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MINISTERS CLEAR WAY FOR CONVENTIONAL FORCES IN EUROPE TREATY

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today announced that Canada and other signatories have reached an agreement that clears the way for the entry into force of the Treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE).

The final document signed by Foreign Ministers at today's Extraordinary Conference in Oslo, Norway, ensures that the CFE Treaty can come into force despite the dissolution of one of its original signatories, the Soviet Union. It addresses all technical issues arising from the emergence of eight successor states in the applicable treaty area. Mrs. McDougall, who is in Norway for meetings of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the North Atlantic Co-operation Council (NACC), signed on behalf of Canada.

"The CFE Treaty is the major multilateral arms-reduction agreement to emerge from the Cold War," said Mrs. McDougall. "Today's agreement clears the way for the successor states to the former U.S.S.R. to be fully incorporated into the treaty's regime, which is a cornerstone of Europe's future security."

Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Georgia, Moldova, the Russian Federation and Ukraine have all accepted the CFE obligations undertaken by the former U.S.S.R. concerning equipment ceilings, the destruction of excess equipment and the acceptance of verification visits by other signatories.

Canada ratified the CFE Treaty on November 22, 1991. The treaty will enter into force when ratified by all of its signatories. Ministers have expressed the hope that this will occur before the Helsinki Summit, scheduled to open July 9.

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