

*The Political Officer
in the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade*

- (C) A general invitation to political officers throughout the department to contribute their analysis and suggestions.
- (D) The convening of four workshops to develop "storyboards" describing political work in four work settings. Workshop participants were chosen for their experience in having worked recently in a functional bureau, geographic bureau, multilateral mission, or bilateral mission. Selection was largely random, depending on individual availability. In all, 25 individuals spent a day at CFSI contributing their knowledge and experience to the study.
- (E) Interviews with DFAIT staff at headquarters and at missions, with senior officials in other government departments and agencies, and with members of foreign missions in Ottawa. Some 25-30 individuals were interviewed for about an hour each, almost all one-on-one. Interviews were conducted under journalist rules of non-attribution.

These several sources provided a rich resource on which to draw in preparing the final report, certainly the most comprehensive review of the department's political resources since the Hunter/Halstead study in 1991. Moreover, the analysis and recommendations are largely those of political officers themselves. While no survey of officers was conducted to supply "quantitative" data on issues, the individuals who contributed their personal time to the study likely represented the views of the total population better than most surveys could aspire to do. First, the individuals who attended the workshops or agreed to be interviewed included officers at every level of the department (ADMs, DGs, directors, deputy directors, and desk officers at headquarters, and ambassadors and political counsellors abroad). Second, they contributed collectively more than 200 hours of sustained high-quality input. Without exception, individuals took a fair and balanced approach, drew on their personal experience or those of colleagues to ensure "hard facts" informed the discussion, and worked conscientiously to find consensus when opinions differed and positions needed to be probed.

Nonetheless, the study's limitations should be recognized. Time constraints and summer leave prevented a number of officers who expressed interest in the study from being able to make a contribution. The scope of the study allowed issues to be raised but not always to be explored in any great detail. And the inventory of "best practices" in Chapter 4 results more from individual officers' own knowledge and experience than from a broad review of performance across the public sector in Canada and abroad.