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There are certain aspects of the central agency role abroad that should be highlighted.

The Embassy abroad is a microcosm not of the Department of External Affairs, but of the whole Government of Canada. Ambassadors represent all government departments, indeed all ministers, the Prime Minister, the Crown and the provinces and the public — not necessarily in that order. Under their direct supervisory authority are, in all probability, officers of other government departments implementing programs of trade, aid, defence, security and immigration among others. Thus ambassadors must have an outlook as broad as their responsibilities. Their skills cannot simply be diplomatic ones; they must be programmatic as well. Ambassadors must be very knowledgeable, both of Canada and the country of accreditation. He or she must be a good manager, not just of finances but of people. And more than this. He or she must be creative and committed — a leader, capable of leading on a variety of questions at the same time. This is a big responsibility. Knowing what we do about the interdependence of countries in the contemporary world, of our own dependence on others, of the importance of our economic and political objectives, of the multiplicity of Canada's interests, of the interests and well-being of individual Canadians, we must recognize that the ambassador has a task that is today more important than at any time in the past.

I must emphasize again that the central agency concept places responsibility and accountability for all post programs with the Head of Post. This means that Canada's Heads of Post — our ambassadors, high commissioners, consuls general and consuls — must have the recognized authority to take the action necessary to meet this requirement. In the past, there has, regrettably, been confusion over the question of authority. In some posts the head of a program, such as public affairs or trade, may be an officer of the same seniority as the Head of Post. Jurisdictional disputes at the post sometimes arise. This is no longer acceptable if we are to achieve our goals as a central agency.

I have already mentioned the document recently issued by ICER setting out in clear terms the authority and responsibility of the Head of Post. The document states that the Head of Post represents not one department but the Government in general and, under the authority of the Secretary of State for External Affairs, assumes direct responsibility for all post programs. It makes the point that individual program managers must consult their Head of Post for approval of the planning and implementation of all program objectives. It establishes unequivocally that the Head of Post is accountable both to the Secretary of State for External Affairs, and to the relevant deputy ministers, for the conduct of program activities in their respective jurisdictions. This last point is, I think, an important innovation because it clarifies the direct responsibility of the Head of Post to all deputy ministers, within the context of a coherent foreign policy management system, for their departments' program interests abroad.

The selection of persons to fill Head of Post positions proceeds with great care. Although External Affairs officers fill the majority of Head of Post positions, persons from other foreign service departments, other departments in Ottawa, and from

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