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YUGOSLAVIA: Slovene Opposition Issues Declaration

Leading independent political groups in the republic of Slovenia and the Communist Party have clashed over a draft political declaration drawn up by Slovene opposition political groups. The declaration, published in the Slovene press, calls for a multiparty system and parliamentary democracy in the republic, and more Slovene autonomy, including the right to secede from Yugoslavia. The Slovene party presidium rejected the declaration, and a leading Slovene politician on Friday criticized the increasing separatist tendencies in the republic. Early this month, several groups sponsored large demonstrations to protest the jailing of a journalist convicted last year of disclosing state secrets. Leaders from other regions have since criticized Slovene leaders for being unable to control their populace. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Slovene leaders are walking a tightrope between their liberal constituency, which wants immediate and far-reaching political reforms, and federal and southern leaders, who fear the Slovenes will stray too far toward pluralism and separatism. To avoid extreme federal pressure, Slovene leaders are likely to try to rein in the political groups by appealing for moderation, relying on harassment, or—eventually—even arresting the groups' leaders. At the same time, Slovene officials will continue measured progress toward greater political pluralism, such as allowing independent political groups to operate under the auspices of official Communist-led institutions. [REDACTED]

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