

Lithuania's gas supply slashed

VILNIUS, U.S.S.R. - The Kremlin tightened its economic squeeze Thursday on Lithuania by shutting off more than 80 percent of the Baltic republic's gas supply following a complete cutoff of oil the previous night.

The independence-minded republic promptly ordered that the first to lose their energy supplies will be Soviet military bases and factories run by Moscow, according to the parliament's press office.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev started his most drastic attempt to force Lithuania to retreat from its March 11 declaration of independence late Wednesday when a pipeline to Lithuania's only oil refinery was shut off.

Lithuanian Energy Minister Leonas Asmantas ordered immediate gasoline rationing of 30 liters per month for private cars, according to Daina Kalendra of the parliamentary press office.

"Where we can give up the use of gas, gasoline, any heating or lighting, let us do this, and then we will be able to survive longer and, maybe, we will not be intimidated by these sanctions," government spokesman Ceslovas Juršenas said on Lithuanian radio.

Lithuania, forcibly incorporated into the Soviet Union in 1940, is entirely dependent on Moscow for its oil and gas, which it receives at below-market prices.

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vadim Perfiliev told reporters

Thursday that Moscow "might have some other restrictions" to impose on Lithuania, but he refused to elaborate.

In Key Largo, Fla., President Bush and visiting French President Francois Mitterrand said they were both "deeply disturbed" by the Kremlin's recent steps regarding Lithuania. Bush told reporters he was "considering appropriate measures to be taken in light of Soviet actions."

Lithuanian Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene was in Norway to see about contracting for expensive Western oil and seeking foreign aid to pay for it.

Officials told a news conference Thursday night other supplies were being cut as well, but refused to tell reporters what they were, Kalendra said.

Lithuania normally produces its own electricity at a nuclear power plant at Ignalina, but it is shut for repairs. Kalendra said the republic has experienced no electricity shortage, and other plants are operating, including a hydroelectric plant near Kaunas.

Lithuania has virtually no foreign currency. Asmantas said the republic needs about 500,000 tons of oil a month -- about \$55 million worth at world prices.

Prunskiene acknowledged the Soviet navy could easily blockade Lithuania's harbors, but said that would be "unthinkable."

Lithuanian President Vytautas

Landsbergis said Thursday that Lithuania will survive on its reserves while waiting for Western help.

"We have no other way. We are waiting from the East for direct negotiations and from the West for more support," he said in a TV interview with Cable News Network, broadcast from Vilnius.

Landsbergis again urged major Western democracies to come to Lithuania's aid, adding Lithuania already received expressions and promises of support from Czechoslovakia, Iceland, France, Italy, some Scandinavian countries and its fellow Baltic states Estonia and Latvia.

Dainis Ivans, president of the Latvian People's Front, said he views the fuel crunch on Lithuania as political pressure on Latvia as well. Both Latvia and Estonia are following Lithuania's footsteps in pushing for independence.

Gorbachev met in the Kremlin Thursday with leaders of Latvia and Estonia and offered both republics "special status" in the Soviet Union if they drop their attempts to follow Lithuania into independence, said Raymond Lochmelis of the Latvian Popular Front and other officials present.

The flow of natural gas was shut off in three pipelines -- two from Latvia and one from Minsk in Byelorussia -- cutting supplies to Lithuania by more than 80 percent, officials of Lithuania's parliament, the Supreme Council, said.

UNL to return Omaha remains

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln and the Omaha Indian tribe have reached an agreement on the return of skeletal remains of 92 Omaha ancestors and 1,300 artifacts.

The artifacts and bones have been in the University of Nebraska State Museum since 1930. They were uncovered then by construction crews and archaeologists near Homer, 14 miles south of Sioux City, Iowa.

Tribal elders said Thursday that the bones will be reburied, and the tribe hopes to build a museum on its reservation at Macy to house the artifacts, which include weaponry, hunting items, face paints and cosmetics and copper and brass jewelry.

The university gave documents to Omaha tribal elders Thursday confirming transfer of the skeletal remains and artifacts. Elders performed a special ceremony with the bones, using a cedar tree, which is sacred to the tribe.

"I feel happy. I am rejoicing right now," said Doran Morris, tribal chairman.

John Yost, vice chancellor for research and graduate study at UNL, said a unique spirit of cooperation enabled the university to return the remains so quickly.

Yost said the passage of LB340

by the 1989 Legislature was an important catalyst for returning the remains. LB340 requires the state to return all reasonably identifiable Indian skeletal remains and burial goods for reburial.

The quickness of UNL's action contrasts sharply with the long drawn-out effort of the Pawnee Tribe to retrieve skeletal remains and artifacts from the Nebraska State Historical Society. University and tribal officials met on Sept. 14 and by Nov. 11 had reached preliminary agreement on the return.

Morris said the remains and artifacts were left in Homer after a smallpox epidemic devastated the tribe in the late 1700s and early 1800s. Tribal elder Clifford Wolfe Sr. said the tribe then was told by medicine men to move from the site as a way of curing the sickness.

"Today is a momentous moment for me," Morris said before the cedar ceremony at Nebraska Hall on the UNL City Campus. "We are losing our language. What cultures we have left, we are trying to keep them. My people were changing so fast we were losing our way of life."

He said the university will store the relics for the tribe, which numbers 5,000 members, until a museum can be built. The bones will be reinterred.

Kidnappers postpone release indefinitely

BEIRUT, Lebanon - Pro-Iranian kidnappers said Thursday they postponed indefinitely the release of an American hostage because the United States refused to send a senior State Department official to Syria.

The Islamic Jihad for the Liberation of Palestine in a lengthy statement repeated its demand that John Kelly, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, fly to Damas-

cus. It also renewed threats to attack jetliners and airports used to transport thousands of Soviet Jewish emigrants to Israel. Much of the 500-word communique was devoted to the rise in Jewish emigrants, who Arab leaders say could strengthen Israel and displace Palestinians from the occupied territories.

In Damascus, Syrian Foreign

Minister Farouk al-Sharaa said his government has "been exerting a great deal of influence" to secure the hostage release by Sunday. He would not elaborate.

President Bush said the United States has "been disappointed before" by dashed hopes for the release of American hostages and repeated that he will not meet the demands of kidnappers.

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