Kim Richard Nossal, "A Canadian Department of Global Affairs?" in Janice Gross Stein, ed., *Diplomacy in the Digital Age: Essays in Honour of Ambassador Allan Gotlieb* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2011), 141–54. Page turns indicted thus: **[142]**

One of the major paradoxes of diplomacy in the digital age is that the expanding nature of what constitutes "foreign policy" makes it increasingly difficult for governments to organize themselves coherently and effectively to engage in global politics. The expansion of foreign policy has been accelerated by the globalization of the economy, the growth in both number and scope of transnational actors, and the mounting complexity of international operations. But governments continue to organize themselves in ways that reflect an earlier age. Virtually all governments in the contemporary international system maintain separate bureaucracies to engage in a wide range of activities beyond their state's borders: foreign ministries to conduct general political relations with other governments; ministries to encourage foreign trade, sometimes twinned with the foreign ministry; agencies to collect intelligence and conduct espionage operations abroad; agencies to engage in financial coordination with other governments; agencies to monitor and control the country's borders; departments to deliver development assistance abroad; and armed forces to act in military or policing operations beyond the state's borders. This way of organizing the state reflects organizational decisions taken long ago, but these have often persisted for largely inertial reasons. And in this **[142]** panoply of bureaucratic

organizations, the foreign ministry has a particularly problematic role, since there are so few agreed-upon parameters for what should be within its purview. Indeed, foreign ministries, with their traditions and practices deeply rooted in European history, seem old-fashioned and out-of-touch, unsure of their mission in an increasingly networked and globalized world.

Reflecting on the problem in the British context, Peter Hain, minister of state in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, noted in 2001 that the concept of the "foreign" in foreign policy was becoming harder and harder to define. He entitled his reflection "The End of Foreign Policy?" and wondered whether there would eventually come a time when "international policy" would "no longer be split into arbitrary compartments," and foreign ministries would be rebranded as Departments of Global Affairs.[1]

Some parts of Hain's suggestions would be more easily accomplished than others. For example, it is relatively easy to embrace the change in language from "foreign policy" to "international policy." Paul Martin, Canada's prime minister from December 2003 to February 2006, chose to use "international policy" to describe all those areas of policy that are part of the Canadian government's engagement with the international system. His government's *International Policy Statement*, published in 2005, consisted of reviews of diplomacy, development assistance, defence, and international trade, with an overview presented by the prime minister himself.[2]

But it is much more difficult to embrace the other part of Hain's argument to create an appropriate bureaucratic structure for "international policy." How exactly is this to be done? **[143]** A number of governments in the late 1990s and early 2000s adopted a variant of what the Labour government of Tony Blair had first bruited in 1997 as "joined-up government" — a recognition that there are some intractable social problems that cannot be solved by a single government agency alone, but which required the integrated and coordinated efforts of different agencies. Blair's joined-up government morphed into what was called a "whole-of-government" approach to policy, according to which different agencies would work to provide integrated policy formulation and implementation that crossed department lines.[3] A complementary approach was embraced in the case of international stabilization missions: the so-called "3D" approach to foreign policy, which sought to integrate the contributions of the defence forces, the development assistance agencies, and the diplomats from the foreign offices.

But whole-of-government and 3D approaches, in particular as they were applied in international stabilization missions in the former Yugoslavia, in Afghanistan, and in Haiti, demonstrated the difficulties of overcoming "departmentalism" in policy terms. The whole-of-

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[1] Peter Hain, *The End of Foreign Policy: Britain's Interests, Global Linkages and Natural Limits* (London: Fabian Society, 2001), 61.

[2] Canada, *A Role of Pride and Influence in the World: Canada's International Policy Statement*, overview booklet (Ottawa, April 2005).

[3] Tom Christensen and Per Lægreid, "The Whole-of-Government Approach to Public Sector Reform," *Public Administration Review* 67, no. 6 (2007) 1059–66.

government approach sought to integrate the operations of a number of different departments, each with different organizational missions, different bureaucratic cultures, and different bits of bureaucratic turf to defend. As long as the structures of hierarchical authority are left in place, with each department funded separately, each responsible for its particular mission, each reporting separately to a central authority, the essential unity of purpose implied by the whole-of-government rhetoric simply will not work.

Peter Hain's proposal for a singular Department of Global Affairs was intended to address the fragmentary dynamics of **[144]** departmentalism. In this model, the bureaucracy would be radically reorganized so that the "arbitrary compartments" of policy areas would be brought into a single ministry charged with the formation and implementation of "international policy." Instead of multiple semi-autonomous organizations, with their own hierarchical structures, with their own institutional cultures, and with their own champions at the political level in cabinet vying for budgets and control over policy "turf," there would be one Department of Global Affairs, with a single internal hierarchical authority, represented by a single voice at the cabinet table. Such a departmental structure would logically bring all the "compartments" together under one roof. In other words, all those who formulate and implement a country's engagement with the world would be members of this mega-department: the diplomats, the members of the armed forces, the spies, the development assistance specialists, the immigration and border control officials, and all the functional policy experts from the "international" units of "domestic" departments.

On the one hand, there can be little doubt that entrenched departmentalism can be challenged and indeed overcome through bureaucratic reorganization. The most extensive government reorganization in the contemporary era – the creation of the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) in the United States in the aftermath of the attacks of September 11, 2001 – demonstrates what can be achieved when one takes twenty-two different government agencies, many with long histories and deeply-rooted organizational traditions and cultures, and hurriedly repacks them into a single organization. The case of DHS suggests that one can indeed remould institutional cultures and create a singular organizational mission.

[145] But the DHS case also begs an obvious question about large-scale government reorganization: even if the creation of a single Department of Global Affairs would provide the state with an effective bureaucratic organization for the formulation and delivery of "international policy," would the massive reorganization necessary to effect that change be worth it?

The Canadian experience with foreign policy reorganization suggests one answer. In Canada, effort to grapple with the role of the foreign ministry in a world where the definition of foreign policy is changing goes back more than a generation. While the issue was first raised in the early 1970s with the creation of the Interdepartmental Committee on External Relations, it was not until Allan Gotlieb was appointed as the deputy minister of the Department of External Affairs (DEA) – or the under-secretary of state for external affairs, as the position was known then – that efforts were made to address the problem in a sustained and structural way. Gotlieb's

idea, in the late 1970s, was to reposition the Department of External Affairs within the Ottawa bureaucracy and give it a central role in the making of international policy. In Gotlieb's view, External Affairs should become a central agency, like other central agencies of the Canadian state, such as the Privy Council Office, the Prime Minister's Office, the Treasury Board Secretariat, and the Department of Finance. And, like other central agencies in Ottawa, External Affairs should be given authority to engage in a broad coordinating role across government, advising cabinet as a whole on a range of foreign policy issues, rather than running programs.

This movement included the consolidation of the Foreign Service, bringing together those civil servants from External Affairs, International Trade and Commerce, Immigration, **[146]** and other government departments who served abroad. Introduced in 1980, the consolidation also saw all the senior officials serving abroad in the Department of External Affairs, the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce (IT&C, as it had become in 1969) and of Employment and Immigration (E&I) integrated into External Affairs. From this common pool were drawn the heads of posts for Canada's missions around the world. The idea behind this scheme was to allow posts abroad to operate more efficiently by streamlining the authority of the head. Instead of having to coordinate the activities of officials at a mission abroad who were receiving instructions from External Affairs, the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), IT&C, and E&I in Ottawa, the head of post would have authority over all staff, regardless of their function.

The final component was the reorganization of the government by Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau on January 12, 1982. All departments with an economic mandate were affected. A new central agency, the Ministry of State for Economic and Regional Development, replaced the Ministry of State for Economic Development; the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and the "industry" side of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce were both replaced by a Department of Regional Industrial Expansion. The "trade" side of IT&C, including those parts of the Trade Commissioner Service not included in consolidation, as well as the Export Development Corporation and the Canadian Commercial Corporation, were all merged into a "new" Department of External Affairs.

However, the 1982 reorganization did not resolve any of the bureaucratic "turf" issues that continued to appear as **[147]** other departments continued to pursue their international policy mandates. The attempts of External Affairs to establish its primacy over all aspects of international policy produced mixed results, and DEA lost control of the most important foreign policy area: the negotiation of a free trade agreement with the United States. The Progressive Conservative government of Brian Mulroney decided to create a separate agency to guide the process of negotiating that agreement. Usually, international negotiations on trade would be conducted by External Affairs, but Mulroney's Cabinet decided that this issue was too important to be left to one department; rather it would be given to a Trade Negotiations Office (TNO) under a chief negotiator, Simon Reisman, and staffed by officials seconded from other agencies of government like Regional Industrial Expansion, Finance, External Affairs, and the Privy Council Office (PCO), with some drawn from outside the bureaucracy. While Reisman was

nominally a deputy in External Affairs and the TNO was nominally an administrative unit of that department, in fact the TNO was an autonomous organization that reported directly to the prime minister.

The tinkering with the foreign ministry continued in the late 1980s. The name was changed in 1989 to External Affairs and International Trade Canada (EAITC), and when Reid Morden was appointed under-secretary of state for external affairs in the early 1990s, there was yet another change in direction. Under Morden, the department went "back to basics" – focusing only on political and economic affairs and eliminating overlap. This required transferring some roles to other departments. External's immigration function was moved to Employment and Immigration Canada; responsibility for international expositions was moved to Communications **[148]** Canada; international sports was transferred to Fitness and Amateur Sport; cultural and academic programs were moved to the Canada Council (a measure that was subsequently defeated in the Senate).

In one policy area, however, EAITC continued to try to extend its policy control. The reorganization in 1982 had left the Canadian International Development Agency alone, and during the 1980s Joe Clark, as the minister responsible for both External Affairs and CIDA, had allowed CIDA considerable policy autonomy. After Mulroney moved Clark from External Affairs to become the constitutional affairs minister in 1991, however, the cabinet decided to put funding for both official development assistance (ODA) and assistance to the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe into one budget envelope. The International Assistance Envelope (IAE) was controlled by External Affairs, which sought to shift large amounts of development assistance funds to spending on projects designed to assist Central and Eastern European countries in making the transition to democracy.

After the Liberals under Jean Chrétien came to power in November 1993, the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade (DFAIT), as it was renamed by Chrétien, experienced a serious shrinkage in size over the course of the 1990s as part of deficit reduction. By 2001, the size of the department had been reduced to 1900 Foreign Service officers, 2,800 non-rotational officers in Canada, and 4,600 locally-engaged personnel in foreign missions. The problem for DFAIT was that policy demands did not diminish with the shrinking resources. Because the number of independent countries grew in the wake of the Cold War, there were always good reasons to expand the number of diplomatic posts **[149]** maintained by Canada, and so while some embassies abroad closed, many more were opened. The activities of the Canadian government in international organizations increased as new organizations like the International Criminal Court were created, and negotiations in the institutions of global governance increased and became more complex. The number of Canadians traveling abroad during this period expanded as well, requiring expanded consular services.

The pressures on DFAIT accelerated in the post–9/11 period, when a new emphasis was placed on the 3D approach in initiatives such as the Canadian mission to Afghanistan. DFAIT increasingly worked with CIDA and the Department of National Defence (DND) to coordinate activities abroad, particularly in Canada's expanding commitment in Afghanistan. However, this

increasing focus on the integration of the activities of the three departments abroad was interrupted by Paul Martin's decision to pull DFAIT apart. On December 12, 2003, the day that he became prime minister, Martin announced that the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade would be divided into two separate departments again, bringing to an end twenty-one years of fusion. He made this announcement without any prior discussion or consultation with affected industry groups such as the Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters.

Although the Martin government used an Order-in-Council to split the department, the legislation to give the two new departments their new formal mandates was never passed. By the time that legislation was ready to be considered by Parliament, the 2004 election had reduced the Liberals to a minority government, and on second reading, the three opposition parties in the House of Commons combined to **[150]** defeat this government bill—the first time since 1925 that a government bill was defeated on second reading.

When the Conservative Party of Canada under Stephen Harper won a minority in the January 2006 elections, the bureaucratic landscape did not change much. One of its first acts on taking office was to cancel Martin's Order-in-Council; Harper also confirmed the continuing responsibility of the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade for the coordination of the international policy agenda. In the past five years, however, more power and authority over Canada's international policy has accumulated in the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office.

In short, in the thirty-three years since Allan Gotlieb first proposed the idea of External Affairs as a central agency in 1977, no amount of fiddling with the foreign policy bureaucracy has managed to resolve the essential dilemmas that Gotlieb and his contemporaries were trying to address. While today the Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade continues to have the formal central role for the coordination of foreign policy that it enjoyed for much of the twentieth century, the bureaucratic landscape remains as crowded as ever with those agencies responsible for key elements of Canada's foreign policy: at the centre, the clerk of the privy council, the foreign and defence policy advisor to the prime minister, located in the Privy Council Office; the Department of National Defence and the Canadian Armed Forces; CIDA; the Department of Finance, Treasury Board Secretariat; and Public Safety Canada, with its various agencies that are involved in national security, including the Canada Border Services Agency, the **[151]** Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service.

It is precisely this profusion of bureaucratic actors "delivering" international policy on behalf of Canada that may make the idea of a Department of Global Affairs for Canada seem attractive. A single agency, with a single deputy minister and a single voice in cabinet, responsible for *all* aspects of Canada's international policies—widely defined—would indeed introduce an element of coherence and coordination that is difficult to achieve when the power over policy formulation is tightly centralized at the centre—in the Prime Minister's Office and the Privy Council Office—and at the same time policy implementation is fragmented across a number of bureaucratic actors.

The irony, however, is that while a Department of Global Affairs might be *conceptually* attractive, actually trying to put into place a bureaucratic structure that takes seriously a whole-of-government approach in international policy would be an administrative—and hence political—nightmare for any government in Ottawa that sought to bring such a mega-department into being.

First, there is the simple and highly pragmatic consideration that reorganizing the bureaucracy comes at an exceedingly high price. Thus, for example, when the Harper government took office in February 2006, they were determined that, as one Conservative put it, they "would not get involved in a complicated rejigging of the machinery of government… basically for the reason that if you start to reorganize the machinery of government, you kiss your productivity goodbye for two years as everyone figures out who reports to whom."[4]

[152] Second, absent the kind of transformative event such as 9/11, which allowed the administration of George W. Bush to trump the entrenched interests of twenty-two government agencies and create a single Department of Homeland Security, no government in Ottawa could even attempt to tidy up the foreign policy bureaucracy without generating backlashes at several different levels.

Consider, for example, the insurmountable difficulty of trying to fit the Canadian Armed Forces into this scheme. To be sure, at a purely conceptual level, there is no logical reason why the legislated four-fold mandate of the CAF—protecting Canada, defending Canadian sovereignty, defending North America, and contributing to international peace and security around the world—could not be delivered in a different way. The CF command structure could be left intact, with the Chief of Defence Staff responsible to the Minister of Global Affairs rather than the Minister of National Defence. The Department of National Defence could be abolished and incorporated as a unit of the Department of Global Affairs, whose deputy minister would have responsibility for policy and resources. But what might seem conceptually tidy would simply be unthinkable from a realistic political perspective. What government—unless motivated by a rare death wish—would actually move to abolish the Department of National Defence and put the armed forces of the country into an agency filled with diplomats, tradies, intelligence agents, development assistance experts, immigration officers, customs and border agents, and a variety of other officials whose policy areas have global implications?

Importantly, it is likely that the very same dynamic that would make the dismantling of DND and the transfer of the **[153]** CAF to Global Affairs politically impossible would be reproduced in other policy areas. The resistance to dismantling a large number of established federal institutions—DFAIT, CIDA, CSIS, CBSA, and all the international units of other government departments—would be considerable. The effects on the smooth functioning of the Canadian state would be profound (since the world would not stop while Canada reorganized

[4] Quoted in Paul Wells, *Right Side Up: The Fall of Paul Martin and the Rise of Stephen Harper's New Conservatism* (Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 2006), 283.

itself). And the process of putting a new bureaucratic Humpty back together into a single coherent organization would be fraught with practical difficulties.

In short, it is the high costs and the "unthinkability" of bureaucratic alternatives that gives the present structures their inertial fixedness rather than any inherent logic in the way in which governments are organized. But a look at the alternatives—and what happened in Canada when significant attention was devoted to trying to rejig the machinery of government to make it more coherent and tidy—strongly suggests that it makes considerable sense simply to leave Hain's "arbitrary compartments" alone, and just live with the inherent messiness that comes with how governments organize themselves for foreign policy.

Footnotes published on p. 154