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CANADA SUPPORTS BALTIC INDEPENDENCE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today, on the 52nd anniversary of the infamous Molotov-Ribbentrop pact, underlined Canada's strong support for Baltic independence.

"We have long called for the restoration of independence to the Baltic States and will continue to call for that," Mrs. McDougall told reporters following her meeting with President Havel in Prague.

Canada has never accepted the forcible Soviet annexation of the Baltic States, marked on this day, which is called International Black Ribbon Day.

Canada welcomes the Latvian and Estonian declarations of independence, as it did that of Lithuania in March 1990. The Government is urging the quickest possible start to negotiations.

Canada has always maintained *de jure* recognition of the Baltic States against the day when they could once again reclaim their independence.

That the Soviet coup failed is in large part due to the courage of the Baltic peoples and their unfailing commitment to democracy.

"I would hope," Mrs. McDougall stated, "that in the light of recent events we will see a change sooner rather than later."

- 30 -

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