

THE WHITE HOUSE
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MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION

SUBJECT: Meeting with President Adamkus of Lithuania
(U)

PARTICIPANTS: The President
Samuel R. Berger, Assistant to the President
for National Security Affairs
Keith Smith, United States Ambassador to
Lithuania
Stephen J. Flanagan, Special Assistant to
the President and Senior Director for
Central and Eastern European Affairs, NSC
Staff, Notetaker

Valdus Adamkus, President
Stasys Sakalauskas, Ambassador to the United
States
Raimundas Miezelis, Adviser to the President
Eidijus Meilunas, Deputy Adviser to the
President on Foreign Affairs
Violeta Gaizauskaite, Spokesperson for the
President

DATE, TIME: October 21, 1998, 6:45 - 7:05 p.m. EDT
AND PLACE: Mr. Berger's Office

Mr. Berger: Welcome to the White House. I know you are no stranger to Washington or the U.S. government. (U)

President Adamkus: That's true. I spent 27 years in government, ending as Region V Administrator for the Environmental Protection Agency. I remember coming to meetings in the OEOB. So it is a pleasure to be back here in a very different capacity. (U)

Mr. Berger: How are the troubles in Russia affecting Lithuania?
(U)

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President Adamkus: Well, only about 20 percent of our trade is with Russia, so losses in the Russian market are not doing great damage. Unemployment is up a bit, but at 5.6 percent pretty good for a transitioning economy. Still, a reduction of foreign capital and the general global slowdown have led us to lower our growth projections for next year from 7 to 6 percent. That said, we are delighted that American investment remains strong; we just closed on the big (energy distribution) deal with the Williams Company. (C)

Mr. Berger: How do you see events in Russia unfolding? (C)

President Adamkus: We expect very difficult times ahead. They confront profound political and economic challenges. We think it is important for the international community to remain engaged in efforts to stabilize the Russian economy. Some of the worst economic projections have not yet been borne out. (C)

Mr. Berger: It's important for the Russians to stay the course on some difficult reforms. However they are losing the confidence of Western banks and the international financial institutions due to default on their debts. The first tranche of IMF funds was gone in two days. We have told them they can't defy the laws of gravity of the global economy. (C)

President Adamkus: I want to mention our concerns about NATO enlargement. We are continuing our internal political and economic reforms and are building up our defense capacity in a very serious way. We hope that the United States and other NATO governments will give us careful consideration as you prepare for the Washington Summit. (C)

(The President joined the meeting at this point.)

The President: It's a pleasure to see you again. I'm glad that we have another chance to talk. (U)

President Adamkus: I truly appreciate your taking time to see me in the middle of this intense activity on Middle East diplomacy. It is a real honor and speaks well of your interest in Lithuania. (U)

The President: Well you have a lot of friends here. Senator Durbin called to tell me about all the good work you are doing. I don't know if you are aware of this, but we also have a sizable Lithuanian-American community in my hometown of Hope. They came to Arkansas from Chicago. A lot of those folks have

They came to Arkansas from Chicago. A lot of those folks have voted for me many times over the years and they still write me and remind me to do the right thing for Lithuania. (S)

The President: On the NATO issue, I just want to say we understand your concerns and are taking them into account as we prepare for the NATO Summit. (S)

The President: Congratulations on your environmental awards. You have done some important work in this area. I find in my discussions with world leaders that environmental issues are a more prominent facet of all our dealings. (U)

President Adamkus: I fully agree. We are doing a great deal of work with all our neighbors on environmental issues.

Mr. Berger: Mr. President, I know you have to leave now.

President Adamkus: Thank you very much Mr. President. Best wishes for success in the Middle East talks.

(The President left at this point)

President Adamkus: May I just ask one last question about your views on NATO enlargement? How do you see the next steps evolving? (S)

Mr. Berger: We have always seen NATO enlargement as a sustaining, incremental process. The Madrid decisions were not a one-time action. We envision that there will be additional tranches of states admitted to the Alliance. We are committed to working with Lithuania and other aspirants to assist your efforts to become the best possible candidates. (S)

President Adamkus: Thank you very much. (U)

Mr. Berger: It was a pleasure. (U)

-- End of Conversation --