



No. 17

January 21, 1991

CLARK STRONGLY CONDEMNS VIOLENCE IN LATVIA

The Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, today strongly condemned the brutal and unwarranted use of military force against the people and democratically elected Government of Latvia.

"Canadians are shocked as I am by this appalling and reprehensible behaviour," Mr. Clark stated. "I received a communication from Soviet authorities Saturday, but regrettably they have not acted to defuse the situation."

Mr. Clark again called on Soviet authorities to show restraint and avoid further bloodshed. He urged them to seek negotiated solutions consistent with democratic principles and their international obligations.

"Our apprehension about the escalating violence in the Baltic States has been forcefully conveyed to the Soviet Foreign Minister by the Canadian Ambassador in Moscow and to the Soviet Ambassador in Ottawa," stated Mr. Clark.

Mr. Clark stressed that unless Soviet authorities move quickly to curb these repressive actions, our bilateral relations will be further adversely affected. Canada's offers of technical assistance and the new \$150 million Export Development Corporation line of credit for the purchase of foodstuffs are already under review.

Mr. Clark reiterated that Canada was consulting actively with its allies in NATO and friends in the UN and the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe to find effective ways of supporting internationally the legitimate right of the people of the Baltic States to determine their own future.

Mr. Clark announced that Canada would be looking at concrete ways to support the Baltic States through increased official contacts and direct technical assistance.

- 2 -

A Canadian Embassy officer remains in the Baltic region to provide consular assistance to Canadians and to act as a channel of communication. Officials from External Affairs and International Trade Canada are maintaining continuous contact with representatives of the Canadian Baltic communities.

- 30 -

For further information, media representatives may contact:

Media Relations Office
External Affairs and International Trade Canada
(613) 995-1874