



NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Mark Schoeff Jr. 202-775-3242 (mschoeff@csis.org); Andre Belelieu 202-775-3251
www.csis.org

CANADA'S SPEECH FROM THE THRONE Martin Government Outlines New Agenda; Prime Minister Martin Responds

WASHINGTON, Feb. 3, 2004 — CSIS analysts made the following statements today about yesterday's Speech from the Throne, the Canadian equivalent of the State of the Union address, and today's response by Prime Minister's Paul Martin:

Andre Belelieu, research associate, CSIS Canada Project (202-775-3251, abelelieu@csis.org): "By outlining a comprehensive agenda of reforms to democratic governance as well as a welcome continuation of social initiatives reminiscent of the Chretien era, the Speech from the Throne and the Prime Minister's response should respond to criticisms that the Martin government will govern from the right. However, by promising to keep the federal budget in check, increase military spending, and continue important work with the United States on homeland security cooperation and the Smart Border Accords, the Martin government has also answered any doubts that it will govern solely from the left. The result is an ambitious mix of domestic promises with a clear signal that the Martin government desires a foreign policy that will balance Canada's sovereign interests with its desire to chart a new course in Canada-U.S. relations. This new agenda should please not only a majority of Canadian voters, but also officials in Washington D.C."

Ben Rowswell, CSIS Pritzker Fellow (202-775-3296, browswell@csis.org): "Many expected Prime Minister Martin to adopt a more U.S.-centric approach. Instead, the Speech from the Throne reinforces the Chrétien / Axworthy focus on issues of global governance at the same time as announcing new economic and security negotiations with the U.S. It will be fascinating to watch how the government reconciles these two directions in Canadian foreign policy."

James L. LeBlanc, senior associate, CSIS Canada Project (703-799-2935, jleblanc@techpublicaffairs.com): "I was intrigued and encouraged by statements made last week by Paul Martin on the occasion of the First Ministers meeting that provincial premiers and officials would be given new powers to deal more directly with Canada-U.S. relations. The Speech from the Throne and the Prime Minister's response appears consistent with this thinking. It will be a true test of Martin's sincerity and commitment of getting broader participation on critical Canada-U.S. files if it is implemented over the likely objections of the Departments of Foreign Affairs and of International Trade."

*These are the views of the individuals cited, not of CSIS, which does not take policy positions.
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