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STATEMENT MARKING THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE SOVIET INVASION OF AFGHANISTAN

The Honourable James Kelleher, Acting Secretary of State for External Affairs, today reaffirmed the importance for the Canadian Government of restoring the independence, sovereignty and genuine non-alignment of Afghanistan.

On the fifth anniversary of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Mr. Kelleher expressed the deep concern of the Canadian Government at the continued military occupation of that country by Soviet forces and its tragic human consequences, which include the creation of one of the world's most serious refugee problems.

Mr. Kelleher noted the support of many important international bodies including the United Nations, NATO, the Commonwealth, the Non-Aligned Movement and the Islamic Conference, for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Afghanistan. He endorsed the efforts of the United Nations' Secretary General, and the Secretary General's personal representative, to bring about a solution acceptable to the international community and to the people of Afghanistan.