



PRIME MINISTER

21/92

**STATEMENT BY THE PRIME MINISTER, THE HON P.J. KEATING MP
YUGOSLAVIAN REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

The Australian Government is acutely conscious of the sensitivities that are involved in relation to the question of the recognition of what is presently known as the Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia.

From the point of view of the people living in this and other parts of the region, and their friends and relatives abroad, we understand and sympathise with their struggle to fulfil their legitimate aspirations for democracy and independence. We are concerned at the continuing human suffering which exists in the former Yugoslavia, and are totally supportive of the efforts within the EC and the UN to bring about a lasting peace.

From the point of view of Greece, and the Greek community in Australia, the question of the recognition of the Yugoslavian republic known as Macedonia creates a number of problems which do not exist in relation to other present or former Yugoslavian republics.

Greek concerns include:

- the use of the name "Macedonia", with all its historical and cultural associations with ancient Macedonia;
- doubts about Skopje's commitment to accepting the sovereignty and inviolability of the whole of present day Greece; and
- the question of the protection of minorities, in particular the Albanians who boycotted the 1991 independence referendum.

Australia will not proceed to recognition until these basic outstanding questions are resolved:

- the use of the word "Macedonia" being settled in a way that does not cause further tension with Greece;
- Greece's concern about possible territorial claims or aspirations being fully met; and
- the international community's concern about the protection of minorities being fully satisfied.

We are aware of divided opinion on these issues in Europe and of efforts to find a mutually acceptable outcome between Athens and Skopje.

Australia is firmly of the view that the recognition issue should be determined in a way which avoids creating new tensions in a region already undergoing such rapid change.

CANBERRA
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