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TEXT

TAGS: PREL, PGOV, PHUM, LH, CJAN (LILEIKIS, ALEKSANDRAS)
SUBJECT: FIRST LITHUANIAN FALLOUT FROM OSI'S ALLEGED
REMARKS ON WAR CRIMES CASES: IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUEST

REF: A) VILNIUS 288, B) SMITH/ROSENBAUM TELCON 2/1/99

(U) CLASSIFIED BY AMBASSADOR KEITH SMITH FOR REASONS 1.5 B
AND D.

1. (U) PLEASE SEE IMMEDIATE ACTION REQUEST PARA 4.
2. (C) WE ARE SEEING THE FIRST NEGATIVE EFFECTS OF THE
JANUARY 31 AP ARTICLE QUOTING OSI ON LITHUANIAN WAR CRIMES
CASES (REPORTED REF A). MY STAFF RECEIVED AN EMOTIONAL
CALL FROM LITHUANIAN PARLIAMENTARIAN EMANUELIS ZINGERIS
FEBRUARY 2. BASED ON THE ARTICLE (NOW REPEATED WIDELY AND
PROMINENTLY IN THE LITHUANIAN PRESS) AND THE MESSAGES OF
CONDEMNATION ZINGERIS HAS RECEIVED CONCERNING THE ARTICLE'S
CHARGES BY MEMBERS OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN THE UNITED
STATES, HE IS SERIOUSLY CONTEMPLATING RESIGNATION FROM HIS

NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT

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2. (C) ZINGERIS, A MAN OF MANY HATS -- CHAIRMAN OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE, CHAIRMAN OF THE LITHUANIAN-AMERICAN PARLIAMENTARY CAUCUS, CHAIRMAN OF THE STATE JEWISH MUSEUM, DIRECTOR OF THE EUROPEAN INSTITUTE FOR DISPERSED ETHNIC MINORITIES, MEMBER OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD OF THE RULING CONSERVATIVE PARTY AND CHAIRMAN OF THE PRESIDENTIAL HISTORICAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE HOLOCAUST AND CRIMES COMMITTED UNDER SOVIET OCCUPATION -- IS THE ONLY JEW IN PARLIAMENT. GIVEN HIS STATURE, HE HAS BEEN ONE OF THE FEW FULLY EFFECTIVE INTERLOCUTORS ON WAR CRIMES ISSUES. ZINGERIS HAS COME UNDER FIRE BEFORE WHEN LITHUANIA HAS NOT MOVED AS ACTIVELY TO ADDRESS WAR CRIMES CASES AS IT SHOULD. NOW, HOWEVER, ZINGERIS FEELS PARTICULARLY UPSET THAT THE U.S. GOVERNMENT SHOULD TAKE SUCH A STRONG NEGATIVE POSITION AS REPORTED IN REF A.

4. (C) WE ARE WORKING CLOSELY WITH ZINGERIS -- AS WE ALWAYS DO -- AND ARE TRYING TO REASSURE HIM, BUT THIS INCIDENT ONLY CONFIRMS OUR BELIEF THAT THE RECORD NEEDS TO BE SET STRAIGHT AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. THEREFORE, UNLESS INSTRUCTED OTHERWISE, THE EMBASSY WILL USE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT TO RESPOND TO ZINGERIS AND OTHER INTERESTED PARTIES:

THE U.S. GOVERNMENT IS DISAPPOINTED THAT ACCUSED WAR CRIMINALS FROM THE NAZI ERA HAVE NOT STOOD TRIAL IN LITHUANIA. HOWEVER, NEITHER THE U.S. GOVERNMENT NOR THE U.S. EMBASSY ARE IN POSSESSION OF OR AWARE OF SPECIFIC EVIDENCE THAT THE RESULTS OF THE MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF FORMER VILNIUS SECURITY POLICE COMMANDER **ALEKSANDRAS LILEIKIS** ARE INACCURATE. FURTHERMORE, THE U.S. GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT LITHUANIA IS GOVERNED BY THE RULE OF LAW, AND THAT THE CASES OF LILEIKIS AND HIS FORMER DEPUTY, KAZYS GIMZAUSKAS, ARE MATTERS FOR THE COURT RATHER THAN FOR THE GOVERNMENT. SMITH

ADMIN
END OF MESSAGE

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