REPORT FROM THE FIRST ANNUAL ACADEMIC ROUNDTABLE: TEACHING IN FOREIGN POLICY

May 7, 1999
Ottawa

The Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development organized and hosted the First Annual Academic Roundtable in Ottawa on May 7, 1999. Participants included academics from across Canada who are involved in foreign policy teaching, graduate students in the foreign policy field along with officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade and the Canadian International Development Agency. As this was the first roundtable, a general topic was proposed: the situation of foreign policy teaching and research in Canada. The following report is from a day-long discussion.

SUMMARY OF PRESENTATIONS

The co-chairs, Steven Lee (Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Foreign Policy Development) and John English (University of Waterloo) welcomed all the the roundtable and opened the discussion by signalling an open agenda. To start the discussions the relationship between foreign policy teaching and government departments (i.e. Foreign Affairs and International Trade, National Defence, and CIDA) was suggested as a topic.

In the afternoon, Fen Hampson presented an overview of the CCFPD occasional paper: The State of Canadian Foreign Policy Research Capacity (NPSIA, Carleton University 1996). The paper outlines strengths in foreign policy research capacity to be: migration and population issues, international security, and Asia-Pacific. These areas of expertise were mainly concentrated in the University system and not in the 'think tanks.' The weaknesses included: human rights and civil society, the 'new emerging foreign policy agenda,' communications and technology, the United States, and Europe.

Professor Hampson suggested the main issues raised in the paper to be used as a basis for discussion. The report cited a lack of informal links between policy makers and the academic community, a lack of research centres situated in small or medium-size cities, the presence of research fragmentation between researchers inside and outside of Quebec (more pronounced in the functional area than in the regional), and generally a pessimistic outlook for the future improvement of foreign policy research capacity.

The report outlined some of the ways in which foreign policy research capacity could be increased in Canada. Aside from requests for increased funding, certain creative solutions were proposed. These included increased use of networking between institutions (universities, government and NGO's), especially in the 'emerging' areas of foreign policy.