would “inevitably appear” as “this [was] *the* Soviet

³⁷⁵ Tim Bovee, “Groups Opposed to War-Crime Deportations Hold Capitol Reception,” 13 June 1989, Associated Press, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

strategy for dealing with the independence movements in Eastern Europe.”³⁷⁶ While the strategy employed by the Soviets was nothing new, Palubinskas fought back against the Bovee publication and its placement within public discourse in the days surrounding Baltic Freedom Day, seeing that it could wreak backlash on the commemoration and undo the work that JBANC had done to set up the United States’ dedication of the day.

Another example of mediated coverage of Baltic Freedom Day occurred abroad, with the publication of the full text of the Congressional Joint Resolution appearing within Latvian newspapers in the days leading up to the transnational holiday. The full text of the resolution was published on the front page of the June 12, 1989, edition of *Atmoda*, the weekly information bulletin of the Popular Front of Latvia, the main independence movement of that state. Though this publication was controlled by the Central Committee of the Latvian Communist Party and therefore subject to Soviet censorship, *Atmoda* was known for its “aggressively independent editorial policy” and popularity not only across Latvia but also the Baltic region and even in parts of Russia. It was both the most widely read newspaper in Latvia and a big enough publication to be distributed throughout other parts of the Soviet Union. The decision to print the text of the resolution in *Atmoda* was significant as it “reflect[ed] a growing boldness on the part of the executive board of the Popular Front of Latvia (LTF), which recently abandoned its program for Latvian sovereignty within the USSR, in favor of a call for total political and economical independence.”³⁷⁷ Thus, the spread of the Congressional Joint Resolution abroad and

³⁷⁶ Ginta Palubinskas, “Baltic-Americans Decry Soviet-style Propaganda On Eve of Tragic Anniversary,” 14 June, 1989, Associated Press, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota. Emphasis added.

³⁷⁷ Ojars Kalnins, “U.S. Congressional Resolution Supporting Baltic Independence Published in Latvia’s Most Widely Read Newspaper,” 21 June 1989, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

the Latvian publication of this bill within newspapers located behind the Iron Curtain demonstrated the broad effects of the US decision to support the commemoration. The transnational reach that the passage of the congressional bill had would end up being essential to the Baltics' continued fight for independence and the United States' positioning of the issue at the forefront of its foreign policy strategy during the time.

By encouraging a US adoption of Baltic Freedom Day and using the holiday as a tool in its discourse with the USSR and the Baltic states during the final years of the conflict, JBANC was able to leverage the holiday as a politically powerful event within the Cold War context. In doing so, the ethnic lobbying organization garnered strong governmental support for Baltic Freedom Day and utilized its transnational relationships and networking with those who were a part of the governing apparatus to strengthen the United States' relationships with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania and advocate for the states' continued journey towards independence. The recurring nature of the holiday and its ties with JBANC's Baltic Freedom Day reception also encouraged the ways in which JBANC was able to interact with congressional members and advocate for the ways in which they could also work to support a US national recognition of the day, showing the country's support for the Baltic countries and those fighting within them for a reinstatement of independence.

Conclusion

The work that JBANC did to elevate these five days within the Baltic-American foreign policy sphere and to highlight the importance of American recognition of International Black Ribbon Day, the Baltic states' original independence days, and Baltic Freedom Day was crucial to achieve the organization's pro-Baltic-independence advocacy goals. By encouraging their

celebration, JBANC ensured that each of these days would not only have a unique placement within the Baltic independence discourse of the time but could also strengthen the transnational ties between the United States, Baltics, and other countries of the East and West. Out of all five of the commemorations, a more complex Rhetorical transnational web was spun, further linking together communities and audiences in the United States, the Baltic states, and other countries invested in the diaspora issues of Eastern Europe. In their elevation, these dates were not only more deeply inscribed and Rhetorically situated on the map of East-West foreign policy concerns but were also given greater presence within the US-Baltic foreign policy milieu of the late-Cold War period. Through their slow growth and recognition, other commemorative events gained traction and evolved throughout the 1980s, as well, including the recognition of these key dates within the Baltic states themselves, a significant turning point for these states' growing separation from the USSR.

Likewise, the commemoration of these holidays contributed to public memory discussions regarding Baltic independence and the historical and cultural significance regarding these dates within the three Baltic countries' national narratives. Due to greater emphasis being placed on the five dates, as well as their relationship to one another, US and Western observers who were previously unaware of the significance of these dates could more readily understand and realize the broader story arc of the Baltics and their incorporation into the USSR. Thus, a new "brand" of Baltic heritage was able to be realized within the US cultural imaginary, created not only to keep alive the memory of key Baltic dates within the Baltic states themselves but also to instill a memory of them within the American environment. In doing so, the Baltic-American community and members of the Eastern European diaspora in the West, as well as others in the American public who were simply Baltic sympathizers and interested in the issues of the region,

were collected together as part of a new audience upon which JBANC could rely to further its own advocacy work and, once again, to put pressure upon American lawmakers to further support such endeavors.

While all together the dates worked to achieve these ends, they were unique in the separate elements of Baltic independence they highlighted—JBANC took advantage of those differences as well as the ways in which the dates' commemorations played into and supported one another, highlighting their Rhetorical convergence and divergence with one another. For example, International Black Ribbon Day on August 23 was a date that brought many different quadrants of the Baltic diaspora community in the West together but was ultimately leveraged by JBANC to articulate the disastrous effects of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact and the signing of the secret protocols on this date in 1939. While the day was meant to recognize many people and countries that were part of the Soviet Union, the date became especially emblematic of Baltic advocacy due to these countries' inclusion into the Eastern European bloc as a result of the pact. Similarly, the original Baltic independence days—commemorated on February 16, February 24, and November 18—were important to the changes that JBANC advocated for within the US foreign policy structure as they were symbolic of the Baltic states' previous independent identity before the USSR. While the commemoration of these days was often associated with political tensions and controversy within the Baltic states, their celebration within the United States (as well as the United States' official support of their celebration within the Baltics) became key to the growing Rhetorical conditions of possibility regarding the opening of society within Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. JBANC knew that with broader US support the date would have significant impacts on the independence movement of the Baltics, and thus it encouraged the US government and Baltic-American community to emphasize the importance of these dates

stateside. In keeping this register of Rhetoric in mind, JBANC catered to the days' transnational quality and appeal in order to achieve its US-centric aims.

Similarly, the dates were natural ones for the United States to support in its zeal to encourage the further development (and reestablishment of) democracy in the Baltic states and in drawing connections between the United States' historic fight for autonomy and the Baltics' ongoing struggle. For one, the commemorations were primarily times of celebration, dates that were meant to remind observers that a past identity could become a future characteristic, as well. Even Baltic Freedom Day on June 14 not only became an important date on which to remember the 1941 Soviet deportations but also served as a pivotal discussion point within the United States regarding what the future of *glasnost*, *perestroika*, and independence could look like in the Baltic region. Similar to International Black Ribbon Day and the commemoration of the signing of the secret protocols of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, June 14 became a date that tied the Baltic states and the United States together through the bonds of advocacy and education on Baltic national narratives, including histories of deportations and Soviet-induced violence. It became an important time within the calendar year during which JBANC could enact its mission and encourage those within the US governmental apparatus to continue to show their support for and strengthen the United States' assistance of the Baltic journey towards independence.

Through JBANC's work to set aside these dates within the United States and promote their commemoration among various factions of the American public, JBANC sought to utilize the days as key R/rhetorical orientational events of the Baltic-American advocacy agenda. The dates and invention of these holidays not only raised awareness regarding the Baltic plight and the states' position within the USSR but also highlighted the importance of time and the various memories that needed to be preserved and cultivated in order to support the greater cause of

Baltic independence. By furthering the United States' acknowledgement and celebration of these days, as well as solidifying the United States' support of their commemoration internationally (especially within the Baltic states themselves), these five dates within June, August, November, and February were able to create an organized schedule and cyclical time frame through which the Baltic independence cause was never able to be fully laid to rest within the fast-paced schedule of the US foreign policy apparatus. Instead, through the ways that these days dovetailed with each other and steadily grew over the last years of the 1980s, they underscored the importance of curating a unique Baltic-American Rhetorical imaginary for JBANC and the ethnic lobbying organization's work to make the US public stateside more invested in the issues that had long been the focus of the Baltic independence movement across the pond.

Chapter 6. Self-Determination as Grounds for Independence: International Appeals to the Principle

Over the entire course of JBANC's advocacy work of the 1970s and 1980s, the ethnic lobbying organization sought to employ the rhetorical strategies that were the most palatable to the target audiences whose support the organization was seeking to recruit in the US-Baltic foreign policy milieu of the time. With growing inclinations towards détente in the 1970s and repeated attempts or situations instigated by the US government that threatened a potential pivot away from its longstanding non-recognition policy towards the Baltics, JBANC sought to strengthen the United States' alliance with the region and shed light on the suspicions and secrecy being invoked at the time. Likewise, seeing the opportunity for greater collaboration with the US Congress and wanting to more closely link the Baltic-American community together with US lawmakers, JBANC's involvement in the late-Cold War congressional terrain and the Ad Hoc Committee provided the impetus for constituents to become more closely involved in lobbying efforts. Finally, JBANC's focus on key commemorative dates in the 1980s generated greater stateside interest in the Baltic independence fight and ensured that a Baltic-focused cultural heritage and memory was able to be adopted by the American public, elevating awareness of the Baltic plight. These instances of little-r rhetorical leveraging demonstrated JBANC's willingness and ability to adapt to the ever-evolving US foreign policy landscape and make itself relevant to the leading issues of the day, even within the fast-paced and quickly changing late-Cold-War situation.

However, within all of these moments, JBANC also adopted an overarching big-R Rhetorical perspective that steered the corpus of its mission and worked to achieve the long-standing goals of its lobbying efforts, weaving these smaller scenes together as it trekked

towards a vision of full US support for Baltic independence and the ultimate achievement of these three states' separation from the USSR. These instances comprise the makeup of this project's Rhetorical cartographical map, highlighting the organization's interplay with the foreign policy governmental apparatus during the late-Cold War era. In the previous chapters there have been glimpses of how this ethnic lobbying organization worked within the changing governmental environment in order to create Rhetorical conditions for possibility that would slowly, over time, lead US policy towards full adoption of JBANC's goals. In chapter 3, JBANC worked over the course of at least a decade to push back against US foreign policy that threatened to harm the West's relationships with the Baltic states, toggling between different rhetorical uses of secrecy, transparency, and publicity to place greater pressure on the US government to be more forthright about its policy in the Baltic region. Through strategically revealing and highlighting information, JBANC's interactions with the governmental apparatus shaped and challenged the ways in which the US government enacted and communicated foreign policy. In chapter 4, JBANC's entry into the complex foreign policy situation facilitated the strengthening and weakening of certain relational ties in order to make its case. Through the intermingling of various audiences and JBANC's bringing together of those inside and outside the US governmental infrastructure, the ethnic lobbying organization conceived how these powerful modes of production could create the discursive conditions necessary to achieve its ends. Spinning out its work from this central, networked approach, it generated opportunities for many different actors of various times, places, and contexts to come into contact with one another, orchestrating a new dimension of US-Baltic foreign policy prioritization. In chapter 5, JBANC's position within the late-Cold War Rhetorical cartography stands out in its elevation of Baltic commemoration days that fashioned a new version of the Baltic-American cultural

imaginary and not only put these days in close conversation with one another (connecting them across the months of the calendar as well as across years within the 1980s landscape) but also encouraged a different iteration of the celebration each time, expanding it from local relevance to transnational significance. As such, the celebrations grew significantly throughout the late 1980s, making possible the Rhetorical conditions for a deeper and richer foreign policy conversation regarding the United States and the Baltics.

Interwoven throughout these advocacy moments and Rhetorical underpinnings lies another element of JBANC's work: its interaction with the principle of national self-determination, a term that means both a state's overcoming of alien rule and its simultaneous inclusion into international society.³⁷⁸ The ways in which appeals to this concept helped the organization work towards its greater foreign policy goals are worth dissecting, especially because of the ways in which the concept had already received great interest and employment in other contexts of the late-Cold War era. This principle became extremely prevalent to simultaneous international conversations happening during this period and thus helped inform the changing makeup of the Soviet Union and its satellite states. Riding this wave of popularity, then, JBANC was able to easily take up this concept for its own use and transition it to application within pro-Baltic independence discourse. The ways in which this discourse functioned, moved, and evolved over JBANC's work always changed, as well, reflecting evolution of the term both locally in the United States and transnationally across the globe. What started as a principle that was taken up by the Baltics and used to reference their previous attainment of independence in the early twentieth century soon became iterated by other actors

³⁷⁸ Adom Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2019), 16.

and across other contexts and moments within JBANC's advocacy network. These actors, including Baltic dissidents, US governmental leaders at all levels of American politics, and the US presidential administration, meant that the concept of self-determination within US-Baltic relations gained complex meaning, invoking ideas of identity and independence that were unique to the Baltic situation. In order to make this concept relevant to the "Baltic issue," JBANC called upon all three areas of TANs politics—information, symbolic, and leverage—in order to ensure that the principle could become mobilized within the situation and used to bolster the work that was already being done on the national and international stage to fight for a second iteration of independence for Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

By the late 1980s, self-determination became the sole lens through which JBANC focused its fight for Baltic independence, with the organization highlighting this principle so prevalently within its advocacy that the principle's invocation had but one purpose: to push US-Baltic foreign policy relations towards full support of Baltic independence, which could then encourage the hopeful end result of the Baltic states peaceably separating from the USSR. JBANC's previous work throughout the prior decades had prioritized this concept, as well; however, the principle did not come through as clearly as it did during the final years and months leading up to the Soviet Union's collapse. With the concept bubbling up once more in popularity especially during 1987 and 1988, the use of self-determination within JBANC's circles helped the organization clarify its own goals and mission. Thus, its re-animation in the second fight for independence ensured that JBANC could complete its greater goals of strengthening the US foreign policy position regarding the Baltic states and bending it towards more fully supporting Baltic independence. This chapter specifically looks at how JBANC's use of the concept created even stronger ties between itself and its chosen audiences, instilling a greater sense of solidarity

and unity between itself and its various collaborators and encouraging the US government to take more concrete and tangible action in accordance with its policy. In this sense, the principle highlights JBANC as a primary organizer of Baltic-American relations during these final Cold War years.

As the previous chapters of this project have oscillated between the two registers of R/rhetorical activity in their analysis, both highlighting minute strategies that JBANC employed and shedding light on its greater organizational capacity and work as orchestrator of the landscape of Baltic-American discourse, this chapter does the same. However, most importantly, this chapter heavily focuses on big-R Rhetorical functions in the weaving together of JBANC's dimensions of political actions and its rewriting of the political terrain of the time. These complications and inscriptions of foreign policy interplay demonstrate how the ethnic lobbying organization kept its sphere always focused on and attuned to greater US prioritization of the Baltic states in its Cold War conversations, this time with JBANC taking its own shot at employing self-determination for the Baltic states' (and arguably its own) benefit. Tracing these can help parse out JBANC's overall strategy during these pivotal Cold War decades and also spell out how self-determination all the while fit in with the rest of the strategies it had previously employed during its work earlier on. Therefore, such mapping can, once again, showcase how Rhetoric created conditions of foreign policy possibility, informing observers of how JBANC used self-determination in its last push to try to shift foreign policy in the United States towards a policy conducive to supporting Baltic independence.

To look at this in more depth, this chapter first explores the history of the principle of self-determination, including the term's origin and its use not only in the first Baltic independence movement but also throughout the middle of the Cold War in the 1950s and the

end of the conflict. I then re-highlight material from the previous arsenal of activities that we have looked at in this dissertation in order to explore both how the principle was invoked in the organization's earlier advocacy periods and its use within the late-1980s timeframe. To do this I first explore early employment of the term, including JBANC's invocation of the principle within its efforts in the 1970s when the organization was actively working against détente. By the 1980s the organization had an inkling that the trajectory of foreign policy in the United States could be changing, and self-determination was still a key factor in its discussion of Baltic independence with other governmental-adjacent entities, including political party leadership. I then move on to material that centers on 1988 and the places in which self-determination appeared during JBANC's work throughout this year, more specifically the ways in which self-determination became a unifying principle that more closely aligned the US with the Baltic states in their endeavors to regain independence and encouraged the US government to take up concrete action, with the conversation regarding the Baltic states becoming more "serious" in these final Cold War years. Lastly, I focus on ways in which the US Congress and presidential administrations embraced this principle within their communication on the issue and how JBANC pushed for this embrace, giving members of the US government key language that they would then adopt as their own. Looking at how these various actors utilized the terms within their private and public materials helps to showcase the evolution of the term over the course of the late-Cold War era and the period in which JBANC especially centered its advocacy around this universal principle.

The Right to National Self-Determination

Although the national “right of self-determination” is often thought of as a principle that was first enshrined in Article 1 of the United Nations Charter and later reaffirmed in Article 1 of the 1966 Covenants, the concept has been around for most of the twentieth century.³⁷⁹ On January 8, 1918, right after the end of World War I, US President Woodrow Wilson gave the famous speech to Congress where he introduced the Fourteen Points, which were designed to be guidelines for rebuilding the postwar world and reestablishing nations’ conduct of foreign policy with one another. In this speech, Wilson alluded to the concept of national self-determination alongside his call for the creation of the “general association of nations,” which was supposed to guarantee that principle and nations’ “political independence and territorial integrity.”³⁸⁰ In many ways, his reference to this new principle reached back to the “consent of the governed” in the American Declaration of Independence and to the “divine right of the people” of the French Revolution. Yet despite the near universal appeal of the concept, his commitment to national self-determination was in many ways a mere attitude and not a feasible policy or program that was meant to be implemented.³⁸¹ For example, when

³⁷⁹ See United Nations, “United Nations Charter,” [https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text#:~:text=All%20Members%20shall%20give%20the,taking%20preventive%20or%20enforcement%20action](https://www.un.org/en/about-us/un-charter/full-text#:~:text=All%20Members%20shall%20give%20the,taking%20preventive%20or%20enforcement%20action;); United Nations, “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>; and United Nations, “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

³⁸⁰ Woodrow Wilson, “Fourteen Points Speech (1918)” *U.S. Embassy to Germany*, <https://usa.usembassy.de/etexts/democrac/51.htm>. Some scholars such as Trygve Throntveit claim that history has over-attributed self-determination to Wilson in this address as the actual phrase “self-determination” is absent from the text; however, most political theorists and international relations scholars recognize the impacts that Wilson’s rhetoric had on the creation of the League of Nations as well as subsequent liberal international order concerns regarding nations’ right to self-governance. Trygve Throntveit, “The Fable of the Fourteen Points: Woodrow Wilson and National Self-Determination,” *Diplomatic History* 35, no. 3 (2011): 446.

³⁸¹ Allen Lynch, “Woodrow Wilson and the Principle of ‘National Self-Determination: A Reconsideration,” *Review of International Studies* 28, no. 2 (2002): 427.

Wilson became a part of the World War I peace negotiations during the Paris Peace Conference in January 1919, his insistence on self-determination had to be quieted. This was in part because compromises were made in the post-war years that, in general, did not apply the concept of self-determination to the countries of Asia and Africa in the same way that it was applied to Europe. Thus, self-determination became an *ad hoc* principle that was only granted to the states that came about after the war—"peoples" such as the Austro-Hungarian, German, Ottoman, and Russian ethnic groups. While the League of Nations also developed during this time, working to address and mitigate foreign affairs conflict in the 1920s and 1930s, much confusion surrounded the constitution of new states and who deserved such rights. This led to the further development of the concept, including self-determination's loose idea of "peoples," which supported exclusive practices and resulted in the horrific instrumentalization of the principle in World War II. Unfortunately, the end of the Second World War did not bring about much improvement or clarification of the concept. While the principle was then formally solidified as international law through its inclusion in the UN Charter (Articles 1 and 55), it was still loosely defined and theorized.

It was not until the 1950s and 1960s that the nuances of self-determination began to be ironed out as the UN started to play a greater role in sub-Saharan Africa and arguments for self-determination were leveraged to address African decolonization. One element of this development was the fact that prior to 1960 there were only four members of the UN from the sub-Saharan region. By 1965, however, the UN had ballooned to include 29 members from that area of Africa. The membership from this area enlarged so much that by 1965, Africa

comprised the largest bloc of representatives than from any continent.³⁸² These numbers grew in parallel with the process of decolonization, and by the 1960s the UN's realization that the European powers' imperial violence in Africa had contributed to human rights issues such as enslavement, economic exploitation, social engineering, and sometimes even genocide tipped the scales in favor of decolonization.³⁸³ Elite intellectuals in those countries started to leverage the concept of self-determination in support of African peoples still under colonial rule, seeing the chance to utilize that same human rights language that was starting to be discussed within the liberal sphere to support their own claims to self-determination and decolonization.³⁸⁴ In 1960, the General Assembly adopted Resolution 1514, the "Declaration on Decolonization," which asserted that a termination of colonialism should occur, leading to the creation of many new states in Asia and Africa.³⁸⁵ However, many scholars have argued that this UN-led decision only caused further discrimination, with newly proclaimed states favoring certain domestic groups over others and refusing to follow the values that the UN tried to reflect in its liberal international order.³⁸⁶ In this way, many thought that the UN prematurely granted the application of self-determination and led to a "retribalization of politics," which in some cases caused extreme violence to break out in the newly liberalized states.³⁸⁷

³⁸² Christopher O'Sullivan, "The United Nations, Decolonization, and Self-Determination in Cold War Sub-Saharan Africa, 1960-1994," *Journal of Third World Studies* 22, no. 2 (2005): 103.

³⁸³ O'Sullivan, "The United Nations, Decolonization, and Self-Determination," 104.

³⁸⁴ Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 14.

³⁸⁵ United Nations, "United Nations and Decolonization,"

[https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/about#:~:text=Resolution%201514%20\(XV\)%20proclaims%20the,a%20right%20to%20self%2Ddetermination.](https://www.un.org/dppa/decolonization/en/about#:~:text=Resolution%201514%20(XV)%20proclaims%20the,a%20right%20to%20self%2Ddetermination.)

³⁸⁶ Maja Spanu, "What is Self-Determination? Using History to Understand International Relations," *International Relations*, 2014, <https://www.e-ir.info/2014/04/17/what-is-self-determination-using-history-to-understand-international-relations/>.

³⁸⁷ Ali A. Mazrui, *Africa's International Relations: The Diplomacy of Dependence and Change* (London: Heinemann, 1977). Nigeria's decolonization situation is often referenced as one of the instances in which much blood was shed over a nation's realization of self-determination; however, one can also look to the application of

While self-determination was seen as a core principle of the international order during this time frame, the actual application of self-determination during the twentieth century demonstrated that it was an ambiguous concept at best. For many, critique came with the fact that the UN Covenants opened with the declaration, “All people and all nations shall have the right to self-determination,”³⁸⁸ which did little to define the utilization of the principle. Questions arose surrounding the concept of “peoples,” and additional concern arose regarding who could be considered a distinct and identifiable collective outside the designations of borders and nation-states.³⁸⁹ Uncertainty also arose regarding the definition of nation-states, with state legitimacy often riding on whether nations within a state had consented to that state having control over them or whether the nations that comprised a state could realistically stand on their own in the world.³⁹⁰ Further, even when it was determined that nations were able to be independent, issues of constitution arose surrounding who has the legitimacy to speak on the nation’s behalf and who ought to be delineated as part of and outside of the new establishment.³⁹¹

national self-determination in Ethiopia, Afghanistan, Bosnia, Iraq, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, and Vietnam to see its disastrous effects.

³⁸⁸ United Nations, “International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights,” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-civil-and-political-rights>. United Nations, “International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights,” <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/international-covenant-economic-social-and-cultural-rights>.

³⁸⁹ Clyde Eagleton, “Excesses of Self-Determination,” *Foreign Affairs* 31, no. 4 (1953): 595.

³⁹⁰ Chimène I. Keitner, “National Self Determination in Historical Perspective 1789/1989: The Legacy of the French Revolution for Today's Debates,” *International Studies Review* 2, no. 3 (2000): 5.

³⁹¹ For example, Charles Tilly notes that self-determination was the “justification for political action by ostensible leaders of peoples who lack states, by rulers of states who speak in a nation’s name, and by third parties—outside rulers, conspirators, international organizations, and many more—who intervene in the political struggles of particular states.” Charles Tilly, “National Self-Determination as a Problem for All of Us,” *Daedalus* 122, no. 3 (1993): 30.

These ongoing debates regarding self-determination in the late-Cold War and post-Soviet years have continued to congregate around questions of whether the principle can actually be maintained as a central organizational concept within the international foreign policy system. Among the many questions that self-determination has historically faced: What coherent case can one ever make for self-determination as a right and obligation? How does one go about implementing those principles when self-determination has been granted?³⁹² Can self-determination be compatible with nondemocratic arrangements? Does it apply to all cases of internal population minorities? What mechanisms of international law exist that can enforce self-determination? Is doing so the responsibility of the claimants, the state, or the international community?³⁹³ Just briefly considering these natural questions that arise from the UN declaration, as well as looking at the challenges that have arisen from gaps in theory, it is easy to see why many have criticized the right of self-determination and have wondered whether it is actually a fundamental principle to which all subscribe.³⁹⁴

Since the principle's employment in the late-Cold War years, scholarship has attempted to tackle some of these inquiries and further complicate our understanding of the topic. In her book, *Worldmaking after Empire*, Adom Getachew weaves together many aspects of the story

³⁹² Or, as Eagleton puts it, “But how is this desire to be measured or ascertained?” Eagleton, “Excesses of Self-Determination,” 595.

³⁹³ This question is posited in Anna Stilz, “Decolonization and Self-Determination,” *Social Philosophy and Policy* 32, no. 1 (2015): 1–24.

³⁹⁴ One of self-determination’s harshest critics is Rupert Emerson, as demonstrated in Rupert Emerson, “Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1921-1969),” *International Law and Developing Countries* 60 (1966): 135–41, and Rupert Emerson, *Self-Determination Revisited in the Era of Decolonization* (Cambridge, MA: Center for International Affairs, Harvard University, 1964), 64. Another is Clyde Eagleton, who in “Excesses of Self-Determination” stated that “perhaps the term ‘self-determination’ should be dropped.” It was also recorded that in 1921 Secretary of State Robert Lansing commented that Woodrow Wilson should have never developed support for the concept, commenting that it was “loaded with dynamite,” Robert Lansing, *The Peace Negotiations: A Personal Narrative* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1921), 97.

of self-determination in a methodological approach that looks at the history of empire and builds a narrative about how nations rose to the challenge of overturning imperial rule.

Through bringing together national and international and arguing that these two frames cannot be viewed in isolation, Getachew seeks to understand how self-determination works in both frames and give readers “a very accurate sense of their resonance for today’s world.”³⁹⁵ In her description of self-determination’s fall, she asserts that through the concept’s abandonment of the expansive and ambitious internationalist vision, a narrower definition became adopted and often conflated dissent or disagreement over the application of self-determination with anti-nationalism. Thus, this messiness of the self-determination ideal was left behind by the last years of the twentieth century for the embrace of neoliberal globalization. Further, as self-determination was heavily abused after Wilson’s introduction of the principle, seen as a theoretical tool that merely furthered colonization and perpetuated hierarchical structures in the post-WWI international landscape, by the late twentieth century the concept had already become a very complex term and ideal, taken up in many contexts around the world and employed in many different ways, but not without its challenges.³⁹⁶ In our perspective on the concept now, self-determination is not seen as a unilateral good that brought about the decolonization and development of majority-world countries (as it was often touted in the 1990s and early 2000s) but instead as a principle fraught with issues regarding its employment. While other narratives that have detailed the Baltic states’ late-Cold War fight for independence often embrace self-determination employed by the Baltic states themselves as

³⁹⁵ Sandipto Dasgupta, “Review of Adom Getachew’s *Worldmaking after Empire*,” *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 48, no. 3 (2020): 358.

³⁹⁶ Getachew, *Worldmaking after Empire*, 37–70.

the main reason they achieved autonomy, I see the concept as just one of many elements that brought Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to their independent realization. Self-determination was not relevant to the conversation of independence purely because of the Baltic states' interest in the concept but because of the way that it wove together the Baltic states and the West in joint advocacy for separation from the USSR. Furthermore, JBANC's employment of the concept throughout its other advocacy activities, even earlier on in its ethnic lobbying work, provided the foundation for the concept to be harnessed once again in the late 1980s.

Self-Determination in Eastern Europe

In order to more fully complicate this story, however, we need to first look at how self-determination was specifically applied in the Eastern European context. After the period of decolonization in the 1960s, the UN somewhat washed its hands of the responsibility to manage the application and invocation of self-determination, generating many of the concerns outlined above. Even so, appeals to self-determination did not die down. While many of the self-determination debates up to that point were only relevant to states that had been colonies, the principle soon began to expand and be applied to other histories and situations.³⁹⁷ This was the case when rumblings of discontent in Eastern Europe transpired during the late-Cold War period and it was made clear to the rest of the world that the Soviet Union no longer held a firm grip on its satellite states in the Eastern Bloc.

Even with this re-eruption of the principle's interest in the region, appeals to the principle of self-determination in Eastern Europe were not a new concept, especially in the

³⁹⁷ Eagleton, "Excesses of Self-Determination," 597.

Baltic states. Going back to the first period of independence enjoyed by the Baltics in the early twentieth century, during 1917–1920, self-determination was leveraged even then, serving as one way of advocating for independence and appealing for the support of the West. As the concept was coined by President Woodrow Wilson on January 8, 1918, right in the middle of the first fight for independence in the Baltic region, it was seen as fueling some of the heightened conversations in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania during the time regarding autonomy and independence from not only Russia but also Germany.³⁹⁸ Further, the employment of this concept was not unique to the Baltics, with Bolshevik speeches and declarations also expressing strong notions of self-determination, heavily influencing Leninist ideals and the sovereignty and equality of all of the people of Russia during the same revolutionary era. However after the February and October 1917 uprisings that concurrently marked the beginning of the desire for autonomous rule in the Baltics, arguments for self-determination were more forcefully echoed in Baltic independence declarations and appeared in the use of similar language as that which both President Wilson and Russian Bolsheviks employed.³⁹⁹ The concept of self-determination ultimately appeared in the treaties between Soviet Russia and the Baltic states in the 1920s, with the “right belonging to all nations of free self-determination” supporting the relinquishment of Russian power to the Provisional Governments in each respective Baltic country.⁴⁰⁰

These pleas were also used within the US context and Baltic-Americans’ appeals to Washington regarding the support of an independent Baltic region. While the United States was

³⁹⁸ Vilkauskaitė, “From Empire to Independence,” 5.

³⁹⁹ Vilkauskaitė, “From Empire to Independence,” 14–15.

⁴⁰⁰ *The Baltic Review*, 349, in Record Group 59, National Archives. As cited in Vilkauskaitė, “From Empire to Independence,” 45.

ironically slow on the recognition of these states' separation from the Russia throughout the 1917–1920 period, remaining a “bystander in dealing with such problems,”⁴⁰¹ those who worked with the Baltic-American activist community tried to make the US government aware of the connections between the Baltic fight and Wilson’s own use of the term and support of its proliferation.⁴⁰² For example, Congressman Chandler from New York, a major supporter of Baltic independence, especially argued for this recognition based on the states’ right of self-determination.⁴⁰³ Ultimately the United States would give the Baltics its support and recognition—support and recognition that would sustain their relationship throughout the next occupations of the Baltics by Russia, Germany, and Russia that would last the entirety of the Cold War.

In the second phase of the Baltic fight for independence, during the late-Cold War era, many in the Baltics and the West again utilized self-determination to characterize the nature of the conflict. The concept reemerged, bolstered by its continued use and reinstatement of popularity around the world during this time as well as its application to colonies, and became tossed around in connection to the Baltic struggle. The Popular Fronts in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania especially harnessed the term, using it to justify their demands for political, economic, military, and diplomatic sovereignty. They insisted that their struggle for self-determination be taken up not only in the Baltics but also elsewhere across the Soviet Bloc, with the Estonian Popular Front claiming that it was necessary that the “right of self-determination of all

⁴⁰¹ This is further detailed in Chapter 1.

⁴⁰² Eero Medijainen, “Self-Determination, Wilson and Estonia,” February 16, 2018, *Rahvusvaheline Kaitseuringute Keskus International Centre for Defence and Security*, <https://icds.ee/en/self-determination-wilson-and-estonia/>.

⁴⁰³ Special to The New York Times, “Chandler Appeals for Baltic States,” *New York Times*, May 17, 1921, <https://www.nytimes.com/1921/05/17/archives/chandler-appeals-for-baltic-states-new-york-representative-asks.html>

nationalities and real sovereignty of the national republics on their historical territories” be guaranteed.⁴⁰⁴ According to the Popular Fronts, self-determination was not a unique solution for the Baltics or their situation but merely a useful step for advocating for the transformation of the federal structure of the USSR and ultimately attaining independence for the three states.⁴⁰⁵ However, despite this concept’s uptake within the Baltics during this era, many problems with the idea of self-determination had also become more fleshed out by this era and apparent in the many situations in which the principle was appealed to from the 1960s onward. For one, self-determination movements were seen as relying on the application of changing and contradictory criteria to recognize and settle its issues, and in many cases self-determination movements became violent. While this was not initially the case in the Baltic fight for independence, the worry that appeals to self-determination would create such an environment were always there and, if anything, made the Baltic situation unique in its avoidance of many of these issues.

In the late-Cold-War period, the Soviet Union did not initially recognize the Baltic states’ desires for independence or their accompanying appeals to self-determination, seeing regional sovereignty as a more important and attainable solution to the Baltic issue. Sovereignty was considered as something that could be accommodated by the Soviet system, but self-determination was not.⁴⁰⁶ However, as the Soviet Union continued to unravel in 1989, the claims of self-determination made by the Baltic Popular Fronts and the West’s uptake of the concept when speaking about the Baltic situation continued to make an impact on the conversation of

⁴⁰⁴ *Popular Front of Estonia Charter, General Programme, Resolutions, Manifesto* (Tallinn: Periodika, 1989).

⁴⁰⁵ Nils R. Muiznieks, “The Influence of the Baltic Popular Movements on the Process of Soviet Disintegration,” *Europe-Asia Studies* 47, no. 1 (1995): 4.

⁴⁰⁶ Anatol Lieven, *The Baltic Revolution: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and the Path to Independence* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993), 229.

independence. During the “Baltic Way” demonstration—an event where a 600-kilometer-long human chain of Balts stretched across the entirety of the three states—activist Arnold Ruutel gave a speech from the top of the medieval Tall Hermann tower in Estonia, asserting that “self-determination is the natural desire of all nations” and articulating that the Baltics were on their way to achieving what they perceived to be their right to independence and separation from Russia.⁴⁰⁷ In the West many Americans and Baltic Americans increased their advocacy of new US foreign policy decisions that would support the three states, walking the fine line between outright encouraging the Baltics to engage in violent activity and reaffirming the position that the United States would not be able to offer military support in their fight.⁴⁰⁸ By the time that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania fully achieved independence, the idea of self-determination was completely embedded within the process of separation and clearly articulated by both the Baltic states and their Western supporters. Unlike previous iterations, self-determination was not simply invoked by dissatisfied minorities within existing states but instead harnessed within a well-defined region in support of the Baltics seeing before them the hope of independence and reattainment of a separation from Russia that they had previously achieved in the early twentieth century. In this instance self-determination was seen as a principle that could help achieve independence through negotiation instead of the violent fight over boundaries.⁴⁰⁹

While the principle was successfully appealed to in the Baltic situation, however, the rest of Eastern Europe did not necessarily have the same experience with the concept in the

⁴⁰⁷ Esther B. Fein, “Baltic Citizens Link Hands to Demand Independence,” *New York Times*, August 24, 1989, <https://www.nytimes.com/1989/08/24/world/baltic-citizens-link-hands-to-demand-independence.html>.

⁴⁰⁸ “How America Can Help Baltic Independence,” *Heritage*, March 29, 1990, <https://www.heritage.org/europe/report/how-america-can-help-baltic-independence>.

⁴⁰⁹ James Mayall, “Non-Intervention, Self-Determination and the ‘New World Order,’” *International Affairs (Royal Institute of International Affairs) 1944* 67, no. 3 (1991): 425.

late-Cold War era. The breakup of Yugoslavia, for example, brought with it a resurrection of the concept, as well, but in its case, self-determination was leveraged for the sake of both legitimizing new states and justifying the physical and administrative practices of ethnic cleansing.⁴¹⁰ While self-determination had been previously heralded as a principle of liberalism, in the Yugoslavian situation it was heralded as a concept in support of hierarchical ethnic arguments, not used for the purpose of building a unified national identity but rather for the purpose of eliminating others from that vision of unity. Furthermore, these claims of self-determination were made behind a “vener of liberalization and democratization” and the “dawning of the new era,” obscuring the fact that the intentions behind the arguments for self-determination were decisively fascist and opposed to human rights or liberal traditions.⁴¹¹ Thus in Yugoslavia, the principle of self-determination was used in a paradoxical way, creating division between a nationally intermixed population. The international community failed to fight against this misapplication, taken aback by the different path that it took here than in the Baltics and increasing confusion surrounding the usefulness of the concept in the late twentieth century, creating an international “self-determination crisis” that surrounded the deep-seated uncertainty of when it was best to claim self-determination.

In this way, self-determination was a principle that was eagerly adopted within Eastern Europe during the transitional period of the end of the Cold War; however, the ways in which the concept was articulated drastically differed in character in each instance. Further, how self-

⁴¹⁰ Reneo Lukic and Allen Lynch, *Europe From the Balkans to the Urals: The Disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Soviet Union* (Oxford: Oxford University Press/Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, 1996).

⁴¹¹ Jasminka Ukovički, “Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the Former Yugoslavia,” in *The National Question: Nationalism, Ethnic Conflict, and Self-Determination in the 20th Century*, ed. Berch Berberoglu, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 301.

determination was utilized in the Baltics even changed between 1917–1920 and the late-Cold War time period, shining light on differences in how the process of independence was enacted within the region in both scenarios and showcasing how the principle was utilized multiple times over the course of the same century in order to support Baltic self-governance. Keeping these conventions and history in mind, the following pages analyze the contours of JBANC’s employment of self-determination in the US context in the hopes of better understanding how the concept’s usefulness in US foreign policy decisions dovetailed with what was going on in the Baltic states at the time. Further, understanding JBANC’s use of the principle within its own goals of strengthening the US governmental position regarding Baltic independence can illuminate how the ethnic lobbying organization stuck to or strayed away from the claims of others engaged in these debates at the time. In understanding these distinctions, I will be able to contribute to shedding more light on the ways in which some petitioned for Baltic independence on the world stage.

Early Employment of the Principle

Self-determination was long a thematic feature of JBANC’s discourses and arguments, steering the ways in which the organization discussed the prospects of Baltic independence and how those who belonged to a part of the JBANC sphere of influence voiced their concerns to other state and non-state actors dealing with US foreign policy in the region. John Genys, a future chairman of JBANC, wrote an article in the late 1970s that articulated the influence of self-determination on the organization’s work. Titled “The Joint Baltic American Committee and the European Security Conference”, Genys provided evidence regarding how long the organization had leveraged self-determination as part of its advocacy measures and how the

organization held fast to these convictions even when the principle was seemingly at odds with the détente foreign policy being negotiated by the US government during the 1970s.

One such instance most clearly comes through in Genys's articulation of the narrative surrounding JBANC's reaction to the United States' role in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), which was a key element of building up détente in the 1970s as it was convention created to recognize the boundaries of postwar Europe in the attempt to improve human rights. However, Genys and JBANC did not necessarily support these efforts of the US government and were greatly concerned about the effects that the boundary affirmation would have on the non-recognition policy that the US had always held regarding the Baltics. In the article by Genys, through his provision of context and a broader look at the US government's role in the Helsinki agreement as well as President Ford's references to the US policy towards the Baltic States throughout this same time period, Genys notes that the US government asserted extreme contradictions regarding the future of the Baltic region. Although President Ford had directly stated that "the United States has never recognized the Soviet incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia and is not doing so now. Our official policy of nonrecognition is not affected by the results of the European Security Conference," Genys noted that the outcomes of the security meetings did not necessarily match these articulations. JBANC, along with others interested in the issues of Eastern Europe, had "difficulties in interpreting the various contradictions" in the conference records and questioned the intentions at the heart of the decisions made by the US government.⁴¹² This confusion was further bolstered by story after

⁴¹² Genys, "The Joint Baltic American Committee," 252.

story in the US media presenting conflicting analyses of the talks, which then alarmed the Baltic Americans interested in the outcomes of such negotiations.

In reaction, JBANC sponsored vigils all over cities in the United States for Baltic Americans who wished to continue to put pressure on the US government throughout the remainder of the Conference on Security of Cooperation in Europe. In D.C. the vigil was held in front of the White House and started at midnight on July 30, 1975, with the aim of reengaging the president and encouraging him once again to articulate his affirmation of the United States' desire to keep to its non-recognition policy regarding the Baltic states. Beyond this act, JBANC helped Baltic Americans send over 2,000 telegrams to the White House and set up numerous meetings, send press releases, and alert news media of the Baltic-American concern, centering the United States' supposed commitment to the self-determination of states as a reason why the country ought to continue to work for Baltic independence. Much like its other work in the 1970s encouraging Baltic Americans to write to their congressional representatives and senators directly regarding their concern that the US government should better support the Baltic states, these petitions asked President Ford to better clarify the CSCE on US-Baltic relations. JBANC most notably printed an ad in the *Washington Post* on July 31, 1975, where a 7x11 section depicted a map of Soviet aggression against the Baltic States and read, "Thank You, Mr. President, but No Thanks." The following text was printed as part of the advertisement:

The million Americans of Estonian, Latvian, and Lithuanian descent thank you for making the following statement on July 25th, at the White House... the United States has never recognized the Soviet incorporation of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia and is not doing so now. Our official policy is not affected by the results of the European Security Conference. We would thank you for making the same statement at Helsinki. However, we cannot thank you for signing the FINAL ACT which makes our already violated Baltic borders now the "INVIOABLE" Soviets borders. We cannot thank you for signing the agreement which perpetuates the violation of the sovereignty of the Baltic States, committed—IN THE NAME OF DETENTE—under the provisions of the

infamous Hitler-Stalin Pact—the only justification for the present illegal Soviet occupation of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. We cannot thank you for failing to respect “...the equal rights of people and the right of self-determination...” (Final Act, Chapter 8, “Equal Rights of Self-determination of People”) by signing an agreement which affects three countries not represented at the Conference on Security of Cooperation in Europe. We cannot thank you for ignoring the desperate voice of the seven million oppressed Baltic people as you approve, with your signature, the STATUS QUO in Europe. Can we have PEACE without JUSTICE?⁴¹³

Together these efforts by JBANC attempted to demonstrate the strength and determination of the Baltic-American community and its constant commitment to policing the US government in its adherence to previous statements of support for the Baltic states. Additionally, the leveraging of the specific right to self-determination, articulated as part of the Helsinki Final Act, became an essential diplomatic part of JBANC’s advocacy work with the hopes that the organization could continue to hold the United States accountable to it in its Cold War negotiations, even in the midst of growing support for détente.

The increase of public discussion regarding self-determination from this point on was heavily encouraged by JBANC, with the organization reflecting in its annual report that nearly fifty years of Soviet occupation could never extinguish Baltic resistance nor Baltic hopes for the restoration of independence and that, especially in the late 1980s, there was a distinct feeling that the tides could soon be turning. JBANC noted through its ethnic lobbying work that, in furthering the Baltic states’ aspirations for freedom, it ought to rely on a large array of activist activities to encourage the US government to further adopt a pro-Baltic position. This included writing position papers, interfacing with congressional hearings, holding various briefings, and meeting with high-level administrative officials, as these individuals were likely to yield more attention due to their ability to give substantial “traditional U.S. support for Baltic freedom.”

⁴¹³ Genys, “The Joint Baltic American Committee,” 253–54.

Because JBANC saw this point in time around the CSCE as a moment to provide a noticeable difference in the ways in which the Baltics were discussed within the US government infrastructure, JBANC leveraged members of Congress to then leverage the administration “to raise Baltic issues including the right of self-determination, in the United Nations and in talks with the Soviets.” This specific point of discussion was seen as crucial to the broader global conversation regarding the Eastern Bloc at the same time as JBANC and its colleagues saw self-determination as a pressure point that the US government could utilize to further its Cold War interests. Such work also reveals the character of JBANC’s Transnational Advocacy Network, with the ethnic lobbying organization working up the chain of command in order to appeal to the UN.

Even into the next decade, JBANC made these broader arguments for greater discussion of Baltic self-determination on the part of the United States at the level of the liberal world order, telling lawmakers within its orbit of influence that it needed to up the ante regarding US support for the issue. As stated by former Baltic prisoner, Tiit Madisson, the Estonian whom JBANC brought in front of Congress (whose story we heard in chapter 4),

Historically, every empire has fallen. We must keep pushing for more and more reforms—even though few will actually be carried out. Because when the Soviet authorities see that the Baltic people are united on some issue, they do yield a bit. It’s clear that if there were no opposition at all, things would be much worse. We need to proceed at a careful pace, building our strength and developing courage among the people in general.⁴¹⁴

By articulating the bounds of the careful relationship between JBANC, the US Congress, the US presidential administration, and the Baltic people, Madisson communicates the idea that by better

⁴¹⁴ Mari-Ann Rikken, “A New Generation,” page 1, found in the Joint Baltic American National Committee 1987 Annual Report, 1987, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

positioning arguments regarding self-determination on the world stage, the United States could help to further encourage the Soviet government to slowly allow the independence movements in the Baltic countries to be fully realized. Rhetorically, such appeals were significant for the ways in which JBANC changed the tenure of its advocacy, not only using Balts such as Madisson to appeal to some of the highest levels of US foreign policy decision-making (Congress and the presidential administration) but also making greater appeals regarding how the issue ought to be discussed in international venues. Thus, this marked a time of JBANC extending its work beyond the borders of the United States or Baltic states to now address a global audience.

In regard to soliciting the US government's support for this international issue, various pieces of correspondence surrounding the passage of a House Joint Resolution declaring June 14 Baltic Freedom Day in 1987 also seemed to drive home this focus on self-determination. In a letter from Baltic-American supporter, William J.H. Hough III, to Representative Judd Gregg, Hough advocated for the H.J. Resolution and, in doing so, noted the history of the Baltic states and self-determination. With comments about the background of the Baltic states and their employment of the principle, he stated that the Baltics had long leveraged the principle of self-determination in their independence discourse, even recalling that after the end of World War I, "the first nation to recognize [the Baltics'] right to self-determination and perpetual sovereignty was the Soviet Union." Going on to articulate what this independence brought for the three countries, Hough asserted that for self-determination to be resuscitated in the states, the Baltics most needed the US government to continue to support Baltic Freedom Day and to show "a powerful sign of solidarity with the Baltic peoples." For further discussion on the matter, Mr. Hough directed Representative Gregg to get in contact with Ojars Kalnins of JBANC in order to hear more "specific suggestions as to what Congressmen can do to pressure the Soviets into

allowing the June 14 vigil in Latvia to proceed peacefully” as well as what other stateside events could show the Baltic states the ways in which the US government was supporting them in their nationalist endeavors.⁴¹⁵ In his letter, Mr. Hough exemplified the strength of JBANC’s constituency and its ability to rally not just Baltic Americans but also other members of the American public around the issue of Baltic independence, showcasing that it had been able to build out its circle of influence and encourage these members of public to take up Baltic advocacy efforts on their own, joining JBANC in its lobbying efforts and direct appeals to US lawmakers.

Folding in with JBANC’s work regarding Baltic-American commemorations, a previous discussion in this dissertation, self-determination also appeared as part of the ethnic lobbying organization’s work to amplify these celebrations in both the United States and the Baltic countries. For instance, in preparation for Latvian Independence Day in 1987, JBANC worked within its various channels and leveraged its connections across the US foreign policy sphere in order to advocate for greater emphasis on self-determination in the US government’s interactions with not only the Baltic states but also the USSR and the American public audience. Part of this work was done through the drafting of sample congressional statements and record statements that members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine could take to the greater legislature. In one such sample congressional statement for Latvian Independence Day that JBANC drafted ahead of the commemoration, the organization noted that the value and principle of self-determination should be highly elevated within strains of congressional discourse and deliberation. To demonstrate the need for this support, the statement brought up

⁴¹⁵ Correspondence from William J.H. Hough, III to Representative Judd Gregg, 28 May 1987, Box 6, Folder 20, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

the other demonstrations that had occurred earlier in the year, such as the June 14 designation of Baltic Freedom Day and the August 23 gathering that commemorated the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop secret protocols. These demonstrations had “reaffirmed [Baltic] national identity and rejecting [of] Russification,” demonstrating—not only to fellow Balts but also to the rest of the world—that “the spirit of the nation is growing stronger.” In order to back up the utility of these demonstrations and show to the rest of the world that the US government supported public celebration of these days, JBANC noted in the sample that Americans ought to help by holding “strong to the policy of non recognition of the illegal occupation of the three Baltic States” and to do as they always have when “Americans lend support to those struggling for freedom.” JBANC went on to comment that it was evident that the Baltics’ “continued determination to fight for their freedom is a testament to the unquenchable thirst of the human soul for the fundamental right of self-determination” and that those within the US government should work to “bring the cause of Baltic self-determination to the World community’s attention.”⁴¹⁶ Through its support of the celebration of these events in the Baltics and parallel celebration of Latvia’s November 18 independence day in the United States, the US government could show that US solidarity strengthened the fight for self-determination.

In another reference to JBANC’s most notable advocacy activities, JBANC’s work with Senators Donald W. Riegle, Jr. and Robert Dole to submit a concurrent resolution to the Senate regarding Congress’s support for the celebration of Latvian Independence Day in 1987 reveals that self-determination was included in the senators’ pleas. In this resolution, which was more fully discussed in chapter 5, support of the Baltic commemoration of Latvian Independence Day

⁴¹⁶ “A Sample Congressional Statement for Latvia’s Independence Day,” November 1987, Box 5, Folder 35, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

was premised upon the principle's value to the United States, mentioning that "ever since [the United States'] inception, [it] has been committed to the principle of self-determination." Within the entire resolution, this principle clearly served as the backbone of why the United States' government traditionally recognized November 18 as Latvian Independence Day and why it wanted to make it clear that US lawmakers would be watching the Soviets' reaction to Baltic demonstrations on this day very closely. In relation to these 1987 peaceable assemblies that the United States knew in advance would occur within Latvia on the independence date and its general awareness of how the Baltic states were working to breathe life back into extremely important dates of Latvian history, Congress stated that it would "raise the issues of human rights and self-determination in the Baltic States during the next United States-Soviet summit."⁴¹⁷ This same sentiment expressed by the US government was articulated other times in documentation between JBANC and governmental officials over the course of 1987 and also shows how self-determination became a concept that was significant beyond just the JBANC-US congressional pipeline, expanding to be a relevant concept discussed even among US and USSR officials during Cold War negotiations.

Even so, appeals to the principle were employed by not just US actors during this time but also actors from the Baltics, coming directly from those working within the nationalist movement structures across Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania over the course of 1987. On December 13, in an open letter from Linards Grantins, leader of the Latvian human rights group Helsinki-86, to JBANC, he noted the general mood in Latvia at the time and commented on how

⁴¹⁷ S. Con. Res. 87 in the Senate of the United States, page 20, found in the Joint Baltic American National Committee 1987 Annual Report, 1987, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

dissent was growing within the region. In reflection upon the November 18 Latvian Independence Day demonstrations, he told the story of how demonstrators were overall met with “harsh reprisals” and that many demonstrators “were brutally beaten.” However, he also stated that this did not deter the Latvian people or squash future endeavors to grow pro-independence sentiments in the country, with Grantins articulating that the “Latvian people [were] in a revolutionary mood and express[ed] their repugnance toward the manner in which the authorities dealt with peaceful demonstrators.” This emphasis on exigency was similar to statements Grantins made elsewhere, such as his comments to Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty that articulated that the people of Latvia “waited and waited until [they] could stand it no longer; [we] had to do something. The hour had struck.”⁴¹⁸ Thus, he commented in his letter to JBANC that with the Soviet government refusing to acknowledge the situation in Latvia and refusing to grant “even some degree of self-determination,” it would be possible that “terrorism and bloodletting would begin,” creating a situation “even worse than during the genocidal Stalin era, for the demographic situation in Latvia has been artificially created to the disadvantage of the Latvian people.”⁴¹⁹ Even so, to Grantins it was worth the risk in order to “bring about reforms and changes.”⁴²⁰ This commentary by Grantins was rather ironic, as appeals to self-determination often resulted in some sort of violence breaking out, historically demonstrated in the various contexts in which the principle had been pushed for in the past. However, the Balt seemed

⁴¹⁸ “RFE/RL Baltic Area Situation Report,” page 20, 24 March 24 1988, HU OSA 300-8-47, Box 2 (8//2697), Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

⁴¹⁹ “An Open Letter from Linards Grantins, Leader of the Latvian Human Rights Group, HELSINKI 86,” 13 December 1987, Box 5, Folder 35, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

⁴²⁰ “RFE/RL Baltic Area Situation Report,” page 20, 24 March 24 1988, HU OSA 300-8-47, Box 2 (8//2697), Vera and Donald Blinken Open Society Archives, Budapest, Hungary.

confident in his report that in the Baltics the opposite would be true and that by advocating for the principle in the Baltic situation, there could be an avoidance of bloodshed in the Baltic pro-independence movement. Such claims served as another reason articulated from the lips of Balts that the United States should get further involved in the developments in the region, even while the US government was hesitant to do so because of its inability to send military support for the independence movement. In no uncertain terms, however, Grantins urged the United States to come to the support of the Baltic states and their situation and to more forcefully condemn the actions that the Soviets were taking in response to growing nationalism in the Baltic states.

These appeals by both Balts and Baltic Americans to the US Congress and JBANC were likewise mirrored in advocacy efforts directed towards the US presidential administration and other powerful international leaders. In a statement given by Ojar Kalnins on behalf of JBANC, presented at the White House Seminar on US/Soviet Human Right Issues, Kalnins asserted that the realization of self-determination was an essential component of achieving Baltic independence during this period of the Cold War, urging US lawmakers to once again pick up the principle and employ it as part of their foreign policy strategy. He began the piece by asserting, “Ask Baltic Americans what they feel is the single most important issue for them in the upcoming summit, and the answer would be unqualified and unanimous freedom and self-determination for Soviet-occupied Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.” While Kalnins went on to remind participants at the seminar that this support was not a new position for the US government, just a natural extension of its consistent holding to the 47-year-old non-recognition policy, he also claimed that the present situation in the Baltics now demanded “concrete action.” Ongoing iterations of US support for Baltic independence—articulated time and time again by high-up governmental figures such as Ambassador Jack Matlock, President Reagan, and

members of the US Congress—had renewed the “strength and hope” of the Baltic people and, according to Kalnins, they wanted even more assurance that the US government had the Baltics’ back. With the stability of the region in danger and the concern that Soviets could “conceivably use uprisings in the Baltic States as a pretense for an increased military buildup in this area,” Kalnins urged listeners to help “defuse growing unrest” by taking advantage of the next United States/Soviet summit to discuss the topic and to view the Baltic States within the constructs of US foreign policy as not “an internal Soviet issue, but an international, legal, political and humanitarian issue.” Kalnins seemed confident in the United States’ ability to do just that, stating that he knew that the “US government can put real pressure on the Soviets—through sanctions or other political and diplomatic means” and that because “the very survival of the Baltic people is at stake,” he expected the US government to use its various forms of diplomatic power to “guarantee the fundamental rights of these illegally occupied peoples.” In conclusion, the statement by Kalnins circled back around to his beginning appeal to the principle, stating that “the bottom line is self-determination and independence. The Baltic people long for it and have a right to it. Until then, however, our immediate and most critical goal is simply national survival.”⁴²¹ While Kalnins seemed not quite to think that the moment for full realization of this national principle was yet upon the Baltics, he also saw the need to garner further US support for the idea and thought that in better championing the self-determination issue, those embedded

⁴²¹ Ojars Kalnins, Public Relations Director, American Latvian Association on Behalf of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Statement Presented at the White House Seminar on US/Soviet Human Rights Issues,” 3 December 1987, page 23–24, found in the Joint Baltic American National Committee 1987 Annual Report, 1987, Box 2, Folder 6, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

within the US governmental framework could advocate for it on the world stage and within official US-USSR channels.

Concrete Support

As appeals to self-determination began to pick up speed throughout 1987, the concept was thrown out in discourse generated not only by JBANC itself but also by other members of its networked orbit, including Balts such as Maddison and Grantins and members of the American public such as William J.H. Hough, III. The principle became a unifying force that was used to establish further connections between governmental and governmental-adjacent entities that together had an interest in furthering US support for Baltic independence. Likewise, it was leveraged within conversations between JBANC and members of the governmental apparatus as a reason why US lawmakers needed to take more concrete action needed to be taken to demonstrate that those in charge of foreign policy decisions truly adopted and supported the principle of self-determination. Looking at the Rhetorical map, through these means, the principle became more and more inscribed in the foreign policy landscape of the time, central to all the various audiences involved in the Baltic independence conversation. Besides the principle's employment within the relationships that have already been articulated in this chapter—relationships that also gesture back to the previous lobbying activities articulated across this dissertation—appeals to self-determination also became a key part of JBANC's work with other political institutions of the United States that have not yet been discussed. These institutions were ones that the ethnic lobbying organization hoped would help elevate this principle even further, making it a key part of the foreign policy environment of the time period, stretching it across all boundaries and divisions within the US political landscape. JBANC also

hoped that in its appeals to these new groups, self-determination could become a concept that was more concretely supported through not only the language discussed regarding US-Baltic relations but also the actions employed by the US government.

Some of these most notable late-1980s appeals are illuminated in JBANC's interactions with broader US political machines such as the Democratic National Committee and Republican National Committee. In the beginning of 1988, JBANC worked with both organizations to assert that self-determination was a shared principle of both parties that could be called upon in all American politicians' foreign policy deliberation regarding the Eastern European region. This was essential to JBANC's plan for self-determination to become more deeply etched within the US governmental apparatus and to ensure that its end goals of full US support for Baltic independence could be achieved, no matter who was in power or what political party came into power after the end of Reagan's term in 1989. We enter this part of the story in January 1988, when Seth Levin, Executive Director of the Ethnic Council of the Democratic National Committee (DNC), wrote a letter to Zinta Arums, Executive Director of JBANC. Here Levin responded to JBANC's previous concerns regarding the DNC's position on Baltic independence. While the DNC chairman had apparently been unclear regarding the committee's position on advocating for Baltic independence and the party's commitment to support of the Baltic issue did not come through in politicians' previous communication of the matter, Levin asserted that he needed to clarify some of the previous remarks made by the DNC Chairman Paul Grattan Kirk. Noting that the DNC did "support[] full, free self-determination on the part of all of the people of the Baltic states, including Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia," Levin went on to describe exactly what this position of self-determination for the DNC actually entailed. He stated that because "the Soviet Union's occupation is intolerable and cannot be condoned," the DNC felt that the

Soviet Union ought to allow for greater freedom for the Baltic peoples. To underscore the importance of such a position and this more firm declaration of it, Levin also noted that Chairman Kirk would be “issuing remarks in the next few weeks for the upcoming Lithuanian and Estonian Independence Days,” reaffirming “his strong stand against Soviet domination of the Baltic states.”⁴²² In his response to Arums and the pressure that JBANC had previously put on the DNC to be clearer regarding this issue, Levin put the DNC stance in more affirmative terms, demonstrating the ways in which the committee would be sure to stand with Baltic Americans and the ongoing discussion regarding how self-determination could be attained.

However, even after receiving further support from the DNC regarding the Baltic independence issue, JBANC pressure on political national committees did not stop. A few months later, Ojar Kalnins of JBANC appealed to the idea of self-determination again, this time in his communication with the Republican National Committee (RNC), where he made known his desire to provide testimony for the 1988 Republican National Convention. In his presentation to the Republican Party Platform Committee, Kalnins attempted to detail the long history of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Baltic states, articulating proposals that the Republican Party Platform should support. Here, Kalnins mentioned the ways in which the Baltic states harnessed the principle of the right to national self-determination and how the US political infrastructure ought to support the principle and JBANC’s position in its political endeavors. Painting a common vision for what Baltic independence support could look like, Kalnins stated that the “Baltic community of America and the United States Government have

⁴²² Correspondence from Seth Levin, Executive Director for the Democratic National Committee Ethnic Council to Zinta Arums, Executive Director of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 25 January 1988, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

always shared identical views concerning the political status of the Baltic States: since 1940 Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania have been occupied countries, brutally invaded and illegally annexed to the Soviet Union.” He went on to say that every US president since Roosevelt had supported the Baltic states, appealing to the fact that President Reagan especially articulated a strong stance of US solidarity with the countries, quoting the president as referencing “the Baltic nations’ right to national independence and their right to again determine their own destiny free of foreign domination.” Based on this historic support, Kalnins noted that the “continued U.S. support for Baltic independence [would] serve[] the interests of the American people and the U.S. Government” and would tell “the world that the U.S. will never condone nor accept violations of international law” in this way. Hitting home this point of self-determination, articulated both explicitly and in his description of the stances of previous Republican presidents, the chairman noted that the Baltics were relying on a continuation of longstanding US support in their pursuit of further separation from Russia. Specifically, he stated that because demonstrations in the Baltic states had recently picked up speed and renewed international interest, such support by the RNC would help to ensure the realization of the Balts’ longings for “human rights, national self-determination and independence.”⁴²³

To underscore the ways in which the RNC could support such a program, Kalnins put forth a five-point agenda that the Platform Committee should adopt in order to best demonstrate its concern for Baltic issues. Consisting of suggestions for policy review, increased support for the Baltic-language units of Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, the broadening of internal

⁴²³ Ojars Kalnins, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Presentation to the Republican Party Platform Committee,” 30 March 1988, Box 5, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

operations regarding US foreign policy focus on the Baltics, the expansion of appointments of Baltic Americans within the US governmental system, and Republican-supported legislation that would allow war crime trials to be held in the US (a direct response to the OSI cases, covered in chapter 4 of this dissertation), Kalnins made robust requests of the RNC to bolster its pro-Baltic position. Together, Kalnins and JBANC saw the implementation of these ideas as “seek[ing] out and promot[ing] peace in the world” as such policy could ensure that the “people of the occupied Baltic States and their Baltic-American countrymen in the United States [were] unified in their commitment to this freedom.” By continuing to support growing Baltic unrest, just as “the US government stood up for Baltic freedom in 1940,” Kalnins saw that the United States’ late-Cold War foreign policy needed to prioritize “concrete actions.” Further, Kalnins noted that “if there was ever a time when the US government could directly help the occupied Baltic people achieve their goals of human rights, self-determination and independence, that time is now.”⁴²⁴ This strong assertion and the weaving together of the more modern self-determination appeal with the historic legacy that the United States had established in its long support of the Baltic states set the scene for Kalnins’s argument that the RNC ought to see the bigger picture and support concrete decisions that could support the principle.

This language of self-determination and Kalnins’s pleas for broader RNC support for the Baltic states were then parroted back to JBANC by the RNC a few weeks later. In a letter to the ethnic lobbying organization on June 7, 1988, the RNC sent its “warm greetings” to the diasporic organization, telling JBANC that it remembered the “commemor[ation] of the 70th anniversary

⁴²⁴ Ojars Kalnins, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, “Presentation to the Republican Party Platform Committee,” 30 March 1988, Box 5, Folder 4, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

of Estonia's, Latvia's and Lithuania's independence" and was looking forward to Baltic Freedom Day. Noting that it understood Baltic Freedom Day as "a fitting tribute to those individuals, both here in the U.S. and abroad, who dedicate their lives to the causes of freedom, self-determination and independence for the Baltic nations," the RNC positioned itself within the group of American supporters of Baltic issues and asserted that the principle of self-determination was shared by both itself and JBANC. However, the support did not just end there, with the RNC also commenting on how its acknowledgement of Baltic Freedom Day paved the way for the party's strengthening of transnational ties between itself and the Baltics. In doing this, the RNC noted further that it "join[ed] with all Estonians, Latvians and Lithuanians, as well as with all people who refuse to resign themselves to dictatorship and foreign occupation, in commemorating Baltic Freedom Day."⁴²⁵ By confirming the RNC's commitment to the ideals that JBANC had previously presented to them and creating its own inroads between itself and Balts, the RNC more firmly articulated its pro-Baltic position. Further, the RNC made it clear that when its members supported JBANC's agenda, it supported the ideals of self-determination. This was demonstrated in a June 14, 1988, statement where RNC chairman, Frank J. Fahrenkopf, issued a Baltic Freedom Day statement that affirmed the commemoration was "a fitting tribute to those individuals, both here in the United States and abroad, who dedicate[d] their lives to the causes of freedom, self-determination and independence for the Baltic nations."⁴²⁶ In its outright support of this day, the RNC copied much JBANC's language in its previous correspondence and

⁴²⁵ Correspondence from Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr., Chairman of the Republican National Committee to the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 7 June 1988, Box 10, Folder 54, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

⁴²⁶ Republican National Committee, "Fahrenkopf Honors Baltic Freedom Day," Press Release, 14 June 1988, Box 10, Folder 54 University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

demonstrated that the RNC desired to come together with Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians to recognize the day, providing further evidence of the party's supposed Baltic support, listing concrete examples of ways in which the RNC sponsored pro-Baltic-independence activities, bringing home the committee's true dedication to the issue.

Besides JBANC's interactions with national political parties and the unification of conversations regarding growing *concrete* support for self-determination, increased investment in the principle was also apparent across other factions of the US governmental apparatus. Throughout the rest of 1988, JBANC continually worked with lawmakers and other actors in the US governmental system to make sure that direct appeals to self-determination were at the forefront of the United States' support for Baltic independence. At the beginning of 1988, JBANC worked closely with the US Senate to better articulate a stance of support for the right of Baltic self-determination that could be incorporated into the foreign policy that Congress was negotiating during this time, especially in connection to Soviet treaties. Mari-Ann Rikken, Chairman of JBANC, expressed the organization's stance on the principle and articulated the ways in which the Senate could similarly support such values by folding the language of self-determination into its own policy making. This came through Rikken's explicit suggestion that the US Senate should "consider the experiences of the Soviet-occupied Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania" when thinking about how to negotiate treaties with the Soviets and how to respond to Soviet demands.⁴²⁷ Rikken was additionally forceful in her assertions that the US stance towards the region was not strong enough at this time to actually change the political situation in the Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, stating, "U.S. politicians are generous with

⁴²⁷ Mari-Ann Rikken, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 26 January 1988, page 1, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

proclamations and resolutions on Baltic freedom and human rights; however, so far no one has had the courage or the integrity to put teeth into any of these commemorative measures.” She even went so far as to call out Assistant Secretary of State Rozanne Ridgway and her comments before a pre-Summit human rights briefing on December 3, 1987, when Ridgway stated the “United States has no policy of actively seeking the dissolution of the Soviet Union,” accusing Ridgway of not seeing that support of Baltic independence would be tied to at least a portion of the USSR being dissolved in its Eastern Bloc.⁴²⁸ Rikken went on to say that because Baltic nationalists were pointing to “hard truths about the Soviet Union, truths that many in the West do not wish to face,” the United States needed to do better to listen to these voices and call upon them throughout the process of United States foreign policy development. These individuals and the Baltic situation in general, Rikken asserted, showed that “the people of these occupied countries ha[d] not given up restoring their lost independence... achieving autonomy and self-determination is essential to the very survival of the Baltic peoples, languages, and cultures.”⁴²⁹

To help support these values and for the United States to fully engage in the process of reestablishing Baltic independence, Rikken noted that while no one in the Baltic-American community or in the Baltic states themselves expected the United States to provide military assistance, there were other concrete measures the country could take. For one, the “United States and other Western democracies could reverse their policy of appeasement and propping up the Soviet Empire economically and in other ways,” and “more support, both practical and moral, must be given to democratic and nationalistic movements in the USSR.” For JBANC at

⁴²⁸ Mari-Ann Rikken, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 26 January 1988, page 2, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

⁴²⁹ Mari-Ann Rikken, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 26 January 1988, page 3, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

this time—as it communicated in its interactions with the DNC and RNC—it was about not more written statements or verbal assertions of Baltic-American solidarity but rather the creation of *concrete* actions that could help address the Soviet Union as an “illegitimate anachronism in the modern world.” JBANC hoped that this new angle of its advocacy would ensure that the United States played an active part in “hastening the break-up of such an entity” as, for JBANC, that was “the [only] logical option for ending the threat that [the USSR] poses.”⁴³⁰ This claim and statement made by Rikken articulated that for JBANC, support for a Baltic realization of self-determination meant that the US government had to be willing to encourage complete Eastern Bloc dissolution. In supporting this position and making it possible through tangible means, JBANC thought that such actions could demonstrate that the United States’ true allegiance was with Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

Besides this angle and greater appeal to the US government at large, JBANC also worked to target specific individuals within the US governmental apparatus to push this new goal of achieving more concrete action in response to adoption of the self-determination principle. In a 1988 meeting with Senator Dennis DeConcini, JBANC noted that the US government ought to build upon the nationalist sentiments and manifestos produced in the Baltic states throughout 1987 in an effort to support the “popular sentiment for independence [that] is not only growing, but is also being expressed more openly than in the past, especially among the youth.” Like the other arguments that JBANC was making at the time regarding concrete support for self-determination, the organization told DeConcini that it “would like to see more practical, concrete examples of American support for the right of the Baltic Republics to self-determination and

⁴³⁰ Mari-Ann Rikken, Chairman of the Joint Baltic American National Committee, 26 January 1988, page 4, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

freedom” and that such measures would be a necessary change from the “commemorative resolutions, proclamation and statements of support for the Baltic peoples” that the US government had previously utilized. Within the meeting other aspects of the “important and long-standing U.S. foreign policy of not recognizing the forcible incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR” were addressed in order for JBANC and DeConcini to discuss how this position could be “strengthened and reiterated at every opportunity.” More specifically JBANC asserted that the support of self-determination ought to be furthered through “specific economic and other sanctions,” that the United States should apply more pressure on the USSR to renounce the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, that Congress should review current State Department interpretation and implementation of the Baltic non-recognition policy, and that the US government should encourage the observance of Baltic national, cultural, and religious holidays.⁴³¹ Together, these points, along with the 14 items that were stated as part of the agenda list within JBANC and DeConcini’s meeting, were aimed at better concrete support for self-determination in the Baltic region and actionable steps that could help Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania retain their independence from the USSR.

Congressional & Presidential Embrace

Besides self-determination being a principle that JBANC sought to use to unify the various actors with whom it was interfacing and to encourage them to provide their full, concrete, and tangible support for Baltic independence, appeals to this principle were also more readily used within the language that actors within the US governmental apparatus employed on

⁴³¹ “Meeting with Senator Dennis Deconcini,” 28 January 1988, Box 5, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

their own. Such instances demonstrated how the principle of self-determination became more fully adopted and embedded within the US support of the Baltic independence movement and was employed as a means to generate closeness between the four states at the time. As the Cold War continued and greater international recognition of the Baltic situation developed, the US Congress and various US presidential administrations directly appealed to the principle of self-determination as part of their own articulation of what the trajectory of Baltic independence should look like. Instead of this language being fed to them by JBANC and its interlocutors, the US government eventually also began to rely on its appeal to the concept, demonstrating self-determination's eventual adoption by all audiences involved in the Baltic-American foreign policy system.

Some of the best instances of this come through the continued institution of June 14 as Baltic Freedom Day, once again highlighting the significance of this event and JBANC's work to normalize Baltic-American holidays within the US cultural environment. In its suggestions for the ways in which senators and those involved in the Ad Hoc Committee could support a Baltic Freedom Day proposal, JBANC issued language that the US government ought to further solidify the role of self-determination as a reason for the United States' continued support for the Baltic states during the late 1980s. In an amendment to the proposed S.J. Res. 152,⁴³² JBANC suggested that a new section be added to the bill that would explicitly discuss the role of "self-determination of the people from the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania" and mention how Congress sees the "subjugation of peoples to foreign domination constitut[ing] a denial of

⁴³² Correspondence from Carl Levin and Donald W. Riegle, Jr. to Congressional Colleagues, 18 September 1987, Box 10, Folder 44, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

human rights” that would be “contrary of the Charter of the United Nations.” Further, the amendment noted that “all peoples have the right to self-determination” and that, in order to “establish freely their political status and pursue their own economic, social, cultural, and religious development,” other countries should hold up what “was confirmed in the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.” By then going through the history of the Baltics and their incorporation into the USSR under the secret protocols of the non-aggression pact, the amendment discussed how the Soviet Union had continually tried to work against this goal of self-determination, using “efforts to change the ethnic character of the population of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania through policies of Russification and dilution of their native population.” Finally, the amendment affirmed the US position regarding the principle, stating that the country had continually recognized the “diplomatic representatives of the last independent Baltic governments and support[ed] the aspirations of the Baltic peoples to self-determination and national independence, a principle enunciated in 1940 and confirmed” time and time again, including in 1983 with the United States informing “all member nations of the United Nations that the United States has never recognized the forced incorporation of the Baltic States” into the USSR.⁴³³

In their 1988 support of this day, members of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine again sought to directly insert language of self-determination into the heart of the proposal. Co-chairmen of the Ad Hoc Committee, Dennis M. Hertel and Don Ritter, wrote to their colleagues on May 10, 1988, soliciting cosponsors of H.J. Res. 474 to designate June 14th, 1988, as Baltic Freedom Day and asserting that such an event furthered the non-recognition

⁴³³ “Amendment to express the sense of the Congress regarding the self-determination of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the Senate of the United States—100th Cong., 1st Sess.,” Box 10, Folder 44, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

policy that the United States held regarding the forced incorporation of the Baltic States into the USSR. Hertel and Ritter wrote, “This year’s observance is particularly important. It will show our solidarity with the Baltic peoples as they seek to test the limits of *glasnost*” and respond to “Gorbachev’s call for increased openness and democracy.” Because of this, the US officials understood that it was necessary that the “American people’s support for Baltic self-determination [wa]s of great encouragement to these oppressed peoples” and that in their encouragement of the celebration of the day, Americans and Balts around the world could be encouraged as they came together in the continued quest for the Baltics to once again achieve an independent state identity.⁴³⁴

These same ideas appear in other correspondence from legislators during the time that highlighted how JBANC helped the US government more readily adopt the principle into its own appeals, showcasing how the ethnic lobbying organization influenced the US government’s interest in Baltic Freedom Day and the holiday’s connection with the principle. On June 14, the day set aside for the commemoration, Senator Don Ritter noted as the 1988 sponsor of Baltic Freedom Day, a member of the Helsinki Commission, and co-chairman of the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine, that the Baltic-American community was especially instrumental to his “continued support of freedom for the Baltic nations” and his understanding of the importance of the self-determination principle to the fight going on in the Baltics. He noted that “without [JBANC’s] work and encouragement, the voices in support of the Baltic people would not be heard as loudly as they are heard in the Soviet Union and around the world” and that “their hopes for self-determination” must live on, as there would be “no reason for the

⁴³⁴ Correspondence from Dennis M. Hertel and Don Ritter to Congressional Colleagues, 10 May 1988, Box 10, Folder 44 University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

United States to abandon its policy of nonrecognition of the illegal forced incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union.” Ritter also continued to hit home the importance of self-determination in the Baltics’ fight for independence and the need for the world to take note, stating that “the Baltic people want no more than the opportunity to determine their own economic destiny while preserving their values and the distinctiveness of their culture” and that “self-determination should, in no way, serve to threaten the Soviets.” He cited the principle again just a few lines later, appealing to the supposed longevity of the concept (ironic given its early-twentieth-century inception by Wilson), noting that “Lithuania enjoyed self-determination for over 500 years” before it was occupied by the Russians and Germans and that because the Baltic states have “such deep and independent roots, we cannot, after only 43 years of Soviet rule, discount the ability of these people to regain their freedom.” With that he urged those listening to him on the Senate floor to join him in calling upon the Soviets to fully guarantee these rights as doing so would only strengthen the Soviet Union, essential during a time of vulnerability for the country. He stated that without an adoption of the principle, the two states most directly in conflict within the Cold War (the US and USSR) would not be able to “grow close as long as freedom and self-determination is denied, as long as the Helsinki accords do not remain fully implemented.” Ritter then expressed that he would “look forward to the day when the Baltic nations and peoples enjoy freedom and self-determination” and that hopefully through the United States’ affirmation and support of Baltic Freedom Day, the “coming of that day” would be hastened.⁴³⁵

⁴³⁵ “Baltic Freedom Day,” June 14, 1988, 100th Congress, Second Session, S.J. Res. 249, Congressional Record, 14355.

Besides Ritter affirming this position and hailing JBANC as the reason that the principle was being appealed to on the international stage, an amendment put forth in Congress in 1988 detailed actionable items that the US president was supposed to carry out in order to demonstrate how the United States was supporting the growth of self-determination ideals in the Baltics. Mirroring the growing appeals for concrete actions on the part of the US government that could support the growing unrest in the region, self-determination was again not just seen as a theoretical position worth adopting but rather as a tangible concept that the US Congress needed to fully support with its actions and foreign policy decisions regarding the Baltic region. First, the amendment stated that the president ought to “direct world attention to the right of self-determination of the people of the Baltic States by issuing on July 26, 1988, a statement that officially informs all member nations of the United Nations of the support of the United States for self-determination of all peoples and nonrecognition of the forced incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union.” Second, JBANC called upon the president and US government to “closely monitor events in the Baltic States following peaceful public protests” and to especially “call attention to violations of basic human rights in the Baltic States.” Third, along with outright assertions of support for Baltic self-determination, the United States needed to “promote compliance with the Helsinki Final Act in the Baltic States through human contacts, family reunification, free movement, emigration rights, the right to religious expression and other human rights enumerated in the Helsinki Accords.”⁴³⁶ This connection to the Helsinki Final Act was especially important as it affirmed the importance of the principle within US-USSR

⁴³⁶ “Amendment to express the sense of the Congress regarding the self-determination of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in the Senate of the United States—100th Cong., 1st Sess.,” Box 10, Folder 44 University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

agreements (a previously uncertain issue) and once again firmly set forth ways in which the United States ought to attempt to hold the USSR accountable to these terms, all the while creating more space for the Baltic states to continue in their trajectory and desire for greater separation from the USSR.

Continuing its explicit assertion of *how* the US government ought to affirm self-determination concretely, the US Congress elevated this principle to the extent that it was not only uniformly adopted by US governmental entities but also a connecting force that could strengthen the relationships between the United States and Baltic states as a whole. Ahead of a letter written to “the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania” on August 23, 1988, sent by 28 senators, JBANC’s close ally, Donald W. Riegle, Jr., wrote to his colleagues garnering support for the upcoming correspondence with the Baltic states. Using much of the same language as JBANC had proposed in its previous statements directed at the US government and parroting JBANC’s language affirming self-determination and firm declaration that the United States needed to affirm this principle’s employment among the Baltic people, the letter not only educated Riegle’s fellow senators about the Baltic issues but also articulated what US support of self-determination could look like. Through his work with JBANC and its inside knowledge regarding the pro-independence movements on the ground in the Baltic states (such as Helsinki-86), Riegle knew that this letter to the Baltic states would be read at demonstrations and used as a sign of solidarity among the peoples there to boost morale and hope in the cause. He told the senators this in his correspondence, noting that the “letter, the text of which will be read on August 23 at rallies throughout Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, will serve as a pledge to the Baltic people of our continued support for their efforts to achieve the right to self-determination.” Similarly, he noted that the letter would “reiterate[] the fact that the US has never recognized the

illegal incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union.”⁴³⁷ In this way, he made sure his colleagues understood the consequences of their actions in helping to draft such correspondence while directly answering JBANC’s call for concrete actions and the organization’s previous encouragement and requests that the US government more clearly, effectively, and tangibly show the Baltic peoples that they were behind their assertion of self-determination within the broader Cold War struggle.

With this act came the strengthening of the relationship between the US government and the peoples of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania as well as more appeals for self-determination to be a principle that could unify Americans and Balts in their like-mindedness. In another August 28 letter from 28 senators to “the people of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania,” this point was articulated: “We Americans have long felt deep respect and admiration for you, the people of the Baltic nations. Your difficult, but proud history, is one with which we identify for, like our ancestors, you overcame great odds to win your independence and establish democratic governments.” They went on, “Sadly, your struggle for universal human rights and self-determination, won with such singular courage seven decades ago, has not ended. As members of the United States Senate, we want you to know that our support for these noble goals continues as well.” With this appeal, they mentioned how they, as members of the US Congress, believed self-determination was a principle long since granted to the Baltic states and that this late-1980s fight to regain separation from the USSR was just the countries’ most modern plea for Russian separation. To illuminate the ways in which the US government has historically stood by

⁴³⁷ Correspondence from Donald W. Riegle, Jr. to Congressional Colleagues, 8 August 1988, Box 7, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

the three countries in the past, the senators wrote, “As you know, the United States government first recognized the independent democratic republics of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania on July 28, 1920.” They then went on to quote Ambassador Matlock and his affirmation of these countries before then reminding the letter’s audience that because the United States kept close tabs on what happened in the Baltic states and the USSR’s position towards them, there should be no worries that the Balts’ actions in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were going unnoticed. They stated that the United States was aware of others who had “publicly taken a position that coincides with our own concerning the forcible occupation and annexation of the Baltic States” and that the United States had also noticed that the peaceful demonstrations in the Baltics had “grown ever larger with each passing month,” giving the United States “heart” that the “Baltic people [could] now publicly pay tribute to their friends and loved ones who lost their lives during the mass terror and deportations of 1940-1952.”⁴³⁸ Overall these sentiments expressed US solidarity with the three states and their people, not only demonstrating the ways in which the US and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were similar in terms of background and their joint desire for independence and democratic identity but also asserting that they were also held together through the events happening in the Baltic states at the time. Although self-determination was the primary principle to which the United States appealed as a similarity between the countries and one that had been resurrected as significant within the late-1980s context, it was also a concept the US government tried to raise up as one that it believed had long been present in the Baltic states during not just the 1980s but also most of the twentieth century.

⁴³⁸ Correspondence from the United States Senate to Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania, 23 August 1988, Box 7, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

The senators additionally noted in their letter that the United States was cheering for the Baltic states in each step that they could take towards a more nationalist and independent identity and was watching eagerly as the events unfolded. They stated, “We have shared your joy over the fact that the national colors of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are flying once again with pride over your lands.” Once more they asserted their kinship with the states: “As representatives of a democratic nation, we have supported these actions, for it is our view that freedom of expression and assembly are part of the foundation upon which all democracies, including our own, are built.” After telling the Balts that the US Senate had also written a letter to General Secretary Gorbachev, “urging him to publish in the Soviet press, the full text, including the secret protocols, of the 1939 Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact,” the senators noted that their pressure on the USSR would continue and that the president of the United States also joined in this commitment, “pled[ging] to you, the people of the Baltic States, our continued support.” Finally, the senators once more affirmed the letter’s theme of a close relationship between Balts and Americans, noting that “the U.S. and the Baltic States have always enjoyed a unique relationship, built on true friendship between our peoples, and mutual respect for the principles of freedom, democracy and human rights.”⁴³⁹ With this, the senators used the principle of self-determination as a principle that held all the countries together in their relationship with one another. Because they shared that principle, the four countries could find common ground with one another, and the United States affirmed its help and support of the Baltics through the states’ continued search for a more autonomous and separate future from the USSR.

⁴³⁹ Correspondence from the United States Senate to Estonia, Latvia, & Lithuania, 23 August 1988, Box 7, Folder 7, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In 1989, another congressional joint resolution was passed designating June 14 as Baltic Freedom Day, citing the importance of the Baltic fight for self-determination as part of the reason the US government supported that day. In the resolution itself, the document explicitly referenced the United States' membership in the United Nations as part of the government's increased focus on the principle, stating in the document that the United States had "repeatedly voted with a majority of that international body to uphold the right of other countries of the world to self-determination and freedom from foreign domination" and would continue to do so. In this way, the Transnational Advocacy Network of the Baltic-American lobbying organization once again appeared as a primary lever for American support of the Baltic states and a prime example for why this issue in the late-Cold War era needed special attention. Even though the "Soviet Union ha[d] steadfastly refused to return to the people of the Baltic Republics the right to exist as independent republics, separate and apart from the Soviet Union, or to permit a return of personal, political and religious freedoms," the resolution asserted that the United States would continue to "not recogniz[e] the illegal forcible occupation of the Baltic States" and that Baltic Freedom Day would instead continue to serve as a symbol of solidarity of the people of the United States with the Baltic people.⁴⁴⁰

As interest surrounding US support for the Baltics during this timeframe became more highly elevated within the United States and political circles, President George Bush took the opportunity to address US and foreign audiences alike in a 1989 Baltic Freedom Day proclamation. Self-determination became a central theme of the address, interwoven throughout the speech and explicitly cited at the end. In the proclamation, President Bush utilized a

⁴⁴⁰ S.J. Res. 63 "Joint Resolution Designating June 14, 1989 as 'Baltic Freedom Day,'" Box 2, Folder 32, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

reflection upon history to articulate how the Baltic states had their independence stripped from them in the signing of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, the secret protocols of which had “condemned the independent Baltic States of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to the foreign domination they still endure today.” Going on to state how the signing of the pact led to the Nazi invasion of the three states as well as their “political oppression, religious persecution, and repression of their national consciousness,” the president then turned towards optimism, stating that “half a century of repression has not broken the spirit of the Baltic peoples.” President Bush reminded his listeners that hundreds of thousands of people in the Baltics had demonstrated publicly for freedom and democracy, “calling for national autonomy and control over their own affairs” and that “the future look[ed] brighter today than any other time in the Baltic States’ post-war experience.” However, the president did not stop there, going further to demand that those alongside him in the US government continue to support these countries, as “the people of Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia both demand and deserve lasting guarantees of their fundamental rights.” Ending with an appeal to the principle, he proclaimed, “the Government of the United States does not and will not recognize the unilateral incorporation by force of arms of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. Of this observance of Baltic Freedom Day, we express our solidarity with them and call upon the Soviet Union to listen to their calls for freedom and self-determination.”⁴⁴¹ JBANC and its colleagues quickly elevated this same proclamation and sentiment regarding US support for the Baltics’ right to self-determination, affirming the ways in which the US governmental apparatus was supportive of the ethnic lobbying organization’s request for stronger US support of self-determination. In a news release by Ojars Kalnins on June

⁴⁴¹ President George H.W. Bush, “Proclamation 5990: Baltic Freedom Day, 1989,” June 14, 1989, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

21, 1989, a week after President Bush's proclamation, it was noted that the joint US congressional resolution that set aside the day recognized the "right of the people of the Baltic Republics for the freedom and independence from the domination of the Soviet Union" and that the later proclamation by President Bush expressed solidarity with the Baltic people and supported their calls "for freedom and self-determination."⁴⁴² This was significant to JBANC as the two documents affirmed the Baltic-American position for increased support of self-determination and more forcefully condemned the Soviet occupation of and continued political activity in the three states.

Conclusion

By this late-1980s timeframe and especially during the final months of 1989, the full realization of independence for the Baltic states was a much more certain reality, with the three states officially declaring their full separation from the USSR just months later in the spring of 1990. The firm appeal to self-determination by the Baltic states and multiple actors within the US foreign policy milieu over the course of the 1970s and 1980s certainly built up the realization of this independence, with employment of the principle occurring in multiple instances and over the course of many different rhetorical actors, times, locations, contexts, and scenes. In many of these appeals, self-determination was not only a principle that needed to be appealed to by the Baltic states themselves but also a principle that others who were part of the conversation utilized in their demonstrations of support for the region. It soon became an all-encompassing

⁴⁴² Ojars Kalnins, "U.S. Congressional Resolution Supporting Baltic Independence Published in Latvia's Most Widely Read Newspaper," 21 June 1989, Box 2, Folder 23, University of Minnesota Immigration History Research Center Archives, Minneapolis, Minnesota.

lens through which JBANC and others who were part of the Cold War foreign policy governmental apparatus viewed the entirety of the events occurring in the late 1980s and a principle that steadily pushed all audiences towards full adoption of the conceptual language in their separate and shared discussions of the region's trajectory.

While much of JBANC's work throughout the late-Cold War period employed and called upon this principle, it was in the final years before the official collapse of the Soviet Union that the principle became especially salient and important to achieving the organization's end goals. Further, the principle's international growth during this time period and the ways in which it proved successful in bringing other audiences and actors together into the situation confirmed its ability to help JBANC clarify its own goals and mission in getting the US to provide greater assistance to the Baltic states. In looking at how employment of the principle shifted JBANC's work and advocacy measures, the principle first became one that ethnic lobbying organization could use to hold the United States more accountable not only in its Cold War negotiations with the Baltic states and the USSR but also with the United States' appeal to the greater liberal world order. Second, it allowed the ethnic lobbying organization to demand that the US government display greater concrete actions in light of its support for the Baltics and not just show its support for the region through words, instead producing tangible evidence and policy changes that would back up the Balts' fight for independence. Further, it provided the grounds on which the US government could strengthen its relationship with the burgeoning states, providing a conceptual framework and shared language through which the four countries could find similarity in their adoption of the right and their desire for democratic rule.

Altogether, appeals to self-determination brought JBANC's advocacy to the next level, giving some weight to its advocacy activities and helping link together the other little-r and big-

R R/rhetorical mechanisms that it was utilizing among its various audiences and in the differing moments and contexts within which it was working during the late-Cold War period. In looking at the Rhetorical trajectory of this concept over the course of JBANC's 1970s and 1980s work and advocacy efforts, one can see how the discourse surrounding this issue changed over the time period. When it was first leveraged as a response to the increase of détente foreign policy in the 1970s, appeals to self-determination were seen as a bulwark against the United States straying from its non-recognition policy. It was not until later that the principle was viewed as a fresh and open concept that JBANC could use to more forcefully push the US foreign policy agenda to put greater pressure on the Soviet Union and international world order to support the Baltic states' fight. By 1987 and 1988 the concept had become a more mainstream aspect of JBANC's discourse and that of other public-facing institutions regarding the issue. During this timeframe, the support of the Baltics' self-determination was more strongly affirmed by the United States, and the concept began to be seen as something that could bring the region and the West together. It was something that the United States and Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were understood to have in common. Finally, by the last months of 1988 and 1989, actors within the US governmental system, including Congress and the presidential administration, fully embraced the principle, using self-determination as a main concept employed in their communication on Baltic independence and part of their appeal for action on the issue, parroting the language that JBANC once gave them as part of its advocacy measures. The eventual realization of self-determination through Baltic independence was then seen as the culmination of the efforts both in the Baltics and the United States regarding the issue and the coming together of all the other iterations of advocacy that JBANC employed during the era. Thus, the Baltic states and Baltic Americans used the principle to not only unify their separate peoples and communities but also

build bridges between themselves and others, highlighting self-determination's greater embrace across the world and its ability to be firmly placed at the center of this particular late-Cold War Eastern European issue. As such, JBANC's uptake of the concept proved successful but also dynamic, paving the way for key Rhetorical shifts that occurred in the 1980s that then more swiftly brought the US government more fully into the conversation and aligned it with JBANC's end goals of seeking greater American support for the Baltic plight.

Chapter 7. Conclusion

By mapping the many twists and turns of the 1970s and 1980s, I have sketched out the significance of JBANC, an ethnic lobbying group, on the trajectory of US foreign policy during the late Cold War. Throughout the Cold War, JBANC inserted itself into the political web of US foreign policy decision making, crafting a distinct Baltic-American position that emerged out of the diasporic imaginary and fighting for state actors to better know, understand, and adopt the position as their own. Arriving on the scene in the middle of a time in which civil society actors and other ethnic lobbying groups were gaining more power and prominence within the US governmental milieu and working within the transnational advocacy networks of foreign policy development, JBANC attempted to influence US politics and encourage governing institutions to continue to fight for (and fight even more strongly for) full US support of Baltic independence from the USSR. Admittedly, in doing so JBANC fed into the preexisting Cold War ideological divides and democracy vs. communism frameworks, bolstering US war-hawk attitudes and seeking to prolong the conflict as long as there was hope for the Baltic states to achieve independence once more. While the issue of Baltic occupation was created by the Cold War, JBANC sought to continue the Cold War in order to fight for an end of occupation. Through its attempts to center the “Baltic issue” within US foreign policy, JBANC ensured that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania were inserted into the middle of the typical US vs. USSR Cold War paradigm, expanding the conflict and actors of the war and expanding discourse of the conflict outward.

JBANC used a multi-pronged approach and a variety of rhetorical strategies to bolster its stance. However, this did not mean that this lobbying group did not meet resistance regarding its

activities. Even when JBANC's agenda was challenged during the last years of détente—in part because the ethnic lobbying group's demands for greater support for the Baltic states meant the United States needed to escalate the conflict instead of wind it down—it never put forth an interpretation of US foreign policy that was contrary to previous US action. In many ways, JBANC did not push the envelope in terms of the novelty or originality of ideas that it asked state and non-state actors within the US governmental environment to back, taking a conservative approach to its advocacy. This contributed to its reliance on the previously established Cold War logics and rhetorics of mythmaking, propaganda, and pragmatism that formed the conflict into what it was, with JBANC easily and conveniently fitting itself into the larger US foreign policy schema in order to feed political machines the same messages that had solidified the American mindset regarding the war in the first place. In doing so, JBANC codified itself and those connected with the entity (i.e. constituents, dissidents) into new actors that could breathe fresh air into the stagnating conflict—it also ensured that old tropes were further instantiated within the public imaginary and used as a way to lend credibility to the Baltic's plight. On the whole, much of JBANC's efforts were dedicated to ensuring that the preexisting Baltic non-recognition policy of the Welles Declaration was upheld and uncompromised. Yet this defense of preexisting policy, while not novel, still proved to be no small task for JBANC in light of the drastic changes that occurred over the course of the later years of the conflict, Nixon and Kissinger's evolving perspective on the globality of the conflict, and the ways in which the character of US-USSR relations oscillated (sometimes quite violently) between periods of collaboration and resistance. After a more pro-Baltic-independence position was affirmed within the US governmental milieu by the mid- to late-1980s and it became further apparent that political developments were brewing in the USSR, JBANC then used this bolstered

policy foundation to rest its final case for Baltic independence, supported by coinciding internal and external pleas and applications of the principle of self-determination.

To conclude this dissertation, I return to the development of these actions in the previous chapters in order to summarize key implications and explore how a Rhetorical cartographical approach to mapping the evolution of US foreign policy concerning the Baltics illuminates the character of that governing apparatus. Through its responses to suspicions of secrecy, elevation of transnational governmental and non-governmental relationships, situating of key image-making epideictic events, and harnessing of self-determination, JBANC helped bend US foreign policy towards favoring the Baltics—a slant that, in time, contributed to the eventual breakup of the USSR and the end of the Cold War. Such actions not only proved to be instrumental to the war's outcomes but also set the scene for the future of East-West relations with which our world now operates.

Cartographical Inscriptions

By spotlighting JBANC and its advocacy activities in the 1970s and 1980s, this project has identified and evaluated points of connection between the spheres of civil society and the state to more closely study the role of institutions as agents of government. Just as Rhetorical cartography elevates at least three levels of mapping, 1) tracing the relationships within a governing apparatus, 2) highlighting how Rhetoric is one of the many technologies that a governing apparatus relies upon, and 3) charting political change, this project also examines JBANC's interplay within the US foreign policy sphere and how its Rhetorical activities sought certain ends. Through the different stages of the Cold War and the framework of preexisting Baltic-American relations, JBANC contributed to the foreign policy milieu by elevating the

unique transnational connections apparent within the diasporic community and utilizing these connections to cross the East-West boundary.

This mapping strategy also elevates two different kinds of R/rhetorical registers present in the project. First, it brings to the forefront various rhetorical strategies that helped initiate or support various foreign policy decisions. Among these were tactics that JBANC employed such as its interactions with *occultatio*, intentional orchestration of state and non-state relationships, creation of commemorative epideictic events, and elevation of self-determination. Such strategic tactics also interfaced with the TANS' political rhetorical action of information, symbolic, and leverage politics. Second, I highlighted the role of organizing concepts such as self-determination in shaping the rhetorical environment in which JBANC operated and in which US foreign policy decisions were created and carried out. With both of these registers' reliance on *kairos*, opportune timing becomes a key perspective through which to view both the implementation of strategic little-r rhetoric on JBANC's part and how JBANC fed into the creation of big-R Cold War Rhetorical conditions. Thus, this double helix that continues weaving throughout the entire dissertation and binds these two notions of R/rhetoric together demonstrates how JBANC's work both tapped into and formed conditions of possibility. It binds both the people and discourses of the Cold War together, helping to reinforce the "us vs. them" frameworks that JBANC sought to perpetuate. The twofold nature of this approach features not only how my archival materials discuss rhetoric as a strategic discourse that JBANC and those involved in the Cold War foreign policy structure employed but also how scholars of rhetoric conceive Rhetoric as a more encompassing term of art for those mechanisms that articulate a political context to modes of action that operate at the level of population. By mapping these practices, the distribution of late-Cold War foreign policy making can be not only observed from

the perspective of *who* made these decisions and *what* these decisions were but also studied for the sake of understanding the comparison of symmetries and asymmetries of power, heights and dips of transnational affiliations, expansion and abatement of certain distributions of resources. Rhetoric is always made, unmade, and remade. It is used to mediate and change material things, people, and places, constructing reality along the way.

Such registers are highlighted throughout the project's chapters, revealing the shifting priorities of Baltic advocacy throughout the 1970s and 1980s. Chapter three looks at how secrecy and suspicion were cultivated in the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and OSI cases as well as what JBANC did to take advantage of this environment and try to steer US foreign policy decisions back towards greater Baltic support. Yet the chapter also traces how the relationships that were at the tips of JBANC's fingers and the political environment in which the situations developed also allowed the ethnic lobbying group to capitalize upon détente and the coming together of the US and USSR governments around the OSI cases in order to call for the further strengthening of US-Baltic ties. This, in turn, provided the grounds for the US government's response to the concerns of the Baltic-American community and shaped the ways in which Baltic independence was discussed during this time. Chapter four and its focus on JBANC's lobbying efforts as well as JBANC's facilitation of relational networks on and off the Hill maps the contours of Baltic-advocacy-relationship-making. It also looks at the evolution of JBANC's strengthening of its voice in the changing late-Cold War landscape in the early and middle 1980s, detailing the slow but sure involvement of JBANC in Baltic foreign policy discussions. Through the Ad Hoc Committee on the Baltic States and Ukraine, targeted personal and utilitarian relationships with key lawmakers, and assembling Congress with Baltic dissidents, the lobbying group ensured that it was in the middle of foreign policy decision-making and not easily extracted from the

networks in which *it was* inscribed and which it *helped* to inscribe, serving as a “go-to” organization for firsthand news, knowledge, and access to what lay behind the Iron Curtain. Further, JBANC’s soliciting of support from the Baltic-American community ensured that US constituents were moved closer and closer to the political process as the war waged on, paving the path for their involvement in JBANC’s future demands. In chapter five, JBANC’s elevation of five particular days within the Baltic-American policy sphere especially proved crucial to achieving JBANC’s ends. The commemorations strengthened the transnational ties between the United States, Baltics, and other countries of the East and West, spinning an ever more complex Rhetorical transnational web out of which independence could emerge. The days further connected various audiences in otherwise disparate parts of the world, making the diasporic investments of those in the United States relevant to all those who were carefully watching every move that the United States, Baltics, and USSR made during the late 1980s. Finally, chapter six weaves together the aforementioned aspects of JBANC’s interventions as well as the political changes that occurred in conjunction with these measures, looking at how the principle of self-determination was leveraged to shift foreign policy in the United States towards a very certain pro-Baltic-independence position, serving as a culmination of all its previous efforts.

Rhetorical Implications

Toggling between two registers, rhetoric was not just a “cause” of the Cold War but also an action and activity that was its effect, thereby organizing the conflict and forming its backbone. In one sense this dissertation does not offer a full-blown network analysis because it primarily centers one actor in the midst of the complicated late-Cold War foreign policy milieu: JBANC. However, it is also not a traditional study of public address in the sense that it breaks

through a US-centric narrative and positioning of “one side against another” by examining the movement and change between multiple parties ensnared in the conflict and the ways in which discourse of the Cold War expanded to include not just the US and USSR but also those implicated by the war’s East/West divisions. This project works to characterize the foreign policy establishment as it was formed by, created by, and built upon the interactions of actors such as JBANC and its counterparts. It joins the expanding landscape of Cold War scholarship as well as scholars interested in the contributions of ethnic lobbying organizations to the creation of foreign policy and the intermingling of Transnational Advocacy Networks within global structures. Thus, it offers differing perspectives on how these unique institutions and their rhetorical inner workings contributed to the Cold War and how foreign policy decisions are envisioned, created, and implemented—in other words, the why and how of foreign policy actions that evolve over times, between peoples, and across places.

In many ways, this project confirms the messy complexities of the Cold War and rejects a simple bipolar characterization of the conflict, falling in line with new historiographies that assess the war’s global reach. It details the story of the careful tango that the United States, Baltics, and USSR danced throughout the late-Cold War timeframe, showcasing how they carefully moved alongside one another in their negotiation of foreign policy and allowance of various degrees of intervention. The relations between these entities were triangular in nature, and JBANC helped to manage these triangularities, calling upon its vast transnational networks and relations to advocate for the re-realization of Baltic independence.⁴⁴³ While the telling of the Cold War often involves a conceptualization of parallelism in the relationship between the US

⁴⁴³ Bergmane, *Politics of Uncertainty*, 166.

and USSR (a relationship that was either characterized by the coming together or separation of the two superpowers, as many speak of the periods of Nixon's 1970s *détente* and Reagan's 1980s roll-back), the additions found in the previous pages account for a more malleable relationship, with admissions and concessions taken by both the Americans and the Soviets, enacted, realized, and generated by the presence of outside forces. Thus, the project takes an international perspective on the conflict—it is yet another chapter in the global stories of the rise and fall of twentieth-century communism⁴⁴⁴ as well as the United States' involvement in issues of “freedom” abroad and the USSR's grip on its satellite states.

JBANC's activities in the 1970s and 1980s can also be seen as adding to and further complicating the dualistic US/USSR viewpoint that has been pervasive in rhetorical scholarship and elsewhere. By tracing how the ideologies, myths, and narratives of the Cold War were entrenched, justified, and circulated, my materialist study focuses on *how* exactly these common frames and rhetorics were connected and mobilized across decades of the conflict and different situations that varied in terms of their focal actors, times, and places. By looking at the role of a “third party” lobbyist group that ultimately played a part in US foreign policy creation and bridged the gap between those in the United States and those in the Baltics, working to place its own agenda within the priorities of the US government and to shift the priorities of the US government to better match its agenda, the study does not necessarily assume a predictable or parallel relationship between the United States and USSR where the two expand and contact in conjunction with one another. Instead, it views the relationship between these world powers as

⁴⁴⁴ Zornitsa Keremidchieva, “Globalizing Dissent: the Soviet Response to the Truman Doctrine at the United Nations and the (Re)making of Global Governance at the End of Ideology,” *Review of Communication* 24, no. 1 (2024): 29.

volatile and dependent on other intermediary forces, always changing and being carefully managed by other actors who had their own unique stake in the war. Thus, this analysis tries to further examine how foreign policy Rhetorics of the late-Cold-War era traveled, traced, and compounded due to the work of those within broader transnational networks of advocacy. By looking at JBANC, rhetorical studies of the Cold War can expand to consider how new actors strategically worked to further insert themselves as part of the foreign policy milieu, seeking to gain greater US support for their agenda, but in doing so also ultimately further ingrained old tropes and ideological commitments of the communist vs. democratic conflict. No matter the outcome of their actions, however, lobbying is demonstrated to be a significant form of public address and should be considered as such. Through its lobbying efforts, JBANC worked to continue the war for the sake of the Baltic states, desiring that the Cold War be prolonged if there was hope that the Baltic states could emerge from it independent.

Throughout the Cold War, JBANC was more or less opportunistic in its actions and rhetorical approach. It was also restrictive of itself and others while inventive in its ability to elevate the American consciousness about the presence and plight of the three small Baltic countries behind the Iron Curtain. In some ways, an overarching look at JBANC's role in the foreign policy milieu does not reveal that the organization dramatically changed the foreign policy orientations of the United States in any significant way. The Welles Declaration, after all, was in effect before JBANC came fully onto the foreign policy scene and remained the official US position until the end of the Cold War. Even "close encounters," such as the Sonnenfeldt Doctrine and OSI cases of the 1970s, never brought about an outright or public rejection of this policy. Further, JBANC's employment of the principle of self-determination had been part of twentieth-century discussions of state sovereignty for some time. If anything, JBANC's elevation

of such ideas happened decades after its original “use” during the rise of the agency of the Global South during decolonization. When analyzing the types of arguments that JBANC *could have* made regarding the Baltic states and their desire for separation from the USSR, neither of these tactics was particularly new or forward-thinking. However, JBANC’s work and fight for the maintenance of this Baltic-American foundation of relations was still progressive and considerable, especially given the fact that to keep one particular foreign policy position the same over a near-fifty-year span of time and during such a dynamic conflict took an incredible amount of leverage, work, movement, and relational configuring. Even at the times when the United States and USSR seemingly collaborated with one another, JBANC still fought for the Baltic position, ensuring the states were not forgotten while the US-USSR relations evolved. It tried to maintain the US foreign policy position towards Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania over the course of many administrations, decades, and characteristics of the war. For the field of rhetorical studies, this observation is also notable because seemingly “unchanged” state interactions themselves and the continuation of stasis require a tremendous amount of rhetorical activity and effort. To see the significance in rhetorical maintenance work is not necessarily flashy, even if it does have noteworthy effects or consequences upon a greater situation.

A New Path Forward

After the Baltic states’ re-attainment of independence in the early 1990s, JBANC’s work for the advocacy of the Baltic states did not end. By the mid 1990s, its lobbying work in D.C. became about the inclusion of the Baltic states in the EU and NATO. Although the Baltic states submitted their applications for EU membership in 1995, it took nine years for them to be officially admitted to the organization. This was, in part, due to a series of reforms that needed to

happen in order for the states to better assimilate to Western standards and values. One of the greatest contested issues included Baltic acknowledgment and condemnation of local collaborators in the Holocaust, an era that had long been overshadowed by the Soviet occupation of the countries. As exploration of the OSI cases in this dissertation demonstrated, this issue was one that deeply involved USSR, US, and Baltic interests, adding complexity to the negotiation of this sticking point and the Baltics' desire to be considered as part of a European collective.

The Baltics also faced difficulties associated with their application to NATO. During Yeltsin's presidency there was little immediate impetus to consider NATO as an effective tool to manage Baltic-Russian relations. However, there was uncertainty about who would follow him and what the future of Russia would look like. Other states around Central and Eastern Europe began to increasingly push for NATO membership, encouraging the Baltic states to do the same. In the US, Baltic-American organizations including JBANC lobbied for Baltic NATO membership, using some of the same tactics it had employed during the Cold War, as well as new ones, in order to set the US foreign policy agenda. By 2004, all three Baltic states became members of both NATO and the EU, significant feats for the time: a definitive moment that would affect almost all aspects of the trajectory of the countries and their futures. With this achieved, the transnational capacities of US-Baltic lobbying efforts were once again affirmed, and the networks of the Baltic diasporic community began to grow even larger, further deepening and enriching the avenues that had already been established during the pivotal 1970s and 1980s. Out of the diasporic Baltic community in the West came new leaders, ideas, and ventures that would push the three countries forward in the post-Cold-War context, solidifying their connections with the United States and separations from Russia. In 1998, a former civil servant in the US Environmental Protection Agency, Valdas Adamkus, became president of

Lithuania.⁴⁴⁵ In 1999, Latvian-Canadian academic Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga was elected the first female president of Latvia.⁴⁴⁶ In 2006, an Estonian-American, Toomas Hendrik Ilves, was selected by the Estonian parliament to serve as Estonian ambassador to the United States and become the next president of the country.⁴⁴⁷ And Estonian-American, Mari-Ann Kelam (Rikken), whose presence is interwoven throughout this dissertation due to her close work with JBANC, went on to become a politician in Estonia and a member of its Foreign Affairs Committee.⁴⁴⁸ These were just a few savvy politicians who emerged from the Baltic diaspora, solidifying the ties between all these countries and the Baltic communities at home and abroad.

Even today, JBANC's lobbying efforts still continue, with the organization primarily focusing on garnering US support for Ukraine in the midst of the Russo-Ukrainian War and looking to generate greater US momentum regarding the need for the West to protect its NATO and Eastern European allies. Yet once again, the story may not be the way it seems, with some (like John J. Mearsheimer) arguing that NATO's expansion in the 1990s and early 2000s has been an impetus for Russia's continued aggression in Eastern Europe.⁴⁴⁹ Just as JBANC carefully pushed the United States to adopt a stronger pro-Baltic position within the late Cold War, inserting itself in the middle of East-West and US-USSR relations, JBANC's continual efforts in the modern day to bolster US action in Eastern Europe also certainly affect US-Russian

⁴⁴⁵ Daniel Williams, "Lithuania's Comeback Kids," *Washington Post*, January 16, 1988, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/inatl/europe/jan98/16/adamkus.htm>.

⁴⁴⁶ BBC, "From Child Refugee to President: Latvia's Vaira Vike-Freiberga," *BBC*, August 3, 2019, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-49119077>.

⁴⁴⁷ Office of the President of the Republic of Estonia, "Toomas Hendrik Ilves," <https://president.ee/en/republic-of-estonia/heads-of-state/24>.

⁴⁴⁸ Siiri Sillajõe, "Electoral and Legislative Data from Estonia," *Riigikogu*, June 17, 1999, https://www.riigikogu.ee/msi_arhiiv/tel321.html.

⁴⁴⁹ Isaac Chotiner, "Why John Mearsheimer Blames the U.S. for the Crisis in Ukraine," *New Yorker*, March 1, 2022, <https://www.newyorker.com/news/q-and-a/why-john-mearsheimer-blames-the-us-for-the-crisis-in-ukraine>

relations, Russia's continued aggression in the region, and rumors of a new "Cold War."⁴⁵⁰ As the Baltic states continue to turn away from Russia and towards the US, only time will tell what other rhetorical strategies JBANC will continue to employ and how its position within the greater US foreign policy landscape will evolve and change to reflect the once-again increasing attention that the Baltics and Eastern Europe have received as part of US policy creation. Just as this dissertation project sketches what a Rhetorical map of the late-Cold War governmental apparatus and foreign policy environment looks like in regard to political decisions of the time, a new map can be drawn (or added on to this preexisting conceptualization) in order to showcase the ways that this—and other—ethnic lobbying organizations still influence the post-Cold-War foreign policy frame.

In our current moment, where tensions between East and West have skyrocketed once more and questions are increasingly being asked regarding the role of the US diasporic and ethnic lobby on US actions abroad, an analysis such as this provides a timely and worthwhile venture into the world of foreign policy. The ways that rhetoric brings together state and non-state actors around shared interests and creates linkages and relationships between otherwise disparate peoples, places, and contexts is illuminating for all of these Cold War and post-Cold War examples. Through better attending to the material dimensions of Rhetoric's movement, studies of foreign policy can place weight on "the material-discursive processes that underwrite the formation and mobility of the rhetorical alliances that are likely to constitute the next iteration of international politics."⁴⁵¹ And in doing so, these studies can better examine how the

⁴⁵⁰ Gilbert Achcar, *The New Cold War: The United States, Russia, and China from Kosovo to Ukraine* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2023).

⁴⁵¹ Zornitsa Keremidchieva, "The Unnatural Rhetorical Career of Natural Rights: The US Commission on Unalienable Rights and the Problem of Difference in Global Governance," in *Reassessing Foreign Policy Rhetorics*

present is always complicated by the past—all actors, places, times, moments, texts, and contexts fit together as the small bits and pieces that make up an increasingly complex cartography of conceptual evolutions, computations, and transformations. Scholars ought to look at how what is happening in the present moment is just the next step in the long journey of US-Russian relations that already has implicated and always will implicate those who reside in the East-West liminality. Thus, by mapping such Rhetorical cartographies, we can better understand the details of the invisible tensions, boundaries, and lines that do the heavy lifting for both the very visible foreign policy decisions we see carried out throughout the world and the figures who enact and voice them.

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