

Rothman Leads Bipartisan Congressional Coalition Urging Lithuanian Ambassador To Denounce Recent Ant

March 31, 2004

Rothman Leads Bipartisan Congressional Coalition Urging Lithuanian Ambassador To Denounce Recent Anti-Semitic & Anti-Gay Newspaper Articles Gets 19 Other Members of Congress To Sign Letter Regarding Hateful Articles In Respublika

Washington, DC - Deeply concerned about a series of anti-Semitic and anti-gay articles with an accompanying vitriolic caricature that appeared in a prominent and leading Lithuanian newspaper, Respublika, Congressman Steve Rothman (D-Fair Lawn) today led a group of House members calling on Lithuanian Ambassador Vygaudas UÅ...Âjackas to forcefully condemn the malicious message of hatred and intolerance in the news pieces. Rothman and his colleagues expressed their belief in a letter to the Ambassador that as Lithuania prepares to join the European Union (EU) later this spring, the Baltic state's leaders and foreign representatives must ensure that the country combat anti-Semitism throughout its borders.

"We urge you to take a leadership role in rejecting the Respublika's series of articles that demonize Jews and gays and perpetuate intolerant stereotypes throughout the Republic of Lithuania," Rothman wrote to UÅ...Âjackas in a letter that 19 of his House colleagues also signed. "As the Republic of Lithuania is expected to become a member of the European Union (EU) on May 1, 2004, it is imperative that the Lithuanian government combat anti-Semitism and intolerance throughout its borders. Considering that the EU recently stated that it would fight against anti-Semitism and bigotry throughout Europe, it is shocking that the content of these prejudiced articles and the accompanying caricature appeared on the front page of an ostensibly respectable Lithuanian newspaper within three months of its impending membership in the EU."

A series of articles ran on the front page of the Respublika daily paper and appeared over the course of three days, beginning February 20, 2004. The articles, one of which was authored by the Respublika's editor, Vytas Tomkus, repeats the fictitious conspiracy theory of the Protocols of the Elders of Zion in order to perpetuate an unfounded anti-Semitic canard that Jews "rule the world" and use the issue of the Holocaust to conceal their criminal activity.

"The indoctrination of Lithuanian citizens to hostility, bigotry, and prejudice against Jews and gays will only threaten the stability of trans-Atlantic relations between Lithuania and the United States and potentially slow the progress of the Republic of Lithuania's integration into European institutions," Rothman wrote.

The articles also included gays in the scope of their attack. A hate-filled caricature accompanied the articles, which depicted defaming stereotypical illustrations of both a Jewish man and a gay man struggling to "rule the world."

While several leading Lithuanian officials, including Prime Minister Algirdas Brazauskas and Foreign Minister Antanas Valionis, have condemned the articles, Rothman said that he was deeply troubled that Lithuania's ambassador to the United States has not come forward and denounced the articles.

###

[Click Here To View The Letter](#)

[Go back](#)

