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AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE SUPPORT MINISTER TO VISIT OTTAWA HI TEC AND DEFENCE ESTABLISHMENTS

Francis Fox, Minister for International Trade, announced today the visit to Ottawa of the Minister for Defence Support of Australia, the Honourable Brian Howe. Mr. Howe is leading a delegation of Australian officials visiting Ottawa and Montreal from August 7 to 10.

Following a ministerial visit to Australia in November 1983, and the highly successful Canadian Advanced Technologies Seminars held in Melbourne and Sydney early in 1984, there has been growing interest in industrial co-operation projects between the two countries. Both the Australian and Canadian Governments are now developing proposals for co-operation; some of the areas under consideration are defence-sharing, cross-licensing, industrial co-operation, joint marketing, joint venturing and the sharing of technology for mutual advantage.

Mr. Fox noted that the Australian Department of Defence Support has a broad mandate to develop and implement industrial offset policy with respect to all Australian government procurement. "What we are doing in Canada is of particular interest to them, especially in defence and the advanced technologies," the Minister said.

Mr. Howe and his delegation will visit Ottawa August 8 for briefings by External Affairs, National Defence and Regional Industrial Expansion. On August 9 they will visit an Ottawa-based computer manufacturer and will go on to Montreal August 9 and 10 to view Canadian design and manufacturing capabilities in the aerospace, defence and advanced technology sectors.

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One specific area of co-operation being explored between Australia and Canada is government procurement, where one country or the other can make longer runs on products it is selected to produce by mutual agreement. Mr. Fox noted that Australian-Canadian co-operation in this area would give both countries benefits in pricing, offset provisions and deliveries, as well as providing mutual support in developing exports to third countries.

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