

stability in both the size and shape of our efforts. We thus have a particular opportunity to develop sensible long-term planning, designed to stabilize the careers and deepen the experience of personnel in the areas which are essential to them and to the Department if we are to function effectively as a central agency.

Historically, nothing has excited discussions of foreign service personnel management more than the generalist-specialist debate. Personally, I think that neither the pure generalist nor the pure specialist, if there were such people, would be very useful in a contemporary foreign office. The good foreign service officer must be both.

It is just not possible to co-ordinate or lead a policy review, let alone participate in one, in such areas as fisheries, outer space, maritime boundaries, technological transfer, commodity funding, energy planning, to name a few, and not be very knowledgeable in the area. It is also not possible for a foreign office to function if it lacks flexibility to assign personnel to take on all sorts of tasks in any number of places. So we are pushing several approaches which I believe can help.

**Mid-career  
streaming**

First is the concept of mid-career streaming which has just been introduced. Officers are being encouraged, after approximately five years in the Department, to focus on one or two broad areas or sectors of departmental operations. Headquarters assignments are being co-ordinated with postings abroad to enable officers to deepen their knowledge of these areas by working in them for a period of a decade or more. The goal is the creation of an officer group retaining a generally well-rounded background but with a greater depth of knowledge in selected fields. Areas of streaming are fairly broadly defined and an officer can pretty well choose his or her own mix.

**Temporary  
transfers of  
officers**

An important part of the streaming process is the expanded use of temporary transfers of officers to other departments for periods of two, three or more years. This is our second approach. An officer working on energy matters will, for example, be given the opportunity to acquire increased experience and expertise through a secondment to the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources. Secondments into External Affairs from other departments are also being encouraged because they provide a means of bringing into the Department specialized skills which may be lacking or in short supply. The Department is setting a target of the number officers seconded in and out: it is more than one hundred. I hope that every foreign service officer will, as a part of his or her normal career, have at least one secondment to another government department, or provincial department or university or business institution.

**Lateral entry**

Also worth mentioning, and this is a third approach, is lateral entry into the foreign service. In the past, it has been very difficult to enter the Department at other than the most junior level. While there were good reasons for this, it deprived the Department of the opportunity to recruit into its permanent ranks more senior personnel from the public service, private sector or academic community. A new lateral entry policy is being examined which, if it works, will enable the Department to recruit such persons on a highly selective basis.