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CANADA WELCOMES NEW U.S. PROPOSAL FOR LOWER SUPERPOWER TROOP LEVELS IN EUROPE

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today warmly welcomed President Bush's initiative proposing a new ceiling on U.S. and Soviet forces stationed in Central and Eastern Europe. The proposed ceiling of 195,000 troops would be negotiated in Vienna at the CFE Negotiation on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe.

"Recent events in Eastern Europe indicate that we now have a marvellous window of opportunity to negotiate substantially reduced conventional forces in Europe," declared Mr. Clark. "Canada has expressed the view that now is the time to translate these opportunities into concrete measures to reduce tensions. President Bush's proposal is precisely the sort of innovative initiative required at this time."

Mr. Clark noted that this proposal will significantly enhance the prospects of reaching a CFE Agreement this year. He also welcomed the early positive reaction of the Soviet Union to the U.S. proposal.

President Bush consulted with the Prime Minister before making his new proposal. The Prime Minister indicated Canada's strong support for the President's initiative. The proposal was also discussed by the North Atlantic Council yesterday, which also welcomed the initiative.

Mr. Clark noted that the new proposal applies only to Soviet and American forces and will therefore have no direct impact on Canadian troop levels in Europe. He added, however, that "reductions in the troop levels of other Allied members will likely be an element of further negotiations which will follow an initial CFE Agreement."