

had a clear mandate to lead and to manage. A reinforced mandate was evidently being sought, albeit through depicting a central-agency role that incorporated directional powers. The difficulty here is that the speaker was suggesting something beyond an Under-Secretary's capacity to command.

Part of the Under-Secretary's third question was within the Department's control — i.e., what changes had to be made at headquarters. The changes specified — establishing a new level of Deputy Under-Secretaries capable of acting as surrogate Under-Secretaries, appointing special co-ordinators for disarmament and development policy, and establishing *ad hoc* task forces — had already occurred. Apart from demonstrating a willingness and ability to take charge, the intra-Departmental changes do not appear to do very much to establish External's interdepartmental mandate.

#### New procedures

The other part of that third question (i.e., what changes had to be made at posts) was back in the realm of matters beyond the Department's unilateral control. But in this instance the Under-Secretary was able to announce that new procedures had been agreed on by the Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations. In 1970 a confidential task force had recommended a single comprehensive system for an integrated foreign-operations program. Full structural integration (or unification, as it was called) would have absorbed I, T and C's Trade Commissioner Service, Manpower and Immigration's Foreign Service Branch, and the Canadian International Development Agency's development officers into a single unified foreign service in which the influence of External Affairs would have been predominant. Because of interdepartmental resistance, only the lower-level or support-staff integration was introduced in 1971. The system was a hybrid, with administrative service under External Affairs and foreign-

service officers independently controlled by their respective departments.

The new procedure agreed to in 1978 involved assigning "line authority" to the head of post over all operations within the scope of approved programs. The individual program manager was not to treat his home department as his sole controlling authority, but he was to be responsible as well to his head of post for approval of the planning and implementation of all program objectives. The practice of imperfectly informing the head of post was "no longer acceptable". The ICER departments and CIDA had established "unequivocally that the head of post is accountable both to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and to the relevant deputy ministers, for all post activities in their respective jurisdictions".

Although the obligation on the program manager was intended to clarify the role and reaffirm the authority of the head of post, the dual accountability of the head of post to Ottawa went beyond that. It was well short of unification, but it was a further step beyond the integration process of 1971. Where the head of post is a diplomat, External Affairs acquires a post-program responsibility for the programs of other departments; where the head of post is from another department, he is still accountable to the Secretary of State for External Affairs. This innovation did lend some additional support to the central-agency claim, dovetailing thereby with the Under-Secretary's second question about what authority the Department needed.

His fourth question — what personnel policies were required — was reminiscent of his approach to changes at headquarters. His emphasis was on quality, semi-specialist training, much-increased two-way secondment, some lateral entry, and a slowdown in the process of rotation. Like the headquarters changes, there was little direct relevance to External's mandate, but an undertaking of largely internal initiatives

that could affect behaviour and image. Rotational deceleration, in particular, was intended to enhance the level of effectiveness of diplomats in Ottawa by reducing the disadvantage of unfamiliarity with issues in the "interdepartmental game". When playing bureaucratic politics for central-agency status the Under-Secretary obviously saw no point in playing under a handicap.

#### Credentials

In addition to posing his four questions, the Under-Secretary spoke of the Department's authority to act as a central agency in matters of formal credentials, particularly those of the Minister, and of informal arrangements, including his own role. Under formal credentials, he briefly listed legislation, Orders-in-Council, Cabinet directives and custom and precedents, specifying the SSEA's authority to sign all submissions to Cabinet concerning international agreements and the size and composition of delegations to international conferences. The content of these formal credentials was evidently somewhat less than compelling. In its efforts to exercise this authority, according to the Under-Secretary, the Department ran into problems that compelled it to rely largely on informal arrangements.

It is an accepted principle that even the humblest department supports its minister to the full. Nevertheless, the Under-Secretary chose to include constant support for the Minister as an informal device to consolidate and enhance the Department's role as a central agency. His citation of the SSEA's chairmanship of the Cabinet Committee on External Affairs and National Defence ignores the fact that all the major relevant studies of the 1970s — the foreign-policy review, the development-assistance review, the long-range patrol-aircraft decision and the European-sector battle-tank purchase — bypassed this committee.

Perhaps for this reason the participation of the Minister in the key Priorities and Planning Com-