EXPORT CONTROLS POLICY

BACKGROUND PAPER

The Secretary of State for External Affairs announced new guidelines for exports of military and strategic goods. These guidelines follow a thorough and detailed Cabinet review which took into account the views of a wide range of Canadians from many walks of life. The Government considered the position of manufacturers and exporters as well as the many Canadians who are concerned about disarmament and human rights. The new policy and guidelines represent the Government's preferred path in this complex policy area. The new policy, however, is not a radical departure from previous policies; rather, the Government is revitalizing and adapting the existing policy to current circumstances and clarifying certain elements.

The Minister indicated that there has been a continuity in export controls policy over the years. The Government believes Canadians hold strong views about the role which their country plays internationally. They want Canada to maintain a series of defence obligations, most notably in the NATO alliance and within NORAD; they want Canada to participate in peackeeping missions; to seek the maintenance of international order and stability; and to maintain a strong stand against human rights abuses. This latter concern has been clearly expressed by a number of Canadians who are justly disturbed by the lack of respect given to human rights in certain countries. All of these elements were weighed in the process which resulted in this policy.

The Minister stated that Canada would closely control the export of military goods and technology to:

- countries which pose a threat to Canada and its allies;
- countries involved in or under imminent threat of hostilities; and
- 3) countries under United Nations Security Council sanctions; or
- 4) countries whose governments have a persistent record of serious violations of the human rights of their citizens, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable risk that the goods might be used against the civilian population.