

On the occasion of the tabling of the Final Report of the Special Joint Committee on Canada's International Relations, June 26, the Secretary of State for External Affairs, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, issued the following statement:

"I want to express my gratitude to the Committee for the work it has undertaken and my admiration for its Report, which provides a very valuable perspective on Canadian foreign policy.

Over the past year, the Committee has been at the centre of a grass-roots consultative process that is unprecedented in Canadian foreign policy formulation. This is the first time that a Parliamentary Committee has conducted public hearings throughout the country on the full range of Canada's international relations.

Considering the quality and the number of oral and written briefs submitted to the Committee, the consultative process has been successful in achieving two of its most fundamental objectives. It opened up the process of foreign policy making to allow those not traditionally involved a chance to participate, and it demonstrated the extent to which foreign policy is linked to our domestic daily concerns.

The product of this intensive process--the Final Report--is a document of special significance particularly in two respects:

First, despite the broad range of opinion expressed, the Committee reports a quite remarkable consistency in Canadians' international relations concerns. One of the major accomplishments of the consultative process has been to draw attention to a number of dominant policy themes.

Secondly, the Committee has tabled a unanimous report. I think it very significant that in its final report, which covers the entire range of Canadian foreign policy concerns, the Committee has been able to achieve consensus. The importance of non-partisan agreement on the future course of Canadian foreign policy can hardly be exaggerated.

The recommendations contained in the Report are of considerable interest and they merit careful study. Accordingly, I am instructing the Department of External Affairs to begin an immediate review of the Report, so that the Government may table its response in the fall after a thorough examination by the Cabinet."