

RAYMOND J. CHRÉTIEN: Issues For The 1990's Interview Part II

by Elizabeth Campbell-Pagé

How significant is decentralization of CIDA to External Affairs?

Not only is development assistance a part of our foreign policy, it is an important part of our foreign policy in determining where our aid is going. We are sending signals. Our development assistance is not linked to political objectives; however, in determining our list of eligibility, we take into account a number of factors. For instance, human rights, as demonstrated recently by the case in Dakar, where Canada pushed a resolution on human rights. Here is one important priority of our foreign policy that used to be dealt with, if not exclusively, almost exclusively by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA). Now, with the decentralization of CIDA, it means that we will have a number of posts abroad which may increase in importance. We will also have a number of satellite posts to implement the concept of decentralization of CIDA.

We will need 350 officers, and that will become a major stream requiring constant adaptation of the corporate culture. External is a department that has strong and proud traditions. CIDA is also a department that has its way of doing things, and we will have to extract the best from both worlds. I believe we can learn something from CIDA. I managed a post in Zaire for three years where the main program was a Development Assistance Program, and there are many good things to be learned from the CIDA culture. I would hope that in this exercise of merging we will take the best of both cultures.

CIDA's decentralization represents a major percentage of your human



resources. What will be required to reconcile the two corporate cultures?

Cohabitation. It is like a marriage of convenience in the beginning. I would hope it will become, over the years, more than that. There will be a process of maturation taking place in the field at all of those posts and satellite units, but it will also require co-management by us and CIDA. What will co-management mean in this case? It will mean that the key problems caused by decentralization will have to be addressed by senior management of both External Affairs and CIDA. I can tell you there is a good spirit already. There might have been some fear and anxiety, and these are understandable for the unknown always causes fear and anxiety; but there is an *esprit de collaboration* that exists, certainly between the president and myself, and at the level of personnel, in order to make it work and make it a success.

Immigration is a significant issue identified for the 1990's. What impact will it have on External Affairs?

Briefly, immigration of refugees will change the face of the department in the years to come. Traditionally, we have had an immigration section abroad of two or three officers, but in the future in some

In our previous edition of Liaison, we discussed human resource management related to External Affairs. In this edition we will discuss specific issues with major impacts on the department and its people.