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JOE CLARK WELCOMES AMNESTY FOR POLITICAL PRISONERS
IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOREA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, welcomed the recent declaration of an amnesty for 52 political prisoners declared by Roh Tae Woo, President of the Republic of Korea. This was the fourth amnesty declared by President Roh since his inauguration in February 1988 and the third in less than 4 months.

Included in the latest amnesty were Lee Chul and Lee Tae Bok, two detainees on behalf of whom the Canadian Government and Canadian human rights organizations have made representations over the last two years. Lee Tae Bok and Lee Chul, as well as Kim Chol Hyun and Lee Sang Baek, who are also among the 52 released, had been 'adopted' as 'prisoners of conscience' by Canadian Amnesty International. Representations were also made on behalf of Lee Tae Bok to the Korean authorities during the recent PEN Conference in Seoul by the Canadian PEN delegation.

"Canada welcomes the progressive implementation of democratic political institutions in Korea over the last year. We believe that the release this year of more than 250 political prisoners demonstrates an increased commitment to human rights by the Korean Government. Canada's longstanding interest in human rights was an important subject of discussion during Prime Minister Mulroney's visit to Seoul in 1986. In establishing democratic processes and in recognizing the need to respect the fundamental rights of its citizens, the Government of the Republic of Korea has begun to lay the essential foundation upon which a free society can develop and flourish", said Mr. Clark.

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