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BEATTY REITERATES SUPPORT FOR RUSSIAN REFORMS

External Affairs Minister Perrin Beatty today assured Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev of Canada's firm support for President Yeltsin as he pursues a course of democratic and economic reform. Mr. Beatty discussed recent political developments in Russia in a telephone conversation with Mr. Kozyrev this afternoon.

Mr. Beatty told Mr. Kozyrev that Canada understands that extraordinary measures had to be taken to resolve the constitutional deadlock in Russia. The Russian minister agreed with Mr. Beatty that free elections are the only basis on which any country can achieve and maintain democratic government. He stressed that this position enjoyed the widespread approval of the Russian people.

"Canada's assistance to Russia will continue," Mr. Beatty said. "Concrete action to support Russia's transition to democracy and a market economy is now more important than ever."

The two ministers will consult again when they meet next week at the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

Mr. Beatty also spoke with Canada's Ambassador to Moscow, Jeremy Kinsman. Ambassador Kinsman confirmed that the situation in Moscow is calm and that the 950 Canadians registered with the Canadian Embassy in Russia face no danger at the present time. The Embassy continues to follow the situation closely and encourages all Canadians arriving in Russia to register.

Earlier today, Russian Ambassador to Canada Alexander Belonogov called on senior officials at External Affairs and International Trade Canada to brief them on developments in Russia.

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