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# News Digest

By the Associated Press Edited by Brandon Loomis

## Soviets shut off oil supply to Lithuania's only refinery

MOSCOW - The Soviet Union on Wednesday shut off the supply of oil to Lithuania's only refinery, imposing part of Mikhail Gorbachev's threatened economic embargo on the breakaway Baltic republic, Lithuanian spokesmen said.

"The flow of crude oil to Mazhiiekiai was cut off at approximately 9:30 p.m.," said Aidias Vainoras confirmed the single pipeline feeding the plant from the Russian city of Polotsk had been shut down.

Reading an official government statement, he said Mazhiiekiai refinery director Bronius Vainoras confirmed the single pipeline feeding the plant from the Russian city of Polotsk had been shut down.

The statement said a message read earlier by telephone to Vainoras said: "In accordance with the resolution of the Council of Ministers, we are halting pumping of crude oil to your refinery."

There was no immediate word on whether natural gas supplies also had been disrupted.

The move came just hours after Soviet Deputy Oil and Gas Minister Aklim Mukhamedzyanov told the Soviet news agency Tass that reports of an energy cutoff to Lithuania "are completely groundless."

He said the Soviet Council of Ministers issued no instructions to stop the flow.

Lithuania is entirely dependent on the Soviet Union for all oil and gas, and petroleum products are the Soviet Union's most profitable export.

Sales of gasoline to Lithuanian motorists have tripled this week as residents reacted to Gorbachev's threat with panic-buying, but stocks were adequate and no rationing was anticipated, Lithuania's energy minister, Leonas Asmantas, said before the shutdown Wednesday.

The Supreme Council refused Wednesday to bow to Gorbachev's ultimatum that it rescind independence-oriented laws, but offered to pass no more such measures if the Kremlin starts immediate talks.

After the Supreme Council legislature approved an official response to Gorbachev, Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis warned Gorbachev that an embargo of such supplies would hurt other republics as well as Lithuania.

"An economic blockade would influence Latvia, Estonia and the Kaliningrad region of Russia," Landsbergis was quoted as telling a news conference.

"That would resemble an angry man beating himself," Eduardas Potasinskas of Lithuanian TV quoted Landsbergis as saying.

But anticipating a possible Soviet embargo,

the Supreme Council urged Lithuanian factories and consumers to "prepare themselves for spiritual endurance and strict economy on all consumption." It did not announce specific conservation measures.

At the end of two days of sometimes heated debate, the Supreme Council drafted a letter to Gorbachev promising that if talks began before May 1, it would not pass any more measures to implement its March 11 declaration of independence.

That offer represented an effort to compromise with Moscow, but was unlikely to be accepted by the Soviet leadership.

In their resolution -- titled "On the Expansion of Relations Between the Republic of Lithuania and the U.S.S.R." -- members of the Supreme Council reaffirmed their declaration of independence, and also appealed to Gorbachev not to use violence against Lithuanians or impose the economic sanctions he threatened on Friday.

Gorbachev said that unless Lithuania rolled back several laws supporting the declaration of independence, he would impose an embargo on key supplies to the small Baltic republic of 3.8 million people.

In Washington, Secretary of State James Baker III said action by Moscow against Lithuania could doom commercial relations between the Soviet Union and the United States.

"It's very difficult to see some of the commercial aspects of our relationship surviving the use of force or coercion" against Lithuania, Baker said.

In a separate letter to Gorbachev, the Lithuanian legislature expressed "regrets on the position and methods chosen by the U.S.S.R."

"On our part, as earlier, we are prepared to discuss any issues, taking into consideration all justified interests of the Soviet Union, foremost those of its citizens and those of a strategic nature," the letter said.

Legislators said they were forming a delegation led by Bronius Kuzmickas, vice president of the Supreme Council, to travel to Moscow for possible talks. A previous delegation met with Gorbachev adviser Alexander Yakovlev but made no headway toward settling the dispute.

Lithuania picked up support Wednesday from neighboring Poland, with the Solidarity delegation to the Polish parliament adopting a resolution expressing concern over the "growing pressure" being exerted by Moscow.

The delegation also suggested Warsaw assist in negotiations between the republic and the Kremlin.

## Court gives judges power to order increased taxes for desegregation

WASHINGTON - Federal judges may order local officials to raise property taxes to pay for the racial desegregation of public schools, the Supreme Court said Wednesday.

Although ruling unanimously in a Kansas City, Mo., case that judges themselves generally may not impose such tax increases, the court voted 5-4 in empowering judges to tell school officials to do so.

The justices said such orders even take precedence over state laws imposing limits on school property taxes.

Civil rights forces praised the decision. Through the last three decades, the court has given federal judges sweeping power to take whatever steps necessary to end public school segregation -- including forced busing of students, teacher reassignments, and even the partial merger of separate school districts.

But never had the court authorized judges to bring about higher taxes to pay for various desegregation plans.

Justice Byron White wrote for the court. He said that local officials should be allowed to devise their own solutions, but that Clark could have forced officials to raise taxes to pay for the desegregation plan -- "magnet schools" and \$260 million worth of renovations -- he ordered.

Missouri law limits property taxes, but White said Clark could order Kansas City school officials to ignore that law.

"A local government with taxing authority may be ordered to levy taxes in excess of the limit set by state statute where there is reason based in the Constitution for not observing the statutory limitation," White said.

He was joined by Justices William Brennan, Thurgood Marshall, Harry Blackmun and John Paul Stevens.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist and Justices Anthony Kennedy, Sandra Day O'Connor and Antonin Scalia dissented.

Writing for the four, Kennedy said, "Today's casual embrace of taxation imposed by the unelected, life-tenured federal judiciary disregards fundamental precepts for the democratic control of public institutions."

Saying there is no real distinction between a judge directly imposing a tax and "commanding the school district to impose" it, Kennedy said the ruling might be used to justify ordering higher taxes to pay for prisons, hospitals or a civil rights lawsuit award against a city government.

## Daily Nebraskan

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