

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The process of globalization is creating a new reality, a "globality" which is requiring governments to re-think how they perform their functions. Foreign ministries, rather than being an anachronism, may be the state's best instrument for designing the future it wants. Located at the intersect of domestic and foreign policy, the role of a foreign ministry is to manage the state's progress through international issues which engage domestic interests, negotiating solutions within rule-bound systems and helping to develop rules where none exist. To be effective 21st century institutions, foreign ministries need a combination of resources not found elsewhere in government: a worldwide infrastructure to generate the information, contacts and methods for successfully pursuing national interests abroad; a global communications system; a capacity for developing national policy to deal with globalization; and "globalist" foreign service officers.
2. "Globalists" are a new breed, neither generalists nor specialists, but masters of the global scene with a unique mix of knowledge, skills and personal attributes. They have a command of the many dimensions of global affairs and how these interact -- politics, culture, technology, finance, national security, and ecology. They are skilled in "working the global system". And they have the mental toughness to operate in alien environments. Diplomacy is only one of the professions in which globalists are beginning to appear.
3. Political officers are the foundation of the globalist foreign service officers of the future. It is their job to understand the "big picture", to identify the major interests at stake, to craft the strategies for protecting and promoting those interests. Their core functions are collecting and analyzing information on developments which could affect Canadian interests; providing policy and operational advice to Canadian decision-makers; coordinating national positions; building networks in Canada and abroad; lobbying and advocating on behalf of Canadian government positions; negotiating agreements and conventions; and managing foreign policy operations.
4. But political officers represent a "thin red line". Apart from EX-level officers, there are only 482 FSs in the political/economic stream which supplies the bulk of political officers. The 316 at headquarters are spread among some 35 functional divisions and 20 geographic divisions. Abroad, there are only 166, spread across 160 missions. Both in Ottawa and in the field, political officers are able to spend only a portion of their time on core functions. Multi-tasked by their own department, they also support the operations of other government departments. And many are required to handle much of the administrative work associated with visits and conferences.