

## Lithuania promises to consider Soviet interests Kremlin warns against power transfer

MOSCOW - The Kremlin on Monday sternly warned the breakaway republic of Lithuania not to put up its own customs posts, introduce its own currency or take over Moscow-run factories without permission.

The nationally televised announcement was Mikhail Gorbachev's first concrete step to counter Lithuania's March 13 declaration of independence. The announcement did not say what would happen if Lithuania ignored the orders.

Earlier Monday, a Lithuanian delegation delivered a letter to the Kremlin that promised Soviet interests in the republic would be given "careful consideration."

The television statement accused the Lithuanian leadership of planning to turn over national factories to private owners, bring in a separate currency and put up customs posts on the borders of the republic.

It said the government was concerned especially about nuclear energy plants in Lithuania and had ordered increased security around them.

It accused the Baltic republic of trying to "undermine its links" with the rest of the Soviet Union, which it said could have "pernicious consequences" for the national economy.

The government said police, the KGB and customs agents would have authority in maintaining the existing customs situation.

A directive was issued to the management of all Soviet enterprises and agencies in Lithuania, saying that under no circumstances should they begin negotiations on handing over their authority to local officials. Such

talks can be run only by Moscow ministries, it said.

Many Lithuanians say they expect Moscow to impose an economic blockade, depriving the republic of the fuel and raw materials that it receives only from the Soviet Union.

The government statement contained no such threats.

Gorbachev and the Congress of People's Deputies -- the national parliament -- declared the declaration of independence invalid last week, but Kremlin leaders have ruled out the use of troops in Lithuania.

Lithuanian activist and television editor Eduardas Potashinskas said he thought most Lithuanians would take the government warning calmly.

"We say the Soviet empire is showing its teeth," he said by telephone from the Lithuanian capital, Vilnius. "But we think they can't threaten Lithuania. We'll be calm. We'll fall and get up, but we'll go on."

The Bush administration said Monday it would keep an eye on Soviet military activities in the Baltic region. The White House and State Department spokesmen urged a peaceful approach to secession and reminded Gorbachev he had said force would not be used.

The TV statement said the government sympathized with Lithuania's desire for greater sovereignty, but it said this should be pursued with "strict observance of Soviet laws and taking into consideration the mutual interests of the peoples of Lithuania and other republics."

Soviet TV has broadcast several

segments in the last two days focusing on discontent among non-Lithuanians, who comprise about 20 percent of the republic's 3.7 million people.

On Monday evening, the nightly news program "Vremya" showed a mass meeting against Lithuanian independence in the city of Klaipeda. One speaker complained, "We don't want to live in bourgeois Lithuania."

A "Vremya" anchorman also read an appeal from a demonstration held Sunday in Vilnius that drew tens of thousands of Lithuania's Russians, Poles and other ethnic minorities.

"Hypocritically and arrogantly, the interests of many thousands of people who are categorically against being torn from the peoples of the U.S.S.R. are being ignored," it said. It was addressed to Gorbachev.

The appeal expressed the hope that Gorbachev would "be able to defend your fellow citizens from the encroachments of political adventurers."

Gorbachev has said he is willing to carry on a "respectful dialogue" with Lithuanian representatives, and he reportedly met personally with a Lithuanian delegation that arrived in Moscow.

The six-member delegation was headed by Egidius Bickauskas, a lawyer who recently resigned from the Lithuanian Communist Party.

It was empowered by Lithuania's parliament to meet with Gorbachev and propose a start of negotiations on independence, said a spokesman for the Lithuanian nationalist movement, Sajudis.

## East German winners fail to shape coalition

EAST BERLIN - The victorious Alliance for Germany said Monday the German states must move more quickly to reunify, but its leader was rebuffed as he began trying to form a coalition government to move the process along.

A more left-leaning party, the Social Democrats, turned down an invitation to join the coalition, thus blocking the Alliance from having a two-thirds majority in Parliament. Such a majority would allow East Germany to simply declare a merger with the West.

The three-party Alliance swept to victory Sunday in East Germany's first free elections but did not win a majority in the 400-seat Parliament.

The Alliance got a boost Monday from perhaps its biggest supporter, West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who promised financial aid for East Germany.

The chancellor had refused such aid to the Communists, who have governed since hard-liner Erich Honecker was overthrown in the fall.

Lothar de Maiziere, likely to be the next East German premier, invited the Social Democrats and the Union of Free Democrats to discuss forming a "grand coalition" to guide the nation toward unification with the broadest pos-

sible consensus. The Social Democrats said moving quickly to reunify could result in a loss of East Germany's cradle-to-grave social services and allow the country to be swallowed up by its wealthy neighbor.

De Maiziere held a round of meetings Monday with the goals of forming a government and uniting with the West.

"Here, we will carry forward and step up the pace of the already started negotiations," he said.

He urged "rapid introduction of a monetary, economic and social union" with West Germany. In a largely symbolic move, he said the Berlin Wall should be torn down "as soon as possible, as a clear sign of the merging of the two German states."

White House spokesman Martin Fitzwater said the vote was "a victory not only for the people" of East Germany, "but for all Germans and all who support democratic values."

Kohl's government is scheduled to decide today on ways to halt the immigration of East Germans to his country. The exodus sparked the fall revolution and has come to strain West Germany's social services while crippling the East's economy.

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Editor Amy Edwards  
472-1766  
Professional Adviser Don Walton  
473-7301

Photo Chief Dave Hansen  
Night News Editors Jana Pedersen  
Diane Brayton

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