

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
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Canadian ambassador John Holmes will share his Iraq experience

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Contact: Dr. Patricia Goff
Associate Professor, Department of Political Science
(519) 884-0710 ext. 2588

or Michael Strickland
Manager, Media Relations & Information
(519) 884-0710 ext. 3070

WATERLOO – Canada’s ambassador to Iraq and Jordan will discuss a range of issues related to his postings in the Middle East when he visits Laurier later this week. Ambassador John Holmes will deliver a public lecture from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Friday, February 3 in Laurier’s Maureen Forrester Recital Hall.

Holmes will share his experience in establishing relations with a country that has not had an ambassador from Canada for 15 years. He will discuss the challenges of working in Iraq and of establishing an embassy there, as well as outline Canada’s efforts to aid in reconstruction and offer his views on the current political situation.

Holmes will, however, avoid topics where any comments could impede Canadian efforts. In particular, he will not discuss the current hostage situation while it remains unresolved.

“We are very pleased to have someone in Ambassador Holmes’s position take the time to share his experiences in an extremely challenging part of the world,” said Patricia Goff, political science professor at Laurier. “And we fully appreciate the need for him to be discrete in his remarks on very delicate matters.”

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Holmes presented his credentials to the president of Iraq in September of 2005, becoming Canada's first ambassador to the country since 1991. He has also served as ambassador to Jordan since 2003.

He earned bachelor of art and law degrees from McGill University before joining the department of external affairs in 1982. He has held posts abroad and served in New York at the Permanent Mission of Canada to the United Nations. In Ottawa, he held a number of positions, including director of the legal advisory division. In 2002 and 2003, he served as director of the United Nations' human rights and economic law division.

Ambassador Holmes's talk is sponsored by the Centre for International Governance Innovation; the Centre for Global Relations, Governance and Policy at Wilfrid Laurier University; and the Canadian Institute for International Affairs.