

A MISSION OF MERCY

Canadian Secretary of State for External Affairs Barbara McDougall was at Kiev's Borispol airport on January 27, 1992, to meet the first shipment in Canada's \$8-million airlift of medicines and medical supplies to the former Soviet Union and the three Baltic nations of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

The airlift was part of the more than \$10 million of humanitarian assistance donated to Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union by the Government of Canada during the past six months.

Emergency Airlift

The Canadian humanitarian airlift, coordinated by the Canadian Red Cross, has brought desperately needed medicines and medical supplies — including syringes and dressings — to Ukraine, Russia, Belarus, Moldova, Kyrgyzstan, Armenia, the Nagorno-Karabakh region of Azerbaijan and the Baltic States. The supplies are targeted to those most in need — children's hospitals, pregnant women, and the elderly both in and outside of institutions — and will support hospital and home care for more than 435 000 patients for the next 12 months.

The Canadian Department of National Defence made some 20 flights to airlift the more than 180 000 kg of medical supplies to the former Soviet Union. In addition, Canadian military aircraft helped to transport food aid donated by the European Community into Russia as part of an international North American Treaty Organization (NATO) relief initiative.

The Ravages of War

Canada has also focused its relief efforts on the former Yugoslavia. Initially the Canadian government contributed \$1.25 million toward the purchase of emergency relief and medical supplies to support the activities of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Canadian Forces airlifted the supplies to the region in late 1991.

Then, in January 1992, Mrs. McDougall announced an additional \$1-million contribution to a special United Nations' (UN) appeal for humanitarian assistance.

"The contribution underlines Canada's support for UN work and our determination to alleviate the suffering of innocent civilians in the war-torn region," said McDougall in making the announcement.

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*The Honourable
Barbara McDougall*

The funds will be shared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the United Nations Children's Fund and the World Health Organization.

Canadians are also playing a frontline role in the United Nations peace-keeping operations in Yugoslavia and Croatia. The Canadian contingent of 1 200 military personnel is one of the largest in the 31-nation United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR). In addition, 30 members of the Canadian Royal Mounted Police will act as civilian police monitors under UNPROFOR.

A Generous Response

Other Government of Canada initiatives include a shipment of 1 000 tonnes of wheat to Albania and the provision of skim milk powder to Bulgaria. In addition, hundreds of Canadian voluntary organizations and private citizens have made generous donations of money, food and clothing to the former republics of the Soviet Union. (See sidebar on p. 21).

Canadian business has also responded. The Quaker Oats Company of Peterborough, Ontario, provided 17 orphanages in Belarus with a one-month supply of oatmeal to help feed some 8 500 children. Valued at approximately \$50 000, the shipment was accompanied by Jon Grant, Quaker's President and Chief Executive Officer, who noted during a special ceremony in Minsk, "This was a necessary thing to do in light of the difficult circumstances facing the people of Belarus. Quaker has strong ties with the former Soviet Union and we could not simply look away." ■