

CONFIDENTIAL
FM WASHINGTON
TO IMMEDIATE FCO
TELNO 578
OF 130015Z MARCH 90
INFO PRIORITY MOSCOW, UKDEL NATO
INFO ROUTINE EC POSTS, UKMIS NEW YORK, STOCKHOLM, OSLO, HELSINKI

LITHUANIAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
SUMMARY

1. US SUPPORTS LITHUANIA'S RIGHT TO PEACEFUL SELF-DETERMINATION AND CALLS ON MOSCOW TO NEGOTIATE WITH THE GOVERNMENT OF LITHUANIA. ADMINISTRATION BELIEVE PROSPECTS FOR INDEPENDENCE ARE GOOD, BUT BELIEVE THERE WILL BE AN AWKWARD TRANSITION PERIOD, AND THAT EVENTUAL SOVEREIGNTY WILL BE LIMITED.

DETAIL

2. THE LITHUANIAN DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE HAS RECEIVED WIDESPREAD AND SYMPATHETIC COVERAGE IN THE US MEDIA.

3. IN A WRITTEN STATEMENT ON 11 MARCH, THE WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMAN (FITZWATER) SAID THE US HAD NEVER RECOGNISED THE FORCIBLE INCORPORATION OF THE BALTIC STATES INTO THE SOVIET UNION, AND HAD CONSISTENTLY SUPPORTED THE BALTIC PEOPLE'S INALIENABLE RIGHT TO PEACEFUL SELF-DETERMINATION. THE STATEMENT URGED THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO RESPECT THE WILL OF THE LITHUANIAN PEOPLE, AND TO ADDRESS THEIR QUOTE CONCERNS AND INTERESTS THROUGH IMMEDIATE CONSTRUCTIVE NEGOTIATIONS UNQUOTE. IT EXPRESSED THE HOPE THAT ALL PARTIES WOULD AVOID VIOLENCE (FULL TEXT IN MIFT).

4. ASKED WHETHER THE US WOULD ESTABLISH FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH LITHUANIA, THE STATE DEPARTMENT SPOKESMAN SAID THE US RECOGNISED THE INDEPENDENT STATE OF LITHUANIA IN 1922. US PRACTICE WAS TO ESTABLISH FORMAL RELATIONS WITH THE LAWFUL GOVERNMENT OF ANY STATE ONCE THAT GOVERNMENT WAS IN EFFECTIVE CONTROL OF ITS TERRITORY AND CAPABLE OF ENTERING INTO AND FULFILLING INTERNATIONAL OBLIGATIONS. WHEN THE US WERE SATISFIED THAT THE LITHUANIAN GOVERNMENT COULD MEET THESE REQUIREMENTS, THEY WOULD ESTABLISH FORMAL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS.

5. OUR CONTACTS IN THE ADMINISTRATION - INCLUDING INTELLIGENCE AGENCIES - ARE CONFIDENT THAT MOSCOW WILL NOT WANT TO USE FORCE TO BRING LITHUANIA TO HEEL, AND THAT LITHUANIA WILL THEREFORE EVENTUALLY ACHIEVE INDEPENDENCE. BUT THEY EXPECT A DIFFICULT AND PROBABLY LENGTHY TRANSITION PERIOD. BOTH STATE AND CIA HAVE TOLD US THAT THEY EXPECT MOSCOW TO TRY TO LIMIT LITHUANIAN SOVEREIGNTY BY INSISTING ON CERTAIN MILITARY REQUIREMENTS, INCLUDING

CONFIDENTIAL

D 152
MDHIAN 0849

RETAINING FORCES AND AIR DEFENCE ASSETS IN LITHUANIA, HOLDING A CORRIDOR FOR ACCESS TO KALININGRAD AND, POSSIBLY, RETAINING THE PORT AT KLAIPEDA. (THERE IS ALSO SOME SPECULATION - SO FAR OF A NOT TOO SERIOUS KIND - ABOUT A POSSIBLE POLISH CLAIM TO VILNIUS). ON GORBACHEV'S SUGGESTION LAST WEEK THAT CALLS FOR LITHUANIAN INDEPENDENCE WOULD RAISE QUESTIONS ABOUT THE REPAYMENT OF THE 21 BILLION ROUBLE SOVIET INVESTMENTS, STATE BELIEVE THAT NEGOTIATIONS WILL DRAG ON, WITH DEMANDS FOR REPARATIONS FROM BOTH SIDES.

6. STATE HAVE EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE LANGUAGE OF THE LITHUANIAN DECLARATION, IN PARTICULAR BECAUSE IT AVOIDED ASKING FOR MORE FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, AND WITH GORBACHEV'S INITIAL LOW-KEY REACTION. THE ADMINISTRATION NOW EXPECT MOSCOW TO FOLLOW UP BY EXPRESSING A WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS DIFFERENCES. STATE HAVE SHOWN SOME CONCERN TO US ABOUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT SAJUDIS COULD PRECIPITATE MATTERS EITHER BY TAKING EARLY ACTION TO LEGISLATE AGAINST CONSCRIPTION INTO THE SOVIET ARMY, OR BY ASSERTING CONTROL OF THE BORDERS (AIRPORTS, PASSPORTS ETC). STATE FEAR THAT THE LATTER COULD LEAD TO PRESSURE FROM THE POWERFUL LITHUANIAN LOBBY HERE FOR THE US TO OPEN A MISSION IN LITHUANIA. MUCH OF THE PRESS INTEREST IN DEVELOPMENTS SO FAR HAS FOCUSED ON THIS POSSIBILITY, WHICH BOTH THE STATE DEPARTMENT AND WHITE HOUSE SPOKESMEN HAVE BEEN ANXIOUS TO PLAY DOWN.

7. IN SHORT, THE GENERAL VIEW HERE IS QUOTE SO FAR SO GOOD UNQUOTE.

ACLAND

YYYY

DISTRIBUTION

468

MAIN 468FCO WHITEHALL
SOVIET

KIEV U

NNNN

PAGE 2
CONFIDENTIAL