

13 June 1990

COALITION WELCOMES GORBACHEV-BALTIC TALKS

The Federal Opposition has welcomed the meeting between President Gorbachev and leaders of the three Baltic Republics yesterday on their declarations of independence.

In a statement issued in Canberra Acting Shadow Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Baden Teague said,

"The Liberal/National Parties have always supported the rights of the peoples of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to independence.

"We have called on the Soviet leadership and the leaders of the three Baltic Republics to work out a peaceful transition to independence.

"This must inevitably involve direct negotiations.

"Yesterday's meeting is to be welcomed as a significant first step in this process."

"As I indicated last week when addressing the Council of Hungarian Associations of South Australia, I welcome the great changes that have occurred in central and eastern Europe in the last twelve months.

"It is heartening to see the peoples of one country after another reclaiming their basic freedoms, including the right to free political institutions, parliaments elected freely and fairly from competing political parties, and opportunities for private participation in economic life.

"I hope that the peoples of the three Baltic Republics will be able to work out with the Kremlin an orderly reclaim of their independence.

Senator Teague expressed hope that the process will continue with sensible concessions by both the Soviet leadership and the Baltic Republics that will lead to a negotiated long term solution and genuine independence.

Contact: Senator Baden Teague