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CANADA WELCOMES UKRAINIAN RATIFICATION OF THE STRATEGIC ARMS REDUCTION TREATY (START 1)

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today welcomed the unconditional ratification by the Ukrainian parliament of the START 1 Treaty and the Lisbon Protocol, which commits Ukraine to acceding to the Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) as a non-nuclear weapons state.

"The government and parliament of Ukraine have acted courageously in the spirit of the tripartite agreement recently signed with the United States and Russia. They have recognized that denuclearization is the best way to ensure Ukraine's security and promote stability in the region. We expect that Ukraine will now move quickly to implement START 1 and accede to the Non-Proliferation Treaty," said Mr. Ouellet.

Mr. Ouellet noted that he will discuss this issue and the prospects for increased Canada-Ukraine co-operation when he visits Ukraine in the near future. Canada has an extensive program of technical assistance in Ukraine and early NPT accession will open the door to full co-operation in the nuclear field, particularly in the area of safety.

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