



# Search for The New Lithuanian Ambassador for Washington in 1993

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**Annotation.** Based on archival documents and press information, an attempt is being made to find out whether in 1993 the DLPL government and President Algirdas M. Brazauskas legally recalled Ambassador Stasys Lozoraitis (Junior) from Washington and transferred him to a similar position in Rome. An attempt is made to evaluate the selected candidate for the Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Los Angeles, Vytautas Čekanauskas, to temporarily lead the Lithuanian diplomatic mission in Washington. Although some Lithuanians in the United States supported Čekanauskas' candidacy, there was an outcry that Lozoraitis had been illegally withdrawn from the United States and treated with disrespect; Čekanauskas refused the proposed post. This may have been influenced by the vague prospects offered to him by the Lithuanian authorities, as there was no clear talk about the post of ambassador. At the same time, the governments of Latvia and Estonia appointed Latvian and Estonian representatives in the United States as their ambassadors in Washington.

**Keywords:** *ambassador, Washington, Stasys Lozoraitis (Jr), Vytautas Čekanauskas, Algirdas M. Brazauskas, Kazys Bobelis, presidential elections, US Lithuanian expatriates.*

**Anotacija.** Remiantis archyviniais dokumentais ir spaudos informacija, bandoma išsiaiškinti, ar 1993 metais LDDP vyriausybė ir prezidentas Algirdas M. Brazauskas teisėtai atšaukė ambasadorių Stasį Lozoraitį (jaun.) iš Vašingtono ir perkėlė analogiškoms pareigoms į Romą. Bandoma įvertinti pasirinktą kandidatą Lietuvos garbės generalinį konsulą Los Andžele Vytautą Čekanauską laikinai vadovauti Lietuvos diplomatinei misijai Vašingtone. Nors dalis JAV lietuvių palaikė V. Čekanausko kandidatūrą, sukeltas triukšmas, kad S. Lozoraitis (jaun.) neteisėtai atšauktas iš JAV ir su juo pasielgta negarbingai, V. Čekanauskas atsisakė siūlomo posto. Tam įtakos galėjo turėti ir Lietuvos valdžios siūloma jam neaiški perspektyva, nes nebuvo aiškios

kalbos apie ambasadoriaus postą. Tuo pat metu Latvijos ir Estijos vyriausybės savo ambasadoriais Vašingtone paskyrė JAV latvių ir estų atstovus.

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**Esminiai žodžiai:** *ambasadorius, Vašingtonas, Stasys Lozoraitis (jaun.), Vytautas Čekanauskas, Algirdas M. Brazauskas, Kazys Bobelis, prezidento rinkimai, JAV lietuviai.*

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## Introduction

The latest historiography of Lithuanian history has already discussed the first elections of the President of the Republic of Lithuania in 1993.<sup>1</sup> However, the consequences of the elections, which relate directly to the fate of Ambassador Stasys Lozoraitis, have not yet been researched by historians, nor have press reports. First of all is the removal of Lozoraitis from the post of ambassador in Washington, his transfer to Rome and the search for his successor in Washington. The small number of documents from the archives of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and information in the Lithuanian and Lithuanian press allow partial reconstruction of the situation in the government, resolving the issue of the US Embassy headed by Lozoraitis (J).

The withdrawal of Lozoraitis from Washington met great resonance not only in some sections of Lithuanians in the USA, but also in Lithuanian society. The recall was accepted as a form of indecent treatment of the former ambassador by the Democratic Labour Party of Lithuania, in power in Lithuania at the time. Understandably, the compliant public welcomed the newly appointed representative to Washington. But, as the documents show, the situation was not quite as it seemed to the public. Therefore, the purpose of the article is to discuss: whether there were grounds to recall Ambassador Lozoraitis from Washington; and was the candidacy of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Lithuania, in this case the engineer of the Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Los Angeles, Vytautas Čekanauskas,<sup>2</sup> a rational decision at that time?

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<sup>1</sup> ILGŪNAS, Gediminas. *Algirdas Brazauskas*. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2009, p. 297-314; GRYBKASKAS, Saulius, TAMOŠAITIS, Mindaugas. *Žmogus, jungęs epochas. Algirdo Brazausko politinė biografija*. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos centras, 2019, p. 262-270.

<sup>2</sup> Vytautas Čekanauskas (1929-2009) - was born in Kaunas, in 1944 he moved to Germany with his father. He graduated from high school there and came to the United States in 1949. He served in the U.S. Army, participated in the Korean War, and returned to study electronics at the University of Chicago. After graduating, he went to Los Angeles and worked as an aeronautical engineer. He became involved in local social activities - he was a member and leader of many Lithuanian and American organizations. In place of the first Lithuanian Honorary Consul General in Los Angeles, who died in 1977, dr. Julius J. Bielskis, Chief of the Lithuanian Diplomatic Service Stasys Lozoraitis (senior) selected V. Čekanauskas from several candidates for the post of consul. His candidacy was also approved by the US State Department. Until his death, V. Čekanauskas worked as the Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Los Angeles (SKIRIUS, Juozas. *JAV lietuvių darbai Lietuvai 1918-2018 metais*. Vilnius: Savas takas, 2018, p. 352-353).

The chronological boundaries of the article cover a very short period: during April and May 1993, when Ambassador Lozoraitis was notified of his transfer from Washington to Rome, Čekanauskas was temporarily appointed as head of the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, when he refused to accept his proposed duties. The traditional methods of source analysis and comparison of diplomatic experience were used in the research process.

In the future, this problem could be deepened and expanded in the context of Lithuanian foreign policy, based on documents from the archives of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania and the individual Kazys Bobelis, perhaps even the US authorities.

## Presidential elections and transfer of S. Lozoraitis to Rome

On February 14 1993, the first direct elections to the post of President of the Republic of Lithuania took place. The candidates were DLPL leader Algirdas M. Brazauskas and the Lithuanian ambassador to Washington, Stasys Lozoraitis, named “the President of Hope”. There were 2,019,015 voters (78% of the electorate) who took part in the elections<sup>3</sup>. Lozoraitis lost the election, winning only 38.28 percent of the vote, though it should be noted that he won a majority in Kaunas (54.7%), in Kaunas district (51.5%) and abroad (53.1%). After the election, Lozoraitis said he was ready to continue working as an ambassador to the United States, but would not abandon political activity either, as “almost 40 percent, the support of the bright part of the nation and intellectuals obliges” (*Lietuvos Rytas*, February 17, 1993, No. 30)<sup>4</sup>. Such a public statement by him as a diplomat, head of a very important embassy and with great authority in the diaspora, was a mistake: the ruling DLPL felt him a serious opponent working in the civil service. Undoubtedly, this reinforced the negative attitude of the rulers towards an overly active and sufficiently independent diplomat. Historian Alfonsas Eidintas, already being an ambassador, deftly noticed that for the Lithuanian government, that is DLPL, maintaining subordination with former representatives of the Lithuanian diplomatic service was a rather complicated matter: “Psychologically, it was not easy for the old representatives of the Lithuanian diplomatic service in foreign countries, who had been acting independently for about 50 years, to transfer to the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs”<sup>5</sup>. In other words, it was difficult for the diplomats to adapt to and obey the rule of the former communists, renamed the LDDP. Therefore, it was decided to gradually get rid of “disobedient” diplomats, such as Lozoraitis (by transferring elsewhere, retirement, etc.). Understandably, the government decides which civil servants it needs and chooses the ones it can work with.

<sup>3</sup> ILGŪNAS, Gediminas. *Algirdas Brazauskas*. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2009, p. 310.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.voruta.lt/stasys-lozoraitis-vilties-prezidentas/> (accessed 2019 07 11)

<sup>5</sup> EIDINTAS, Alfonsas. *Lietuvos ambasados rūmų Washington, D.C. istorija*. Washington, D.C., 1996, p. 39, 42.

On April 21, 1993, Lithuanian Minister of Foreign Affairs Povilas Gylys sent a letter to Ambassador Lozoraitis in Washington. In the letter, noting the “new political situation in Lithuania and the tasks set for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs”, Lozoraitis was offered the position of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to the Italian Republic – the country where he began his diplomatic work and had extensive personal ties. It appears from the letter that the ministry has already applied to the Italian government and had received its consent to accredit Lozoraitis as an ambassador.<sup>6</sup> Although Lozoraitis was asked to respond to the offer as soon as possible, his answer to the above-mentioned letter is not to be found in the archives of the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. On May 5, the President of the Republic of Lithuania A.M. Brazauskas and Prime Minister Adolfas Šleževičius signed a decree on the removal of S. Lozoraitis from the post of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Lithuania to the United States of America.<sup>7</sup> Minister Gylys sent a decree to Lozoraitis and asked him to “continue in office until a new head of the Embassy is appointed”, promising to meet with Lozoraitis to discuss his future prospects.<sup>8</sup>

It should be noted that in September-October 1992, the Chairman of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania, Vytautas Landsbergis, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Algirdas Saudargas, considered the possibility of Lozoraitis taking over the leadership of the future Lithuanian Embassy in Rome following his post in Washington: this was discussed in detail with Lozoraitis. On October 1, his candidacy was submitted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to the Foreign Affairs Commission of the Supreme Council of the Republic of Lithuania for consideration as ambassador to Italy.<sup>9</sup> The then Lithuanian government sent a request to the Italian government as to whether it would agree to the appointment of Lozoraitis as ambassador to Quirinal. The Italian Government sent such consent to Lithuania on January 21, 1993, on the eve of the presidential election.<sup>10</sup> Hence, after the presidential election, Lozoraitis was removed from Washington and appointed to the same position in Rome, forming the Lithuanian diplomatic corps.

<sup>6</sup> 1993 04 21 A copy of a letter from Foreign Minister P.Gylys from Vilnius to Ambassador S.Lozoraitis to Washington. *LRURMDA*. Ap. 2, b. 142, l. 142.

<sup>7</sup> 1993 05 05 Lietuvos Respublikos Prezidento Dekretas. *Ibid*, l. 185.

<sup>8</sup> 1993 05 10 A copy of a letter from Foreign Minister P.Gylys from Vilnius to Ambassador S.Lozoraitis to Washington. *Ibid*, l. 189.

<sup>9</sup> LANDSBERGIS, Vytautas. *Pusbrolis Motiejus. Knyga apie Stasį Lozoraitį iš jo laiškų ir pasisakymų*. Vilnius: Vaga, [2002], p. 308.

<sup>10</sup> ILGŪNAS, Gediminas. *Algirdas Brazauskas*. Vilnius: Versus aureus, 2009, p. 314.

## Vytautas Čekanauskas is proposed as the head of the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington

On May 5, 1993, Lithuanian President Brazauskas, speaking on the radio show Morning Express, said that Vytautas Čekanauskas,<sup>11</sup> the Chargé d’Affaires of Lithuania, and current Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Los Angeles, had already taken up the post of Head of the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington. However, the available documents show that it was only on May 12 that the Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Virginijus Papirtis wrote to Čekanauskas stating that he was to be appointed the head of the Lithuanian diplomatic mission in Washington.<sup>12</sup> This letter was forwarded to Čekanauskas the next day, asking him to send his short biography in Lithuanian and English.<sup>13</sup> However, it was not possible to find any personal letter or letter from Čekanauskas regarding his appointment in the archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is probable that Čekanauskas communicated with the officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by telephone on this issue.

On 5 May, after learning that he had already been recalled, Lozoraitis wrote a letter to Minister Gylis stating that he had not received the decree. This document would be required to be served on the US Department of State. In addition, as he noted, Vytautas Čekanauskas must also be presented in a corresponding letter to the US State Department, noting that he will take over the management of the embassy. But for that purpose, “he needs to sort out his US citizenship, if they would refuse”.<sup>14</sup> Minister Gylis received the letter on May 7. Meanwhile, on May 5, Lozoraitis visited the Baltic Division of the US State Department, where he met with the officials. They were informed about future changes at the Lithuanian Embassy. Lozoraitis was told that no matter who would be appointed as head of the diplomatic mission, ambassador or trustee of affairs, he must be a Lithuanian citizen. It was assured that co-operation would be established with the new representative and it was noted that the name of the selected person would not be made public until the consent of the US State Department was obtained. It turned out that by May 5, the US State Department and the US Embassy in Vilnius had not received any official notifications on the matter. At the same time, Lozoraitis noted that if Čekanauskas was intended to head the embassy only temporarily, he “should think carefully about his steps before relinquishing the position of Honorary Consul General and US citizenship”.<sup>15</sup> On May 14, Čekanauskas received a fax from Stasys Sakalauskas, Head

<sup>11</sup> Brazauskas atšaukė amb. Lozoraitį. *Draugas*. 1993, gegužės 6, no. 86, p. 1.

<sup>12</sup> 1993 05 12 viceministro V.Papirčio rašto (anglų k.) V.Čekanauskui nuorašas. *LRURMDA*. Ap. 2, b. 146, l. 67.

<sup>13</sup> 1993 05 13 Fax by A. Milukas, First Secretary of the American Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, to V. Čekanauskas. *Ibid*, l. 68.

<sup>14</sup> 1993 05 05 Letter from Lithuanian Ambassador S. Lozoraitis from Washington to Minister P. Gylis. *LRURMDA*. Ap. 2, b. 142, l. 182.

<sup>15</sup> 1993 05 06 Letter from Lithuanian Ambassador S. Lozoraitis from Washington to Minister P. Gylis. *Ibid*, l. 174-175.

of the American Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It stated that in order to “become the head of the Lithuanian diplomatic mission in the United States, one should suspend (temporarily), if possible, or renounce his or her US citizenship altogether.” Otherwise, the diplomatic immunities and privileges provided for in the 1961 Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations will not be available. The report made it clear that after this step, that is, the renunciation of US citizenship, the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs would be able to apply to the US State Department for consent to accredit Čekanauskas as the head of the Lithuanian diplomatic mission in Washington. At the same time, it was noted that “this step requires a serious decision”.<sup>16</sup> However, the post of ambassador was not mentioned.

Why was Čekanauskas chosen? Viktoras Nakas, who worked as an adviser at the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington at the time, recalled: “When word spread about the appointment of V. Čekanauskas, I (and I think other embassy employees) considered Kazis Bobelis to be the main culprit, Critic of Lozoraitis (J.) (...) Another reason why I believed that K. Bobelis could be the one who nominated V. Čekanauskas: he was black in his activities in the American Lithuanian Council”.<sup>17</sup> During the recall of Lozoraitis, Dr. Bobelis worked in the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania – he was the chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee which also decided upon who would be appointed or dismissed as ambassador. When Lithuanian and US media outlets began to comment extensively on the planned changes at the Lithuanian Embassy in Washington, the opinion was also raised. As the daily *Lietuvos Rytas* wrote at the time, the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Seimas, Kazis Bobelis denied the information that on his initiative V. Honana, the Honorary Consul of Los Angeles, had been appointed Honorary Consul in Los Angeles. He, as Bobelis noted, “was chosen because he has the most experience of any of our diplomats currently in America or any country”.<sup>18</sup>

## Approval and disapproval of American Lithuanians

Čekanauskas' candidacy was immediately approved by the Chairman Grožvydas J. Lazauskas on behalf of the American Lithuanian Council and the Chairman Dr. Leonas Kriaučeliūnas on behalf of the American Lithuanian National Union. They sent letters of support to President Brazauskas and Minister Gylius. Those documents were immediately printed in the DLPL publication *Tiesa*.<sup>19</sup> It is important to note that these documents indicated several characteristics of Čekanauskas required to hold a position

<sup>16</sup> 1993 05 14 Report by S. Sakalauskas by fax from Vilnius to V. Čekanauskas to Los Angeles. *Ibid*, b. 146, l. 69.

<sup>17</sup> 2019 01 27 Letter from V. Nako from Washington to J. Skirius. AA, b. V. Čekanauskas (1929-2009) – įvairi medžiaga, l.n.

<sup>18</sup> Girdėta iš Vilniaus. *Dirva*. 1993, gegužės 13, nr. 18, p. 2.

<sup>19</sup> Nuomonės iš už Atlanto (*Tiesa*, 1993 m. gegužės 6 d.). *LVNA*, f. 24, ap. 1, b. 101, l. 42.

in Washington: long and successful experience in diplomatic work; his relations with Lithuanian society were close and positively assessed; his manner and personal disposition allow for quick warm connections with other individuals and organizations. Hence, a person with the necessary social and political experience.<sup>20</sup> The initiative shown by the leaders of these two organizations provoked the disapproval of some members of Lithuanian society in the United States. Discussions began in the expatriate press. An attempt was made to emphasize that the Lithuanian authorities acted disrespectfully against Lozoraitis, a highly respected emigrant with extensive diplomatic experience.<sup>21</sup> However, in the above-mentioned letters of support, it should be noted that the leaders of the above-mentioned organizations did not say a word against Lozoraitis. And also in the letters opposing those organizations, published in the Lithuanian press in the USA, no remark was made against Čekanauskas. This only confirmed that the Lithuanian government had chosen a suitable candidate for Washington. In the press, after discussions, the charges against the leaders of the said organizations were withdrawn. There was also an opinion in the press: if the government decided to make changes to the embassy or better to the diaspora, so that a local, own person would be appointed to the place, or a former or existing member of the so-called “nomenclature” would be sent?<sup>22</sup> Apparently, it also relied on the experience of our neighbors, Estonians and Latvians. The emigrant press wrote that in April 1993. In the middle of the 19th century, the Republic of Latvia appointed Ojers Kalnins, a well-known 43-year-old diaspora Latvian, as its ambassador to the United States and Mexico. He had been based in Washington since 1985, where he took over as Director of Communications for the Latvian-American Community Organization; in 1991 he joined the then Latvian embassy. He began taking office as head of the embassy in early 1993 and presented his letters of appointment to President Clinton on April 14th.<sup>23</sup> Also, the President of the Republic of Estonia Lennart Meri on April 20 appointed Tooma Henrik Ilves (born 1953), an Estonian, who was head of the Estonian Free Europe Service from 1988 to 1993, as Estonian ambassador to Washington.<sup>24</sup> Those neighbors were appointed to the Lithuanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Thus, the Lithuanian authorities’ search for a suitable candidate among expatriate diplomats was not accidental.

On May 13, the daily *Draugas* reported that Čekanauskas, as one of the candidates for the post of Lithuanian Ambassador to the USA, said that he had not received any official

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Lozoraičio atšaukimas vertinamas neigiamai. *Draugas*. 1993, gegužės 8, nr. 88, p. 1; Laiškai. *Ibid.*, gegužės 11, nr. 89, p. 5; Atkreipiame dėmesį. *Ibid.*, gegužės 19, nr. 95, p. 1; Kur tie kaltinimai? *Ibid.*, gegužės 28, no. 102, p. 5.

<sup>22</sup> Jonas T.Lazdūtis. Neužtarnauti kaltinimai. *Draugas*. 1993, gegužės 22, no. 98, p. 7.

<sup>23</sup> Dundzila A. Naujas Latvijos ambasadorius Washingtonė. *Dirva*. 1993, gegužės 20, no. 19, p. 12.

<sup>24</sup> Amerikietis paskirtas Estijos ambasadorium JAV. *Draugas*. 1993, gegužės 13, no. 91, p. 1.

letter with such a proposal.<sup>25</sup> (It should be noted that at the beginning he was not offered the position of ambassador. This could have influenced his decision). However, despite the *Draugas* observation, Čekanauskas had already started the procedure of renouncing US citizenship, and citizenship, according to the newspaper, must be renounced in the presence of a US official, but outside the US. The consul himself, as the *Draugas* noted, said he was going on holiday in Lithuania in June, but claimed it had nothing to do with his appointment.<sup>26</sup> In fact, Čekanauskas was not assigned to Washington. First of all, he himself apparently no longer wanted it. It was even noted in the expatriate press that he himself refused.<sup>27</sup> He decided not to take part in that procedure anymore, as he saw the dissatisfaction of part of the diaspora and the Lithuanian opposition society with the dismissal of Lozoraitis, which was even described as a political deal.<sup>28</sup> V. Nakas noted that “S. Lozoraitis was highly respected and loved by Lithuanians in the United States, who seemed to have treated DLPL rudely with S. Lozoraitis. In addition, a large part of the Lithuanian society in the USA did not like K. Bobelis very much.”<sup>29</sup> But even in the case of Čekanauskas, there were no criticisms in Lithuanian society in the USA.<sup>30</sup> It had become like a tool in the hands of those in power. Juozas Kojelis, a Lithuanian media editor and activist in the USA, wrote that “in the long run, it became clear that V. Čekanauskas was appointed not as an ambassador, but as a temporary trustee of the embassy. The position of the Ambassador in Washington, as political observers in Lithuania believe, was actually reserved for Kazys Bobelis’ son Jonas, who is currently the Assistant to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Lithuania P. Gylis.”<sup>31</sup> Clearly, this was just J. Kojelis’ public observation.

After the resignation of Lozoraitis and his departure for Italy, on October 21, 1993, historian Alfonsas Eidintas,<sup>32</sup> who had no diplomatic work experience, was appointed Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Lithuania to Washington. Thus, the protests within the diaspora and in Lithuania, based on emotion, gave what was not really expected. Instead of Čekanauskas, who had extensive experience, taking over the position of ambassador, a representative of the academic community, who had to master the skills of diplomatic work from scratch, was sent.

<sup>25</sup> In the personal archive of V. Čekanauskas in Los Angeles, the author of the article could not find any documents that would be related to the appointment of V. Čekanauskas to Washington. It must be assumed that those documents are missing or that the question of appointment has been handled by telephone.

<sup>26</sup> Čekanauskas atsisakys JAV pilietybės. *Draugas*. 1993, gegužės 13, nr. 91, p. 1.

<sup>27</sup> Juozas Žemaitis. Komunistinio stiliaus farsas (article snippet from *Laisvoji Lietuva*. 1993, rugsėjo 9). Current Archive of the Office of the Lithuanian Studies and Studies Center in Chicago, Alfonso Eidinto byla, l.n.

<sup>28</sup> Prašymų ir protestų laišakai. *Dirva*. 1993, gegužės 27, nr. 20, p. 4.

<sup>29</sup> 2019 01 27 V.Nako iš Vašingtono laiškas J. Skiriui. AA, b. V. Čekanauskas (1929-2009) – įvairi medžiaga, l.n.

<sup>30</sup> Jonas Meldutis. Kur tie kaltinimai? *Draugas*. 1993, gegužės 28, nr. 102, p. 5; Kojelis J. *Iš nakties į rytą*. Kaunas: Garso leidykla, 1996, p. 272.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> EIDINTAS, Alfonsas. *Ambasadorius. Tarnyba savo valstybei svetur*. Vilnius: Mokslo ir enciklopedijų leidybos institutas, 2003, p. 250.

## Conclusions

The elections of the first President of the Republic of Lithuania in 1993 highlighted the disagreements between the ruling DLPL and the Lithuanian Ambassador to Washington, Stasys Lozoraitis. The head of the diplomatic mission in Washington, which is very important for Lithuania, was quite obviously not a supporter of the ruling DLPL nor an obedient official. His position reflected the mood of the old diplomats of the Lithuanian diplomatic service. The rulers are gradually planning to replace them with new, self-righteous people.

The ruling DLPL, based on the decision of the former Chairman of the Supreme Court V. Landsbergis and the Minister of Foreign Affairs A. Saudargas to appoint Lozoraitis as the Lithuanian Ambassador to Rome, received the approval of Italy and transferred him from the USA to represent Lithuania in the Italian Republic. However, among some Lithuanians in the United States and in Lithuanian society, without knowing all the details, escalating dissatisfaction among Lozoraitis' supporters arose, emphasizing that Lozoraitis had been treated disrespectfully.

In preparation for the recall of Lozoraitis from the USA, Vytautas Čekanauskas, Honorary Consul General of Lithuania in Los Angeles, who had many years of diplomatic and consular experience and a good reputation among Lithuanians and Americans in the USA, was appointed to replace him as the temporary head of the Lithuanian diplomatic mission in Washington. His candidacy was endorsed by the leaders of two influential Lithuanian organizations in the United States, the American Lithuanian Council and the American Lithuanian National Union. At the same time, the dissatisfaction of some Lithuanians in the USA with the recall of Lozoraitis arose. Neither body spoke against Lozoraitis or Čekanauskas, but directed their criticism not only against the decision of the Lithuanian authorities, but also against each other.

Čekanauskas, seeing the mood of a part of Lithuanian society in the USA supporting Lozoraitis, and whose future status in Washington was not clearly defined by the Lithuanian authorities, refused the new position offered to him. Meanwhile, at that time, the Latvian and Estonian governments appointed Latvian and Estonian representatives in the United States as their ambassadors in Washington. Due to unfounded protests within the diaspora, the ambitions of some opposition politicians and vague promises to Čekanauskas, the Lithuanian authorities lost the opportunity to appoint a highly experienced former member of the Lithuanian diplomatic service as their new ambassador to Washington.

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10. *Laisvoji Lietuva* (JAV lietuvių Lietuvos atgimimo sąjūdžio dvisavaitinis leidinys), 1993.
11. *Tiesa* (LDDP visuomeninis-politinis dienraštis), 1993.

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## Naujojo Lietuvos ambasadoriaus Vašingtone paieškos 1993 metais

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### Santrauka

Lietuvos Respublikos pirmojo prezidento rinkimai 1993 m. išryškino valdančiosios LDDP ir Lietuvos ambasadoriaus Vašingtone Stasio Lozoraičio (jaun.) nesutarimus. Pralaimėjęs rinkimus Algirdui M. Brazauskui, ambasadorius S. Lozoraitis (jaun.) pareiškė, kad ir toliau dalyvaus politikoje. Tai buvo jo klaida. Valdantieji siekė kontroliuoti labai svarbų diplomatinį postą Vašingtone ir ten turėti savo diplomata. Tuo metu vyko Lietuvos diplomatinio korpuso pertvarka. Remdamiesi buvusio Aukščiausiosios Tarybos pirmininko V. Landsbergio ir užsienio reikalų ministro A. Saudargo sprendimu S. Lozoraitį (jaun.) skirti ir Lietuvos ambasadoriumi Romoje,

gavę iš Italijos pritarimą, atšaukė S. Lozoraitį iš JAV, paskirdami jį atstovauti Lietuvai Italijos Respublikoje. Tačiau tarp JAV lietuvių ir dalies Lietuvos visuomenės, nežinant visų detalių, kilo S. Lozoraičio (jaun.) šalininkų eskaluojamas nepasitenkinimas, pabrėžiant, kad su S. Lozoraičiu (jaun.) pasielgta negarbingai.

Ruošiantis atšaukti S. Lozoraitį (jaun.) iš JAV, į jo vietą laikinoms Lietuvos diplomatinės misijos vadovo Vašingtone pareigoms buvo numatytas Lietuvos garbės generalinis konsulas Los Andžele Vytautas Čekanauskas, turintis ilgametę diplomatinę-konsulinę patirtį ir gerą vardą tarp JAV lietuvių ir amerikiečių. Tiesa, apie ambasadoriaus postą jam kol kas nekalbėta. Jo kandidatūrai pritarė dvi įtakingų JAV lietuvių organizacijų – Amerikos lietuvių tarybos ir Amerikos lietuvių tautinės sąjungos – vadovai. Lygiagrečiai kilo ir dalies JAV lietuvių nepasitenkinimas, susijęs su S. Lozoraičio (jaun.) atšaukimu. Ir vieni, ir kiti nepasisakė prieš S. Lozoraitį ir V. Čekanauską, bet kritikavo ne tik Lietuvos valdžios sprendimą, bet ir aiškindamiesi tarpusavyje.

V. Čekanauskas, matydamas dalies JAV lietuvių visuomenės nuotaikas, remiančias S. Lozoraitį (jaun.), Lietuvos valdžios neaiškiai formuluojamą jo būsimą statusą Vašingtone, atsisakė siūlomų naujų pareigų. Tuo pat metu Latvijos ir Estijos vyriausybės savo ambasadoriais Vašingtone kaip tik paskyrė atstovus iš JAV latvių ir estų. Lietuvos valdžia dėl nepagrįstų visuomenėje kilusių protestų, kai kurių opozicijos politikų ambicijų ir neaiškios V. Čekanausko perspektyvos prarado galimybę nauju savo ambasadoriumi Vašingtone paskirti didelę patirtį turintį buvusį Lietuvos diplomatinės tarnybos narį ir Lietuvos URM tarnyboje esantį garbės generalinį konsulą.

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