

resulting from these changes.

It is important that the PPO take a focused long-term view regarding its future roles and mandates resulting from the above influences, and possibly others. Most of these elements involve the planned use of informatics technologies, which more and more are becoming inexorably tied to the fundamental strategic plans of many organizations. Informatics and evolving enabling technologies are inspiring change and social evolution, rather than being only tactical components in many programs. In the case of the PPO, informatics technology and PPO activities are so intertwined that this review had to deal with overall social and political issues rather than simply technology developments to carry out its mandate properly.

Some recent examples will serve to clarify the importance of a long term focus. As a result of the recent well-publicized set of articles in the Montreal Star regarding the ease of obtaining and using Canadian passports, the PPO has recommended a number of changes to improve security in the short and medium term. Many of these recommendations involve distribution of services in Canada and the reduction of mail-in and proxy applications. Other recommendations focused on security enhancement through pre-registration of guarantors and increased verification of documents such as birth certificates. A further important element is the HQ validation overseas of lost-passport reports, based on the Master Index as well as the Passport Control List (PCL).

None of these changes could be contemplated if it were not for the capability of modern informatics technology to enable their implementation. It would also have been preferable had a long-term planning process been in place to have identified, planned, and budgeted these changes in advance. Despite their regular planning processes to upgrade systems, security, and office locations incrementally in the normal course of business, the PPO was unfortunately forced to react to the larger issues that arose rather than have foreseen the need and be in the process of implementing the improvements that could have resulted from a broader long term planning program.

Of course hindsight is characterized by perfect vision, and the PPO is now in the process of implementing such programs. The PPO is also certainly not alone in its need for deliberate long-term focus. It seems apparent that the Government of