



news release

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CO-CHAIRS ANNOUNCED FOR NATIONAL FORUM ON CANADA'S INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

University of Toronto professor Janice Gross Stein and Montréal business executive Pierre S. Pettigrew will act as co-chairpersons of the first annual National Forum on Canada's International Relations to be held March 21-22, 1994, at the Government's Conference Centre in Ottawa.

The announcement was made today by Foreign Affairs Minister André Ouellet, Defence Minister David Collette, and International Trade Minister Roy MacLaren.

The purpose of the Forum, which was promised prior to the 1993 Election, is to provide an opportunity for Canadians to consider the implications of the rapidly changing international and domestic environments as they affect foreign affairs, and to offer views on the impact these changes should have on Canada's policy priorities. Some 120 people from a number of backgrounds and with involvement in business, labour, academic, non-governmental organizations, Aboriginal affairs and the media are expected to participate in this first Forum. They have been invited in a personal capacity on the basis of their knowledge and experience.

The National Forum, which will be held annually, is an important dimension of the foreign policy review process initiated by the Government. Other aspects of the ongoing review include public hearings by parliamentary committees, as well as a variety of other consultations with the Canadian public and groups interested in international relations.

Professor Gross Stein, who teaches international relations at the University of Toronto, and Mr. Pettigrew, who is Vice-President of Samson Bélair/Deloitte & Touche International, will preside over discussion of the full range of Canada's international roles and responsibilities.

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For further information, media representatives may contact:

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Backgrounder

PROCESS FOR REVIEW OF FOREIGN POLICY

The Government is committed to opening up the process of foreign policy-making as a response to an increased desire by Canadians to be involved in public affairs. To give effect to this commitment, the Government will have annual consultations on Canada's international relations. The purpose of this process is to ensure that policy formulation receives public input and that implementation of Canada's foreign policy is subject to ongoing assessment in an era of constant change in the international environment. Consultation will continue in 1995 and be an integral part of the Government's approach to the management of foreign policy in the future.

PROCESS OVERVIEW

The 1994 process has four components.

- 1) The parliamentary process -- which includes debates in the House of Commons on defence and foreign policy issues -- will examine broad areas of policy that may need public debate and will recommend directions and priorities to the Government. Parliamentary committees (one on defence policy and one on foreign policy including international assistance) will start their work in the spring and will submit their report to Parliament in the autumn.
- 2) The National Forum on Canada's International Relations, which will be held annually, will be co-sponsored by the Minister of Foreign Affairs, the Minister of Defence and the Minister for International Trade. The Forum will provide the occasion to reflect on the main changes in the international environment and to draw conclusions about the strategic approaches that these changes require Canada to pursue in order to succeed. Forum participants will be asked to identify areas of Canada's international relations where there is a consensus on maintaining existing directions, as well as those where there may be a need for change. The conclusions of the Forum will serve as advice to ministers and to the committees that will conduct parliamentary reviews of foreign and defence policies.
- 3) Other ad hoc forums of consultation will also be conducted by the Minister of Foreign Affairs and secretaries of state Christine Stewart and Raymond Chan.
- 4) A first annual statement of the Government's foreign policy directions, and in this instance covering the international assistance framework, will be presented in the House of Commons by the end of 1994 or early 1995.