

June 25, 1941

Statement by the Latvian Minister (Bilmanis)

Citation:

"Statement by the Latvian Minister (Bilmanis)", June 25, 1941, Wilson Center Digital Archive, Foreign Relations of the United States Diplomatic Papers, 1941, General, The Soviet Union, Volume I, Document 621.

<https://wilson-center.drivingcreative.com/document/145004>

Summary:

Statement by the Latvian Ambassador to the United States on the Soviet occupation of Latvia.

Original Language:

English

Contents:

Transcript - English

Washington, June 25, 1941.[\[1\]](#)

The Latvian Minister in the United States of America duly accredited by the independent and legal Government of Latvia to represent the Latvian Nation in this country and invested with special full powers in case of an emergency to act in the best interests of the Latvian Nation, has the honor to make the following Statement in connection with the recent armed conflict between Germany and Soviet Russia in which against its will the Latvian Nation might be involved without the possibility to express its independent point of view, or to influence the outcome of the present war between two great Powers waged in part on the territory of Latvia.

The Republic of Latvia, a free and independent country, was invaded on June 17, 1940 by strong Soviet Russian armed forces in violation of all existing treaties between Latvia and Soviet Russia and contrary to solemn pledges given to Latvia and its statesmen by the Government and the leaders of the U. S. S. R. Similarly were invaded Estonia and Lithuania.

By the way of brutal aggression and treachery and through enforced elections of a puppet parliament, the U. S. S. R. took control of all the institutions of Latvia and annexed Latvia and made it a part of Communistic Soviet Russia, thus committing illegal acts never recognized by the Latvian Nation and its representatives who were not under the duress of the invaders.

According to news filtering out of occupied Latvia a regime of communistic terrorism had been established in Latvia; the social, economic and political order destroyed, and religious life suppressed; indescribable, inhuman sufferings were the result. Similar events took place in Estonia and Lithuania.

It is evident that the Latvian Nation has struggled by all possible and available means to liberate itself from the brutal Soviet invaders.

At the same time it is evident also that the change from the monstrous terroristic military occupation by Soviet Russia to military occupation by German troops apparently taking place at the present moment in Latvia will not bring freedom and full independence to Latvia and its inhabitants.

As duly accredited Latvian Envoy and Minister Plenipotentiary I have the honor to declare solemnly in the name of the Latvian Nation that Latvia will continue to struggle for her complete and unconditional independence.

With gratitude for the sympathetic support given by the Government of the United States of America and the great American Nation to the cause of freedom of Latvia, the Latvian Minister requests the continued goodwill and support of the United States of America in the present difficult situation of Latvia, the innocent God-fearing people of which are now suffering all the horrors of war waged between two great military powers against the will of the Latvian Nation, which asks only to be permitted to become again free and independent and to enjoy the fruits of its hard labor and to live as a really good neighbor.

Dr. Alfred Bilmanis

[\[1\]](#) In an attached memorandum Loy W. Henderson, Assistant Chief of the Division of European Affairs, wrote that the Latvian Minister, who was accompanied by the Estonian Acting Consul General at New York in charge of Legation, Johannes Kaiv, read this statement with the request that it be communicated "to the appropriate officials of the American Government." The two Baltic diplomats "had just come from a meeting of the three Chiefs of Baltic Missions and found a complete community of views." Povilas Zadeikis was the Lithuanian Minister in the United States.