

President Toomas Hendrik Ilves spoke at a formal dinner on Wednesday organized by the Baltic community and representatives of the Canadian Government and Parliament at the Canadian Parliament Building and thanked Canada for years of help, support and understanding.

"I thank the Canadian state that never recognized the annexation and occupation of the Baltic countries before and after the Second World War. This consistent attitude provided our small nations with the strength to stand up for their rights and to struggle until the countries regained their freedom during the last decade of the 20th century," the Head of State emphasized.

He thanked Canada for its hospitality, which helped tens of thousands of Estonians, Latvians, and Lithuanians, who were war refugees, to start new lives in Canada and to preserve their languages and cultures.

As the guest of honor at the dinner, President Ilves spoke at length about common values, which have made allies of Canada and Estonia in bringing peace and stability to the world's crisis areas.

"As a NATO member state, we help to jointly achieve peace, stability, and development in faraway Afghanistan. We have lost some of our best men and women there as dead and wounded. We do this because above all we appreciate the fundamental values of liberty, the freedoms of speech and expression, respect for the rule of law and human rights. We know that if we abandoned these values and their defense in respect to other peoples that need help, we would be turning our back on our past and the one-time aspirations of own peoples," the Estonian Head of State said.

The working visit of the President of the Republic to Canada culminated with the laying of a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in the center of Ottawa, after which the Head of State met with the Speakers of both Houses of Parliament.

**President Ilves thanked Canada for years of help and support**

Friday, 30 May 2008 17:19

---

Office of the President  
Public Relations Department  
Phone +372 631 6229