

## Serb neighbors recognize Kosovo

*by UPI*

PRISTINA, Kosovo - Serbian neighbors, Croatia, Bulgaria and Hungary, said in a statement Wednesday they will recognize Kosovo's independence. Croatia becomes the second former republic of Yugoslavia to recognize Kosovo formally, following Slovenia's lead. Croatia declared its own independence in 1991, leading to a four-year conflict with the former Yugoslavia. The joint statement said the decision was "based on thorough consideration" and sentiments from European Union leaders, the BBC said Wednesday. Serbian Foreign Minister Vuk Jeremic warned states against recognizing Kosovo, which Belgrade calls "an illegal state." "I call on states, particularly those of the region, not to take this step. Do not injure our country's territorial integrity and sovereignty," Jeremic said. Most EU states formally recognized Kosovo as an independent state, though Cyprus, Slovakia, Spain and Romania have so far refused to do so. Kosovo issued a unilateral declaration of independence, seceding from Serbia Feb. 17 following failed negotiations.

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