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INVITATION AND RECEPTION OF FOREIGN DIGNITARIES

The purpose of this note is to review a few basic principles concerning the issuing of invitations to, and the hosting of foreign dignitaries. What follows does not break any new ground, but is rather a confirmation of existing practices.

Provincial political figures and senior officials who are travelling abroad will sometimes invite foreign dignitaries to visit them in their province. It will be appreciated that any invitation, whether motivated by simple courtesy or by a definite intention, has implications that extend beyond the provincial context alone. Thus, the invitee, while in Canada, may also wish to visit Ottawa or other parts of the country.

In order to improve the coordination of such visits to Canada, and also to place the invitations in the wider context of our foreign relations, the federal authorities need to receive advance notification. Accordingly, any such projects should be referred as early on as possible to the Office of the senior advisor for Federal-Provincial Relations (CFX) of the Department of External Affairs in Ottawa. The latter would be responsible for informing the appropriate Canadian diplomatic mission abroad. Since planning for visits to Canada is inevitably a joint effort, your keeping us informed of plans to host foreign visitors is an essential part of the process. It then becomes very much more practicable to reach joint decisions and make arrangements which help ensure the success of the visit. Examples include, inter alia, whether or not the visitor is accompanied by an official of this Department, such as the Canadian Ambassador to the country concerned.