

Ouellet Expresses Deep Disappointment Following Resumption of Hostilities in Sri Lanka

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Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet expressed deepest disappointment about the unilateral decision of the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) to abandon the peace process in Sri Lanka and to return to armed conflict with a surprise attack on two government naval vessels in Trincomalee harbour on April 19. "We are dismayed at the precipitate actions of the LTTE and at the further loss of life. We call on the Tiger leadership to reconsider its decision and to return to the pursuit of a negotiated settlement. The LTTE has taken a step backward, given the fact that peace had held in Sri Lanka since January without major incident. Through it all, the Government of Sri Lanka has demonstrated a strong willingness to respond to many of the concerns of the LTTE," said Mr. Ouellet.

OECD Secretary-General to Visit Ottawa

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The Honourable Roy MacLaren, Minister for International Trade, announced that Jean-Claude Paye, Secretary-General of the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), will visit Ottawa April 24-25, 1995. Mr. Paye will meet with Mr. MacLaren; Industry Minister John Manley; Gordon Smith, Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs; Allen Kilpatrick, Deputy Minister for International Trade; Bernard Bonin, Senior Deputy Governor of the Bank of Canada; as well as officials from the departments of Finance, Environment, Industry, Human Resources Development, Canadian Heritage, and Foreign Affairs and International Trade. The OECD Secretary-General visits OECD member countries regularly to discuss the state of their economies. While in Ottawa, Mr. Paye will also talk about plans for the annual OECD ministers' meeting in Paris, which this year takes place May 23-24.

STATEMENTS

The Canadian government is working to strengthen its ability to respond to crises, primarily in three areas. We must take preventive action to stop simmering tensions from turning into open military conflict. If we can prevent a crisis from erupting, we will not only save money in terms of troop movements and military intervention, we will also be saving lives and protecting the rights of the people in the area concerned.... An essential requirement of our approach is that the world community develop the capacity to intervene quickly in the event that preventive diplomacy fails. We need a quick response to back up our diplomatic initiatives. We need to be able to act before a dispute spreads, before it becomes an entrenched war, too difficult or impossible to resolve. That is why Canada is sponsoring an in-depth study of the short- medium - and long-term options for improving the rapid reaction capability of the UN in response to crisis, such as that which took place last year in Rwanda. I believe that having this capacity may, in many cases, be enough to bring about a resolution. The threat of intervention may be sufficient to compel the parties to reach a peaceful solution. And, since belligerent parties are not likely to listen to reason without it — it is essential for success. We are also encouraging — and attempting to lead by example — on the wider question of building the capacity of certain states to provide protection for human rights. We need to help rebuild in places where war and oppression have left deep scars — scars which have either destroyed democratic institutions, or left little hope that any such institutions could ever be developed.... Too often, in the past countries devastated by war or oppression were left alone by the world community to heal themselves. Instead of healing, the same wounds grew worse. The same problems re-emerged. The same bloody conflicts ensued. To reverse the cycle and to ensure long-term peace we must be ready to provide the expertise and experience that has kept our own societies relatively free of violence and oppression.

Notes for an Address by the Honourable André Ouellet, Minister of Foreign Affairs, to the Conference of the Political Internationals on Human Rights (Ottawa, Ontario, April 25, 1995, 95/28)

UPCOMING EVENTS

- April 17-May 12: Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty Review and Extension Conference (New York)
- May 4-6: Quadrilateral Trade Ministers Meeting (Whistler, British Columbia)
- June 5-10: OAS General Assembly (Haiti)
- June 15-17: G-7 Summit (Halifax, Nova Scotia)

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