



ACTING PRIME MINISTER

CANBERRA

25 OCT 1989

Dr John Kunca
President of the Lithuanian Community in Melbourne
PO Box 128
NORTH MELBOURNE VIC 3051

Dear Dr Kunca

Thank you for your letter of 21 September to the Prime Minister about the Baltic States.

The Australian Government unreservedly condemns the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, its cynical disregard for the aspirations of the Baltic peoples, and the brutal repression to which it gave rise.

The Australian Government does not accord de jure recognition to the incorporation of the Baltic States into the Soviet Union. Australia supports the legitimate aspirations of the people of the Baltic States to freedom of expression, action and decision-making.

While the extent to which the Soviet Government is prepared to accede to Baltic nationalist demands is unclear, the Australian Government considers that the Soviet Government has so far shown a willingness to address positively a number of Baltic concerns.

The political situation is at a delicate stage. The Australian Government is concerned that President Gorbachev's reforms will not be assisted if Western countries condemn at this stage Soviet reactions to the demands of the Baltic States.

The House of Representatives passed a resolution on 31 August which called on the Government of the USSR to:

- (a) publicly denounce the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact;

Lietuvos valstybės naujasis archyvas
F. 26 Ap. 1 B. 332 L. 12

(b) restore to the Baltic peoples the fundamental rights and freedoms which they seek; and

(c) establish a mechanism whereby the Baltic peoples may peacefully and democratically exercise their sovereign right to determine their own future.

A similar resolution was passed in the Senate on 16 August.

The Australian Government has raised the issues of self-determination and human rights for the Baltic States with a number of international organisations, including at sessions of the UN Commission on Human Rights in 1987, 1988 and 1989. The decision to do so followed resolutions by the Senate and the House of Representatives in 1985 and 1986 respectively, which called on the Government to raise these questions in international forums

We will continue to watch the situation in the Baltic States closely and to encourage international support for self-determination and human rights in the Baltic States.

Yours sincerely



(Lionel Bowen)