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MINISTER CLARK WELCOMES SOVIET PROPOSALS ON
REDUCTIONS TO NUCLEAR AND CONVENTIONAL ARMS

The Secretary of State for External Affairs the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today welcomed the announcements made in Moscow by Soviet President Gorbachev with respect to unilateral cuts in Soviet short range nuclear forces (SNF) and further precision concerning proposals for cuts in conventional arms which are currently being negotiated in Vienna.

Mr. Clark noted that the cuts in Soviet theatre and short range nuclear arms (284 SNF missiles, 166 bombs, and 50 artillery) still leave the Soviet Union with a massive advantage in these weapons. The Soviets have approximately 3,000 SNF missiles on 1,766 SNF missile launchers, at least 5,500 nuclear capable artillery systems and over 5,000 aircraft capable of delivering theatre nuclear weapons. NATO has only 88 SNF missile launchers and less than 1,000 SNF missiles, less than 3,000 nuclear artillery and less than 2,600 aircraft capable of delivering theatre nuclear weapons.

Mr. Clark noted that Canada supports the commencement of negotiations on reductions, but not total elimination of SNF missiles and is also prepared to support modernization of NATO's SNF forces. The first step in any such negotiation should be to bring the continuing Soviet asymmetry down to NATO levels.

Mr. Clark indicated that he would want to give the Soviet proposals on conventional cuts further study before commenting in detail. He looks forward to seeing the additional details Mr. Gorbachev has promised to put forward in Vienna. He welcomed the Soviet willingness to reduce their tanks, armoured personnel carriers and artillery systems down to NATO levels, which responds to the proposals put forward by the West at Vienna.

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Secretary of State
for
External Affairs

Secrétaire d'État
aux
Affaires extérieures