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**CANADIAN PRIORITIES
FOR THE ARCTIC COUNCIL**

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The Minister of Foreign Affairs is to have bilateral talks with his U.S. and Russian counterparts at the 3-7 meeting in June, and with the Danish and Norwegian Foreign Ministers at the NATO summit in Paris. He is also in a position to meet with or write to the Finnish and Swedish Ministers, and to have discussions with the other permanent participants on the Council's work. Given his willingness to use these encounters to drive the Arctic Council forward, there is an opportunity to generate ministerial marching orders for the Council's meeting in September, instructing them to set up a series of Arctic Council working groups on priority themes which would also be open to discussion by permanent participants at the September gathering. If the Minister is to succeed in this, he will need to have a good working set of proposals for priority action by the Arctic Council by the time of the 3-7 meeting, if not earlier. In effect, we are talking about a circumpolar element in the preparation for 3-7.

Recommendation 1: For the Circumpolar Ambassador and DFAIT to produce an Arctic Council Action Plan by the end of May 1997 for the use of the Minister of Foreign Affairs in recurring contacts with the Arctic countries.

Recommendation 2: For the Action Plan to consist of scoping the work of Arctic Council working groups to be set up on some or all of the themes identified to be reviewed at the 1996 Ministerial meeting with the Council's circumpolar development programme is formally to be launched.

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