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CANADA AND THE WORLD

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Crisis . . .

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Professional Standards Paramount

Creation of a fully-staffed cadre of ODA specialists is important but a simple paper exercise would not be the answer to creating an expanded Foreign Service. A long-term solution could consist of improved personnel planning, more recruitment, more flexible staffing from existing resources and accelerated promotion from within the qualified ranks. Compromise will be necessary but this should not prejudice the interests of existing FSOs. Professional standards must be upheld, personal suitability and broad background knowledge are essential diplomatic prerequisites.

Good FSOs still advance through the ranks but this is often *despite* rather than *because of* the career apparatus. At issue are the integrity, credibility and legitimacy of promotions, appraisals and assignments, all subjective, top-down processes. That supervisors have inordinate influence over the career prospects of those they evaluate invites favouritism. Formulaic appraisal of FSOs' abilities is time-consuming, personally corrosive and gives promotion boards exceptional discretion.

A comprehensive multiple-choice appraisal is a promising option. Also, the promotional process should be retooled to focus more on the professional needs of career FSOs. Annual evaluation of current year appraisals, for example, would yield scores the cumulative total of which over a given number of years would form the basis of promotion decisions. The savings in time alone would be significant.

Appraisal and promotion are largely dependent on assignment. A chosen few get what they want as the rest bargain for what is left. Sustained consular work, the most sensitive and high-profile activity, is the kiss of death in career terms while economic and political reporting are regarded with esteem without reference to originality or relevance. If promotion of deserving FSOs is impracticable because of budget cuts, perhaps self-funded leave and sabbaticals, secondments and job exchanges could enrich careers.

Some Possible Solutions

Rehabilitation of the Service also requires restructuring. Conversion several years ago of all senior FSOs into one public service category co-opted senior management. Implemented to meet an organizational planner's dream of a better job classification system, it drove a wedge between working level professionals and their supervisors.

Two discrete career tracks should be re-established. One would include all FSOs who choose, upon eligibility, to develop specialized expertise. Others who choose management would be free to pursue opportunities more suited to that. The former could be the answer for those with little interest, or ability, in management but who are capable of senior service capacity and deserving of recognition.

This division must be undertaken with fundamental organizational reform. External Affairs is flush with middle and senior management but thinly endowed at the working level. The Department resembles an inverted pyramid, an inefficient allocation, it invites criticism, and if corrective action is not initiated internally, it might come from the Treasury Board after further review by the Auditor-General. Delaying and streamlining the decision making process are essential to a more effective Department with fewer managers but better management.

Events are transforming the international environment and, as the world changes, so must the Foreign Service. Canada's international performance in recent years often has been perceived as insipid or derivative. Possessed of a distinctive blend of political, economic and linguistic pluralism, multicultural tolerance and a commitment to social justice, this country has something tangible to offer. But the opportunity will be lost if we are unable to overhaul the institution through which the example might be promoted.

Rich in ability and experience, the Department of External Affairs is capable of prevailing over current adversities. It needs desperately to reach out to the community it serves at home and abroad. Diplomacy is, after all, a "hands-on" profession. In the spirit of renewal and dedication to the pursuit of Canadian interests, the Foreign Service prospect can and must be restored.

Daryl Copeland is a career FSO who currently does intelligence analysis.

S I G N P O S T S

TORONTO — In a rare venture for a foreign diplomat, the Netherlands' Ambassador to Canada, Jan Breman, has offered a cautious view of the constitutional crisis over the Meech Lake Accord. "A small flag of warning" is how he characterized his comment during a speech to the Canada Netherlands Chamber of Commerce. "As someone who has lived more than 4 1/2 years in

Canadian suppliers of goods and services up to 90% protection against loss. The \$20 million package is a revolving credit facility and since sales in any one year could exceed that amount, additional export credits will be extended as earlier sales are paid for. The facility provides support for transactions involving payment within 180 days or less and the protection is limited to transactions in which payment is made by irrevocable documentary credits issued by Polish banks acceptable to the Export Development Corp.



AWA — The federal government last concluded InvestTech '90, a series of meetings at which off-foreign Canadian missions abroad for the private sector "the arts of attracting technology and investment from other countries." International Trade Minister John Crosbie says increasing global competition is forcing business everywhere to look beyond national boundaries.

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ANA — Louise Frechette, Assistant Deputy Minister of External Affairs (American and Caribbean), said during an official visit that Canada is increasing dialogue with Cuba on bilateral and multilateral issues as part of an effort to strengthen links with the region as a whole. "We've always had good relations with Cuba and we propose to improve them even more", she said before returning to Ottawa April 29.

government believes that it is essential to keep the nuclear option open." Ontario Hydro, which has one of the largest nuclear generating bases in North America, is increasing its contribution to AECL R&D by approximately \$30 million a year. Quebec and New Brunswick, the only other provinces with power reactors, will provide an additional \$3 million and \$1 million, respectively, in each year. Ottawa's commitment is \$31.5 million a year. AECL will continue to explore export potential, but Mr. Epp says "the priority ... will be to serve domestic needs"; including the feasibility of other provinces using a smaller reactor AECL is developing to compete with coal-fired generation stations in the 450-megawatt range.

OTTAWA — A mid-air collision over West Germany between two Canadian CF-18 fighters last month and the crash of another off British Columbia brought to five the number lost this year. They were the 10th, 11th and 12th destroyed since Canada began taking delivery of the McDonnell Douglas fighters in 1982. Of the losses in which cause has been identified so far, all but one have been attributed to pilot error; the exception was a crash resulting from an engine fire. The Department of National Defence imposed a brief moratorium on CF-18 flights before permitting them again with greater minimum airspeeds and higher minimum altitudes.

WARSAW — A new short-term export credit insurance facility for Poland affords

WASHINGTON — Environment Minister Lucien Bouchard, here for a

17-nation conference on global warming, wasted no time in reacting to a suggestion by President George Bush that more research is needed. "The price of inaction is too high to wait upon further research"; Mr. Bouchard complained only a few hours after Mr. Bush said a better understanding of the basic processes at work "was crucial." The President was trying to explain why he wants a 60% cut in the budget for research on global climatic change. Mr. Bouchard agreed more research is warranted, but insisted also on remedial action. "We can, and we must, do both."

OTTAWA — The Canadian Exporters' Association says "the over-valued Canadian dollar is proving disastrous for Canadian exports." A recent membership survey indicated that 75% are experiencing difficulty because of the appreciation of the currency against most others. The result has been that 68% of the companies who responded to the survey have had to reduce prices, 29% have foregone export opportunities and 29% have sourced exports from affiliates elsewhere. "Particularly disturbing is the fact that 23.2% ... reported that the high Canadian dollar has materially affected their strategy to take advantage of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement." CEA President James Taylor says exporters are confused: "For three years, the government and the Bank of Canada has said high interest rates are needed to combat inflation. Now exporters are told high interest rates are needed to support the dollar. Exporters want and need a lower dollar that reflects more closely its 'real' value, not the value set by international speculators attracted by excessively high interest rates."

TORONTO — Federal grants totalling \$1.6 million, the first under the government's "Going Global" trade promotion effort, are central to the creation of a programme for the study of Asian languages and business practices. The funds are being divided between the Joint Centre for Asia Pacific Studies and the Ontario Centre for International Business. The former brings together researchers from the University of Toronto and York University while the latter is a partnership of the business and law faculties of the two aforementioned insti-