

REVIEW OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS

FINAL REPORT

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Evaluation Division (SIE)
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Review of Consular Affairs

Executive Summary

The Evaluation Division in the Office of the Inspector General was requested by the Deputy Minister to examine the new demands faced by consular services and how the Consular Program could best position itself to address these demands in the future. The primary objectives of the review were to draw a comprehensive picture of FAC's Consular Affairs Program, to identify any issues related to consular affairs services, to properly understand their underlying causes, and to highlight potential solutions that should be addressed in more detail in the near future.

In recent years, more Canadians are travelling generally, and to a wider range of destinations. At the same time, new threats have led to a security conscious world, making travel in some areas more risky. The result is an increase in consular cases, more complex cases and more public scrutiny. The Consular Program has evolved dramatically in the last decade to meet these new challenges. Canadians seek consular assistance abroad for many reasons. For the majority it is to replace a lost, stolen or expired passport. Other reasons for seeking consular assistance include financial destitution, medical emergencies, family distress, arrest and detention, child abductions, deaths, evacuations following natural disasters or violent conflicts, and kidnapping.

Within the limits of this review, it appears that the FAC Consular Affairs is a sound program and is also regarded as a leader in the field. The Department, through its international network of missions and Honorary Consuls, properly and diligently delivers its services to distressed Canadians in most of the cases. The development in technology over the past decade has facilitated the work of consular officers and has increased their efficiency. Consular services at missions seem to generally enjoy the proper level of resources but the level of resources at headquarters seems to be deficient. Most respondents for this review spoke of their pride of doing consular work and are quite dedicated to fulfilling their duties.

This being said, some cases are more complex and a few are difficult high profile cases that have received media attention and subsequently criticisms from the public and political circles. The increasing demand for services and an evolving context in which to deliver these services will require in the future higher levels of resources if no adjustments are made to the mandate of Consular Affairs. Consequently, the Consular Affairs Bureau must adjust and become more proactive in anticipating problems, and must undertake more "front end" work in preparing Canadians and in dealing with critical events. Information needed in order to prevent incidents must reach Canadians in time and in ways that will ensure a better dissemination. Better policies and procedures must be designed in order to react more efficiently and diligently to events.

Principal Recommendations:

1. The Department should develop a comprehensive forward looking strategic policy governing the delivery of consular services. A special emphasis should be placed on assessment of the scope and limitations of consular services.
2. The Department should proceed with the development and implementation of a communication strategy that through various channels will state the limits of Canadian consular intervention and develop the awareness in Canadians that they are responsible for their behaviour when travelling abroad.
3. The Department should better manage its relations with the media to provide them with the right information. The communication strategy should include a pro-active approach in dealing with the media.
4. The Department should, given the expanding needs of travelling Canadians in an increasingly complex and risky environment, plan for the necessary resources to fulfil its mandate at headquarters and at missions.
5. Consular Affairs should develop and implement a more rigorous performance measurement system to improve its delivery of services in relation to its service standards.
6. A core team of consular experts should be developed to assist missions and HQ in managing crisis situations..
7. The Department should take a detailed look at and improve the structure and support provided to the Honorary Consul Program to ensure the proper selection, training, supervision and performance monitoring of Honorary Consuls by the supervising missions while at the same time not imposing a rigid structure that would deprive missions the flexibility to adapt their Honorary Consul program to their needs
8. An award system for Honorary Consuls should be put in place.
9. Better recognition of the Consular program:
 - a) main streaming through integration in the FS group and
 - b) direct reporting to senior management at the mission level.

(a detailed list of recommendations is to be found on page 51)

Section A

1. Introduction

This report summarizes the findings and recommendations of the review of Consular Affairs requested by the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. The mandate for this review was wide-ranging and all-encompassing. The Evaluation Division of the Office of the Inspector General was asked to examine the new demands faced by consular services and how the Consular Program could best position itself to address these demands in the future. This report reviews Consular Affairs activities and suggests areas that need to be addressed to further strengthen a very strong program.

2. Objectives and Scope of the Review

The review provided an opportunity to highlight strengths and successes of the Consular Program and to enable consular staff and their various stakeholders to voice concerns and draw attention to aspects of Consular Affairs that can be improved.

The primary objectives of the review were to draw a comprehensive picture of FAC's Consular Affairs Program, including the Honorary Consul Program, to identify problems related to Consular Affairs services in general, to properly understand their underlying causes and to highlight potential solutions that should be addressed in more detail in the near future.

The Review team examined:

- the relevance of the policies, service standards, tools, instructions, and procedures that guide the Consular Affairs program;
- the efficiency and effectiveness of the management of difficult cases; the training of consular officers; relationships between the consular affairs bureau and the rest of the Department; communications with the media and travellers; and, the Honorary Consul Program;
- the views of those outside government who use or may access Consular services: Canadian travellers, future travellers, representatives from NGOs, travel organizations and the private sector;
- how Canada is positioned relative to selected other countries in providing consular services;
- the quality of the consular services and clients needs and satisfaction.

The review included field visits to provide the opportunity to interact directly with consular officers in the management of cases and to assess the extent to which the policies and procedures are effective. The field visits to Hong Kong, the Philippines, the United Kingdom, Italy, Egypt and the

United States also provided the review team with opportunities to interview Canadians at missions as they were seeking Consular services.

3. Methodology

This review analysed data and information gathered through multiple lines of evidence. The main instruments and methodologies of data collection were the following:

3.1 Consular Affairs:

a) Document and data review and analysis

The review team analysed numerous documents provided by the consular affairs bureau, including descriptive reports, analytical studies, statistical reports, comparative studies, and previous reviews of Consular Affairs.

b) Headquarters Interviews

SIE conducted 35 in-person interviews with Consular Affairs staff and stakeholders in other divisions at the Department of Foreign Affairs headquarters. The interviews were held from late January to early March 2004. The Evaluation Division (SIE) adapted the interview protocol to fit the duties of each participant and their link to Consular Affairs.

c) Telephone Interviews with HOMs and Consular Officers at Missions

The review team conducted 14 telephone interviews with HOMs and 20 telephone interviews with consular officers at missions. Those interviewed were selected from a sample of small, medium and large missions. JPD was consulted in drawing up the list of participating missions. The telephone interviews focussed on issues that were pertinent to the delivery of consular services at missions and communications between missions and headquarters.

d) Focus Groups:

-- SIE organized a focus group discussion among Consular Affairs staff and other stakeholders at headquarters to address issues that had been raised in the course of the interview process. The objective was to explore in further depth two issues which were identified during the interview process: communication with Canadians, and the management of difficult cases.

-- Focus group discussions were also organized to explore with Consular Affairs managers and other stakeholders from the department issues pertaining to Consular Affairs resources at headquarters

e) A comparative study of Consular Affairs offered by other countries

SIE conducted a study to compare consular services offered by Canada and other countries similar in culture and values. Information for this study was gleaned from the web sites and interviews conducted with representatives from the embassies of France, Germany, New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the USA through their missions in Ottawa.

f) Questionnaire: for Canadians receiving consular services at missions, 682 questionnaires. This questionnaire was distributed to Canadians seeking consular services in 50 missions. Canadians were asked if they would voluntarily answer this questionnaire that focused on their views of the different consular services that Canada offers to its citizens, their expectations regarding these services and their appreciation of the services they received.

g) Questionnaire: For Canadians waiting for their documents at the Passport Office

A short questionnaire was administered in 4 Passport Office waiting rooms. This questionnaire asked Canadians about their views and their expectations concerning different aspects of consular services. This questionnaire did not probe for people's opinions of the services delivered by the Passport Office. Their views were important as future travellers. 990 Canadians agreed to share with us their opinions.

h) Questionnaire: a web-based questionnaire was developed and administered through the Consular Affairs web site. Canadians seeking information on this site were asked to answer a questionnaire dealing with consular services. 1360 Canadians responded.

i) In person interviews were conducted during site visits at seven missions with Canadians that were seeking at that time some type of consular service, 95 Canadians accepted to participate in these structured interviews dealing with their opinions regarding different facets of consular services. (See Appendix A for summaries by country)

j) In person interviews were conducted on site visits with seven HOMs to explore their opinions and experience with the Honorary Consul Program and consular affairs; over 60 interviews were conducted with consular officers, both Canadian and LES staff;

3.2 The Honorary Consul Program:

A separate study of the Honorary Consul Program was conducted to develop a strategic understanding (context, environment, history, profile, roles, scope) of the Honorary Consul program and to identify areas for improvement.

k) A focus group discussion was organized with stakeholders from Consular Affairs and other sectors from the department to explore the different facets of the Honorary Consul Program: changing roles, relationship with headquarters, expectations, etc.

l) Telephone interviews were also conducted with ten other HOMs of missions to discuss the Honorary Consul Program.

m) Telephone interviews were conducted with 14 Honorary Consuls.

n) Representatives from the United Kingdom, the United States and New Zealand, responsible for their Honorary Consul programs were contacted to gather information about their programs.

o) The comments, descriptions, analysis and subsequent recommendations found in this report stem from the aggregation of the multiple lines of evidence. Where needed the specific source of the information is identified but often the analysis presented is based on a review of the aggregated data.

4. Limitations of Review - Quality of Data

The review study design provided for a comprehensive sample of key informants at headquarters and missions abroad, document reviews, focus groups of internal stakeholders, and specialized studies of the Honorary Consul Program and other countries' consular services. However, given the sensitive nature of detention cases, we did not involve such individuals in our review interviews except for four prisoners who agreed to answer the review questionnaire.

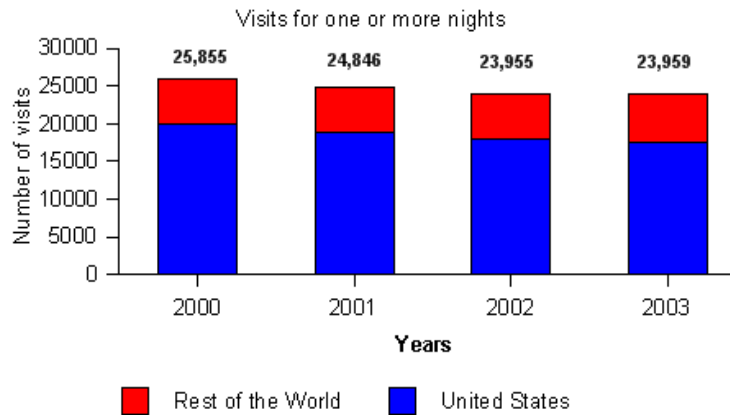
5. Evolving Context

In recent years, more Canadians are travelling generally, and to a wider range of destinations. At the same time, new threats have led to a more security conscious world, making travel in some areas more risky. Some countries, in the name of security, have occasionally demonstrated less respect for generally accepted consular protection practices and the mobility and rights of travellers. These practices have caused human rights advocates to become increasingly vocal in criticising what they see as a disregard for customary international law. The result is more consular cases, more complex cases, and more public scrutiny. The Consular Program has evolved dramatically in the last decade to meet these new challenges.

During the 1990's, Canadian travel to countries other than the United States and Western Europe increased by 37%. Since September 11, travel has declined slightly to just under 24 million visits of one night or more in 2002 from a high of 25.9 million in 2000 (see Figure 1). Three-quarters of this travel is to the United States followed by Europe, the Americas, Asia-Oceania and finally Africa.

Various factors will continue to affect the demand on consular services abroad. An aging population with medical problems or disabilities will travel abroad in even greater numbers. Canada's large immigrant population will continue to travel back to their original homelands to visit family and friends despite the political or other risks they may encounter. Canadians will continue to travel to remote and exotic places for business or pleasure despite the risks of terrorism, civil unrest or natural disasters.

Figure 1: Travel Statistics (in thousands)



Since 9/11 and the heightened threat from and response to terrorism, considerable changes are occurring in the approach to consular cases. There are also higher concerns for Canadians travelling in certain countries, where national security concerns impinge on the rights of their nationals and foreigners alike. The risks are especially high for Canadians with dual citizenship travelling in the country of their other nationality. In addition to the increase in volume, Canadian citizens travelling or living abroad are having higher expectations of what consular services can and cannot provide. This may be linked in part to the consular fee Canadians pay when acquiring a new passport. They consequently expect more service in return.

In other ways, the increased scrutiny by the Canadian media of consular cases and political intervention in the management of certain consular cases has also contributed to the pressure felt by consular officers to provide services beyond stated standards. Media coverage gives these cases a higher profile and brings into play a larger and more senior group of departmental officials often at the behest of family and friends of the individual involved in the case in question. “It is more often easier to provide extra services than to deal with accusations that you have not gone the extra mile”.

6. Brief History of Consular Affairs

The provision of consular services to Canadians by the federal government is a relatively recent development. From Confederation until World War II, consular services for Canadians living or travelling abroad were provided almost entirely by British diplomatic and consular posts. Canadian immigration agents and trade commissioners, posted abroad from 1868 and 1895 onwards respectively, unofficially performed some consular functions for Canadians in their particular areas. When the Department of External Affairs was established by Act of Parliament in 1909, the law made no reference to consular affairs, but an Order-in-Council of June 21, 1909 directed “that the administration of consular matters and the issuance of passports ... be continued through the Department of External Affairs”.

Some subsequent legislation, such as the Citizenship Act of 1976 and the Canada Shipping Act of 1970, assigned certain specific responsibilities of a consular nature to the Department or to its officers stationed abroad. Most consular services, however, are provided under the royal prerogative. This means that they are made available at the discretion of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, as a service to Canadians, and that nobody is entitled to claim any consular service as a matter of right.

The first four Canadian consuls were appointed in 1940 to Godthaab (Greenland), Portland (Maine) and to our legations in Paris and Tokyo. It was not until after World War II, however, that the Government made a major effort to repatriate consular responsibilities for Canadians from the British. Canada developed its own pattern of consular activity, adapting British policies and practices and international customs to suit Canadian needs, meeting the demand for services in a pragmatic way. Over the years, consular officers serving abroad have made dedicated efforts to provide services in a humane and caring way, as a reflection of the fact that Canada is concerned about the welfare of its citizens abroad as well as at home.

For generations after the first Canadian consular officers were posted abroad in 1940, the Canadian consular program consisted largely of ad hoc arrangements to assist Canadians in distress. Its main elements were a manual of instructions, diplomatic and trade officers reluctantly endowed with a consular commission, part-time clerical staff to handle front-line operations, and a small division at headquarters to take on sensitive cases.

Prior to 1988, the provision of consular services was the responsibility of the political/economic FS stream. The consular program was then transferred to the social affairs stream until immigration split off from the Department in 1992. Since 1992, the administrative group has been responsible for consular affairs. Likewise, the Consular Affairs Bureau has been shifted around from branch to branch being part of immigration/consular/passport branch in 1990, transferred to the legal and consular branch in 1992, to the international business branch in 1996 and is now part of the corporate services branch since 1999.

7. Description of Consular Affairs

Canadians seek consular assistance abroad for many reasons. For some, it is simply to seek advice on local conditions or Canadian regulations. For the majority it is to replace a lost, stolen or expired passport. With the number of Canadians living overseas increasing each year, there are many who seek consular assistance in filing citizenship applications and in registering themselves as Canadians abroad. The more serious reasons for seeking consular assistance include financial destitution, medical emergencies, family distress, arrest and detention, child abductions, deaths, evacuations following natural disasters or violent conflicts, and kidnapping. Hundreds of thousands of Canadians seek assistance from FAC posts abroad.

The consular affairs program is one of the most sophisticated of any operated by the Department of Foreign Affairs. It provides consular services at over 270 points of service in approximately 180 countries and it is capable of assisting Canadians anywhere there is a telephone or e-mail connection,

24 hours a day, seven days a week, in every major language. The program makes advanced use of information technology to monitor international developments, alert Canadians to trouble, connect them directly to consular officers for advice and assistance, allow consular staff to provide a rapid and professional response. As a preventative measure, the Consular website provides one-stop shopping for Canadians planning to travel abroad.

Consular Affairs is a vital and highly visible organisation within the Department. There are approximately 800 employees involved in the delivery of consular services, 77 of which are in Ottawa. The Consular Affairs web site www.voyage.gc.ca is the Department's most visited site with an average of 75,000 unique visitors each month.

8. Structure and Function of CA at HQ

The Consular Affairs Bureau (JPD) at Headquarters is situated in the Corporate Services Branch and reports to the Assistant Deputy Minister, Corporate Services, Passport and Consular Affairs. The bureau is comprised of five divisions.

8.1 Case Management Division (JPO)

The Case Management Division manages individual consular cases in co-operation with missions abroad, and with other federal and provincial government departments and agencies. Case management officers, working on a regional basis, assist Canadians in dealing with the full range of consular problems. They serve as the contact point for family members and friends of consular clients in Canada. The division includes a unit which deals with cases specific to children's issues, and acts as the National Coordinator for the 'Our Missing Children' program.

8.2 Emergency Services and Operations Centre (JPE)

The Emergency Services Section manages the Operations Centre, on behalf of both the consular program and the Department at large. It is also responsible for contingency planning and crisis management. The Operations Centre is staffed round the clock by experienced officers, monitoring world events and alerting appropriate departmental officials if FAC action or intervention is required. The Centre also facilitates communications for, and with, FAC personnel in Headquarters and abroad, and is the call-centre for the Department during major international incidents or crises. The division's consular responsibilities include responding to calls for travel information and advice, providing emergency consular assistance and guidance to Canadians abroad, covering after hours consular services for over 150 missions, managing all non-technical aspects of the Registration of Canadians Abroad (ROCA) and all facets of consular contingency. After business hours, the Centre serves as the Department's worldwide communications centre, including answering calls to ministers' offices and the press office.

8.3 Client Services Division (JPS)

The mandate of the Client Services Division is to promote the role of consular representatives abroad and offer information on security issues in foreign countries. This information is communicated to the Canadian public and the Travel Industry via various publications and promotional tools, the Web Site, the Outreach Program, the Travel Information Program, correspondence unit, and the Drugs and Travel Program. The Web Site is the Department's main communications medium to disseminate up to date information to Canadians about consular issues. It is an important source of information on safety and security conditions abroad for the Canadian public, the travel industry and MPs.

The Travel Information Program (TIP) actively monitors the world to pick up information that may affect the security of Canadians abroad. This information is published in Country Travel Reports (over 225 countries) and in the Current Issues section of the Consular Affairs Web Site which offers a wide range of information and advice on foreign travel. The Safe-Travel Publications Series includes "Bon Voyage But..." and 14 other titles available on line and distributed free of charge. In 2003, over 2 million copies of these publications were distributed. "Bon Voyage But..." which is distributed with every passport renewal accounted for nearly half of this amount.

The Outreach Program unit organizes promotional campaigns and performs presentations aimed at the Travel industry and Canadian travellers throughout Canada. This division also responds to Ministerial Correspondence and e-mails related to Consular matters received on the voyage@international.gc.ca mailbox. Finally, the Drugs and Travel Information Program is designed to communicate to Canadian travellers and the travel industry advice on travel and illegal drugs and travel with prescription drugs and other remedies; create awareness about the consequences of getting involved with illegal drugs or travelling with unauthorised drugs in foreign countries and discourage such behaviour.

8.4 Informatics Division (JPC)

The informatics division is responsible for the development, maintenance and support of the COSMOS system. COSMOS consists of a number of modules: CAMANT, GenSearch, Communicator, ROCA, PMP, EmServ, COMIP. These systems are available to all consular points of service including Honorary Consuls. JPC is also responsible for the development of the Bureau's web sites and other associated tools. All training for COSMOS users is provided by JPC staff who deliver one-on-one training sessions in person and by telephone. All Consular sites are maintained and supported by JPC's own web team. The web team also provides custom applications allowing other, non-technical, members of the Bureau to provide and edit content for the web sites.

8.5 Program Services (JPP)

The Program Services Division is the principal point of contact for all matters related to Consular Services Standards, cost recovery issues, Consular Specialized Services Fees; for bilateral consular agreements, transfer of offenders treaties, and, consular co-operation with other countries including

the Canada/Australia Consular Sharing Agreement; for consular policy matters (e.g. consular policy and dual nationals; consular policy in death penalty cases); and for program co-ordination with other departments/agencies. The division provides a comprehensive research and analysis service, based on COMIP/CAMANT data, to capture and present statistical information relevant to client satisfaction and the management of Consular resources. The division manages the Honorary Consul Program, Distressed Canadian Fund recoveries, Voting Abroad, Consular Designations, and the Delegation of Signing Authority to Designated LES.

Program Services (through JPPT) is also responsible for matters related to the on-going delivery and evaluation of training programs for staff involved in the delivery of consular services; for revisions to the Manual of Consular Instructions; and, for liaison with the Passport Office on policy directives to missions.

8.6 Program Development (JPA)

The Program Development division develops strategic plans and directions for the handling of assigned major projects in response to audit and evaluation reports, emerging and expanding consular demands in an evolving security-conscious world. This includes the development of an enhanced and/or overarching framework for consular services as well as accompanying procedures, standards, systems, services delivery and re-engineering training needs.

9. Consular Affairs At Missions

Through its network of embassies, high commissions, consulates and Honorary Consuls, FAC provides a variety of consular services.

At missions, the Consular Affairs Program is usually managed by the Management Consular Officer (MCO) who reports to the Head of Mission (HOM). The MCO is also responsible for finance, human resources, property management, information technology and security. The MCO is supported by Locally Engaged Staff (LES) and depending on the size of the mission by Canada-based Staff (CBS).

The LES consular officers conduct the day to day work and interaction with Canadians seeking assistance. However, difficult or more complex cases are referred to the Canada based staff.

10. Consular Affairs: By the numbers

The Consular Affairs Bureau gathers, analyses and tracks statistics from COSMOS data sources specifically from CAMANT, the case management program, PMP, the passport management program and COMIP which captures time spent on all aspects of consular work. These statistics are used to measure workloads, assist management in resource planning, respond to media inquiries and as a source for reporting requirements such as the DPR, business plans, reviews and audits. There has clearly been an upward trend in the number of cases handled by consular affairs over the past 10 years averaging 7.5% per year (see Figure 2).

However since 2001, there has been a slight increase to this upward trend (9.0% in 2002 and 9.8% in 2003). In 2003, consular officers handled over 14,500 protection and assistance cases, processed over 20,000 citizenship applications and 31,000 registrations, and issued over 116,000 passports. Of the 184,054 cases logged in 2003, passports (63%) citizenship applications (17%) and ROCA (Registration of Canadians Abroad) (11%) accounted for 91% of the total (see Figure 3). The remaining 9% of cases are divided among the various assistance categories with the top four being loss and theft, general assistance, arrest and detention, and legal/notary. Other categories include children issues, medical, financial assistance, deaths, well-being and distress, and disaster. Trend lines show a steady increase over the last five years in all categories except for financial assistance cases.

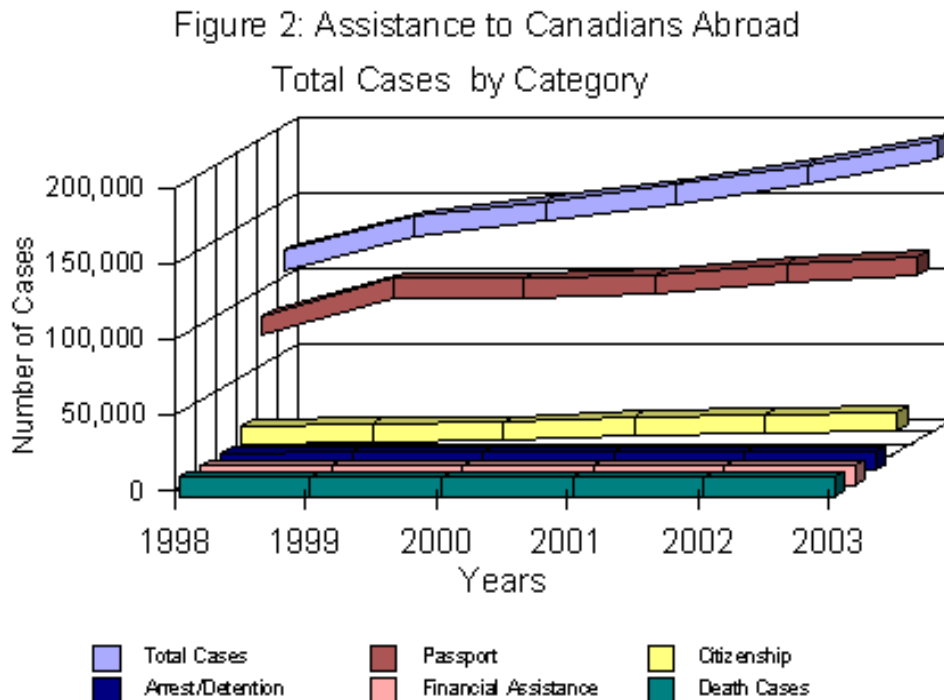
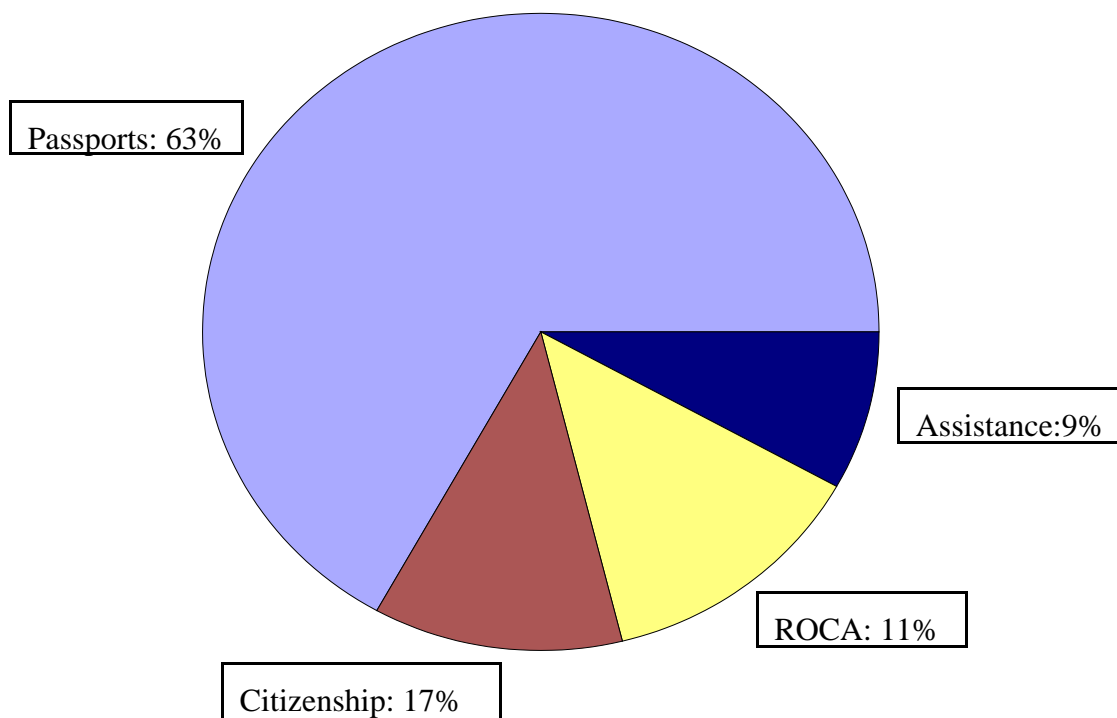


Figure 3: 2003 Case Breakdown by Category



Although we have been cautioned about the integrity of the COMIP data and using it to draw conclusions, this data shows that there has been a steady increase in workload in the management of cases over the past five years. Of this, passports, citizenship applications and ROCA, which can be described as the more routine work account for approximately 50% of the workload yet 92% of the case load. On the other hand, whereas general assistance cases take up over a third of the workload, yet number relatively few cases. Although work dealing with passports is quite significant for any consular section at missions, passports and citizenship services are not defined as consular services. These services are offered on behalf of the Passport Office and Citizenship and Immigration through our consular staff at missions.

Among other categories, “arrest/detention”, while still far behind the two previously mentioned categories in terms of number of cases and days of work, shows a very large increase in the number of cases between 1999 and 2003. A large proportion of that increase (more than two thirds) has taken place in the United States where the number of such cases has more than doubled over that period. Since 2002, there have been efforts devoted to ensuring that the data entered into the COMIP system is as complete and as accurate as possible.

Looking at consular cases from a regional perspective, Europe has by far the largest number of cases with Asia/Oceania a distant second. Those two regions also have shown the largest absolute increase in the number of cases over the period in question. However, starting from a smaller base, Africa/Middle East has had the largest increase percentage-wise in the number of cases.

The review was cautioned by many consular stakeholders, abroad and at headquarters, about the integrity of the COMIP data. A variety of comments were heard concerning COMIP. At missions, some consular officers stated that they only completed their COMIP entries, “when we have time”, “if we have time”, that there are not enough categories to reflect the different types of consular activities, that some activities can be associated with multiple categories of work, that some consular assistance work cannot be assigned to a category, etc. This review could not evaluate the validity of these comments and the degree of reliability or the COMIP tool but the comments at missions and at headquarters were so consistent that a proper assessment of the reliability of COMIP should be conducted.

On the other hand the COMIP data is regarded as but one source of information when decisions are to be made to ensure that consular resources are appropriately allocated. The Program Services Division (JPP) has tried in many ways to improve the reliability of the COMIP data: the COMIP Reference Manual is now part of the regular COMIP training sessions where copies are given to all those who will be performing consular work abroad, consular program managers are reminded of outstanding COMIP logs each time they log into COSMOS, missions that are delinquent in their COMIP reporting are given special attention by phone and any special problems are brought to the attention of audit inspection teams.

Section B

Issues and Findings

1. Policies / Instructions

The Vienna Convention on Consular Relations is a framework for what consular services should be offered to citizens, and how they should be offered. Signatories to the Vienna Convention have discretion as to how services are delivered to their citizens.

There is no overarching detailed official written policy of the Government of Canada on consular services. There exists some policy documents dealing with specific consular policy issues such as death penalty cases or dual nationals. These are often summaries of consular affairs practices out of which a policy is highlighted and put forward. Consular Affairs does have a comprehensive list of procedures, protocols and instructions that assist consular officers serving Canadians abroad. These appear to be updated as warranted and included into a Consular Manual that is also available on-line.

A strong majority of respondents at missions and headquarters indicated that they did not feel that the Department needed new policies or that existing policies needed to be reviewed. They do not believe that Consular Affairs policies as such put the Government at-risk. However, it is important to note that policies must be actualized to not only reflect the “realities” of 2004 but must be based on thoughtful reflection of what will be consular services and how they will be operationalized over the next decade or two.

It is the perceived inconsistencies and “exceptions” in decisions concerning consular cases that make the work of consular officers more difficult. Respondents said that their training and instructions can be quite precise but the reality of work in the field, expectations of Canadians and varying directions from headquarters lead them to offer services that go beyond any existing policies or consular instructions. These kinds of situations were reported as often being the source of serious frustration, stress and additional workload.

Given the increasing number of consular cases, the increasing level of risk for Canadians travelling abroad and the significant number of dual nationals, some fundamental questions were raised by many respondents, such as: “Do we deliver too much?”, “Is it in the best interest of Canada to continue to deliver this level of service?” Respondents for this review questioned the scope of FAC consular services and the perceived flexibility on the application of FAC policies on different issues. Respondents suggested that the Department could pull back on the reach of some consular services in order to deliver a more streamlined array of consular services.

It is evident that the demands for consular services will continue to increase. Given this fact, without changes, the Department will always be in a position of “keeping up” with service demands. This requires an investment of additional resources to deliver what some have labelled “Cadillac consular

services”. Some believe that the Department should engage in a self-assessment exercise to determine the “width and breath” of Canadian consular services. These types of serious questions and issues, related to policy and the high profile cases of the last few years, highlight the need for a general robust policy governing the delivery of consular services. This overarching Consular Affairs policy needs to be developed in consultation with a variety of stakeholders, OGD’s, organizations outside government and the general public, in order to provide an overall philosophy and framework for consular services that will be offered to citizens.

2. Service Standards

The Consular Affairs Program is based on written service standards. The Consular Service Standards were established and introduced in 1996 as part of the Departments cost-recovery initiative to levy a \$25 Consular Fee at the time passports are issued. The standards formed part of the Treasury Board submission on consular cost recovery , and included a commitment to make them public and report on performance against them. Reporting is done via the annual Departmental Performance Report.

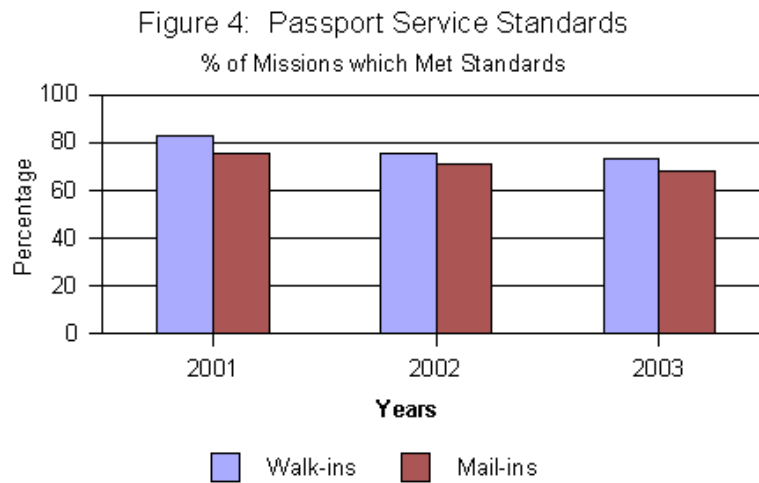
These service standards identify the qualitative and quantitative service levels that the Department requires of its employees in order to deliver consular services to Canadians “at all times with sensitivity, empathy, courtesy, speed, accuracy and fairness” (Consular Affairs Web Page). In particular, it identifies that consular officials will respond immediately to all emergencies, notify family and friends within 12 hours, initiate action on missing persons within 12 hours, contact persons who have been arrested or detained within 24 hours, assist with financial transfers for a fee within 2 days, issue emergency passports as required and other passport within 5 days (in person) or 10 days (mail-in), perform most legal and notary services within three days, respond to most information requests within 3 to 5 days, and make contact or visit prisoners or detainees every 3, 6 or 12 months depending on the location.

Consular Affairs service standards are published on its web-site and posted at some missions abroad. In a comparative study of Consular service standards, it was noted that Canada is the only country among those compared (United States, Australia, United Kingdom, New Zealand, Germany, and France) that publishes a list of services and response standards. Security concerns and the evolution of procedures were cited by many of the interviewees from comparative countries regarding the lack of published standards. As well, comparator countries suggest that there is no compelling reason for a country to have a service standard except perhaps for the provision of passports and notary and legal services. Standards for all other services were expressed as desirable targets and were not considered obligatory.

The main driving force behind consular services is the compassionate nature of the consular officers and their genuine desire to help. For many of the consular officers interviewed for the study, the goal was to help and they felt a standard simply was not relevant. Many expressed the opinion that their job was 24/7 requiring them to be on-call constantly. Most countries referred to a 24/7 help line available at their home offices.

Table 1 (p.22) shows the comparison of service standards of Canada with the six comparator countries. Most of the entries for other countries are shown as “immediate”, “as requested” or “as required” in spite of the very heavy caseload identified by most consular officers as the major impediment to expeditiously closing all of their cases. Except for the issuance of passports for which Canada’s published standards exceed those of the comparator countries, all other standards are not comparable and it would appear that comparator countries offer the same or similar services as those of Canada.

The next question that needs to be asked is “does Canada meet its published service standards?” This question is difficult to answer within the scope of this study. The COSMOS database tracks both passport issuance times and contact with prisoners abroad. Data for the issuance of passports over the last three years shows service standards for walk-ins (5 days) were met in 83% of the cases in 2001 but have steadily declined to 73% in 2003. Similarly 75% of missions in 2001 met the service standards of 10 days for mail-ins and has similarly declined to 68% in 2003 (see Figure 4).



The data for contact with prisoners abroad is unreliable to report any conclusions because of a lack of data entry (22.5% of the total). Of the data available as of February 2004, at least 27% of the contact with prisoners/detainees world-wide did not meet the service standard.

This is especially pronounced in the Americas or U.S.A. where the data shows that over 50% of the cases did not meet the service standards. Again, the reviewers have been cautioned as to the integrity of the data, as missions might have neglected to update the “last contact” field.

The performance measurement system in place does not tell if the Department is meeting its published service standards. Where it does for passports, it shows a decline in meeting them. Another avenue for reporting how the Department is doing, is to look at client satisfaction. The Consular Affairs Bureau commissioned surveys in both 2001 and 2003 of consular clients living in the United States and Canada. The vast majority of respondents (85% from the 2003 survey) were those that received a passport service because of the high availability of addresses. This will skew the results somewhat

as worldwide passport services accounted for 63% of the services rendered. There were no Canadians or the families thereof who were arrested or detained abroad who responded to the survey. Nevertheless, the general response rate was within industry standards. Overall, 76% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied compared to 12% who were not satisfied. This compares favourably with the 2001 survey where 79% were satisfied. It should be noted that 53% in 2003 were very satisfied with the service they received as compared to 45% in 2001. Fully 80% of respondents felt the service met their expectations with over half of the respondents stating that the service rendered was better or much better than expected. A number of service aspects fell short of the importance given to them by respondents. Although rated overall positively, respondents felt that mission service hours were not up to par. There were also larger discrepancies between waiting time and staff willing to go the extra mile.

Missions have begun providing feedback forms to clients to report on the service they received. To date a small sample numbering 104 has been compiled. Again, the results are skewed by 80% of respondents having received passport services and the remaining 20% indicated that they received services of a non-emergency nature. In particular, although 30 missions were identified as providing a service, Nairobi accounts for 23% of the respondents. The results showed that nearly 85% of respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the service received and just under 80% felt that the service met their expectations.

There are a number of important factors influencing the performance of consular services. One is the tendency to provide services above and beyond the published standards because of appeals from anxious families, representations and pressure from Members of Parliament or other political influence, and negative or the threat of negative media coverage. A philosophy of saying “yes” has at times created a sequence of growing expectations among Canadians in distress demanding services that are not normally provided. Pressure from the media and political interference raise expectations. For consular officials abroad, there is growing frustration on not knowing the limits of service. Commonly felt is the notion “that you are only as good as your next big case”. A second factor influencing performance is the situation where individual consular officers, both CBS and LES, may provide services at a lower standard because of a lack of experience or training in consular affairs.

Table 1 Comparison of Services Standards: Canada - Comparator Countries

Services	Canada	Australia	France	Germany	New Zealand	UK	USA
Protection and assistance							
- Respond to an emergency	Immediately	Immediately	Immediately	As requested	As requested	Immediately	Immediately
- Communications with Family and / or Friends in the Event of an Emergency	12 hours	As requested	As requested	As requested	As requested	As required	As requested
- Contact with Arrested or Detained Persons	Within 24 hours	As requested	Immediately	As requested	As quickly as possible on request	Immediately on Request	Immediate request to see prisoner 48 hours
- Contact with Prisoners	3, 6, or 12 months depending on region	Depends on the circumstances	Depends on the circumstances		Frequently & as requested	According to circumstances	3 - 12 months depending on region
Passports Services							
- Emergency	As requested	48 hours - additional fee	As required	1 day (temporary travel document)	Same day for genuine emergencies otherwise 3 days	Will attempt to meet travel dates of traveller	Same day
- Regular - In Person	5 days	10 days + post	3 months	4 - 6 weeks	10 days	4 weeks	2 weeks
- Regular - By Mail	10 days	10 days + post	3 months	4 - 6 weeks + post	10 days + post	4 weeks + post	4 weeks (mail in renewals are only available in Canada)
Citizenship Services							
- Application in Person	10 days		1 year			As required	
- Application By Mail	20 days					As required	
Information: Canada / Third Country							
- Travel - Third Countries	Immediately		On-line	On-line	Immediately - on-line	Immediately - on-line	
- Others	5 days				Refer to other country except <i>pensions</i> (immediate) & voting (on-line)	5 days except voting (information on-line)	
Information Local							
- Travel	Immediately		On-line	On-line	Immediate	Immediately	
- Others	3 days				Refer to other country except legal services (as requested)	Immediately (List of lawyers on-line for legal services)	
Legal and Notary	2 - 5 days (As required)		As required	As required	As requested except <i>legalization, serving & obtaining</i>	n/a	

The majority of countries that were considered during this review place more responsibility on the shoulders of their citizens. They clearly tell their citizens about the limits of possible interventions on their behalf in other countries. In the case of citizens with dual citizenship they tell their citizens that when they are in their country of origin (or another country for which they have citizenship), they are “home” and cannot expect full consular services from the country of their “other” citizenship.

Below are a list of specifications for each of the comparator countries:

Australia: General Practice to get back to clients with initial response within 24 hours. Consular Services Charter offers 24 hour Consular Emergency Centre. There are no guaranteed response times.

France: The general rule is to reply as quickly as possible. There are no standards. Service depends on the specific circumstances.

Germany: The Department of Foreign Affairs in Germany maintains a 24/7 answering service for immediate assistance.

New Zealand: Few specific Standards identified on the web but implication is as stated in the chart. Passports have specific response times.

United Kingdom: Service expectations are available in a Citizen’s Charter but not on the web. (Note: The Citizens’ Charter is considered an outmoded term.) Service expectations are generally considered as an internal guide.

United States of America: Consular Affairs offers no service standards. Each case is responded to depending on the circumstances. Many of the information services are available on-line.

3. Consular Services Tools

The various consular tools at the disposal of consular officers received high praise for their usefulness and their ease of use by respondents at missions and respondents at headquarters who have used or still access these tools. COSMOS in particular, which has been improved on a constant basis, is perceived and reputed to be state of the art in the field of consular affairs. COSMOS is for most users a read write information application dealing with individuals who request consular services. It is fully accessible to all consular officers, Honorary Consuls and LES at all missions. It can now, in some areas, be accessed by consular officers from a distance (iCOSMOS). In some instances, for some users, the COSMOS system is a read only application.

COSMOS is FAC’s consular software package that enables the Department to collect, store, transmit and retrieve information on all consular cases dealt with by Canadian missions anywhere in the world. COSMOS’ components are the following:

- CAMANT - is the case management component of COSMOS. It identifies, stores and disseminates information used to manage consular cases.
- COMIP - is the consular management component, used for the analysis of consular work by mission or HQ division/unit, the monitoring of workload levels and the targeting of appropriate resources as required.
- ROCA - ROCA (Registration of Citizens Abroad) is the citizen registration component of the COSMOS consular software package. Canadians who live

- more than three months outside Canada are asked to register with the mission nearest to where they plan to stay.
- PMP - is the passport management database that includes the information on requests for passports made at missions abroad.
- GenSearch - is the generalized search component of COSMOS. It searches the entire COSMOS database for cases entered through the various COSMOS modules.
- Communicator - is the case communicator component of COSMOS. It monitors case notes that are relevant to the management of specific consular cases.

The number of COSMOS users is as follows:

- 934 COSMOS accounts have the Notes role. Of those, 933 also have the CAMANT role. This allows them to see all cases and all notes for those cases.
- Of those 933, 773 are mission users, including 137 program managers. 78 are Consular Affairs (JPD) users at headquarters, and 83 are non-mission and non-JPD users.

The non-mission and non-JPD users are diverse:

- Passport Office (73 users) users have access to CAMANT, Communicator, PMP and PMPInv. This access is needed to work on passport cases.
- MKM (2 users). Access to everything.
- AGY, Youth International Internship Program (2 users). Access to ROCA only as they are responsible for adding clients to the ROCA database.
- BCM, Media Relations Office (1 user). Access to CAMANT, Notes, Communicator and GenSearch.
- Correctional Services Canada (1 user).
- SMF (Financial Management Section) (3 users). Those users can only access PMP. This is so that they can provide a reconciliation for the Passport Office of monies collected at missions and what passport services they paid for.
- SMSS (Business Intelligence and Salary Management) (1 account). Back-end access to a number of tables, but not to Notes.

4. Management of Difficult / High Profile Cases

4.1 Overview

The following factors, among others, contribute to the heightened risk that some consular cases will attract more attention, will be more difficult to manage and will result in a higher profile: the increased number of Canadians travelling abroad, the fact that Canadians are travelling to more ‘exotic’ locations and/or countries, and the increased number of Canadians with dual or multiple citizenships.

Cases may be considered difficult because of their nature or complexity. In the case of dual nationals, the level of complexity is often augmented. The complexity stems from the fact that certain countries do not respect human rights; not from the fact that a person is a dual national. Other cases may acquire a high profile because they attract a lot of attention on the part of many players, not the least from

Canadian media, NGOs or politicians. Respondents indicated that they can deal with complex cases more easily if they do not become the subject of great interest to the Canadian media. It is felt that once a case is the subject of headlines in Canada, its management becomes more difficult between Canadians and between the missions and the country it is dealing with. The host of stakeholders that become involved in such a case puts much pressure on consular officers and officials in missions.

Many respondents believe that too much time is spent by consular officers on briefings and responding quickly to internal and external queries, rather than attending to the task at hand: resolving the problems. Although most cases become complex as a result of the behaviour of the distressed Canadians or their families, they are the ones who suffer in the end. The distressed Canadians or their family are not made aware that the information they may give to the media could be detrimental to the resolution of the case. On some occasions, comments made by the families or the distressed Canadians when they go to the media impede the negotiation and resolution of the problems. As a result, consular officers sometimes burn their contacts in the host country.

The level of media attention on a few cases has contributed to the false perception that Canadian Consular Affairs are often not properly fulfilling their mandate. Less than 1% of cases become high profile cases. They often are characterized by the following variables: they involve countries that do not respect human rights, dual nationals, there are often security/terrorism issues surrounding the case, they might involve torture of the individual and family members or an interest group have focussed media attention on the case. Despite very careful case management by the mission and headquarters, there is always the risk that a case will not evolve to the satisfaction of the individual or his/her family and friends. The limits of the influence of the Canadian government are not always accepted or understood. There is no doubt that all has to be done in order to minimize the risk of such cases. Consular Affairs has instituted procedural changes and formed a high level committee to manage difficult/high profile cases both actual and potential. This is in order to assure that actions and communications are consistent with issues affecting security, legal affairs, communications, bilateral relations and reflect an agreed upon strategy for handling the various aspects of these cases. Respondents said that this resulted in a better sharing of the burden and responsibility of dealing with such cases by bringing in the expertise of sectors other than consular, such as the geographic and legal bureaux. Respondents said that they believe the Department is now better equipped to respond to new cases before they become high profile. All respondents also added that the Department or the government will not be able to avoid all such cases. Respondents were clear, that there will be other difficult high profile cases that cannot be avoided entirely, and that the Department has to be prepared to handle them.

Heads of mission, consular officers, Honorary Consuls, non government stakeholders and Canadians met at missions were questioned about the government's handling of high profile cases. Although government insiders (HOMs, Consuls, etc.) are more informed of government processes and people outside government receive their information via the media, the general opinion heard from a very significant majority of respondents was that they could not propose alternatives to the way the government had handled the public portion of such cases. Many stated that we must accept that there are and will be many instances, in and with other countries, where Canada cannot or in a very limited way, use its influence to assist Canadians in difficulty. There is a limit to Canada's influence within another country as there is a limit to how much information can be shared with the public and the media given the limits imposed by the Privacy Act.

4.2 Citizens with Dual or Multiple Citizenships

Since the 1980's, Canada has had a significant influx of immigrants and refugees, combined with a radical shift in the country of origin of the newcomers. A large number of recent immigrants came from countries where respect for human rights and international conventions is not up to Canadian standards. A number of those countries also present a higher level of personal risk to travellers.

A large number of Canadians born in foreign countries retain the citizenship of their country of origin. They are also likely to maintain family, cultural or business ties to that country of origin, leading to more or less frequent visits. Those factors contribute to a higher risk of consular cases related to dual citizenship. This is an area of serious concern to many respondents at missions and headquarters.

As stated in the Consular Affairs booklet on this subject, Canadian law allows a person to remain or become a citizen of another country and still be recognized as a Canadian. However, dual citizenship is not legally recognized in all countries. This can and has led to serious difficulties for Canadians when they travel in another country in which they have citizenship. Multiple citizenships can also lead to problems when a person visits a third country and there is confusion over what passport was used to enter that country.

The consular document (also found on FAC's www.voyage.gc.ca site) mentions the most common risks and problems associated with dual citizenship. The most common risk is that the other country will not recognize the person's Canadian citizenship, especially if the person entered the country using the other country's passport. This problem was frequently mentioned by consular officers at missions. If another country does not recognize a person's Canadian citizenship, Canadian consular services can be denied or made very difficult to deliver. Consular officers at Canadian missions abroad provide to dual nationals the same level of services as to any other Canadian. When a country does not recognize a person's Canadian citizenship, the ensuing problems for this Department may lead to accusations and the false perception that the Department is not doing enough for a Canadian in need of assistance.

Even though the risk that dual citizens may face when travelling abroad is well publicized on the Department's web site, many consular officers interviewed recommended doing even more in order to inform those Canadians of the limits of consular interventions on their behalf. Most Canadians who travel are generally not aware and make no effort to inform themselves on Canadian consular services. Instructions for dealing with dual citizens have been reviewed recently by Consular Affairs and further information for Canadians concerning potential risks for dual nationals have been posted on the Consular Affairs website.

Positions of other countries regarding consular services to dual nationals can be grouped into three themes: countries that do not provide consular services to dual nationals living in their country of second nationality (Jamaica, Holland, South Africa, Switzerland); countries that grudgingly provide consular services to these individuals (USA); and countries like Canada with no restrictions on the provision of consular services to dual nationals. Adopting a radically different position in Canada could be seen as quite inconsistent with longstanding Canadian politics and policies.

4.3 Landed Immigrants and Permanent Residents

There is no official obligation on the part of Canadian missions to offer any consular service to all Canadian landed immigrants; consular policy is that it is left at the discretion of mission officers to decide if and what services they may offer. In practice, however, respondents said that while the decision to assist an individual is left to their discretion, in fact they often if not always provide some services to permanent residents who have not obtained Canadian citizenship. Some of these individuals may be travelling on a Canadian Certificate of Identity which includes the \$ 25.00 Consular fee. Landed immigrants are provided such services on a case by case basis. Although respondents said that permanent residents are offered services, many questioned the policy of offering services to non Canadians.

4.4 Countries Suspected of Practising Torture

Some countries are known or suspected of practising torture on prisoners. For consular officers posted in those countries, the problem can be twofold. First, such countries do not always recognize the person's Canadian citizenship and consular services can thus be difficult to offer. Secondly, respondents in missions spoke of the difficulty in recognizing that a person they are visiting in prison is being submitted to physical or mental torture. Consular officers readily recognized the difficulty they face given their lack of expertise in detecting such treatment. Respondents spoke of the need for training or information on this matter. The Consular Affairs Bureau is reviewing this issue and is planning on informing and/or training officers once the training is ready.

Another element, as reported by some respondents from geographics at headquarters, is the delicate situation where on one hand the Department may wish to develop commercial links or bilateral relations with certain countries and on the other hand Consular Affairs may warn Canadians of dangers or difficulties in travelling or working in those countries.

5. Canadian travellers and consular services

5.1 The opinion of those delivering assistance to Canadians

Travellers' Behaviour

Departmental respondents indicated that when travelling, many Canadians tend to minimize their responsibilities and overestimate the power of the consular services in helping them when problems occur. Instead of avoiding potential problems they will tend to rely on the Canadian government to bail them out. Because of this attitude:

- Travellers do not consistently register with the embassies prior to leaving or upon arrival in the foreign countries.
- Travellers do not read documentation provided to them either electronically or in hard copy format. Only a minority of travellers make contact with consular services and request information prior to departure.
- Travellers do not take the advice provided at face value and consequently, tend to downplay the possibility of problems occurring.

- Travellers do not seek information on the level of services that are rendered abroad to Canadians. In addition, many are unaware of the limited power of consular services when dealing with foreign governments and administration. As a result:
 - ▶ They tend to hold the Canadian government responsible for their own mistakes when travelling;
 - ▶ They do not take the time to enquire about their responsibilities as Canadians travelling abroad; and
 - ▶ They rarely request information when in foreign countries, except after the fact, when problems arise.

Therefore, in many cases, travellers fail to take on the responsibility to ensure that all necessary measures are taken to avoid problems abroad. Instead, they adopt a passive conduct toward eventual problems that might be encountered. They rely heavily on their rights as Canadians, and downplay their responsibilities when dealing with foreign governments and thus tend to rely on Canadian embassies and representatives to solve their problems and issues. In other words they do not have the right perspective regarding the capacity and power of the consular services which they tend to make accountable for their security and safety abroad.

Clients' Expectations

Consular clients interviewed at Canadian missions had varied opinions with regard to expectations concerning services provided by embassies and consulates general. While several had no expectations, Canadians who live abroad and have had numerous contacts with the mission where they live knew exactly what services are available at embassies and consulates. One very common expectation relates to passport services and in particular the speed and ease with which a person's passport can be renewed or replaced.

Another type of expectation is to be able to deal with friendly and service-oriented people at the consular section who are knowledgeable, informative and helpful. Many also expect the mission to be easily reachable, especially by telephone. Linked to that is the expectation that mission personnel will respond promptly to telephone or e-mail messages. Finally, there is the expectation that the mission will be able to provide assistance in urgent or emergency situations.

The reactions of Canadian travellers who have high expectations are often the main cause of a simple case going astray. The clients are unsatisfied with the results of the consular officers' interventions because they over evaluate the influence that can be exercised by the Canadian government. They then apply pressure through a political figure or the media.

The pressures placed on consular services once a case becomes complex or high profile result in a level of service that is greater than normal. More often than not, the quality of consular services is judged on high profile cases since they attract media attention. This impacts the level of services in two ways. It creates an expectation regarding the level of service greater than can be provided and feeds the negative perception of the quality of consular services.

To a certain degree, Canadian traveller's expectations vary because of the perceived inconsistent adherence of politicians to a standardized service, and their inability to say no. The inability of the department to say no creates in some cases unrealistic pressure by Canadians on consular officers.

5.2 Canadian travellers as Consular Affairs clients

The views of clients of consular services were obtained through four means:

- a questionnaire handed out to consular services clients at 50 missions (n=682)
- a questionnaire handed out to clients of the Passport Office in Ottawa, Montreal and Toronto (n=990)
- a questionnaire posted on FAC's Consular web site (n=1360)
- in person interviews of consular clients at seven missions.(n=95)

The results from all these sources of information were aggregated in the summary below.

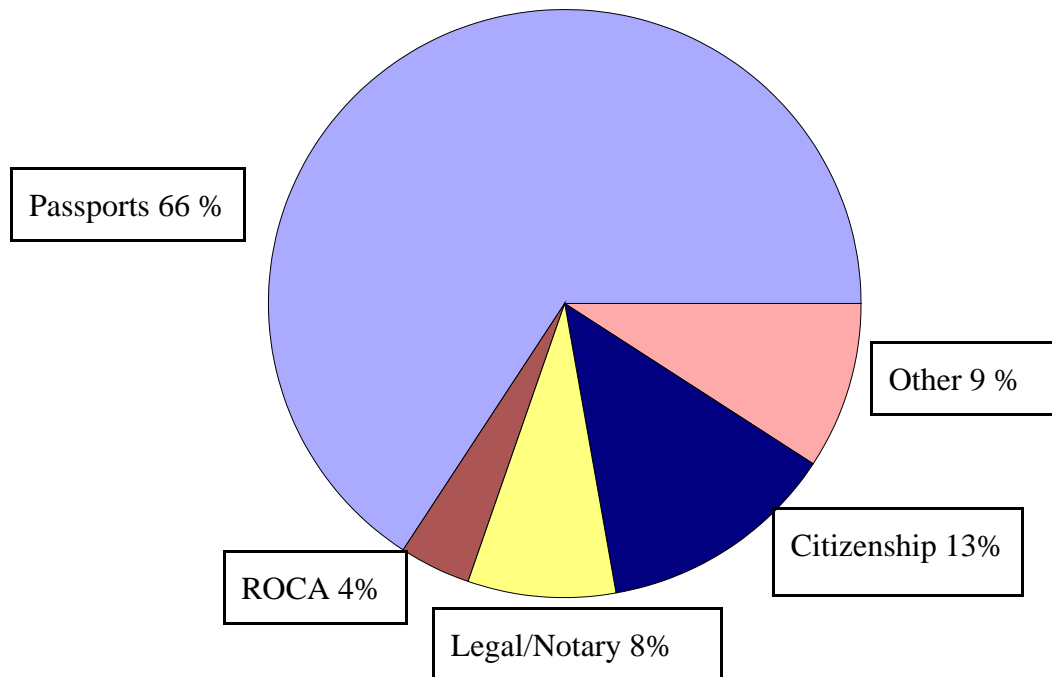
Services accessed

At missions abroad, the survey of 682 consular clients and the in-person on-site interviews with an additional ninety five validated that by far the most frequently accessed services are those relating to passports (see Figure 5). They include passport renewals, mostly for Canadians living abroad, passport replacements in the case of lost or stolen passports, which mostly affects Canadian travellers, and new passports for children born to Canadians living abroad. The mix may vary from mission to mission depending on factors such as the number of Canadians living in a particular geographic area or country and the number and types of visitors (e.g. tourists or business travellers).

For instance, the Consulate General in Hong Kong has to serve a large local population of Canadian passport holders who periodically renew their passport or make applications on behalf of new-born children. In Manila, where many Canadian men come to get married to local women, there is a demand for affidavits on the part of the Consular Section stating that those men face no impediment to marry. In Italy, significant number of Italo-Canadians are retired, those Canadians require consular services for issues related to passports, citizenship, pensions, etc..

Two thirds of clients interviewed or surveyed at embassies and consulates had requested passport services. Another thirteen percent had accessed citizenship services, such as citizenship registration for a child born abroad to Canadian parents. The remainder are divided among many categories of services, including some emergencies and hardships such as illness, death, detention and imprisonment. (*Four Canadians held in detention abroad took part in the survey.*)

Figure 5: Types of Services Received at Missions
Consular Review survey N= 682



Client Satisfaction with service(s) received

Canadians who access consular services at missions are very satisfied with the level and quality of service, (see Figure 6). This is what a majority stated in the course of in-person and on-site interviews at seven missions abroad. They were particularly impressed with the professionalism and dedication of consular personnel, both Canada-based and locally-engaged. Those levels of satisfaction confirmed the results of the client survey conducted by questionnaire at missions around the globe.

The few detracting comments generally had nothing to do with the persons delivering the services. Some had to do with the physical facilities, such as a waiting area that is too small to accommodate the clientele (e.g. Hong Kong). Most negative comments had to do with what the clients saw as complications in the process of applying and obtaining a passport. For instance, the limited list of possible guarantors, which is more restrictive for those applying abroad, the impossibility to get “rush” service abroad, even if you are ready to pay the higher price, are causes of frustration to some consular clients abroad.

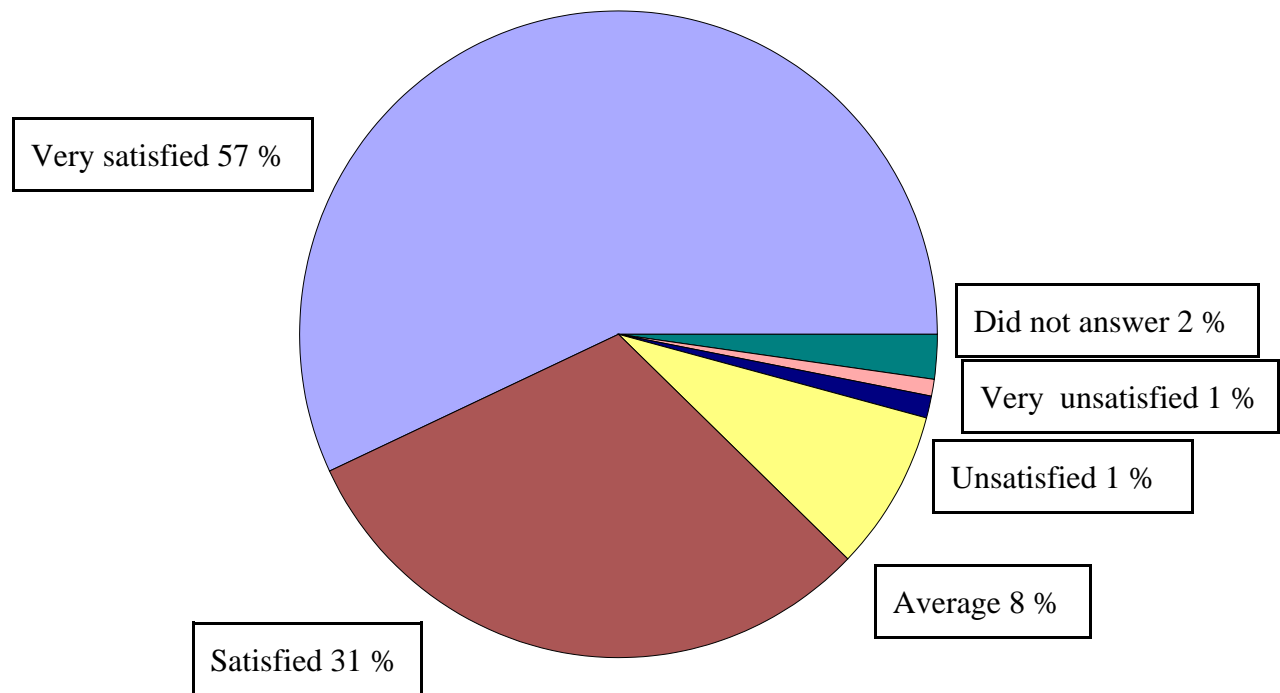
Importance of Services

For Canadians who answered one of the questionnaires or who were interviewed at missions, the two most important consular services are “passport services” and “emergency/evacuation assistance”. All the review sources of information concur in that regard. By contrast, “legal and notarial services” and “Registration of Canadian Abroad (ROCA)” are not considered as important. It is worthwhile to note

that ROCA is rated a more important service by Canadians who live abroad as opposed to those who are only travelling abroad.

Quite naturally, clients at missions rated very highly the importance of the service(s) which they were seeking, which in most cases is passport renewal or replacement. At some missions, clients attached great importance to being able to have the Embassy or Consulate General (eg: Hong Kong) process their application and produce the passport locally, thereby delivering within the stated deadlines. The review did receive feedback from only four prisoners, but it is interesting that all four were quite satisfied with the service they had received from their consular officers.

Figure 6: Overall consular client satisfaction with services received
Consular review survey N=682



Sources of Information

Knowledge of Government Travel Information Services

According to the survey conducted in four passport offices, with Canadians who were planning to travel, government travel information services are not well known by Canadian travellers or prospective travellers. On average, only 30% of respondents are aware of those information sources. Of those 30% who know the information sources, only a third read or use the information provided, such as the publication “Bon Voyage, But...”

On the other hand and as would be expected, respondents who accessed the web site questionnaire had a better knowledge of the means the department uses to disseminate

information to Canadian travellers. A strong majority of these respondents are subscribers of the Consular Affairs Bureau's web site. Many subscribers are frequent international travellers or from travel related organizations.

As for consular clients abroad who answered the on-site questionnaire or were interviewed in person, they were generally well aware of the different web sites; the consular web site, the Passport Office web site and for those who live abroad, the web site of the Canadian mission in the foreign country where they live. Some had become aware through usage of the 24/7 telephone service provided by the Consular Affairs Bureau.

Most of those interviewed at missions had found the consular web site, the mission web site, and the Passport Office web site useful or very useful. They particularly appreciated the links that enabled them to move from one of these sites to another. At some missions, many of the interviewees had downloaded the passport application form from the Passport Office web site and printed it, thereby saving an extra trip to the embassy or consulate to pick up the form.

Many Canadians living or travelling abroad reported having had some difficulties contacting a member of a mission staff through the telephone. Instead of reaching a "live" person, they had to contend with a number of options which did not allow person-to-person communication. This situation of not being able to reach a person and being welcomed by a recorded message (during working hours at missions) was reported through all sources as a very strong irritant with many Canadian travellers.

Usefulness of Information Products and Services

When asked to rate the information products and services as to their usefulness, among those who filled out questionnaires at three passport offices, 69% reported that they had not used those products and services, and therefore could not answer. Those who had used the services mostly found them useful.

The respondents to the web site questionnaire had a better level of knowledge of information products and services. Among those respondents, 83% found the consular web site "useful" or "very useful".

Consular clients who filled out the questionnaire at missions also rated highly the consular web site, but rated highest of all direct contacts with consular officials.

Responsibilities

Canadians consulted in the course of this study believe that, in most circumstances, individuals have the first responsibility to look after themselves when travelling or living abroad. The government, through its embassies and consulates, has a role and responsibilities in times of crisis, emergencies or exceptional circumstances.

In cases of "evacuation from natural or political emergencies", among Canadians polled it was equally divided among those who thought that the government had the entire responsibility and

those who felt that the responsibility was equally shared between the government and the individual. In all other proposed emergency situations, a majority of respondents felt that the responsibility was equally shared.

Summary:

The aggregation of data from the review's multiple lines of information indicate that Canadians generally are not well informed about consular services before they travel. They become informed if and when they have problems during their travels. The expectation of assistance arises when the person is in need. It is not the "normal" process for the Canadian general travelling public, particularly travelling as a tourist, to prepare for difficulties. If they do have any problems they are generally quite satisfied with the services they receive. Of interest, a significant number of Canadians said that they would be willing to share the cost of some of the consular services. Canadians who are frequent travellers, business people or Canadians living abroad, are much better informed about consular services.

5.3 Canadian Consular Awareness Program

Consular Affairs communicates its information through various vehicles such as its dedicated web site, an extensive and up to date travel information program, various publications, outreach to the travel industry and universities, and a dedicated response team is assigned for inquiries from the Canadian public, primarily through e-mail.

The Consular Affairs Bureau has very recently updated its web site, making it easier for instance to find the list of consular services provided by the Department. This corresponds to a request by a large proportion of mission representatives interviewed during this review. Those officers were hoping for a clearer expression by the Department of which consular services are provided to Canadians abroad and which ones are not. The website also publishes service standards for consular services offered by the Department.

The problem is in getting Canadians to access and integrate this information. New communication strategies and delivery through additional mediums were often suggested by respondents at missions and headquarters. Canadians need to be more aware of what consular services Canada offers and what are the limits of these services. Most travelling Canadians do not have a clue of what they can and cannot expect from their consular services when abroad. The department needs to tell Canadians what it can do and what it will not do. The information available to Canadians through the multiple facets of the Consular Awareness Program were rated by respondents at missions and at headquarters as being of top quality; the problem is that few travelling Canadians read them: 25% are aware of the Consular website, but only 14% of travellers check the site for pre-travel information and only 45% find the information they are looking for (JPD - Client Satisfaction Survey). This information was confirmed through this review's lines of evidence.

Respondents that were aware of or involved in communicating information about consular services to Canadians stressed the importance of diversifying or expanding the mediums and methods through which the Department can speak to Canadians. New communication strategies have been presented to departmental officials and are under review. Respondents identified many new ways

to communicate with Canadians. Some could be very efficient but costly, others less costly but with unproven returns. Today's prime medium of communication, television, was very often proposed as the missing link to Canadians. Other ideas shared included: newsprint or travel magazine ads, publicity at airports and travel agencies, using the network of elected federal MP's to communicate with their constituents, passport offices, school or university based information sharing.

5.4 The Media

One of the common issues raised during the interviews is the increased media interest in consular cases and the added pressure this scrutiny puts on consular officers at missions and on Consular Affairs at headquarters. Many officers interviewed think that the Department is too soft in its dealings with the media and that it should be "telling the media about all the good work we are doing". Their proposed answer to the perceived weakness is to "push back" on the media and take a more aggressive stance.

The government and the Department might want to tell the public, through the media, about all it is doing for distressed Canadians but there are many considerations that limit the full disclosure of information, such as the Privacy Act.

Still, some informed respondents expressed the opinion that the Department needs to adopt a proactive and forceful strategy in dealing with the media. They suggested a tour of Canadian editorial boards by consular officials. They also suggested exposing key representatives of the media to "real life, on location" experiences of consular service delivery in some key difficult missions.

5.5 Views of non-government stakeholders on consular services

This review also gauged the views of non-government stakeholders on the delivery of consular services to Canadians: representatives from five NGOs, four private sector organisations and, 15 from the travel industry (travel educators in universities and colleges, travel insurance firms, tour operators, etc.) were interviewed.

Overall, there were no important differences between the views expressed by the representatives from the different groups. A majority of respondents said that Canadians were not informed or not sufficiently informed of conditions or precautions that could affect their well-being while they are abroad. On the other hand a majority of respondents added that this situation was true, not because proper information sources are not available, but because a significant number of travelling Canadians do not bother to prepare properly for their travels. A strong majority of respondents said that Foreign Affairs Canada offers travellers the needed quality information to prepare for travels abroad. Respondents felt that the variety of information tools and resources (travel publications, web site, travel reports, etc.) were mostly very useful or useful. They also found them to be mostly very useful or useful to both the general travelling public and to their organizations or staff. Many respondents said that they believed the travel notes place too much emphasis on crime. They suggested more emphasis on health care issues or a more neutral stance regarding many destinations.

Although a strong majority of respondents said quite positive things about FAC materials and resources, only under half of respondents indicated that they use Foreign Affairs Canada information professionally. Of those who access materials or resources from FAC, travel publications, the Consular Affairs web site and travel warnings were identified as being used more often. The “Bon voyage, But...” publication was identified by many respondents as a document in which they have confidence.

A majority of respondents stated that they believe that the government does not do too much for Canadians but at the same time citizens should be encouraged to be more responsible for their well being themselves. Whether it be for the monitoring of conditions in the country they find themselves in, understanding local customs or laws, informing friends or family of itinerary changes or registering with ROCA, the majority of respondents said that indeed the government had to do its part but these were primarily the responsibility of individuals when they decide to travel. Concerning Honorary Consuls, surprisingly only half of the respondents, including representatives from the travel industry, knew about Honorary Consuls or what they could offer Canadians.

Respondents were asked how FAC could improve its delivery of consular materials or services. Respondents, particularly from the travel industry, said that FAC should increase the contact opportunities between the Consular Affairs Bureau and themselves, (conferences, fairs, etc.). As far as improving the relationship in the level of communication between FAC and the Canadian public, all respondents pointed to radio and particularly TV campaigns. Respondents also added that the information provided should not only be about warnings but also about consular success stories, about the people, the Canadians “out there” that are ready to work for them.

6. Relationships and Communications with Internal and External Stakeholders

Respondents at missions indicated that generally speaking their communications and relationships with their colleagues at headquarters were positive and helpful. Headquarters gives them the assistance and direction they need. Some experienced respondents said that the situation had improved dramatically over the past decade. The tools and communication capabilities have contributed to increased efficiency and to diminishing the feeling of “being out there on your own”. Respondents from missions and headquarters reported difficulties in dealing with the Passport Office. The response time seemed to be at the centre of their complaints.

Consular Affairs has in the past year gone through a change in leadership that has had some significant positive impact on relationships and communications within Consular Affairs and with external stakeholders. All respondents recognized that the past leadership had accomplished a great deal in developing, establishing and managing what has become a world class consular service for Canadians. Many spoke with high praise of that leadership while acknowledging that processes, decision making and responsibility were centralized. There was a regime change in 2003 and new structures and procedures have been put in place that promote better communications between stakeholders at headquarters and consular officials, develop a feeling of inclusiveness and of shared responsibility. Respondents from Consular Affairs, missions and

stakeholders at headquarters indicated that these changes were quite welcome. Respondents indicated that they felt more involved, informed and empowered in the decision making process concerning consular cases in general and more so when dealing with difficult or high profile cases. Their work and communications with colleagues from the different “geographics” was deemed to be very good; they reported that the exchange of information is efficient and that they collaborate well on cases of shared interest. The new high level multi-party committee on consular cases, the Consular Coordinating Committee, is seen as a very useful structure. Evolving variables and a changing global political environment result in the fact that many “players” can be involved in consular cases including Headquarter’s officials, mission officers, stakeholders from geographics, security officials, the RCMP, CSIS, OGD’s and politicians.

7. Resources

7.1 Resources for Consular Affairs

Prior to 1988, the political/economic FS stream was responsible for the delivery of consular services. The consular program was then transferred to the social affairs stream, with immigration. In 1992, with the return of the social affairs stream to CIC, the consular program needed a new location within FAC. During those changes, Consular lost some ground in terms of resources. In 1995, a fee for consular services (\$25 per passport) was instituted as a way to provide the program with a sound funding base. Revenues were suppose to, and largely did, match expenditures. That guaranteed resource base for Consular had one drawback. It made it difficult to secure additional funding. Under Program Integrity I, Consular was able to secure \$3.65 million additional funding in 2000 for the creation of 5 additional Canada-based positions (CBS), 30 LES positions abroad and the reclassification of 70 LES positions. Seven HQ positions were regularized and the outreach program placed on secure financial footing. Under Program Integrity II, the consular program was provided with \$3.45 million of additional funding. This funding was used to enhance the functionality of the Informatics Technology support network for consular services, COSMOS. With the additional Public Security and Anti-Terrorism (PSAT) funds, reference levels for Consular were increased to \$6 million and emergency preparedness was improved. This funding allowed for the creation of additional Canada based positions abroad, 21 LES and 12 consular positions at headquarters.

In general, respondents from missions indicated that they have adequate human resources to fulfil their duties. However, if the current trend is maintained with yearly increases overall of approximately seven percent in the number of consular cases, human resource capabilities at missions will soon be insufficient. Furthermore, a significant number of respondents from missions indicated that the resource needs might be more significant at the Consular Affairs Bureau at Headquarters.

Following up on these remarks, and in order to determine the adequacy of the resources at Headquarters, workshops sessions were held with staff from all services at Consular Affairs, as well as with representatives from other programs such as geographic bureaux and human resources. During discussions, participants were asked to focus on the following questions:

- Are the resources adequate in relation to the services provided?
- If the resources are inadequate, what are the consequences on FAC operations?
- What risks might be encountered if resources remain the same at their current level (or are reduced)?
- What would be the adequate resource level to overcome these risks?

The statements found below in this section represent a summary of the informed opinions of participants in the workshop sessions. The ideas, opinions and suggestions are not the result of an independent needs or risk analysis.

Most participants agreed that the level of resources was inadequate. However that statement reflects the opinion of the participants present at the workshop. It is not supported by a rigorous A-Base review using recognized planning and budgeting methodology. The workshop focussed on negative impacts of the perceived shortfalls.

Participants indicated that overall, essential activities are being carried out with the current resources. However, some are not being performed thoroughly, while others that would be needed in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of operations are not being performed at all. Some of the activities or initiative not being performed include:

- establishing a protocol for difficult cases;
- crisis management initiatives aimed at improving the process;
- although the Crisis Management Software has been developed, its implementation is jeopardized by the lack of resources;
- no promotion of, and contribution to, warden conferences;
- client surveys cannot be performed;
- development of a person-centric registration software to improve ROCA;
- policies and tools are not updated or refreshed;
- no implementation of the consular awareness campaign; and
- travel warning cannot be publicized.

The consequences on operations and the associated risks:

The consequences that the shortfall in resources has on the Bureau's affairs, as identified by the participants, are categorized as follows:

Service Delivery

Providing service to Canadians is probably the area where the shortfall in resources could have the most negative consequences.

Consular cases

Participants believe that if the present resource base is maintained, staff in the Consular Affairs Bureau at Headquarters may be incapable of responding to consular cases with all the due diligence required. When resources are scarce, the immediate solution is to pull resources from

other services and to concentrate efforts in the case resolution process. But, this intermediate solution most often jeopardizes the quality of the other services. It also increases the probability of mistakes occurring, often creates delays, limits the support provided to missions and to the relatives of Canadians, and reduces the level of follow-up activities for other cases.

Information and advice to Canadians

Responding to emergencies in consular cases means that the quality of services could decrease in other areas such as information, advice and warnings to Canadians. For instance, emergency after-hours services are meeting the current demand. However, the section may be unable to handle increasing demand or to deal with a concurrent crisis.

This shortfall in resources could limit the ability to provide the most updated information and advice to Canadians. This situation would also limit the ability of staff to assess client needs and would make it difficult for Consular Affairs to identify areas where services could be improved.

Management of service delivery

Participants believe that by focusing their efforts on bare essentials, the following issues may arise:

- it may be necessary to neglect or cancel new initiatives;
- difficulties could be experienced assessing program delivery at the mission level where less resources are devoted to mission visits;
- it may be very difficult to respond to ATIP request on time, and
- it may be necessary to neglect planning in order to properly react to immediate emergencies and needs.

Participants fear that, with its present resource base, the Bureau may not be in a position to meet the level of quality expected. They feel that if the current situation is maintained, quality could rapidly decrease. This would result in consular cases becoming more complex and costly to resolve, and would be detrimental to all other services provided.

Tools, communication and information management

Informing and helping Canadians in emergency situations implies that the personnel possess all the required tools and abilities. Therefore, communications and information management becomes an area where having adequate resources is important. At the present resource level, the participants believe that the Consular Affairs Bureau might not be in a position to provide all the services at the level of quality that clients expect. The following specifies some of the consequences already experienced at all levels:

- The development and maintenance of tools (e.g. crisis management software, communication systems) are neglected, which creates inefficiencies and increases support staff workload.

- The documenting of procedures, policies, the consular mandate, operations, and requirements is not formalized and updated, which means that these documents are not properly understood and consistently applied. This has had repercussions on missions' ability to supervise consulates adequately.
- Consultation and information with stakeholders and senior management is being neglected
- Consular services are not deemed important at the mission level; resources are therefore reassigned elsewhere.

The resulting risks

The ultimate risk, if consular cases are mishandled, is to the security, safety and health of Canadians in distress. This could obviously expose the Department to legal action and a loss of trust by Canadians in their own government. From the public perspective, the image of the government suffers greatly when cases hit the press.

By not investing properly in the operations of the Consular Affairs Bureau, the Department runs the risk of increasing the number of complex cases that are much more expensive to resolve. Complex cases attract bad press. They can also hinder good relations with local governments. As voiced by participants, many of the negative impacts of the resource shortfall relate to preventive measures and improving the quality, efficiency and speed with which consular cases can be dealt with, all of which reduce the probability of consular cases becoming complex.

From an operational effectiveness perspective, participants indicated that the Department is at risk of losing its capacity to manage consular information properly. Paper trails cannot be maintained adequately, which could have a negative impact on investigations and judgements. Information becomes outdated and obsolete and causes mistakes and discrepancies to occur. It also means that statistics may become unreliable. Overall, this could have a detrimental impact on the resolution of consular cases and, could put the safety of Canadians in jeopardy in many cases.

A business case detailing needs and risk should be prepared for consideration. While determining the level of required funding is beyond the scope of this review, there is a general agreement that the current level of funding (JPD) is not appropriate.

7.2 Human Resources

The document review and the consultations conducted for this review highlighted a situation that has endured for decades. While Consular Affairs officers at missions express a high sense of duty and a large degree of job satisfaction, at the same time they attest to a widespread perception among them that the consular stream is not valued as it should within the Department. They see their function as providing the main contact between the Government of Canada and Canadians abroad. As such, and also because of the knowledge they have of the value to the clients of the services provided, they consider Consular Affairs as an important pillar of FAC.

Although the principal contact of Canadians with the Department is through consular services, the political and trade functions of the Department have been and are still perceived as valued at a higher level. It is felt that many of the best employees are frustrated and are not rated as positively

as those in the political or trade streams. Most officers said that they want to “do consular”, but they also want their work to be respected. Many spoke of feeling as “second class” within the Department. They feel that their work is not recognized as it should be by the Department. However, most of those interviewed did not see their AS category as an issue nor felt that they should be converted to a separate stream within the FS classification. Positions on this issue were not clear in that there was a mix of views on the issue of classifications. Efforts have been done to reclassify positions but the recognition issue is still there and requires a different approach. In some missions the head of consular services reports directly to the HOM or deputy HOM. Consular Affairs could be seen as a distinct area of specialty, such as the political or economic streams, diplomacy, immigration or trade.

The consular program is led and delivered at missions by full-time Canada based staff but the majority of its front-line operations are performed by part-time or locally-engaged staff (LES). Respondents indicated that this delivery system was not seen as problematic, although some respondents indicated that some Canadians regularly request and demand to be served by a Canadian.

8. COSMOS / Consular Affairs and Privacy Protection

Some issues were raised at Headquarters by some Consular Affairs respondents and the Division for Access to Information and Privacy Protection. The concerns expressed have to do in part with the relatively large number of people who have access to COSMOS in the field, at FAC HQ and with the sharing of information with other organizations such as the Passport Office, Immigration, Canadian Security Center and Correctional Services Canada. The concerns centre on information sharing agreements with OGD’s, the required consent by individuals whose personal information the department feels must be shared with others and briefing notes accompanying Q & A’s for the Minister’s office.

Agreements

There does not seem to be any agreement on the sharing of personal information between FAC and CSC, CIC and the Passport Office. Without those agreements, the Department cannot verify the authorities concerning legislation and policies on the collection, uses, disposition and communication of personal information as prescribed by the law. The lack of agreements puts the Department at risk of operating illegally in the sharing and merging of data.

Consent

Upon examination, COSMOS notes do not indicate clearly whether the client’s consent has been obtained in order to share his personal information with family or other persons claiming to act on this individual’s behalf. There is no field that indicates clearly the individual’s consent or the conditions under which the law would allow sharing personal information. Circumstances (such as death, serious illness, serious accident, war, incarceration) that would prevail in the case of such a communication without consent are not stated clearly in the determination of whether communicating information is in the best interest of the individual.

The Consular Affairs Bureau shares information about individuals without their clear consent or legal reasons to do it without their consent. That practice puts the Department at risk of communicating sensitive personal information without the authorization required under Privacy Act.

Briefing Notes

An examination of briefing notes accompanying Qs & As prepared for the Minister's Office concerning consular cases shows that they contain personal information. It is not clear whether consent, even if it were obtained, may allow the communication of that information. That situation puts the government and the Minister at risk of communicating personal information without authorization.

9. Training

There are two types of courses offered in the Department to officers in the consular stream: the Management/Consular Development Program, offered by the Canadian Foreign Service Institute, through its CFSS component, and the consular courses provided under the auspices of JPP, in Consular Affairs.

Since 1992, the Management/Consular Development Program has been offered by CFSI to help prepare MCO recruits for the work they will perform at missions abroad and at headquarters. Consular matters is but one of the components of the program which also covers MCOs' other responsibilities such as financial administration and human resources, among others. A "validation" study of the program, completed in early 2003, concluded that, based on a limited survey of some seventy past participants, the program is generally sound and effective with a good mix of subjects and training methods. The study recommended maintaining the current overall structure of the Management/Consular Development Program, while reviewing all current classroom-based modules. It also recommended maximizing the benefits of the On-the-job (OTL) learning and the Temporary duty (TL) assignment component. The study also recommended to review/enlarge the Consular Services module. It further recommended that the Department consider adding time to training in Consular Services, with particular emphasis on consular challenges and some of the more common emergencies. Among other recommendations having a bearing on consular services, mention should be made of those dealing with the addition of decision-making skills training and adding a four-to-six month follow-up session.

In parallel to this program, JPP has its own courses for consular officers. Those courses pre-date the establishment of CFSI and have remained outside the ambit of the Institute even after the latter was put in place. JPP offers its course once a year, prior to officers being posted. Consular Affairs provides training that it considers relevant to its objectives. The consular training budget in the Consular Affairs Bureau comes from the CFSI Training Budget.

CFSI admits that the current division of consular training responsibilities may have made sense as the Institute was being established. However, there is no strong rationale now to persist with this arrangement. They argue that from the perspective of the Department's approach to training generally, whereby it seeks economies of scale through a centralized training function, the current

situation is an anomaly. For its part, Consular Affairs makes the point that it can manage the consular courses more effectively as to its content and timing, not hindered by considerations other than its own priorities.

Interviews conducted in the course of this study with consular officers at missions reveal a high level of satisfaction with the availability, coverage and quality of training for consular affairs officers. Comments were particularly favourable concerning training for more recent recruits. On the other hand, views were mixed with regard to more experienced officers. While some mentioned that those with experience had learned a lot on the job, as it were, others commented that a number of those officers were in need of “refresher” training.

From the point of view of this review, the most important point is that training for consular officers be as complete and relevant as possible, adapting to new circumstances and issues. Which division has the overall responsibility is a less relevant concern.

Section C

Honorary Consuls

1. Introduction

Honorary Consuls play a vital role in delivering services for Canadians abroad. With the expansion of the Honorary Consul program worldwide and particularly in the United States as part of the Enhanced Representation Initiative, there is a need to look forward to identify the Honorary Consul program of the future, the services it will provide, its accountability structure, and its cost. To this end, this study looked at the following three objectives:

- To determine the extent to which the Honorary Consul Program is and can be an appropriate structure for delivery of Government of Canada services abroad;
- To identify areas where Honorary Consuls are most effective and areas where they are not with a view to recommending future directions of the Honorary Consul program; and
- To assess the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the Honorary Consul Program in the delivery of Government of Canada services abroad and to identify lessons learned that would inform and improve the delivery of the program.

2. Honorary Consul Program - an appropriate structure

Honorary Consuls have been part of the Canadian diplomatic presence since 1947. The program expanded slowly until the late 1970s at which time it started to grow rapidly. Today, there are 118 Honorary Consul positions located in 77 countries performing a variety of duties including consular, trade, immigration, culture and development assistance. Honorary Consuls provide a Canadian presence where it is needed and where FAC does not have consular offices. They provide visibility for the Canadian flag. Traditionally, they have played a role closely aligned with that of consular officers, providing assistance and protection to Canadians as well as passport, citizenship, visits to prisoners, visa and related services. Over time, the role of the honorary consul has expanded to include, in some cases, answering inquiries about immigration, visas and education in Canada, promoting commercial and economic relations, and handling public affairs and related activities. As highly valued and connected people within the host country, Honorary Consuls also provide access to a network of influential people in their area.

According to respondents, the services provided by Honorary Consuls vary by the country and the expertise of the individual appointed to the position. In general, between 50-60% of an Honorary Consul's time is spent on consular services which includes the handling of consular, immigration and passport cases. This is followed by time spent on representation issues, political and economic reporting and providing support for trade missions and business inquiries. Development assistance is also mentioned; however this appears to be more of a case for Africa and Middle East than elsewhere in the world. In specific countries, for example the United States, Great Britain and Japan, Honorary Consuls devote 100% or nearly 100% of their time on trade matters

and representation issues. In other countries like Mexico, they spend almost 100% of their time on consular work.

According to the Honorary Consuls surveyed and interviewed, the most important service offered to Canadians are passport services and general assistance services to Canadians particularly in times of distress. To a lesser extent in degree of importance, Honorary Consuls identified networking or representational duties, trade related services and security issues. The HOM's interviewed regarded trade and political services rendered by Honorary Consuls the most important for themselves and general consular services the most important for Canadians travelling or living abroad. Honorary Consuls have seen an upsurge in requests for services from Canadians over the years specifically in requests for passport related services. They have also seen their duties evolve to include more trade and investment services for missions and companies wishing to do business in their country or with Canada. They expect that in the future the volume of requests will continue to increase and that they will be called upon to deal with more trade and investment inquiries. Of the Honorary Consuls surveyed, their average length of service as an Honorary Consul was eight years and ranged from five months to 19 years.

It is felt that the Honorary Consul program is an appropriate structure for the delivery of Government of Canada services in areas where a Canadian presence is limited. It provides a cost effective approach to the provision of consular services and other duties as required by the supervising mission. In addition, because they possess intimate knowledge of a country's culture, politics and economics, and have proven contacts and networks, Honorary Consuls have a great impact on obtaining rapid and efficient access to all levels of society in either the public or private sectors. Conditions justifying the recruitment of Honorary Consuls or for opening a consular office should include:

- number of Canadians residing in or visiting the area;
- intensity and nature of trade between Canada and the area;
- frequency and nature of consular assistance and services required by Canadians;
- difficulty the Canadian mission experiences in providing services in the area (i.e. distance, communications, accessibility, resources);
- absence of Canadian mission (embassy, high commission or consulate generale) in an area where services might be required and the resource base does not allow the opening of a Canadian mission;
- new, emerging country or region of interest to Canada and where Canada has limited exchange or knowledge.

3. Effectiveness of the Honorary Consul Program

Honorary Consuls and the Heads of Mission interviewed felt that Honorary Consuls are most effective in their networking role and second most effective in the delivery of consular services. In terms of consular services, the Honorary Consuls responding to the survey stated that they were most effective in aiding Canadians in distress, providing emergency services or dealing with security cases. This was followed by passport services (emergency and renewal) and commercial/trade development activities. 175 of the 682 Canadians who completed a survey questionnaire at missions abroad reported that they had used the services of an Honorary Consul.

Of these 175, over 88% reported that they were satisfied (36%) or very satisfied (52%) with the services they received. Less than 4% reported that they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

There was common agreement through all lines of inquiry that the role of the Honorary Consul be dependent on the requirements of the mission and of Canadians residing or travelling to the area. Participants at the focus group meeting at headquarters were not unanimous in being able to describe the current Honorary Consul model or whether it might be necessary to design new models. They preferred to discuss the design of profiles for Honorary Consuls that would meet the needs of headquarters and missions. (See Appendix B) Profiles could help to more accurately identify the type of consular representation needed in a particular environment, and identify the competencies and the training required to enable Honorary Consuls to be most effective in their duties.

The majority of respondents agreed or highly agreed that they received the necessary training to be effective in their jobs (60%) and that this training covered the full range of services for which they are required to provide (50%). Only 10% and 15% either disagreed or highly disagreed to these two questions. Most Honorary Consuls receive a five day training in Ottawa at the beginning of their tenure. The course is not compulsory but most agree to take it. The course first four days are spent covering consular and passport rules, regulations and procedures with the fifth day tailored to the HC's specific needs regarding the management of other programs (public affairs, trade, development assistance, etc.). At the moment they do not receive training concerning financial reporting and controls. The amount of money flowing through the honorary consulates is not large but growing. Proper oversight of these monies by HCs is essential and needs to be reinforced through proper training at the start of their appointments. There is no formal training offered to HCs apart from the initial course. Many of the HCs interviewed and surveyed agree that this training, especially in consular services, be updated every three to four years and that dependent on the requirements of the position, more specialized training in areas such as trade, immigration, and on Canadian systems should be offered.

Two operational models were described as currently employed by the department: the Honorary Consul Model which involves a minimum presence being provided by an honorary consul to deliver basic services and the Honorary Consul Office which would involve setting up an honorary consul office with support staff. In the latter model, the honorary consul would be responsible for the office and have staff dedicated to consular affairs activities and others for trade and commercial issues. Currently, both models are in operation around the world. However, they are not consistently applied. International Trade Canada is currently expanding its use of Honorary Consulates as part of its Enhanced Representation Initiative with plans to create 20 new Honorary Consulates in the United States over the next two years. The cost of this program is estimated at \$2 million per year, nearly doubling the cost of the Honorary Consul Program world wide. These new Honorary Consuls will be devoted solely to trade and advocacy services; consular services will be referred to supervising missions. The ERI Honorary Consul model provides a full package valued at approximately \$100,000 per year to each of the new Honorary Consulates and includes funds to offset the costs for office space, operations, assistants and an honorarium of \$20,000 US which is nearly double the present maximum of \$15,000 CDN. FAC in Mexico has established a country-wide network of seven honorary consulates to deal with the demand for consular services, provides a personal services contract to three of its Honorary Consuls to bring their total

remuneration package to over \$80,000 per year. In addition, to address high turnover and low morale, management agreed to hire the support staff for three Honorary Consul offices as locally engaged staff with the right to pension and health benefits. This decision has created some sensitivity in that the support staff have full LES benefits while the HCs must arrange their benefits privately.

Given the diversity of needs around the world, officials at headquarters preferred to identify honorary consul profiles which would be better suited for adapting to a situation rather than models which can be less responsive. Profiles can be established for trade services, advocacy services and public affairs as well as for consular affairs for which knowledge of basic consular services should be included in each profile. These profiles could help to more accurately identify the type of consular representation needed in a particular environment.

4. Efficiency of systems to manage the Honorary Consul Program

There are a number of systems in place for managing the Honorary Consul program, however these systems do not appear to be consistently applied or utilized. The decisions on what services to be offered are largely left to the individual missions to decide and will vary by country or region and the demand for services. The majority of respondents reported that if services are requested by Canadians or the supervisory missions, they generally attempt to provide them except for those services that are restricted such as issuing visas for immigration and passports. The new HC program in the United States as part of the ERI appears to be the exception. The decision on what services to be offered are mandated from headquarters to be applied by the supervisory missions. The new Honorary Consuls are restricted from providing consular services as part of their mandate. The Heads of Missions interviewed and officials from headquarters participating in the focus group cautioned the Department not to impose a rigid structure that would inhibit the mission's flexibility to tailor the role played by honorary consuls to meet specific needs. However, participants indicated that the structure and support for honorary consuls could be improved. One area slated for improvement is in the issuance of mandate or tasking letters from the Heads of Mission to Honorary Consuls. Tasking letters are supposed to be completed at the beginning of each fiscal year as the last step of the annual appraisal process and is designed to ensure the HC understands what is expected from him/her in the coming year. Given the low appraisal completion rate (according to records in JPP, for the appraisal year 2002/2003, only 11 performance appraisals have been completed. The record is little better for 2001/2002 when 14 were done), it is safe to assume that the tasking letters are also not being done. In fact, in this review's survey of HCs, 60% of respondents reported that they had no mandate or tasking letter outlining their responsibilities, duties and expectations of the supervising mission.

There appears to be no uniform guidelines for the selection of Honorary Consuls by Heads of Missions. Selection of HCs is essentially left to individual Heads of Mission to be later confirmed by Order in Council. The disparity between missions is best illustrated by recent appointments in the U.S. One mission developed selection criteria, identified a short list of 12 candidates, interviewed the selected candidate three times, and conducted background and reference checks. A second mission selected their candidate based on personal knowledge and an established relationship. For the most part, Heads of Mission report that they tend to choose prominent individuals who have extensive connections in the private and public sectors. A second equally

important criteria is their knowledge of and connection to Canada. These criterion were corroborated by the Honorary Consuls themselves. An overwhelming 80% of those we surveyed felt their selection was based on their good contacts within the society in which they were living. 40% mentioned social status and 25% mentioned their ties to Canada. Headquarters Officials participating in the focus group session identified the following basic criteria which should be used when selecting honorary consuls:

- Preference should be given to a Canadian citizen, and if not possible, the candidate should have tangible connections to Canada.
- Candidate should be of independent means with a good standing and reputation in the community.
- Candidate should not hold a consular commission from another state nor hold an official position in the state of residence.
- Candidate should be able to provide services based on reasonable expectations of Canadians and should avoid real, apparent or potential conflict of interest.
- Candidate should be an expert in the subject matter (competencies) for which services are requested and be in a position to influence decision makers.

Although there are systems and mechanisms in place to manage Honorary Consuls and ensure results based planning, monitoring and reporting, these systems and mechanisms appear to be underutilised. As mentioned before, very few yearly appraisals are undertaken of Honorary Consuls by missions. Monthly activity reports, called logs, measure the compilation of work carried out in the consulates and are filed electronically through COMIP (Consular Management Information Program). The logs measure case management time for work in providing assistance to Canadians, new passports, citizenship applications, legal work such as the authentication of documents and the like as well as program management time including work done by the consulate in support of trade, development, immigration and political and economic programs. If filled out correctly on a timely basis, it provides useful information for the planning and management of the Honorary Consul Program.

Controls over financial reporting from HCs are not adequate. While the number of cases of malfeasance is low, the recent experience in Belize demonstrates that not all supervisory missions are managing their consulates appropriately. Supervising missions must be prepared to ensure the monthly financial reports are submitted on time and that they are complete and in conformance with departmental financial procedures. They should not hesitate to ask questions when necessary and to carry out reviews on the premises from time to time. Paper and file controls are a constant problem for Honorary Consuls' officers. The consuls are not aware of departmental destruction regulations and are not equipped to dispose of old files. Passport application files, consular assistance files and citizenship files all contain personal information which needs to be treated sensitively. Honorary Consuls need to be given clearer direction on how to handle such files, how long they should keep them and how best to dispose or destroy them.

Of the HCs responding to the survey, most stated that they are in regular, sometimes, daily contact with the supervising mission and are visited by the consul or head of mission at least once per year. Some reported visits of three to four times per year with a high of 8 visits while one reported that they were visited once every 2 years. 80% of Hon Cons responding to the survey

reported that their relationship with the supervising mission was very good and an additional 15% stated that their relationship was good. 95% of HCs reported that the advice and assistance they received from the mission was good or very good. Heads of Missions overall found that it was difficult to manage the Hon Cons from a distance stating that they lack the personnel at the mission to properly manage the program.

The system of honoraria is out of date and in need of a complete review. It is not clear when the honoraria was last adjusted but it has been over 14 years. While honoraria are not meant to provide compensation for actual work, they are intended to provide recognition of the role performed. Honoraria should reflect the importance the government places in the role and work of the appointee and in the confidence the government places in a person to represent Canada in a consular capacity. We expect the highest standards, not only of work, but also of personal life as it relates to their duties as representatives of Canada. The amount of honoraria varies depending on the workload and currently ranges between \$3,000 and \$13,000 with the overwhelming majority paid at the low end of the scale. The three consulates in Mexico are a special exception and the new ERI Honorary Consuls in the United States are being provided an honorarium nearly double the present maximum. While the special considerations related to the work expected from the HCs in the USA may warrant the expenditure, it raises questions about the fairness and adequacy of the funding for Honorary Consuls generally and perhaps even more particularly for those HCs outside the USA who are also largely devoted to trade and advocacy issues. In our discussions with HCs and HOMs, the majority agreed that the honorariums paid are not a factor in a candidate's decision to accept the mandate of honorary consul nor do they have an effect on the recruitment or quality of candidates. Nevertheless, many of the respondents suggested that improvements could be made in the remuneration of Honorary Consuls. Others noted that the special consideration given honorary consuls in the United States and Mexico need to be reflected in an overall review of the compensation given honorary consuls worldwide. They caution that particularly in the case of Mexico, the amount of compensation could be constituted as an employer/employee relationship.

Canada's Honorary Consul program appears to be no different from the Honorary Consul programs of the USA, UK, France or Australia. They all use the Honorary Consul program as a cost effective means for providing services to their nationals where there is no official representation. Although each country might appoint, train, manage and compensate their Honorary Consuls to some degree differently, the difference is minimal. However, many of the countries share in the challenge in how best to manage the Honorary Consul program and how best to reward them for the invaluable work they do for their countries.

5. Conclusion

The Honorary Consul program is a cost-effective approach to delivering Government of Canada's services in an area where official Canadian presence is limited. Honorary Consuls are most effective in providing assistance to Canadians in distress and in their ability to network with influential groups and individuals in the host country. While the responsibility for the selection, supervision, and performance monitoring of the Honorary Consul continues to reside with the Head of Mission from the supervising mission, current systems in place to manage the Honorary Consul program are underutilised. The structure and support for managing the program needs to

be improved. Taken in the context of the ERI and the special considerations given to the three HCs in Mexico, questions are being raised about the fairness and adequacy of the funding for Honorary Consuls outside of the USA and Mexico. Consideration should be given on how Honorary Consuls should be rewarded which would include recognition by FAC.

Conclusions

OVERALL OBSERVATIONS

In many areas of the world, political and social insecurity is growing and all countries are now in the process of tightening controls and security measures internally and at their borders. The probability that consular events and crises will increase and become more acute is therefore almost certain. Travel abroad will increase over time and more and more Canadian citizens, landed immigrants, and Canadians with dual citizenship might find themselves in situations that will require a strong intervention from consular services. However, Canada's intervention and success will always depend on other countries willingness to respect human rights.

There is a limit to what Canada can do overseas to assist Canadians in distress. This being said, most Canadians who have dealt with consular services, have a positive image of the assistance provided by FAC. Consular Affairs delivers its services without the guidance of an overarching policy on Consular Affairs.

Given increasing general demands, new complex and multiple variables for a growing number of high profile cases and an international context that places individuals increasingly at-risk, the Department is in need of updated, forward looking policies and strategic framework for Consular Affairs. Issues that should be reviewed include: the scope of services to Canadian and dual citizens, definition of consular clients, policies and procedures to deal with countries that do not respect human rights, practice torture or no not recognize dual citizens.

Communications with Canadians is a domain that will require additional attention. The Department must find new and innovative ways of communicating its important consular information to Canadians. The Canadian Government must reiterate the fact that Canadians are responsible for their behaviour when abroad and that the government's influence on other countries is limited. Communications with the media must be improved, diversified and be more forceful. Much greater efforts must be deployed on managing media relations and keeping them informed with the right information. A misinformed media only raises the complexity of the case.

The tools available to consular officers are very good. The developments in technology over the past decade have facilitated the work of consular officers and have increased their efficiency. This being said, the increasing demand for services and an evolving context in which to deliver these services will require high levels of resources at missions and headquarters if no adjustments are made to the mandate of Consular Affairs.

Consequently, consular services must adjust and become more proactive in anticipating problems and in dealing with critical events. Information needed in order to prevent incidents must reach Canadians in time and in ways that will ensure a better dissemination. Better policies and procedures must be designed in order to react more efficiently and diligently to events.

High profile cases while representing a minor percentage of consular cases have had a negative media coverage and will often be a challenge. The difficulties that FAC has had with certain cases

could be seen as a warning that the Department must engage in some thoughtful review and planning of what it wants to deliver as consular services in the future.

Management Response:

To be able to plan ahead effectively and clarify the vision for the Consular Program, there is a need to understand the changing circumstances in which consular services are delivered, and the main challenges these are likely to present.

In the document “Consular Program Capacity Review: A Strategy for the Future”, the Consular Affairs Bureau has identified key trends that will increase demand for consular services and the reasons for adapting and/or changing what and how the Consular Program delivers these services; the challenges these trends present; and the Bureau’s vision to continue to aim to be a high-performing, global consular network.

The biggest challenge facing the Consular program is finding and maintaining a balance between rising client expectations and resources. A stable source of funding for the Consular Program is required: to meet the growing number of consular customers; to manage higher public expectations; for continued investment in program delivery technologies; to respond to the need for consistency across a global network; to prepare effectively for, and respond quickly to, more frequent catastrophes/crises worldwide; to manage new and emerging categories of consular cases, under extreme conditions and volatile situations; and to manage increased scrutiny of consular (and the Department’s) performance.

The Capacity Review document also highlights possible sources of increased/incremental revenues which would assist the Department in ensuring the Consular Program is adequately funded to meet growing, more complex and catastrophe/crisis response demands.

Recommendations

Policy and Procedures

1. In the context of an evolving environment, a strategic policy encompassing the scope and the limits of the consular services should be developed to meet the reality of the 21st century;
2. The Department needs to move towards more clarity and consistency in decisions and instructions concerning consular cases. As other countries, the Department should be clear about the limits of consular services.

Management Response :

All Consular Program efforts, and proposed initiatives, can help to reduce demand/expectations of clients in terms of consular assistance, but they cannot eliminate it. There is also the need to set clear limits on what can and cannot be done for Canadians who get into difficulty, and to be transparent about the way decisions are made in setting these limits. It will involve a difficult balance between being flexible in the approach to individual circumstance, while being consistent in delivery of services worldwide.

It is with this objective in mind that the Consular Affairs Bureau has created a “Consular Framework Document” which targets consular clients, providing them with information on which services are and, are not, offered and stressing the need for Canadians to assume responsibility for their own safe travel. In 2003 the Consular Affairs Bureau developed and produced a 'what we can and cannot do' booklet - Canadian Consular Services.

While the “public” part of the Framework document responds to transparency, Part II of the document is meant to assist consular officers abroad and in headquarters by providing guidelines for managing specific case categories. These guidelines have been developed in response to pressures felt by consular officers to provide services beyond the norm and stated standards, perceived inconsistencies and “exceptions” in decisions concerning consular cases, and to more accurately reflect contemporary circumstances. Also, some of the guidelines in Part II of the Consular Framework Document are being developed into more comprehensive policy guidelines. We have highlighted The Dual National paper in our response below, however, others include Child Sex Tourism, Forced Marriage, Inter-country Adoptions, Death Penalty, and Legal Expenses.

Recommendations

3. FAC should pursue a policy regarding dual nationals that focusses on the promotion of international human rights to ensure among other things the just treatment of dual nationals;
4. FAC should continue working with other countries in a multilateral approach to put pressure on countries who have not adopted acceptable human rights policies and have not adapted to a new world environment of dual or multiple citizenship individuals;
5. As a long term objective, FAC with other countries, should work towards modifying the Vienna Convention or any other international agreement to address the evolving and growing issue of dual or multiple nationals;

Management Response :

The Consular Bureau has prepared a Dual Nationality Policy Paper, and is working with its Five Country Colloque partners (USA, Australia, UK, and New Zealand) to promote a multilateral approach to the increasing and complex challenges in providing assistance and protection in consular cases involving dual nationals. We intend to consult with these like-minded countries and work with other bureaus in the Department to determine whether the VCCR can be amended to clarify the rights of sending states and receiving states in respect to dual nationals.

The Consular Bureau is also committed to working closely with other programs and bureaux in the Department to ensure that cases involving human rights issues have the benefit of and adhere to stated Canadian government policies and initiatives concerning this issue, and take into account overall bilateral or multilateral relationships.

Resources and Tools

Recommendations

6. Put in place at HQ a core team of consular experts to assist missions and HQ during crisis situations;
7. For countries where torture is suspected or known to be practised, training and procedures need to be developed to assist consular officials with the task of detecting mental or physical abuse of detainees and how to assist prisoners in these circumstances;

Management Response :

There is a need to continue to build on the investment in improving and augmenting the consular cadre at headquarters and missions abroad capable of responding to crises which could impact on Canadians currently abroad, including the creation of a multi-disciplinary Rapid Deployment Team. It is recognized that the first 24-48 hours of any catastrophic event or crisis is the most critical, and it is better to over-respond in the early stages and then scale back as the crisis evolves. Specific components of the RDT would respond, on a cases by case basis, to identified and anticipated needs “on location”, as well as providing support and assistance in the Crisis Management Centre in headquarters, to respond quickly and effectively to catastrophic crisis situations and high-profile and complex consular cases.

The changing world environment, which has resulted in an increasing number of, and more complex, consular cases, requires stable staffing levels at headquarters, complemented by expanded training modules. It is essential that more in-depth training is provided directly related to consular case management (to cover subjects such as recognizing and handling clients suffering from mental illness, identifying possible cases of mental or physical torture, grief counselling in the wake of major disasters/catastrophes). The Consular Affairs Bureau is piloting a two-day workshop in February, designed to assist consular officers in identifying prisoner cases where torture is suspected, and in providing the appropriate assistance in these cases. Development of this type of training module will continue on an ad hoc basis as time and resources permit unless there is an increase in dedicated resources (financial and human) required to design and provide this necessary training.

In addition, given the need for coherency and consistency in the “Canadian response” to extreme and catastrophic situations, crisis training of FAC personnel (in all streams) should include instruction on security issues, humanitarian aid, family counselling, bilateral relations, etc. which are becoming more prominent given the changing and evolving world security-conscious environment, and more frequent and devastating crises. It is essential that the creation of, and training, a multi-disciplinary Rapid Deployment Team include consultation and cooperation with Personnel, the Geographic Bureaux, the Communications Bureau, Global Security programs in

the Department, as well as with OGDs and NGOs, who will be able to assist the Department given their interests and experience. There is a need for a training module specifically designed for HOMs, who will have the responsibility on the ground of integrating the RDT in mission work during a crisis.

Again there is a need to adequately resource this need for the long term, to ensure that this type of training will be available on an on-going basis given the need for ensuring that the largest possible cadre of FAC personnel receive the training and refresher courses. Quickly identifiable resources (financial and human) that will be needed are a Training Coordinator, a technical writer (to create module training material), trainers for technical, policy and operational components of the training modules, budgets that allow for HQ and on-site training courses, contracting with professionals to provide on-going advice and assistance in training, but who could also be called on to participate as part of the RDT. There will also be a need for investment in technical support for the RDT, i.e. SAT phones, laptops, cell phones, etc. in order that the team is as self-sufficient as possible upon arriving at the mission or the actual location of the crisis which may not be in close proximity to the mission.

An initiative is already underway to expand the Department's Emergency Operations Centre, to create a fully functional Crisis Management Centre, which will enable the Department to respond to any type and size of crisis. This will involve providing appropriate and adequate space and technologies, which will be adapted and used through the various phases of a crisis. No other significant changes have been made to existing training modules, but these will be addressed as time and resources permit.

Recommendations

8. Some means should be found to confirm the legitimacy of the consular program as a mainstream departmental activity and enhancing its standing within the Department;
9. Consideration should be given to extend the FS classification to consular and MCO staff to be considered like the trade or political programs;
10. The Department should ensure that positions with more than 50% of consular workload are staffed by consular specialists and would report directly to the head of mission or deputy HOM;

Management Response :

Delivery of consular services to Canadian citizens around the world is a "core" business of Foreign Affairs Canada. Consular is a vital and highly visible program in the Department. It is essential for the ongoing effectiveness of the Consular Program, and the public's continued positive opinion of FAC, that the Department invest in and support the human resources delivering this "core" business. The Consular Affairs Bureau should have a headquarters

reporting structure identical to all other programs and bureaux in the Department, including classifications levels, beginning with management positions. The same approach would apply to MCO (both consular and management) positions at missions abroad. The Consular Bureau believes this will confirm senior management's view of the legitimacy of the consular program as a mainstream departmental activity and enhance its standing within the Department.

While the Consular Affairs Bureau sees no advantage to the "FS" option noted in #9 above, it is the Bureau's view that MCO staff should be given the option of self-identifying as "consular specialist" or "management generalists". It is recognized that there is need for all MCOs to have the opportunity of cross-training in both consular and management positions, but they would be able to choose their designation within the MCO group.

Recommendations

11. The Department should strategically plan to meet the expanding needs of Canadians for the Consular Program at missions and at headquarters;
12. The Department should consider the resource needs of Consular Affairs at headquarters in order to facilitate the fulfilment of its duties;

Management Response :

The Consular Affairs Bureau is not funded or staffed to meet growing and more complex consular demands. New and increasing challenges put the Consular Program, and the Department, at risk of not being able to provide essential services in a professional, timely, effective and efficient way.

In the Capacity Review document, the Consular Affairs Bureau has identified critical incremental resource (financial and human) needs, and proposes possible sources of increased/incremental revenues which would assist the Department in allocating adequate budget reference levels to meet current and future demands and reduce Departmental risks and avert negative public reaction.

Recommendation

13. JPD needs to further develop its performance measurement system in order to capture data that would indicate the level of services being delivered, the degree of satisfaction with those services, and whether or not service standards are being met;

Management Response :

The Consular Affairs Bureau has been working on improving the reliability of the COMIP data. It should be noted that 2003 COMIP data is based on 90% completed logs, and the Consular Affairs Bureau is on track for a similar record in 2004. The COMIP Reference Manuals for both the daily user and the program manager have been developed and are now part of our regular

COMIP training sessions and are also posted on the Consular Intranet site. A module on COMIP is included in the Consular training courses given to all staff who are, or will be, performing consular work abroad, i.e. LES, new recruits, MCOs.

Consular Program Managers are reminded of outstanding COMIP logs each time they log into COSMOS. From the COSMOS welcome screen, if a mission (or any missions supervised by it) has one or more outstanding logs, an automatic reminder is displayed to the Program Manager. This reminder includes a list of all outstanding monthly logs by mission. Program Managers have the option of selecting any entry from the list which will bring them to an area where they are able to file the log.

Missions that are delinquent in their COMIP reporting, or where inconsistencies/anomalies in reporting have been identified, are given special attention, i.e. additional assistance/coaching over the phone. Problems in COMIP reporting at specific missions are also brought to the attention of audit/inspection teams prior to on-site visits.

*It is recognized that any system which depends on user input will never be 100% accurate. As such, the goal is that COMIP reports and analyses be seen as **one** indicator, combined with other factors, to ensure that consular resources are appropriately allocated. It should be noted that, where we do not have confidence in the data for a specific mission, it is not factored into the decision making process.*

*However, reporting requirements with regard to the service standards set for the \$25 Consular Services Fee and the Consular Specialized Services Fees are not being fully met. The Consular Affairs Bureau is providing the basics via the Departmental Performance Report (DPR) and the Report on Plans and Priorities (RPP), and the Consular client feedback mechanisms are for the most part capturing the level of client satisfaction out there. However, there is a need to develop better mechanisms for reporting on consular performance against the **measurable** service standards which have been set in connection with these fees (i.e. is the Consular Program providing the service within the timeframes specified by the standards). It is expected that this issue will receive more scrutiny in light of the new User Fee Act which came into effect on March 31, 2004, and it is only a matter of time before deficiencies are noted in future audit/evaluations of these fees. The Consular Affairs Bureau is starting to focus on this but resources needed to move forward are currently not available within the Consular Affairs Bureau reference level. Specifically, salary budget reference levels will need to be increased to staff vacant and new positions, and technical changes need to be developed and implemented in the CAMANT component of COSMOS which would facilitate these performance measurements.*

Recommendations

14. The Department has a legal obligation to ensure privacy protection according to the requirements of the Privacy Law. A review should be conducted to assess the Department's compliance with any information gathering, storage and sharing by Consular Affairs;

15. The Department should review who needs to have access to the information that is available through COSMOS.

Management Response :

The Consular Affairs Bureau has prepared a document entitled “Guidelines on Use and Disclosure of Personal Information”, which are guidelines that have been developed in response to questions and concerns regarding the collection, use and disclosure of personal information in the delivery of consular services, especially when consular staff are faced with circumstances where obtaining a consular client’s consent is unrealistic or impractical, particularly in extreme crisis situations.

In the section entitled “Using Technology” in the Capacity Review document, the Consular Affairs Bureau outlines its response to the issue of who needs to have access to the information that is available through COSMOS. Briefly, an MOU with the Passport Office has been completed as relates to portions of COSMOS available to both groups in order to facilitate the delivery of passport services. The Consular Affairs Bureau is also preparing to negotiate a Memorandum of Understanding with Corrections Services Canada (CSC). CSC only have access to CAMANT arrest cases where there is to be a transfer of an offender back to Canada. The MOU will provide a clear understanding for both groups as to how and what this information is to be used for. Although the Consular Program delivers citizenship services on behalf of Citizenship and Immigration, there is no access to COSMOS given to this department. Also, there is no access provided to a group called the Canadian Security Centre, as mentioned in the review document itself. On-going reviews of COSMOS users are carried out by the COSMOS technical group to ensure that access is limited to only those who play a role in the provision of consular services.

Communication with Travellers and Media

Recommendations

16. Targetted communication strategies must be implemented to inform more Canadians about consular services and their responsibilities when travelling;
17. Review information channels: if Canadians are passive in their responsibility in ensuring their own security abroad, possibly they should be reached through other communication means such as radio, TV and newspaper advertisements, etc;
18. Inform and communicate more efficiently:
 - Canadians should be informed more about their responsibilities and obligations as Canadians travelling abroad, but also as Canadians with dual citizenships;
 - Canadians should be better informed on the responsibility of Consular officers and the limits of consular services when dealing with problems encountered; and

- Maximize the use of travel agencies, passport offices and airlines as disseminators of information when travellers are making arrangements;

19. Efforts must be made on managing media relations and keeping them informed with the right information.

Management Response :

The Consular Travel Information Program is a key tool in assisting Canadians to prepare themselves and enjoy safe and incident-free travel. The Consular Affairs Bureau has created a document entitled “Policy Guidelines for the Travel Information Program” which sets out the policy and procedures involved in developing and issuing Travel Reports and Travel Warnings.

The Consular Affairs bureau has also developed a communications strategy, contained in the document “Consular Awareness” - A Communications Action Plan . It is aimed at making more Canadians aware of the information that is available to them and delivering a key message that the onus is on travellers to prepare themselves with information and protect themselves with adequate and appropriate insurance coverage, before they leave Canada. This is an important element in our overall approach to limiting the risks to the travellers and to enhancing the Consular Program’s ability to respond to ever-increasing critical situation and crises. The Consular Affairs Bureau has been working closely with the Communications Bureau on this initiative over the last year, but current resources are insufficient to move forward.

Honorary Consul Program

Recommendations

20. A complete review of the funding for the HC program taken in the context of the ERI and Mexico is needed to ensure the adequacy, appropriateness, and fairness of the program
21. Supervising missions must improve their oversight of honorary consuls to ensure they are fully meeting the financial requirements of the Department. The monitoring and reviewing of honorary consul accounts must be more systematic and thorough;
22. The Department should take a detailed look at and improve the structure and support provided to the Honorary Consul Program to ensure the proper selection, training, supervision and performance monitoring of Honorary Consuls by the supervising missions while at the same time not imposing a rigid structure that would deprive missions the flexibility to adapt their Honorary Consul program to their needs.
23. The Department should put in place a rewarding system of the most performing Honorary Consul.

Management Response:

The Consular Affairs Bureau agrees with the recommendations regarding the Honorary Consul program. The Bureau will continue to work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that the program functions as an appropriate vehicle to deliver Government of Canada services in areas where a Canadian presence is limited. Furthermore, it commits to a complete review of the funding for the program and to taking a detailed look at the structure and support provided to the program. This will be carried out internally in conjunction with other principal users of the network, or externally by someone qualified to carry out such a review, when resources are available.

Appendix A:

Review Site Visits Summaries

Multiple lines of evidence contributed to this review. The review team conducted seven mission site visits to London, Rome, Cairo, Chicago, New York, Manila and Hong Kong. The objective of these visits was to benefit from the opportunity of meeting, through structured interviews, Canadians who were seeking some kind of consular service. The review also benefited from more in depth interviews with HOMS, heads of consular services and Canadian and LES working in the different consular sections of these missions. The information and opinions gathered during these interviews were aggregated and used throughout this review report. Below, brief descriptive texts on the seven mission sites visited for this review.

Hong Kong

With some 250,000 Canadian citizens living in Hong Kong and a large number of Canadians visiting or travelling through the area, the Consular Section of the Consulate General is kept very busy. Most consular clients are seeking services related to passports: renewal, replacement or first passports for newborn children. There is also a steady demand for citizenship services, for example requests for citizenship documents for children born of Canadian parents in Hong Kong.

In general, consular clients interviewed in Hong Kong were very satisfied with the quality of the service offered. They specifically spoke of the efficient, helpful and friendly staff they had dealt with. However, there were negative comments about the physical facilities, namely the fact that the waiting room for consular clients is much too small to accommodate the flow of people. This was confirmed by a visit in the course of this study. The overflow from the waiting room often forced people to wait standing up in the emergency exit area, in contravention of any safety regulation. Another point is the limited space for consular agents to interview clients. There are only five interview booths and eight would be needed in order to utilise the staff efficiently. However, the current physical setup does not allow for any more space either for the waiting area nor for additional booths. Because of the lack of space, not all examiners can serve clients.

A number of clients also mentioned the limited hours of service as an issue. For instance, people who work would find it easier to come at lunch time to deal with their passport or citizenship matters. This is currently not possible as the office is open until noon for applications and from two to four in the afternoon for passport pick-up.

Additionally, consular clients who come in for both passport and citizenship services have to wait twice in line as those services are handled by separate staff. Those who mentioned this fact were hoping that a system could be found so that they could deal with both types of

services one immediately after the other, without having to go back to the end of the queue, as it were. Multitasking of employees would be a possible solution.

In summary, services and the people delivering them received high praise while the physical facilities elicited some negative comments. Those critical comments were borne out by what the visiting team could observe.

Manila

The consular section at the Canadian Embassy in Manila serves a sizeable community of Canadian citizens who live in the Philippines as well as a steady flow of Canadians travelling on business or for personal reasons. A large portion of cases handled relate to passport services, in large part renewals or replacements for Canadians residing in the country and new passports for their children. Residents also come to the embassy to make citizenship applications for their newborn children. As regards visitors from Canada, a number of men come to the Philippines to marry Filipinas and they visit the embassy in order to have the consular section certify an affidavit stating that they face no obstacles to marry. The mission provides a variety of consular services including assistance and visits to Canadian prisoners in the country.

Clients surveyed or interviewed in person had high praise for the level and quality of service provided by the personnel of the consular section. In addition, many had used the embassy web site and found it informative and useful.

Chicago

The US Midwest is becoming an increasingly popular destination for Canadian tourists and business travellers and an attractive area for Canadians establishing permanent residence in the United States. The consular territory for the Chicago Consulate General covers the tri-state area of Illinois, Wisconsin and Missouri as well as parts of Iowa and Indiana. The majority of Canadians coming to the consulate general for consular services request assistance with passports, both emergency and renewal. Other services requested include citizenship services and support for Canadians in distress. The Consular section is staffed by an experienced LES Consular Officer and a LES Consular Assistant who are supervised by the Consul and PERPA Program Manager. The Consular Officer spends a large portion of his time dealing with the large number of Canadian detainees in the service territory. The Consular Assistant position was recently added allowing the Consular Officer to undertake more consular advocacy work.

The timing of the visit to Chicago did not coincide with the peak demand for consular services. Of the 11 Canadians interviewed, all but one client was extremely satisfied with the services rendered or about to be rendered. There were a couple of complaints about the lack of privacy in the waiting area and having to explain your request at an open wicket which could be overheard by others in the waiting area. Others found the waiting times for delivery of

passports and citizenship certificates to go well beyond the service standards. Some are waiting over 20 days for a passport renewal thus putting the mission in a bad light since they are on the front line responding to clients' frustrations with slow service.

New York

A full range of consular services is provided through the Canadian Consulate General in New York to Canadian citizens residing or travelling in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut and Bermuda. These include passport and citizenship information, registration for federal elections, notarial services and providing emergency assistance in the case of disasters, accidents, arrest and detention, or medical emergencies. The consular section is a busy office and is staffed by a full time CBS Consular Officer who is the head of the Consular Section, one LES Consular Officer and two LES Consular Assistants. During the summer, they also had a Canadian Co-op Student working in the section. The consular officers report that there is a constant flow of clients into the office or requesting information over the phone. They also have between 85 to 100 Canadians detained at any one time in the tri-state area. Aside from the processing of passport and citizenship applications which make up the bulk of their caseload, consular officers report that they have a huge role in assisting Canadians in distress and in monitoring and tracking terrorism cases, drug cases and deportations. The consular section was cited by the Department for their extraordinary efforts in assisting Canadians after September 11th.

Of the Canadians interviewed, the vast majority came for either passport or citizenship services. Except for one client, everyone was extremely satisfied with the professional and prompt service delivered by the consular section. Overall, the system functions smoothly. However, there is a felt need to add more staff resources to assist in the increasing demand for services. Similar to Chicago, there were complaints about waiting times for passport renewal and citizenship certificates. The end result is that more emergency passports are being issued than probably need be. This points to a disparity between the extra fees charged in Ottawa for an urgent request and the issuance of a passport on an emergency basis at the regular fee. Security and terrorism cases will continue to be challenges for the consular section over the next few years.

Cairo

In Egypt it is estimated that approximately 10 000 citizens of dual nationality reside, many for extended periods of time. The Embassy no longer has a Honorary Consul in Alexandria and citizens must deal with the Embassy in Cairo. At certain periods of the year the consular section at the Embassy must give assistance to more Canadian tourists but on a regular basis most of their work is geared to helping Canadians (passport renewals, citizenship documentation, notarial services, etc). The Embassy is housed in a new relatively new building in central Cairo. There is a reported cultural mistrust of all dealings with what can be labelled "government" and this results in consular clients that are very demanding. This situation did

not stop the Canadians that we interviewed from saying that they were very satisfied with the assistance they received from consular officers.

Rome

The Embassy in Rome, through its consular section, gives assistance to a large number of Canadian tourists at certain times of the year and to a significant population of Italo-Canadians residing in Italy. All Canadians that we interviewed reported being well served and very satisfied with the assistance they had received at the Embassy.

London

The High Commission in London has one of the Canada's busiest consular sections. It serves a very large number of travelling Canadians, business people and tourists as well as a significant number of Canadians living in the UK and Canadians holding UK citizenship. The London consular section is a large operation that seems to run very smoothly and offers the full range of consular services. . It is staffed by many long serving consular officers. The London consular section was to be a test pilot site for the new "E" passports strategy. Contrary to many missions, the consular officers reported having quite positive and helpful communications with the Passport Office in Canada. All Canadians that we met in London and were seeking consular assistance were quite satisfied with the quality of services they received.

Appendix B

Honorary Consuls -- Basic Profile & Competencies

Conditions justifying the recruitment of an Honorary Consul or for opening a Consular Office
Number of Canadians residing in area
Number of Canadians visiting the area
Intensity & extent of trade between Canada and the area
Frequency and nature of consular assistance required by Canadians
Frequency and nature of consular services required by Canadians
Difficulty of Canadian mission to provide all services in the area (e.g. distance, communications, accessibility, resources)
Absence of Canadian mission (Canadian Embassy, Canadian High Commission) in area where services might be required
Unfamiliarity with local situation (new emerging country or region where Canada has limited exchange & knowledge)
Resource base cannot permit opening a Canadian mission

Basic selection profile
Preference is given to Canadian citizens
If appointee is not a Canadian citizen, should have tangible connections with Canada (e.g. employee of Canadian company, education in Canada, relatives in Canada)
Appointee should be of independent means
Good standing in community
Good reputation in community
Should not hold consular commission from another state
Should not hold official position in state of residence
Other commitments should not prevent ability to provide services based on the reasonable expectations of Canadians
Should avoid real, apparent or potential conflict of interest
Expert in subject matter

In position to influence decision makers

Basic Competencies
Capacity to maintain good relations with local government authorities
Capacity to have rapid access to local government authorities
Being well connected and having a good standing in/with the local community
Good networking skills (different from being well connected)
Knowledge of both official languages (or develop capacity to offer means to provide services in both official languages)
Knowledge of local language (if appointee is Canadian for instance)
To be service oriented in order to meet service standards
Good communication skills
Good organizational skills

Honorary Consul - Consular Service Area

Functions	Role	Main activities	Specific competencies per activity	Basic Competencies needed in all activities of this area
Consular Assistance & Protection to Canadians	<i>Help Canadians in distress (under the guidance of supervising mission)</i>	Provide first line of consular assistance to Canadians in the events of accidents, death, destitution, family distress, repatriation, arrest, etc.	Good judgement & firm	Empathetic; Sympathetic; Efficient; Display a reassuring manner; Confident; Discreet; Flexible & patient;
		Serve as channel of communications between Canadians concerned & local authorities		
		Issue emergency financial assistance		
		Handle repatriation (medical, death)	Conscientious	
		Handle arrests & detention	Be non-judgemental	
	<i>Maintain links with visiting or resident Canadians</i>	Keep register of visiting or resident Canadians in their district	Able to deal with unusual & dangerous situations	
		Handle security warning, evacuation	Calm & efficient	
Keep close relations with Canadian community		Good inter-personal skills		
Consular Services	<i>Provide passport services (limited)</i>	Affix visa-page inserts and enter and delete certain observations in passports		
		Issue emergency passports with the specific authorization of supervising mission		
		Receive & check completed passport application forms before forwarding them to supervising mission		
		Collect passport & consular fees and remit them to supervising mission		
	<i>Provide citizenship services</i>	Distribute forms		
		Check completed forms for accuracy		
	<i>Provide visa services (limited)</i>	Distribute Canadian immigration and visa (for non-Canadians) application forms (not authorized to issue visas)		
		Provide letters of introduction (for Canadians)		
		<i>Related consular services (Provide limited legal related services)</i>	Administer, take or receive oaths, affidavits or statutory declarations (documents under federal jurisdiction)	

Honorary Consul - Public Affairs and Other Service Areas

Functions	Role	Main activities	Specific competencies per activity	Basic Competencies needed in all activities of this area
Public Affairs	<i>Assist Canadian mission in public affairs</i>	Dissemination of information materials, press enquiries and medias relations		
		Promotion of Canadian culture		
		Fulfill representational or ceremonial tasks		
		Respond to enquiries on education opportunities in Canada		
Admin & logistical support	<i>Assist Canadian mission in the conduct of relations in the territory of accreditation</i>	Assist mission (visits by Canadian officials, consultations with local authorities)		
		Assist visits of private sector representatives		
		Assist in visits from Provincial & OGDs representatives		

Honorary Consul - Advocacy Service Area

Functions	Role	Main activities	Specific competencies per activity	Basic Competencies needed in all activities of this area
Trade Policy	<i>Explain Canadian government positions (under the guidance of Canadian mission)</i>	Respond to incorrect statements (medias, business community, public)		To be articulate & persuasive; Diplomatic
		Make representations to local authorities		
		Report when needed (be responsive) to supervising mission		
Foreign Policy	<i>Explain Canadian government positions (under the guidance of Canadian mission)</i>	Respond to incorrect statements (medias, business community, public)		
		Make representations to local authorities		
		Report when needed (be responsive) to supervising mission		
General advocacy (border issues, continental security, etc.)	<i>Explain Canadian government positions (under the guidance of Canadian mission)</i>	Respond to incorrect statements (medias, business community, public)		
		Make representations to local authorities		
		Report when needed (be responsive) to supervising mission		

Honorary Consul - Trade Service Area

Functions	Role	Main activities	Specific competencies per activity	Basic Competencies needed in all activities of this area
Promotion of commercial & economic relations				Be comfortable in dealing with the business community; Well informed on local economy & services
Service to Canadian missions	<i>Assist supervising mission on trade & commercial matters</i>	Obtain and pass to mission commercial information of interest to Canadian firms (tender documents, projects)		
		Provide information to Canadian government officials about trade investment, technology exchange, customs, or relevant problems		
		Make representation (on behalf of Canadian firms) to local authorities on trade, investment, technology exchange, customs, or relevant problems		
		Provide market intelligence on local firms		
Services to Canadian business people	<i>Help develop new market for Canadian goods & services</i>	Provide introductions and facilitate contacts between Canadian business people & local business people or officials		
		Recommend suitable representatives or distributors for Canadian firms		
		Investigate trade opportunities for specific Canadian products, services, investments, and technical exchange		
Services to local business people	<i>Help local market in developing trade & exchange with Canada</i>	Stimulate or respond to interest in Canadian goods & services, investments & Canadian technical exchange		
		Reply to inquiries about Canadian trade opportunities, tourism and related matters		