

reported direct to the Under-Secretary. This caused problems. There were so many officers reporting direct to the Under-Secretary that effective management was extremely difficult to achieve. There was no one in the organization other than the Under-Secretary who could resolve disputes among the bureaux. This led to long delays flowing from a reluctance by bureaux to seek a solution at the highest official level. As an alternative they would sometimes pursue and eventually achieve a lowest common denominator kind of decision. This was not necessarily the wisest or best decision.

One level below the Deputy Under-Secretary level there are now four Assistant Under-Secretary positions. Unlike the Deputy Under-Secretaries, the Assistant Under-Secretaries do not carry line responsibilities for specific areas of departmental operations.

They provide senior level capacity to take on the management of individual major issues when they are assuming crisis proportions, require undivided attention at a senior level or are bogged down in intra- or inter-departmental policy conflict. The task force established to monitor the situation in Iran, institute and oversee plans for the protection and, as it turned out, effective evacuation of Canadian citizens, is, for example, headed by an Assistant Under-Secretary. The assignment of specific problems like this to designated senior officers improves the timeliness and effectiveness of our service to the government. Our capacity for service has also been improved by recent reorganizations of some bureaux and the establishment of special co-ordinators for certain areas such as disarmament and development policy which cut across several sectors of departmental operations.

Organizational changes in isolation cannot, of course, guarantee that the Department will meet its central agency obligations. As in other central agencies, our primary assets in exercising leadership and serving the needs of government are the information we have at our disposal, the quality of our judgement, and the vigour and effectiveness with which we deal with a wide range of inter-related policy issues usually handled by more than one department. In meetings with managers of bureaux and divisions and other officers, senior management has stressed the importance of initiative and imagination to the successful attainment of central agency goals. Every officer of the Department must strive to identify and come to grips with emerging issues before they are presented as a *fait accompli*.

So far, my description of the efforts to build a modern central agency may have created the impression that all our efforts at renewal and strengthening have been concentrated in Ottawa. Clearly, this was the place to start. But any suggestion that our posts abroad are, as a consequence, marginal to the successful operations of a central agency would be totally unjustified. A foreign office without a strong foreign service in the field would be deprived of the information, advice, analysis and guidance that is essential if it is going to play a full central agency role in Ottawa. Even more important, it would be deprived of the leadership that can be provided by a strong Head of Post capable of promoting Canada's interests in the country of accreditation.

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