

## December 21, 1989 USSR: Lithuanian Party Declares Independence

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### Summary:

An analysis of the Lithuanian Party's declaration of independence from the Soviet Communist Party. An analysis of the Lithuanian Party's declaration of independence from the Soviet Communist Party.

### Original Language:

English

### Contents:

- Scan of Original Document

0399

~~Top Secret~~

[Redacted]

6.2(d)

USSR:

**Lithuanian Party Declares Independence**

*The Lithuanian party's declaration of independence from the Communist Party of the Soviet Union yesterday will accelerate centrifugal tendencies in the national party and reduce the authority of party leaders, but Moscow's response probably will be more bark than bite.* [Redacted]

6.2(d)

The decision, by an 855 to 160 vote, flouts the CPSU Central Committee's insistence on a unified national party and the intense pressure from the Politburo, including a personal appeal by President Gorbachev. In the debate before the vote, several ethnic Russian delegates opposed complete independence, arguing instead for greater autonomy within the Soviet party. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

**Comment:** Gorbachev and other national party leaders undoubtedly are concerned about the blow to their authority and the failure of Lithuanian party boss Brazauskas to get a compromise. Gorbachev may come under pressure from his right to reply harshly, perhaps by increasing the presence and visibility of troops in the republic. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

The leadership probably will be restrained, however, wanting to retain some influence over Lithuanian politics. It could strip the maverick party of such benefits as having a voice in national party decisionmaking and the use of national party buildings, property, and printing facilities. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

A restrained response probably will encourage republic parties in Estonia, Latvia, Georgia, and perhaps Armenia to follow the Lithuanian example before republic elections next spring. This may breathe life into some republic parties but will further reduce Moscow's control in the non-Russian republics. It is also likely to increase the confidence of other nationalists that they can achieve substantial gains through persistent and peaceful action. [Redacted]

6.2(d)

[Redacted] as many as 20 percent of Lithuanian party members, mainly ethnic Russians and Poles, will choose to stay in the CPSU, adding to ethnic tensions in the republic. A similar split may occur in other republic parties that opt for independence. [Redacted]

3.3(b)(1)

6.2(d)

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