

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

- In 1991, the Japanese minister of foreign affairs established an Advisory Group on the Enhancement of Diplomatic Function whose recommendations included the creation of a Foreign Policy Bureau "to strengthen planning and coordination of comprehensive medium and long-term foreign policies", the creation of an Intelligence and Analysis Bureau "to improve functions related to information which is essential to executing foreign policy", and expanding research and "promoting exchanges between domestic sectors". The Foreign Policy Bureau currently consists of six divisions: policy coordination, policy planning, national security policy, UN policy, arms control and disarmament policy, and science and nuclear energy policy.
- At both the Department of National Defence and CIDA, there are assistant deputy ministers for policy with direct policy leadership responsibilities.
- DND has a central policy staff of about 60 members. Under new management, CIDA has been aggressively building up its policy development resources.
- At DFAIT, trade and economic officers hold "brown bag lunch" meetings most Tuesdays during 9 to 10 months of the year to discuss issues of current concern.

PROPOSAL: The Department should reinforce both the mandate and resources of the Policy Planning Secretariat, and recruit "the best and brightest" from universities, think tanks, industry and NGOs to serve terms in the Secretariat.

PROPOSAL: The department should provide for brain-storming sessions and virtual discussion groups on policy issues under development, and explore the creation of avenues for "loyal dissent".

PROPOSAL: The department should organize a regular schedule of in-house lectures and seminars, not limited to economic and trade issues, at which managers and subject specialists can brief staff at large on issues of current concern to the department.

Business Planning

Every foreign ministry in the Western world shares the problem of having to manage a relentlessly expanding international agenda with fewer resources than were available to it a decade ago. But the problem is particularly acute in Canada which has long been trying to pursue a global foreign policy with the resources of a middle power. No group has argued more strenuously than political officers for the department to set priorities and to align priorities with resources -- while also resisting the introduction of the business planning processes necessary to achieve these objectives.