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The country's confidence in the Department's ability to fulfil its role was reflected in the attitudes of foreign service officers towards their work. They had a clear idea of the role of the Department in Canada and the role of Canada in the world. Inevitably, the day-to-day business of bilateral and multilateral diplomacy consumed much of the energies of the Department. But beyond this, there existed a sense of purpose which informed all activities and gave them coherence. We had emerged from the Second World War strong and confident. We saw and embraced the opportunity to help build the peace. We showed a particular aptitude for the design and construction of international political and economic institutions.

Peace and security were the chief international priorities of the Government; its primary focus, notwithstanding the recognized need for NATO, was on the United Nations. The goal of peace and security, although it clearly served Canada's national interests, was not conceived in narrow terms. The Government saw itself as a viable intermediary in international disputes and Canada was able to make a major contribution to the peaceful resolution of situations threatening international stability. The correspondence of national objectives and international circumstances was unique.

When I returned to External Affairs in 1977 after an absence of eight and a half years, a very different situation prevailed. The sheer growth in the size and scale of operations had had an enormous impact on the Department. In 1957, the Department employed, in Ottawa and abroad, about 1,800 persons. In 1977, there were more than 5,000 – an increase of about 300 per cent. The 61 diplomatic and consular missions abroad of 1957 had increased to more than 115 by 1977.

The increase in the size of the Department was the response to the extraordinary increase in the complexity of both government operations in Canada and Canada's international relations. The first factor is important. Managing a foreign service in a vastly larger web of government financial and personnel regulations proved to be enormously demanding of time and resources. But the second factor, the changing international affairs environment, probably placed even greater demands on the Department.

The handling of some international issues was well done, particularly where this drew upon traditional departmental areas of expertise such as in our participation in the United Nations and in maritime resource conferences and negotiations. The Department also made great efforts to respond to the emphasis in the late 1960s and 1970s on achieving national objectives reflecting the national interest and succeeded admirably in some areas. I can cite the skills with which the Department responded to the growing challenge of national unity and the need to act abroad as a bilingual country reflecting our cultural heritage and provincial interests. New offices and embassies were opened, new headquarters units created, new aid programs rapidly developed and personnel trained. The Department pioneered in multilateral institution building in the francophone world.

But problems developed in some areas. As economic programs and the number of

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