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Synopsis

Multiculturalism-a unifying force?

To say that we have the world in Australia is a truism. It is also a truism to say that
under Multiculturalism all Australians can maintain their traditions and cultures whilst
practicing Australian citizenship.

It is inevitable, though that those traditions and cultures create a strong bond with and
allegiance to the country of origin, its history, culture and ethos. This becomes
manifest especially in times of crisis and there is an instinct which drives members of
ethnic communities to take sides.

This may manifest itself in Australia in a number of ways: Lobbying Governments to
take action in support of one side or the other in such a conflict, demonstrations by one
or more sides favouring particular parties to the conflict or taking action (sometimes
violent) against members of a group in Australia identified with an opposing side in the
conflict.

That may be the reaction within or among ethnic groups. But then there is mainstream
Australia. Some populist views suggest that Multiculturalism is divisive, that it is a
negative result of globalisation and, in the extreme, that we are becoming victims of a
global conspiracy to destroy Australia helped and abetted by Multiculturalism.

All of this demonstrates that Multiculturalism is not properly understood in all quarters.
It also demonstrates that we must be able to deal with the impact of global
developments on Australia or particular parts thereof. Most importantly we must find
ways to ensure that Multiculturalism is understood as a means of bringing all Australians
together as a nation and that our cultural diversity should be used to as a smart shield
to prevent global events from damaging our nation. Better still, can we use Australian
Multiculturalism to help reduce the impact of international crisis?

National Policy Forum
Multiculturalism in the New Millennium
29-30 March 2001