

*The Political Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

INTRODUCTION

The following is an internal analysis of the role and work activities of political officers in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade, in particular those involved in the department's International Security and Cooperation (ISC) business line.

Political officers, of course, are part of the political/economic stream and of the foreign service (FS) group more generally, all of whom operate in the same distinctive environment and share many similarities in their work. So while the focus of the study has been political officers doing ISC work at headquarters and abroad, some of the analysis and findings of this report might also apply to economic or trade officers. The subject of the study, however, is the political officer.

The study was launched by the Assistant Deputy Minister (Global and Security Policy), Paul Heinbecker, and was managed on his behalf by David Lee (LGX). The Evaluation Division of the Office of the Inspector General commissioned the consultants retained to do the study, covered the costs, and provided methodological and administrative support.

Paul Chapin, Managing Partner of Performance Systems Canada Inc., conducted background research, interviewed some 30 individuals, and wrote the final report. Daniel Dubé, President of Synerma Inc., assisted by Michael O'Leary, facilitated four workshops at the Canadian Foreign Service Institute and prepared a report on the results.

Objectives

The study has four specific objectives:

- To articulate a rationale for the political resources of the department in an age of globalization, thereby to position the department to explain and defend its need for such resources now and in the future;
- To prepare a profile of how political resources are currently being used in four work settings (functional bureaux, geographic bureaux, multilateral missions, and bilateral missions);
- To identify obstacles to effective use of the department's political resources, and to draw up a list of proposals to make political work more efficient and effective;
- To propose a framework for managing and evaluating the use of political resources which focuses on the contribution such resources make to the achievement of desired outcomes, to assist in the development of the right kind of performance measures for political work.