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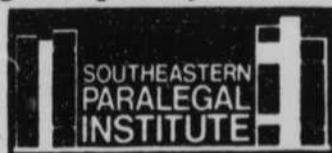
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Lithuanians fear martial law imposition

VILNIUS, U.S.S.R. - The mood in the Lithuanian capital was grim Sunday as the Soviet army moved in dozens of additional armored personnel carriers just hours after a threatening statement from Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The combination of the warning, the reinforcements, Friday's seizure of a Lithuanian government building by Soviet troops and the Soviet Union's drive to remove foreign correspondents from the republic by Sunday night had many people worried that martial law would be imposed within days.

"I fear they are going to start shooting," said one middle-aged Lithuanian woman.

Last week, Gorbachev said he would use force only if there was a threat to life. Since then, Soviet authorities have complained of several sniper attacks on soldiers.

Lithuanian officials said they can find no evidence to support the allegations and many fear that the reports are being created to serve as a pretext for a military crackdown.

Gorbachev has said he fears a breakup of the Soviet Union could result in chaos and violent conflict. He has said it would uproot many of the 60 million people who do not live in their ancestral lands.

Saturday night, Gorbachev urged

Lithuanian leaders to reverse their republic's declaration of independence, saying they must recognize their responsibility for the Lithuanian people's "security and well-being, for the state of democracy in the whole country, and stability in the world."

He warned that if they refuse, "the developments may have grave consequences for all of us."

Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis said Saturday night Gorbachev was "demanding impossible things," but said he would send a delegation to Moscow today to try to begin negotiations.

On Sunday, the last foreign correspondents were being rousted out of the republic. Hundreds of journalists from across the world obeyed the Soviet government's order to depart, fearing the loss of their Moscow bureaus if they refused.

Many said they were depressed at being forced to leave Lithuania after Gorbachev's warning.

"You do get this very sick feeling in your stomach that as soon as we leave... it's not going to be pretty," said Jonathan Sanders of CBS.

"People in the (Lithuanian) TV station are very nervous," he said. Sanders said the Lithuanian journalists expect their reporting of the Moscow-Vilnius war of nerves to be halted as soon as foreign networks are no longer on hand to record a Soviet

takeover of their stations.

The Soviet army reinforced its garrison in central Vilnius Sunday with at least 45 armored personnel carriers.

"It's the same Brezhnev doctrine at work as in Czechoslovakia," only this time, Gorbachev is moving "with a smile, slowly and easily," said Algimantas Cekuolis, editor of the Lithuanian newspaper Gintasis Krastis, who has become a de facto spokesman for the independent government.

He was referring to the doctrine under which late Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev justified the 1968 Warsaw Pact invasion of Czechoslovakia.

Despite the pressure, Lithuanian officials say they are convinced they will last longer than Gorbachev's authority over a splintering empire.

"Our tactics are to hold on a couple of months," Cekuolis said. He said he hopes for support from other Soviet republics moving toward independence and from other democratically minded legislators just elected to the Russian parliament.

Lithuanians also said Gorbachev risks the loss of respect in the Soviet Union and in the world if he is unable to assert his authority without resorting to force.

"They are compromising the leadership of the Soviet Union," Landsbergis said.

Colt considers new production of AR15 assault-style weapons

WASHINGTON - The new owners of Colt Firearms are weighing whether to resume production of the Colt AR15, the popular U.S.-made, assault-style rifle.

The former owners stopped sales to civilians last year when the government banned imports of similar weapons.

Ron Stilwell, executive vice president and chief operating officer of what is now called Colt's Manufacturing Co., said the Hartford, Conn.-based company is considering whether to start producing AR15s for civilians again.

"We are evaluating that," Stilwell said in an interview. "We will have some formal statements on it in the future."

"We firmly believe it is a legitimate sporting system and in fact the only system that can be used for certain national target matches," he said.

The firearms division of Colt Industries was sold March 22 to a group of investors, C.F. Holding.

The Colt AR15 was the most popular U.S.-made semiautomatic assault-style rifle when the former owners shut down production for the civilian market in March 1989.

The action occurred the day after the federal government imposed a temporary import ban on dozens of foreign-made weapons with similar characteristics. The import ban became permanent last July on 43 styles of rifles.

At the time, Colt Industries spokesman Mike Dunn said, "We want to conform to the spirit of the law although we weren't specifically mentioned in the letter of the law."

Dunn said late Friday that Colt never resumed production of the AR15 for civilian use.

Susan Whitmore of Handgun Control Inc. said she was disappointed that Colt's new management may reverse that decision.

"They're putting profits over public safety," Whitmore said. "We don't want to see one more assault weapon on the streets, and this is just going to add to it."

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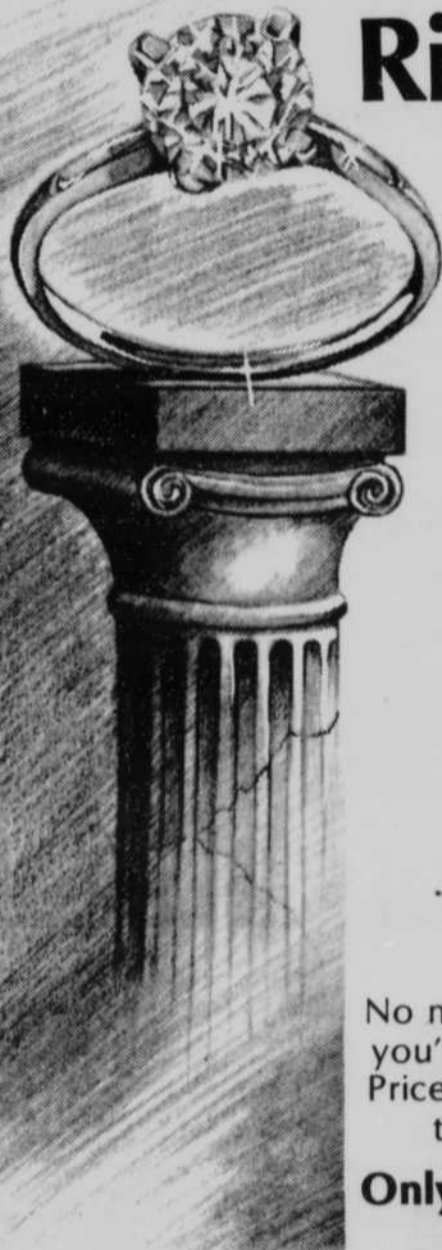
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