

The network concept could be extended to policy, performance and reporting, to building expeditionary capacity to bring diplomacy together with defence and development. It could also be furthered in the creation of "intermestic" networks to embed consultation on foreign policy more deeply with Canadian domestic constituencies and stakeholders.

Embracing the future

But where do we want to be in three to five years? With a world changing almost every day in the challenges it brings, what are the "must have" ingredients in a foreign and trade ministry?

One ingredient is the ability to articulate, advocate, explain and communicate Canadian interests and values—both at home and abroad—and the policies and work that we as a department carry out to effect and support them. We must be able to explain what we do cogently and convincingly to a variety of audiences, and thus build support for our work.

A second ingredient is a strong, quick-moving operational ability in areas and issues where Canadian initiative and action are needed. This would go hand-in-hand with a policy and program planning function that seeks to anticipate where those areas and issues may arise. The operational focus would give younger employees greater range and opportunity to suggest and undertake innovative actions. A dedicated team could "translate" policy initiatives into high-quality documents for Cabinet consideration. This would help us to bring well-articulated, coordinated policy advice to other departments and central agencies—and of course to the Cabinet itself.

A third ingredient is a sense of purpose and ethic about what we do and how our work is good for Canada. In our department, there is a strong, if

sometimes unarticulated, sense of public service and dedication that can be tapped. It's about identifying and focusing on issues that really matter for the future. These could be grouped around three or four issues of global importance: natural resources; financial/economic (including development); security (including health and safety); consular/emergency. The focus would always be on what added value Canada brings to these issues. What are the resource costs and performance objectives? How do we advocate the issues and build coalitions of support, both at home and abroad?

A foreign and trade ministry with these three qualities would be well placed to handle the unknowns and challenges that will inevitably come. The ideas, initiatives and support of the employees of this department are not only welcome, but are essential in this effort. Only by working together can we ensure that our ministry is indeed ready for the future.

Len Edwards is the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. Louis Lévesque is the Deputy Minister of International Trade.



1969
Canada recognizes the People's Republic of China, agreeing to exchange ambassadors with Peking in 1970.

1973
Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II opens the Lester B. Pearson Building.



1982
The government announces the creation of one department—the Department of External Affairs and International Trade—charged with all trade and foreign policy functions.



1970

1970
Canada's first foreign policy review, Foreign Policy for Canadians, challenges the Pearsonian tradition, with a new emphasis on the national interest.



1975

1979
Flora MacDonald becomes the first woman secretary of state for external affairs.



1980

1980
The process of consolidating the foreign affairs and trade departments begins.

1984
Prime Minister Brian Mulroney's government gives priority to improving Canada's relations with the U.S. and seeks a free-trade deal with Washington.

1985

1986
Pat Carney becomes Canada's first woman minister of trade.



1990

An Integrated Department