

EVALUATING FOREIGN POLICY

The government sets national objectives and priorities. These govern all policies, and therefore foreign policy; and all programmes, and therefore the programmes of the Department of External Affairs. To frame policies and programmes as a function of national objectives requires a multiple dialogue between the Department of External Affairs and other government departments, other levels of government, private groups and individual Canadians. This dialogue is continuous. It takes many forms. It is, however, subsumed in a formal process designed to define the basic structure of foreign policy.

The government first establishes national objectives and communicates them to all government departments. The Department of External Affairs then drafts a set of objectives for foreign policy. These constitute the expression in foreign policy of national objectives. In drafting foreign policy objectives, the Department of External Affairs consults a wide range of government departments, working progressively toward a completed statement which has normally in the past been submitted for the approval of Ministers.

The first attempt to set out the objectives of the foreign policy in this formal way was made in 1975. Successive revisions have appeared since, roughly on an annual basis. The latest statement of "Issues and Objectives in Canadian Foreign Policy and External Operations" is dated 30 April 1979 (ICER No. 65). An important comment on an earlier draft was received from the Secretary to the Cabinet. This is contained in a letter of 17 January 1979, which