



# PRIME MINISTER

FOR MEDIA

SUNDAY, 18 JULY 1982

## CAPTIVE NATIONS WEEK, 18 to 24 JULY

In Captive Nations Week the Government is mindful of its significance and its relevance for Australians. We recall during this week the tragic and sometimes brutal events which have put an end to the independence of many nations. It is a week of both remembrance and commitment: remembrance of those who have suffered and died in their quest for individual and national freedoms; and a commitment not to accept, and to do all we can to alleviate, the denial of independence that continues to be endured in many nations today.

There are many recent examples of how easily national freedoms can be destroyed. The Soviet military presence in Afghanistan, the Soviet-backed Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea, and the measures taken to stifle free expression and basic liberties in Poland are part of a long Soviet record of such intervention. We remember in particular this week all those people who have been the victim of the world's greatest expansionist power, the Soviet Union. We recall the heroism of men and women who have resisted their subjugation and who continue today in their efforts to win back the freedoms which are rightfully theirs.

Captive Nations Week, however, is more than an occasion for remembrance and regret. It is also a time to review our commitment to policies that affirm the value of freedom. Freedom is part of Australia's past, its present and its future. We are proud of our tolerance of individual views and our commitment to individual freedoms. We are grateful for the contributions made by many people, who have been forced to leave their homelands, towards making our country a richer and more truly multicultural society. These aspects of Australian life need to be constantly protected and nurtured. We need to remember that the freedom which we enjoy and often take for granted is denied to many nations.

Captive Nations Week reminds us that peace and freedom will be lost by default if those nations which seek to preserve them leave the actual defence to others. The preservation of freedom requires constant vigilance, constant awareness and a preparedness to make sacrifices. Free nations need to remain aware that their freedom involves obligations. Only through fulfilling those obligations can free nations ensure that the future belongs not to those who seek to impose a single dogmatic ideology but to those who aim to liberate the diverse energies of free people.