

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

- In the mid-1990s, in answer to the question "Who's running the country", the Canadian embassy in Tokyo developed a *Political Influence Map* as a guide to the playing field on any given issue. Using the map to identify where issues were being played out, who the key decision-makers were, and how outcomes were being influenced by bureaucratic, private sector and media interests, the mission was able to develop a "practical contact matrix" to inform its lobbying and advocacy efforts. In addition, mission staff developed a *Political Influence Strategy* template to define Canadian objectives, list appropriate courses of action, and record actions and results. "By filling in this matrix, and saving it in a numerical series as new information is added ... in time, it becomes the definitive track record on the advocacy of any given Canadian interest in the host country. It tells you what works and what does not."
- Contact management software of the sort available from any computer store has been a staple of sales professionals for over a decade.
- DFAT officers have been instructed to exercise "greater discretion and discipline" in deciding whether to attend representational events of marginal relevance. "For example, attendance at national day functions should be restricted to the twenty or so countries with which Australia has important relationships."

PROPOSAL: The department should draw on existing examples of successful contact management practices to develop a template for systematic mission tracking of issues of importance to Canada and the development of strategies to achieve mission objectives.

PROPOSAL: Once the template has been developed, missions should be instructed to prepare operational plans for political work, to be reflected in missions' annual business plans and staffing proposals.

PROPOSAL: Mission operational plans should identify priorities for representational activities, and mission officers instructed to exercise "greater discretion and discipline" in attending or hosting representational events of marginal relevance to mission plans.

Managing crises

- Many departments and agencies of the federal government have established procedures for responding to crises designed to ensure timely commitment of resources, tasking appropriate to the circumstances, and effective decision-making. Among these are the PCO, Ministry of the Solicitor General, RCMP, DND, Environment Canada, Health Canada, and Emergency Preparedness Canada.