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CANADA DEPLORES NORTH KOREA'S WITHDRAWAL FROM THE NPT

External Affairs Minister Barbara McDougall today expressed grave concern about North Korea's decision to withdraw from the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT).

"By withdrawing from the NPT, North Korea is isolating itself from the international system put in place to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons," said Mrs. McDougall.

"Canada rejects as clearly ridiculous the North Korean government's rationale that the move is a measure against aggressive American military manoeuvres. I call upon North Korea to rescind this retrograde move."

The Minister indicated that consultations have already begun bilaterally, at the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and at the United Nations. She noted that prior to its decision to withdraw from the NPT, North Korea had resisted efforts by IAEA inspectors to examine all its nuclear facilities in conformity with the agency's mandate. In addition, the Minister indicated that North Korea's decision to withdraw was made to avoid such an inspection. North Korea is the only state to have withdrawn from the NPT in the 25-year history of the treaty. At present, some 156 countries are parties to the NPT.

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