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# news release

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## CANADA WELCOMES RUSSIAN TROOP WITHDRAWAL FROM LATVIA AND ESTONIA

Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet today welcomed the withdrawal of the remaining Russian troops from Estonia and Latvia, which was completed on schedule by August 31.

"The departure of the last Russian troops is a historic occasion. It reinforces Latvia's and Estonia's sovereignty and represents a victory of statesmanship over confrontation," said Mr. Ouellet.

Canada had repeatedly called for the withdrawal of Russian troops from Estonia and Latvia. Their departure means that all three Baltic states — Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania — are free of foreign troops for the first time in over 50 years. In withdrawing its forces, Russia has lived up to commitments made to the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe.

Mr. Ouellet also called on Latvia and Estonia to exercise continued understanding in easing the integration of their minorities, including those of Russian origin.

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