

News Release

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McDOUGALL CALLS FOR WITHDRAWAL OF RUSSIAN TROOPS FROM THE BALTICS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Honourable Barbara McDougall, today expressed Canada's concern about Russia's decision to suspend the withdrawal of its troops from Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia.

"Canada is urging Moscow to resume withdrawing its troops now. We believe that a speedy and complete pull out is important for European security," Mrs. McDougall said.

"Although we are sensitive to the practical problems involved in the return of Russian soldiers, as well as Russia's concerns about its minorities in the Baltic States, we reject the linking of troop withdrawals with these or any other issues." The Minister added that Canada expects all countries, including the Baltic States, to live up to their Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE) commitments with regard to minority and human rights.

Canada's position on the question of Russian troop withdrawals was underlined in September during Mrs. McDougall's meeting with Russian Foreign Minister Andrey Kozyrev at the United Nations General Assembly. It was reiterated by a senior Canadian official in Moscow on October 21 and today with the Russian Ambassador to Ottawa.

Canadian officials also intend to raise the issue at the CSCE officials' meeting in Prague next week.

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