

RWH 4

A WOMEN'S LENS ON FOREIGN POLICY

DIFFERENT VALUES,
DIFFERENT VIEWS, NEW POLICY?

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THE INTERNATIONAL
WOMEN'S HEALTH COALITION

The **International Women's Health Coalition (IWHC)** is a non-profit organization based in New York City that works with individuals and groups in Asia, Africa and Latin America to promote women's reproductive and sexual health and rights. IWHC provides technical and moral support and makes grants to reproductive health service providers and advocacy groups in a number of countries, publishes books and position papers, convenes meetings on new or neglected issues in women's sexual and reproductive health, and acts directly to influence the work of population and health professionals, national governments, and international agencies.

The **Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Program of The Council on Foreign Relations** was created in 1994 to examine the changing domestic base of American foreign policy. From its inception, the program has worked in close collaboration with the Stanley Foundation's New American Global Dialogue. Under the direction of Michael Clough and David Doerge, these two endeavors have conducted a wide range of conferences, meetings and seminars on the role of regions, ethnic groups and global issue groups in international affairs. In 1997, the program will publish two books: *Not-so-"foreign" Affairs* by Michael Clough and *State and Local Foreign Policy* by Earl Fry and John Kincaid.

EDWIN MADUNAGU

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REPORT OF AN INFORMAL
ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION

Tuesday, June 4, 1996, 4:30-7:00 p.m.

The Council on Foreign Relations, New York, NY.

Co-sponsored by

**THE COUNCIL ON FOREIGN RELATIONS DOMESTIC
POLITICS AND FOREIGN POLICY PROGRAM**

and

THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S HEALTH COALITION

PANELISTS

Barbara Crossette, United Nations Bureau Chief, *The New York Times*

Adrienne Germain, Vice President & Program Director, International Women's Health Coalition

Celinda Lake, President & CEO, Lake Research

Dorothy Thomas, Director, Women's Rights Project, Human Rights Watch

Angela Wakhweya, Fellow, Health Policy Research, The Bunting Institute, Radcliffe College, Harvard University

MODERATOR: **Peggy Dulany**, President, Synergos Institute and co-chair, Domestic Politics and Foreign Policy Program, The Council on Foreign Relations

MEETING COORDINATORS: **Michael Clough**, The Council on Foreign Relations and **Joan Dunlop**, International Women's Health Coalition

OVERVIEW

"...people really want information, they have opinions, and they're much less isolationist than the numbers show."

—Barbara Crossette

The International Women's Health Coalition shares Ms. Crossette's perception and has, over the past year, been conducting a series of exploratory conversations, holding focus groups, and soliciting feedback from U.S. women about their desire for the U.S. to be a good global citizen. In April, 1996, IWHC conducted focus groups in Chicago and Los Angeles with activist women, and found substantial interest in a new vision of foreign policy based on the central tenets of the recent Cairo and Beijing United Nations conference agreements. The focus group participants also agreed that more women's voices need to be heard in U.S. foreign policy-making, and supported U.S. foreign assistance that gets to the people who need it, is based on partnerships between donors and recipients, and is not used as a means of asserting hegemony. IWHC plans to conduct more focus groups and/or polling in 1997 on women and foreign policy to test additional messages to determine which are most effective in animating and ensuring a constituency. Crossette's observation offers a salient point of reference for the report of the roundtable discussion that follows.

