Chapter Six

MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS: WORKING
The process of working of the Ministry has raised numerous problems of administration. As in the case of other Ministries there are definite rules of office procedure to guide the day-to-day working of the Ministry. But the great diversity and complexity in the nature of business transacted in the Ministry make often the formal application of these rules inadequate to meet new challenges and requirements. The constant flux of international relations demands quick decisions to be taken which cannot be accommodated within these formal rules. The ever-widening scope of foreign affairs, reflected in particular in the working of international organizations, necessitates a wide range of consultation and co-ordination between the External Affairs Ministry and other Ministries in the government. Co-ordination is also required in the working of the Ministry among the various divisions at the headquarters and between the headquarters and field establishments. Lord Strang has described the problem of the British Foreign Office in this respect as follows:
It (the Foreign Office) must work as a unit in a number of different contexts; in the advice it offers to the Secretary of State; in the relations it maintains with other departments of H.M. Government; in the instructions, it sends to H.M. Missions in foreign capitals or at the headquarters of the international organisations; and in the representations which it makes to foreign governments and in the arguments which it conducts with them. (1)

This description is no less applicable to the Indian External Affairs Ministry also.

II

Rules of Office Procedure and Internal Co-ordination

It was noted in the preceding chapter that in the organization of the Ministry there are two different patterns in existence - the conventional set-up being followed in the specialized and administrative divisions and the re-organized set-up in the territorial and UN Divisions. This distinction has been evolved on the basis of the differences in the nature of functions performed by these divisions. For the same reason, the administrative procedure evolved in the case of the two types of divisions is also different.

Under the conventional set-up the pattern of office procedure in the Ministry is the same as in the case of other Ministries. The Central Registry of the Administration Division receives, registers and distributes to the various sections all communications (called "receipts") addressed to the Ministry. The distribution of receipts takes place at regular intervals. Special procedure is followed for registration and distribution of receipts marked 'secret' or 'top secret' and 'immediate' or 'priority' in order to ensure secrecy and quickness. (2)

The Section Officer classifies the receipts as Primary ('P') or Subsidiary ('S') on the basis whether they provide starting point for new action or arise out of work already

started on a primary receipt. They are entered in the Section Diary and are distributed to the Assistants or to the higher officers according to their nature. The necessary files are also attached or sent on request when the receipts are forwarded to the higher officers. If other sections are also concerned with a receipt, the section in charge may send relevant extracts of the receipts to them for remarks or necessary action. (3)

The file now begins its journey upwards in the hierarchical line. Officials at different levels, beginning with the Assistants, record their 'notes' on the files before passing it on to the higher level. These 'notes' may consist of "a precis of previous papers, a statement or an analysis of the questions requiring decision and suggestions as to the course of action and orders passed thereon." (4) The decision for final

(3) Ibid., Chapters II, VII and IX, 4-6; 30-4; 42-3.
(4) Noting by the office has the following purpose:

(i) to see whether all the facts, so far as they are open to check, are correct;
(ii) to point out any mistakes or mis-statements of facts;
(iii) to draw attention, where necessary, to the statutory or customary procedure and to point out the law and rules and where they are to be found;
(iv) to supply other relevant facts and figures available in the Ministry and to put up precedents or papers contained in the previous decisions of policy;
(v) to state the question or questions for consideration and to bring out clearly the points requiring decision; and
(vi) to suggest a course of action, wherever possible.

(Ibid., para 25, page 8.)
action is taken at the appropriate level under the rules of delegation of work, unless the officer feels that he requires the advice of his higher officers. As far as possible the oral method is required to be used for such consultation. In order to facilitate work and avoid repeated recapitulation a "running summary of facts" is prepared at an appropriate stage in cases involving complicated histories. This is kept up-to-date and is placed on the file. This summary is not to contain opinions of individual officers though the advice or views of other Ministries may be included. (5)

At a particular stage of this process, when the line of action on a receipt has become clear, a draft reply is put up for approval by the office. After final orders have been passed by a competent officer the file goes back to the section through all officers at intermediate stages to keep them informed of the decision taken. The necessary communications are then despatched. (6)

This conventional pattern of office procedure is thorough, but time-consuming, and has been discarded in some of the divisions to-day. Under the re-organized method, the responsibility for quick and efficient disposal of work is placed on the Under Secretary and not on the Section Officer. On all policy-type papers, noting and drafting by Assistants

(5) Ibid., Chapter III, 7-10.
(6) Ibid., Chapters IV, V and VI, 15-29.
in the Section has been completely eliminated. The Assistants' work is simply to maintain the records and to submit the papers duly flagged and referenced to the Under Secretary. (7) The simplification of the old three-tier process of Assistant, Section Officer and Under Secretary has naturally enabled quicker disposal of papers and economy. Papers receive immediate attention from a responsible officer at the policy-making level.

The re-organized scheme was introduced in five territorial sections of the Ministry in August 1958. The preliminary results were found encouraging and during the same year, it was extended to twelve more sections, both territorial and administrative. It was found that apart from the noticeable increase in efficiency, this had led to an economy of Rs. 2,43,000 per annum on account of pay and allowances alone. (8) The reorganization scheme has since been extended to cover nearly all territorial divisions. The conventional method is, however, regarded as more suitable for the specialized and administrative divisions and certain territorial sections like Nepal, Nepal Aid and UN work.

A further measure of reorganization related to the transit of papers. Under the conventional procedure, the regular channel for the passage of papers is from the Section Officer (who gets the 'receipt' from the Central Registry) to

(8) Ibid., 3.
the Assistant (for attaching the relevant papers and noting); from the Assistant back to the Section Officer; from the Section Officer to the Under Secretary; from the Under Secretary to the Deputy Secretary or Director; from the Deputy Secretary to the Joint Secretary; and from the Director or Joint Secretary to the Secretary. However, in many cases, this entire hierarchy may not be covered, for the papers might stop mid-way at any one of the various stages and begin its journey back. In certain cases, level-jumping is also permitted. This means that in specified cases an officer might bypass his immediate superior and address a more senior officer directly. But in such cases, the immediate superior officer should be kept informed of the matter.

The reorganization scheme of 1958 systematized this procedure. It was decided that normally, papers would not be dealt with by more than two officers below the level of the Secretary. This meant that the Under Secretary might submit papers directly to either the Deputy Secretary or the Joint Secretary, but not necessarily to both. Where the papers are submitted to the Deputy Secretary, they are next submitted direct to the Secretary and not to the Joint Secretary. The new arrangements have led to some saving of time and energy. It has also resulted in a "better utilization of officers' strength and enables each of the higher officers to concentrate more on his own direct charge, instead of a succession of officers dealing with the same paper." (9) It has also made

(9) Ibid., 2.
possible more quickness in arriving at decisions and some flexibility of procedure. It assures maximum consultation where necessary with minimum procedural difficulties to deal with.

All files submitted to the Minister should carry a self-contained summary unless a running summary is already available on the file or the last note on the file itself serves the purpose. In order to ensure that the Minister is not overburdened with each and every file, and at the same time that nothing important escapes his attention, it is stipulated that a weekly statement of all cases disposed of without reference to him, except those of a routine nature, should be submitted to him. The Ministry also submits to the Cabinet a Monthly Summary of its principal activities and such other returns as the Cabinet may require. (10)

Situations of pressing urgency, as often arise in international relations, demand a departure from these normal, elaborate procedure. Much short-circuiting is resorted to during such occasions. Some sudden development in a foreign country, as happened in Suez or Hungary in 1956, or a question of voting in the U.N. on any particular issue etc., might call for quick decisions. If they involve important policy implications, the decision might be taken by the Minister himself after hurried consultations or discussions with the Foreign

Affairs Committee or the more important members of Cabinet and his principal official advisers in the Ministry. Less important decisions of this kind are taken at the appropriate official levels. But on such occasions, even after the action itself has been taken, the whole procedure and decision are recorded and regularized.

Different forms of written communications are employed by the Ministry in addressing different agencies or persons and for different situations: 'Letters of Communication' with foreign governments, State Governments, Attached and Subordinate Offices, Public Service Commissions, official and non-official associations etc.; 'Office Memorandum' for correspondence with other Ministries; 'demi-official letters' for correspondence between Government officers for interchange of information or views without the formality of the prescribed procedure or when it is desired that the matter should receive the personal attention of the particular officer to whom it is addressed; 'unofficial references' by sending the file itself to another Ministry/Office with a note recorded thereon or by sending a self-contained note or memorandum for obtaining the views and comments or information and clarification on existing instructions etc. (11)

Special procedures have also been evolved to check delays. Files of urgency are marked 'IMMEDIATE' or 'PRIORITY' according to their degree of urgency. Receipts marked thus

(11) For details see ibid., Chapter VI, 25-28.
are sent up to the officer concerned immediately by the Central Registry, without waiting for the usual periodic distribution of mails. The procedure of short-circuiting the file is also adopted in order to expedite a decision. In such cases, intermediate levels of officers might be skipped and the paper would be directly sent up to the officer responsible for the decision. But in all such cases copies of the papers are later sent to the intermediate officers for information. The Section Officer would keep a note in his personal Note-book or desk calendar for such important or immediate receipts. Special arrangements are also made for the despatch of 'immediate' or 'priority' communications. (12)

There are also other special methods devised for checking delays on the normal disposal of work in the Ministry. A weekly Arrear Statement is prepared by each section and is submitted to the head of the division. A Monthly Statement of cases pending disposal for over a month is also prepared and is sent up to the Secretaries. There are also provisions for the maintenance of Call Books, Suspense and Reminder Diary, Register of Periodical Returns etc. in order to check delays. (13)

Particular care is taken to maintain secrecy where needed. The Ministry of External Affairs functions in an air

(12) Ibid., pages 1, 7, 21, 28-29, 34.
(13) Ibid., Chapter X, pages 44-8.
of greater secrecy than most other Ministries do. Proper security measures are taken for this purpose. Separate procedure has been evolved for files, receipts and despatches marked 'Secret' or 'Top Secret.' They are not opened at the Central Registry, but are passed on directly to the officer concerned. Their movements within and outside the Ministry are very closely restricted. Confidential and secret despatches to missions and posts abroad are sent by the 'diplomatic bag.' The diplomatic bags are sent through special messengers, once or twice a week. For urgent communications express letters or telegrams might be used. When the subject of an express letter is secret, it might be put in cypher or code. These are known as savingrams which might be cleared by diplomatic bag or through registered insurance mail. Similarly for urgent communications of an ordinary nature, en clair telegrams and for communications of a 'Secret' or 'Top Secret' nature cypher and code telegrams are used. These letters are transmitted through and cleared by the Central Cypher Bureau of the Ministry of External Affairs. The Central Cypher Bureau serves other Ministries also, when required. (14)

(14) Ibid., 2-3, 28-9, 63-5.
III

The Problem of Co-ordination

The problem of co-ordination in the Ministry is relevant in two important respects: with other Ministries/Departments in the governments that are engaged in various forms of international relations; and within the Ministry itself among its various divisions and between the headquarters and its field establishments. Co-ordination is necessary in order to ensure uniformity and consistency of policy. The inter-relationship of problems of foreign policy with economics, finance, commerce, defence etc. makes it essential that adequate arrangements are made for continuous consultation between the various Ministries/Departments in the Government and the External Affairs Ministry.

The compact nature of international relations demands that there should be an essential understanding on common objectives and common policy in the various divisions in the Ministry, particularly those dealing with political questions and that there are adequate means of continuous consultation among them.

(1) Internal Co-ordination: Co-ordination within the Ministry is sought to be realized primarily through the operation of the chain of command. The administrative machinery functions as a unit on account of the unity of authority and responsibility running upwards and downwards through the chain of command. They converge upon the Minister for External Affairs. Under him is the Secretary General. It is indicative of the special
responsibility of the Secretary General to ensure this co-ordination that the Economic and Co-ordination Division is kept under his direct responsibility. Similar co-ordinating functions are exercised by the three Secretaries. Their co-ordinating functions are both vertical and horizontal; vertically, in respect of the activities of the various divisions under each of them and horizontally among themselves. They meet together with the Secretary General to discuss common problems of policy. Such meetings take place as often as required - normally, at least once in a week.

The heads of divisions perform co-ordinating functions in the same way as the Secretaries, but at lower levels. Meetings of heads of divisions are convened to discuss common questions of policy. There is no particular regularity about such meetings. They may take place once in a week or more or less often. The head of a division might, in the same way, call for meetings of the Deputy and/or Under Secretaries under him to discuss problems relating to the division.

Apart from the formal and more elaborate means of consultation among the various sections through written communications, personal contacts between officials is also an important means of realizing co-ordination in the working of the Ministry. Personal discussions between two or more officials through the telephone or face to face are much more helpful and efficient to clear up a complicated problem than elaborate written communications and references. This requires,
however, good personal understanding and contacts among officials. The disadvantages of having the Secretariat of the Ministry divided and scattered in various buildings located in different parts of the capital are obvious in this respect. (15)

The headquarters-field relationship also raises numerous problems of co-ordination. There should be easy and quick means of communication between headquarters and its field establishments in order that effective co-ordination is maintained in their working. The headquarters may act as its own 'frontline' in its relations with a foreign government when negotiations or discussions are initiated by the foreign government and are conducted directly between the representatives of the country in New Delhi and the Ministry. The missions and posts abroad act as 'front lines' of the Ministry when these have been initiated by this government and are conducted between the foreign government and the Indian mission there. But in either case, the Ministry maintains consultations with its own mission in the country and with other missions situated in other countries that are interested. (16)

(11) **Inter-departmental Co-ordination:** The Ministry of External Affairs is primarily responsible for the conduct of

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(15) The Secretariat of the Ministry is at present located in five different buildings situated in different parts of the capital. All the territorial divisions are, however, housed in the Central Secretariat buildings.

(16) This point is discussed further in the succeeding chapter.
the foreign relations of the country, but the enormous expansion in scope of foreign affairs in recent times has made it impossible for it to have exclusive jurisdiction over the conduct of all foreign relations. Almost all the various Ministries/Departments in the government are engaged in different forms of international relations. It is the sum-total of these numerous relations that constitutes the 'foreign relations' of the country. Foreign relations, in other words, involve relations between whole governments, or rather states, and cannot, therefore, be confined to the administrative jurisdiction of any single Ministry.

The hypothetical case of a trade agreement with a foreign country can be considered to exemplify the problems of co-ordination. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry is the main technical ministry involved in arriving at and carrying out this agreement, but certain other Ministries are also interested in the negotiations. The Ministry of External Affairs must consider the political implications of the agreement. This would depend not only upon the kind of country with which the agreement is proposed to be negotiated - for example, communist or non-communist - but also on the types of commodities covered by the trade agreement, viz. strategic materials, war materials etc. The Ministry of Finance may be interested in the financial implications of the agreement, as for example, the question of foreign exchange. The Ministry of Commerce and Industry might require to be consulted about its implications regarding industrial production. The Ministry of Food and Agriculture might be interested in the trade agreement to the
extent it affects agricultural production. Outside the
government various groups of interests like that of different
industrial or commercial organizations might also require to
be taken into consultation. Numerous other agencies like the
Reserve Bank of India, Planning Commission and the like also
come into the picture at some stage or other.

The administrative process that ensues is one of the
most complex. Discussions and consultations on the widest
necessary scale are made among the numerous agencies involved
in the process. The proposal regarding the agreement might
originate from the foreign government conveyed through its
mission in New Delhi to the External Affairs Ministry or from
the Government of India conveyed through the Indian representa-
tive in the foreign capital. Within the Government of India
itself the proposal might be initiated by the Ministry of
Commerce and Industry or by the commercial section of the Indian
mission set up in the foreign country. The Economic and
Coordination Division in the External Affairs Ministry comes in
for consultation along with other interested Ministries during
the course of the negotiations. Such mutual consultations
are a continuous process, for every major proposal for
modification made by any of them as well as the foreign
government is subjected to scrutiny by these various agencies.
The agreement that is finally arrived at should represent as best as possible the balance of interests and viewpoints of all of them. The rather sudden and, often haphazard growth of the administrative machinery since independence has given new dimensions to the problem of co-ordination within the government—a situation in which the External Affairs Ministry is also as much involved as any other Ministry in the government. (17) More than anything else, the need for inter-departmental co-ordination has arisen on account of the large-scale participation of the government in numerous international organizations and conferences related to various spheres of governmental activity. (18)

(17) Regarding the problem of co-ordination within this "administrative jungle," the Prime Minister said,

The way government organizations and departments multiply leads nowhere but to waste. With the growth of offices arises the problem of co-ordination between them. A coordinating agency is created and, as usual, its size also goes on increasing. Then arises the problem of how to coordinate the activities of the coordinating agencies.

Speech by Prime Minister Nehru 26 October 1953. Jawaharlal Nehru's Speeches, Volume Three: March 1953 - August 1957 (New Delhi, 1958) 121.

(18) See Appendix III: List of international organizations of which India was a member in 1961-62.
Provisions for inter-departmental co-ordination

(1) At governmental level: The highest organ of inter-departmental co-ordination in the government is the Cabinet. The Cabinet functions as a co-ordinating agency by itself and through its Foreign Affairs Committee and other committees. All major questions of foreign policy as well as other questions involving foreign relations are brought before the Cabinet. All the important Ministries and Ministers are represented in the Cabinet so that discussions in it enable the various points of view to be represented and a co-ordinated policy to be formulated. The decision arrived at may be taken as fairly representative of the best possible balance of interests and influences in the circumstances.

Co-ordination takes place in a more intense form in the various committees of the Cabinet. The Foreign Affairs Committee will usually consist of the more important Ministers representing the more important Ministries related to foreign affairs. For example, in the 1957-62 government, the Ministers for Defence, Commerce and Industry, Finance, Home, and Transport and Communications were members of the Foreign Affairs Committee. (19) Co-ordination between defence and foreign policy has been facilitated considerably on account of the fact that since 1957, V. K. K. Menon, Minister for Defence has been very closely

(19) See footnote 42 in Chapter III.
associated with the foreign policy of the country, playing a role second only to that of Nehru. (20) The views of the Ministry of External Affairs have been enabled to be represented in other Cabinet Committees on account of the fact that the Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs has been member and chairman of all of them.

The Prime Minister plays a very effective role in realizing co-ordination within the government. As the head of the government he is in a position to survey the working of the entire government and to act as a main co-ordinating link. The British experience shows that the Prime Minister has a special role in the conduct of foreign affairs, and that, in recent times, this role has been of increasing importance. (21) The role of the Prime Minister in co-ordinating foreign affairs with other activities of the government has been facilitated in India on account of the combination of offices of the Prime Minister and the Minister for External Affairs in the same person during these years.

The Cabinet Secretariat renders secretarial assistance to the Cabinet and its Committees. It makes and maintains records of the meetings of the Cabinet and its Committees and

(20) V. K. K. Menon has been Minister without Portfolio attached to the Ministry of External Affairs from 1956-57 and Minister for Defence since 1957. His close association with foreign policy was referred to above. See footnote 77, Chapter IV.

(21) This was discussed in section IV, Chapter IV.
follows up their decisions. The Cabinet Secretariat functions directly under the Prime Minister. It keeps itself in contact with all the Ministries/Departments and seeks to effect co-ordination among them. The Secretariat has by itself no policy-making functions. It can therefore be regarded as "a disinterested organisation which can take an objective and impartial view on questions where departmental interests conflict." (22) In Britain, the staff serving in the Cabinet Secretariat is drawn from all the services - the Home Civil Service, the Foreign Service and, to a small extent from serving officers in the armed forces. (23) In India, however, the staff of the Cabinet Secretariat is drawn entirely from the home services and does not consist of members of the foreign service. There are also no separate administrative units in the Cabinet Secretariat in India specifically responsible for foreign affairs as there are for defence and economic affairs. (24)


(23) Max Beloff, New Dimensions in Foreign Policy (London, 1961) 165.

(24) The Cabinet Secretariat in India consists of the Main Secretariat, the O & M Division, the Military Wing and the Economic Wing. The Central Statistical Organisation and the Directorate of National Sample Survey function as attached offices. Matters relating to foreign affairs might be dealt with by the Main Secretariat and the Military and Economic Wings. For details of its organization see, The Organisation of the Government of India (II.P.A., New Delhi, 1958) 339-42.
Co-ordination at the departmental level: routine procedure:

At the departmental level inter-ministerial co-ordination is sought to be realized through the procedure of referring files to other Ministries/Departments or State Governments for information on facts, views and comments, advices etc. The formal and slower method of such consultation is by means of written communication. Less formal but quicker and, often, more effective is the oral method — by telephone or personal discussion. The oral method is sought to be encouraged as far as possible in view of the reduction in paper-work and the saving of time. But all points emerging from such discussions and the conclusions arrived at are recorded on paper by the officer concerned. In order to make co-ordination easier, the practice of distributing despatches, telegrams and memoranda from the missions and posts abroad to other interested Ministries is also resorted to. (25)

This is done on a very large scale in the British Foreign Office. (26)

The External Affairs Ministry also keeps itself regularly informed of the 'international activities' of other Ministries/Departments in the government. It is stipulated that correspondence between the Ministries of the Government of India and the State Governments on the one hand and Foreign Governments and International Organisations on the other should


(26) Strang, n. 1, 15-17.
generally be channelised through the Ministry of External Affairs." (27) For example, all correspondence between the Government of India and the United Nations is routed through the Ministry of External Affairs (which is the operative Ministry for UN affairs) and the India Delegation Office at New York. But in the case of the Specialized Agencies and the subsidiary organs of the United Nations, the Ministries concerned may correspond directly with them on routine matters with copies endorsed to the External Affairs Ministry and the India Delegation Office, New York. (28) In the same way, regional offices in India of international organizations like the ILO, WHO, FAO etc. correspond with the technical Ministries concerned with them, like the Ministries of Education, Labour, Health, Food and Agriculture etc., but copies of all important communications from and to them are endorsed to the Ministry of External Affairs.

Communications between the Government of India and other foreign governments (except with UK and Pakistan, for which different rules prevail) "involving negotiations, or questions of policy or of such importance that even though not involving questions of policy at the initial stage, they might eventually, lead to negotiations or to policy decisions," are directed to pass through the External Affairs Ministry. Other communications may be sent directly by the Ministry concerned, but the External


(28) Ibid., page 132, vii.
Affairs Ministry and the Indian representative in the foreign country should be kept informed. (29) Relaxation of these rules of correspondence with regard to the governments of UK and Pakistan has been done on account of the very large volume of business with these countries on account of the historic connections with them till 1947. The various Ministries in the Government of India are allowed to correspond directly with corresponding authorities in the two countries on most matters. (30)

Similar directives also exist in the case of communications between the different Ministries in the Government of India and foreign diplomatic missions in New Delhi. All official communications between the Government of India and the foreign missions in New Delhi are routed through the Ministry of External Affairs. Informal correspondence and oral communications on routine matters are, however, allowed, but the External Affairs Ministry is to be associated with such discussions at the earliest possible stage whenever they seem to have a bearing on policy matters. All Ministries are directed to record the substance of all important discussions with foreign missions and to endorse a copy of these reports to the External Affairs Ministry. Whenever important negotiations are conducted in India between any Ministry in the Government of India and the

(29) Ibid., Appendix VI, 125, I (2).
(30) Ibid., pages 126-8 and 133-4.
representatives of foreign governments, an officer of the External Affairs Ministry is also associated with it. In the preparation of the final signature of agreements between this government and a foreign government, the External Affairs Ministry is consulted. Similar restrictions are put on communications between State Governments in India and foreign governments or foreign diplomatic missions established in this country. (31)

Other Ministries of the Government of India and State Governments are also restricted from directly corresponding with Indian missions abroad, except on purely routine matters or for information and factual data of a non-confidential nature. They are also directed to submit official letters or telegrams addressed to the heads of Indian missions abroad for concurrence and issue. In the same way, in sending instructions on matters under the jurisdiction of other Ministries, the External Affairs Ministry is required to obtain prior agreement with the concerned Ministries. (32)

It can be seen that the general principle behind all these rules regulating correspondence is that of recognising, on the one hand, the primary responsibility of a technical ministry in dealing with matters within its competence and, on the other hand, the overall responsibility of the External Affairs Ministry for all foreign relations. This requires,

(31) Ibid., 129-30, 1 & vi.
(32) Ibid., page 129; iv(3); page 131, vi(B).
in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. (34) The Ministry is responsible for the negotiation of trade agreements with foreign countries, commercial representation abroad, control and regulation of imports and exports, determination of tariffs, promotion of exports and participation at government level in fairs and exhibitions abroad, membership of and participation in international trade organizations and conferences etc.

The Minister for International Trade is at the head of the Department of International Trade. The administrative head of the Department is the Secretary who is assisted by the usual hierarchy of Joint Secretaries, Directors, Deputy Secretaries and the like. The Department is divided into a number of sections, some of which are organized on a territorial basis, a few others commodity-wise and the rest functional and administrative. The territorial, or Foreign Trade sections as they are called, are responsible inter alia for receipt, scrutiny and follow-up action regarding the reports from the commercial representatives abroad, negotiation of trade agreements and watching the progress of trade under them, work relating to trade delegations going abroad or coming to India, assistance to businessmen going abroad and answering enquiries relating to

(34) There was a major re-organization of the Ministry in 1962. At present, the Ministry is divided into the Departments of International Trade, Industry and Company Law Administration. The entire Ministry is headed by a Cabinet Minister. The Minister for International Trade has the rank of the Minister of State.
trade with foreign countries etc. They also provide assistance to the commercial representatives abroad to chase their cases in the concerned Ministries. (35) The European Common Market section is a recently constituted one and deals with the ECM and the EFTA. The services of certain functional divisions like the Protocol, Trade Commissioners', Planning and Studies, Coordination and the different Export Promotion sections are also important in the organization of work relating to foreign trade. The various sections are grouped under the supervisory charge of senior officials like Joint Secretaries and Directors.

Within the Ministry of External Affairs the recently created Economic and Co-ordination Division is primarily responsible for all co-ordinating work relating to international commercial relations. The division is consulted on all matters relating to foreign commerce. It also scrutinizes reports from Indian commercial and trade representatives abroad with a view to the proper utilization of the information contained in them. It is also responsible for representing the views of the External Affairs Ministry to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry on matters relating to foreign trade.

Under the present arrangements, at the headquarters level, co-ordination of work takes place between the two Ministries through direct contacts between corresponding territorial sections.

(35) The various territorial or foreign trade sections are: East Asia; South Asia; West Asia; Africa; West Europe; America; Communist countries; GATT; E.C.M.
and divisions in them. The establishment of the Economic and Co-ordination Division in the External Affairs Ministry may be expected to bring about a greater degree of co-ordination between the two Ministries at the policy-making level. A further means of effecting co-ordination is that of appointing a few foreign service officers in certain foreign trade sections in the Commerce and Industry Ministry. (36)

Co-ordination is further sought to be achieved at the level of the field establishments. Commercial work is one of the most important responsibilities of all missions and posts. (37) For the more efficient performance of this work the more important missions abroad are provided with commercial sections. The few consular establishments also perform commercial work whenever there is need to do so. The commercial sections used to be manned previously by personnel from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, but since 1954 they have mostly been with foreign service officers. (38) But commercial

(36) As on 1 April 1962, there were two Deputy Secretaries, three Under Secretaries and nine section officers from the foreign service working at the headquarters of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

(37) See Appendix XIII: Detailed list of functions entrusted to Indian missions and posts abroad.

(38) In 1961, there were nearly fifty officers from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry working in the commercial sections abroad. The present Ambassador to Belgium who is also concurrently accredited to the European Common Market was, immediately before his appointment, Special Secretary in the Commerce and Industry Ministry and from the home service.
work abroad is considered to be primarily the responsibility of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry so that expenditure on the maintenance of these commercial sections, including the salary of foreign service officers performing commercial work, is borne on the budget allotments to the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The commercial sections work at present under a dual control system. For day to day work they are in contact with the Department of International Trade and receive instructions from it, but they are at the same time foreign service officers and are, further, under the disciplinary control of the head of the mission. Instructions from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry regarding their work - the negotiation of a trade agreement, for example - are issued only through the head of the mission and are carried out under his directions. Foreign service officers proceeding abroad to serve in the commercial sections as Commercial Secretaries are given training in the Commerce and Industry Ministry.

Since July 1962 a Board of Trade has been constituted to review all aspects of trade and commerce and to advise and make recommendations to Government from time to time on such matters. The Board is primarily concerned with matters relating to export promotion. The Board is constituted of the Minister of International Trade as Chairman; the Secretary in the Department of International Trade as Vice-Chairman and a Joint Secretary in the same Department as Member-Secretary.
Besides, there are a few officials and non-officials as members. This includes the Secretary General of the Ministry of External Affairs also. The Board will consist of not more than fifteen members. (39) The Board meets usually once in a month. The Constitution of the Board is a further attempt on the part of the government to promote the foreign trade of the country and to bring representatives of the various interests within the government and outside around a table periodically to discuss common problems relating to it. The business interests in the country had constantly been critical of the working of the foreign commercial activities of the government in the past. (40) It is, however, too early to judge how far

(39) The composition of the Board is as follows:

(1) Minister for International Trade - Chairman
(2) Secretary in the Department of International Trade - Vice-Chairman
(3) Secretary, Department of Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance - Member
(4) Additional Secretary, Planning Commission - Member
(5) Secretary General, Ministry of External Affairs - Member
(6) Secretary, Department of Agriculture, Ministry of Food and Agriculture - Member
(7) A Joint Secretary in the Department of International Trade - Member-Secretary
(8) President of the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry - Member
(9) President of the Associated Chambers of Commerce - Member
(10) Non-official members not exceeding six nominated by Government representing trade, industry, economists and others.

The Board may co-opt members not exceeding five. It may also request representatives of other Ministries/Departments in the government and of other business organizations to attend its meetings whenever necessary. Resolution No. 4-EP(Coord)/62 dated the 11th May, 1962. The Gazette of India Extraordinary, Part I - Section I, No. 69 (11 May, 1962) 937-8.

(40) Regarding these criticisms and for further discussion on the working of the commercial sections see the succeeding chapter.
the working of the Board of Trade would help to dispel some of these criticisms.

The inadequacies of the existing arrangements to realize the necessary co-ordination in commercial matters have, often, been pointed out. For example, the Estimates Committee pointed out that with regard to the working of the missions and posts abroad, "there should be better co-ordination ... between the Ministries of External Affairs and Commerce and Industry." (41) Under the present arrangements the main operational responsibility for the working of the commercial sections in Indian missions abroad is of the Ministry of Commerce and Industry. The External Affairs Ministry takes initiative only on those matters arising out of commerce and industry which impinge upon the political aspects of foreign relations. (42) This system of dual responsibility has not worked to good satisfaction so far and has often been subjected to severe criticisms. The Special Secretary to the Ministry of External Affairs thought it an anomaly that this part of the Government's activity abroad was not really dealt with by the Ministry of External Affairs. (43) A more dynamic conception of the inter-relationship between foreign affairs and commercial matters

(41) Estimates Committee 1960-61, Hundred and Thirty-Eighth Report (Second Lok Sabha) Ministry of External Affairs (New Delhi, 1961) page 18, para 49.


(43) Ibid., page 22, para 12.
and a more deliberate participation by the External Affairs Ministry in commercial activities abroad are urgently required.

(iv) **Economic Affairs**: The increasing importance of economics as a factor in foreign policy has raised problems of co-ordination between foreign and economic affairs. In India, the need for this has become all the more important on account of the present efforts to seek the maximum of international co-operation for the development of the country. The Prime Minister emphasized the importance of this correlation when he said:

> Ultimately, foreign policy is the outcome of economic policy, and till that time when India has properly evolved her economic policy, her foreign policy will be rather vague, rather inchoate, and will rather grope about. (44)

This vital and necessary co-ordination between economic policy and foreign policy presupposes an essential understanding between the Ministries responsible for each. There should also be proper means of continuous consultation between the two Ministries and an effort to accommodate the points of view of each in evolving and implementing the policies.

Within the Government of India, the Ministry of Finance is responsible for all economic and financial relations of the country with foreign countries and international organizations.

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(44) *Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates*, II (1947) 1260.
These relations include matters relating to foreign investments, economic, financial and technical assistance, foreign exchange and payments and other financial agreements with foreign countries and international organizations like the IMF, the World Bank, IBRD, International Finance Corporation etc. The Ministry is also responsible for India's participation in international conferences of an economic or financial nature like the Commonwealth Finance Ministers' Conference, Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council etc. (45) One of the most important forms of these international economic relations in the present context is the search for foreign aid. Giving and receiving foreign aid has important political implications and as such the Ministry of External Affairs is very closely associated with such negotiations and agreements. In certain cases where the political importance seems paramount the entire work might be taken up by the External Affairs Ministry. This has, for example, happened in the case of the economic and technical aid to Nepal. The Nepal Aid Section which used to function under the Finance Ministry has, since 1961, been transferred to the External Affairs Ministry. The work is at present directly conducted by the territorial division concerned with Nepal. (46)

The international, financial and economic work of the Ministry of Finance is performed by the Department of Economic

(46) The Eastern Division - See Appendix X-C.
Affairs in the Ministry. (47) Within the Department, the External Finance and Foreign Aid Division is in charge of these operations. The division is headed by a Joint Secretary. The work of the division is further divided among the three wings, each of which is further sub-divided into various branches and sections. The External Finance and Foreign Aid Division in the Finance Ministry corresponds to the Overseas Finance Division in the British Treasury. A second division in the Finance Ministry which renders valuable assistance with regard to these international activities is the Economic Division. The division undertakes studies about important economic developments and trends in the world like the formation of the Common Markets, international investment position etc., analyses the economic and financial reports from Indian missions and posts abroad, prepares a monthly survey of major economic developments, policies and trends in foreign countries and prepares briefs for Indian delegations to international conferences and organizations for which the Finance Ministry is responsible. (48) The division is headed by the Chief Economic Adviser. It would seem that special care is required to avoid a sense of rivalry and duplication of work between this division in the Finance Ministry and the Economic and Coordination Division in the External Affairs Ministry. Within the Ministry of External Affairs, while all the

(47) The Ministry of Finance is divided into three Departments: Revenue, Expenditure, and Economic Affairs.

territorial divisions and the missions and posts abroad might be seen to be engaged in these international economic and financial relations with foreign countries and international organizations, and consequently in the work of co-ordinating their activities in these respects with that of the Ministry of Finance, the general responsibility for co-ordination lies particularly with the Economic and Coordination Division in the External Affairs Ministry.

The arrangements in the British Foreign Office to co-ordinate economic work with other Ministries are, however, much more elaborate than in India. The Economic Relations Department plays an effective role of co-ordination regarding economic work within the Foreign Office as well as with the Treasury. The European Economic Organizations Department is concerned with economic co-operation in Europe - O.E.C., the Economic Commission for Europe, the C.M.C., the economic work of NATO etc. The Western Organizations and Planning Department is also closely concerned with the problem of planning and co-ordination in regard to the regional organizations pertaining to the North Atlantic area and Europe, but its emphasis is mostly on the political aspects. The appointments of one of the three Deputy Under-Secretaries in the Foreign Office to be wholly in charge of economic work and a member of the British Foreign Service as Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury on the economic side have been considered as indications of the importance which the economic departments in the Foreign Office
have acquired. (49) In India, the Economic and Coordination Division in the Ministry of External Affairs is still in nucleus form. It is inadequately staffed to perform its important responsibilities. No special arrangements like the appointment of the Deputy Under-Secretary for economic affairs and of the Joint Permanent Secretary to the Treasury from the Foreign Service also exist in the External Affairs Ministry to organize its economic work and to co-ordinate it with that of the Finance Ministry. As shall be noted below, while the interdepartmental committee system operates very effectively with regard to economic affairs in Britain there are no similar provisions at all in India. (50)

Co-ordination of work between the External Affairs Ministry and the Finance Ministry has also been considerably vitiated in India on account of a sense of competition and rivalry between the two Ministries. This rivalry has been evident even in matters of simple administrative details when the Finance Ministry refuses sanction for the creation of a post in the External Affairs Ministry or the sanction of expenditure on an unforeseen item. (51) The advantageous

(49) Beloff, n. 23, 153-6.

(50) See the succeeding section.

(51) This has been so from the days of the British administration. The Department of Finance had functioned as almost a 'super-department' in the Government of India during the British period. Till the very last, the Secretary in the Finance Department had always been an Englishman. It had exercised considerable administrative control over other departments on account of its control over finance. For details see, Asok Chanda, Indian Administration (London, 1958) 204-41.
position of the External Affairs Ministry of being under the direct charge of the Prime Minister has often been exploited by it to circumvent the restrictions of the Finance Ministry, a situation about which a former Finance Minister made open reference on his resignation from Government. (52) The independence of the Foreign Service from the general civil service has also been a further factor contributing to this sense of rivalry. Unfortunately this sense of rivalry has often been expressed even at higher levels and impaired the efficiency of co-ordination between the two Ministries. For example, it is said there had been for long continuous opposition from the Finance Ministry to the creation of an Economic Division in the External Affairs Ministry. Contrary to general international practices of representation abroad, the Finance Ministry even set up for a time two independent establishments of Commissioners-General for Economic Affairs in Washington and London (later Brussels). The Commissioner-General in Washington who also enjoyed Ambassadorial status and the Indian Ambassador in the same capital were reportedly maintaining very unpleasant relations and acting with little co-ordination in relation to their work. (53)

The problem can be solved only on the basis of a clearer definition of the relative spheres of responsibility in matters

(52) Statement by Dr. John Mathai in 1950. See footnote 45 in Chapter IV.

(53) This point is discussed further in the succeeding chapter.
of common interest by the two Ministries. In Britain, even though the influence of the Foreign Office is very vital to the formulation and implementation of the international economic policies of the country the primacy of the Treasury in the matter is not disputed. This settlement was, however, arrived at only after stirring up some confusions about it. It has been held by a number of people that during the inter-war years British foreign policy suffered from certain weaknesses on account of the encroachment by the Treasury upon the rights of the Foreign Office. Sir Warren Fisher in his capacity as Head of the Civil Service had claimed to have a say in the main appointments in the Foreign Office and the overseas missions. (54) Deliberate steps were later taken to enable the Foreign Office to regain its autonomy. The post-war reforms of the Foreign Service had it as one of its main objectives to make the Foreign Service independent of control by others. But sometimes this went too far. In the years immediately after World War II, Foreign Secretary Bevin was regarded as co-ordinating minister for all overseas affairs generally, including economics. (55) During these years the claims of the Foreign Office for a major say in foreign economic policy assumed considerable importance. (56) But, with


(56) Beloff, n. 23, 153.
the assumption of responsibility by Sir Stafford Cripps for all economic planning and later, his appointment as Chancellor of Exchequer in 1947 this brief period of glory for the Foreign Office came to an end. (57) Under the present arrangements the Treasury's primacy with regard to economic matters has remained undisputed. At the same time the claims of the Foreign Office for a major voice in these matters is also recognized. The economic departments of the Foreign Office have been strengthened and they play an important role in the making of economic policy. In the inter-departmental committees on economic organizations the Treasury has the lead, but the Foreign Office point of view is adequately represented. Inter-departmental rivalries have consequently been reduced considerably. (58) Conscious efforts should be made to define more clearly the frontiers of responsibility between the Finance Ministry and the External Affairs Ministry and to create more efficient and thorough means of consultation and co-ordination between the two Ministries.

(v) Cultural Affairs: The Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs is responsible for the international cultural activities of the Government of India. (59) These consist of

(57) Morrison, n. 55, 299-300.


(59) The international cultural activities had been looked after by the Ministry of Education till April 1957 and by the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research from April 1957 to April 1958. The Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs came into existence as a separate Ministry in April 1958 when the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research was bifurcated.
negotiating cultural agreements with foreign countries; arranging visits by educational and cultural delegations to and from India; participating in international cultural conferences, exhibitions and the like; establishing Indian libraries in foreign countries; giving grants-in-aid to foreign educational and cultural institutions; arranging for exchange of scholars and the administration of scholarships from and to India etc. (60) The purpose of these international cultural activities is to interpret the cultural heritage of India and thus project a favourable image of this country before the peoples of other countries. This, it is hoped, would form a more lasting basis for friendship and understanding with foreign countries.

Within the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs these international cultural activities form the responsibility of the External Relations Division. Some of these activities like the negotiation of cultural agreements with other countries, grant of scholarships etc. are performed by the Ministry. Some other activities are performed through the Indian Council of Cultural Relations. This body came into existence in April 1950 and has its headquarters in New Delhi. It has its branches in a large number of foreign countries, mostly in West Asia. In course of time, the Council hopes to

(60) For details, see the annual reports of the Ministry and *Estimates Committee 1957-58, Fifth Report, Ministry of Education and Scientific Research: Cultural and International Activities (New Delhi, 1958)* Chapter I, V and VI.
spread its organization to the various parts of the world. (61)

The increasing importance of cultural diplomacy in the foreign relations of nations makes it increasingly essential for the Ministry of External Affairs and the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs to work in close co-ordination with each other. Under the present arrangements the various territorial divisions in the External Affairs Ministry keep themselves in touch with the Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs Ministry with regard to these cultural activities. The External Publicity Division at the headquarters of the External Affairs Ministry and its various Information Posts abroad may be said to be specially engaged in these activities.

The need for better arrangements for co-ordination between the two Ministries was pointed out in the Estimates Committee Report on the Ministry of External Affairs in 1961. In the opinion of the Committee the External Affairs Ministry is in the best position to judge what type of cultural activities abroad would be most useful and effective and also whether the personnel sent abroad would best fulfil the object of such delegation or not. (62) In Britain, the responsibility for such

(61) Details on the organization and working of the Council can be obtained from its annual reports. Also see *ibid.*, Chapter V.

cultural activities abroad lies with the Foreign Office and is exercised by its Cultural Relations Department. The British Council acts as a very important agency for the performance of this work. Cultural Attachés are also appointed in the more important missions abroad. Unlike the Indian Council of Cultural Relations the British Council is a chartered corporation, though like its Indian counterpart it is wholly dependent on its Government for finances. (63) The British Council has also more facilities in terms of finances, personnel and experience of the work than the Indian Council. (64) No separate divisions like the Cultural Relations Department in the Foreign Office exists in the Ministry of External Affairs to look after these international cultural activities. In 1961, the Estimates Committee stated in its report on the Ministry of External Affairs:

Without being very categorical about the function being taken over from the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, the Committee consider that it may be useful to have a cell in

(63) The Indian Council of Cultural Relations is wholly financed from the budget allotments to the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs. The British Council funds are drawn from various sources: the Foreign Office (53.5%); Commonwealth Services (22.9%); Colonial Services (12.7%); and Colonial Development and Welfare (1.8%); and the Council earnings and Donations (9.1%) / percentages calculated on the basis of 1960-61 estimates./

(64) The annual budget estimates of the Indian Council of Cultural Relations for 1960-61 was Rs. 9,00,000 (£72,500). The annual budget provisions for the British Council for the same year was £5,372,500, nearly 102 times the allocations for the Indian Council of Cultural Relations.
the External Affairs Ministry to work in full co-ordination with the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs. (65)

The Ministry of External Affairs has recently set up a Committee to consider the question whether it would be necessary to have a separate Cultural Division as in the Foreign Office and to examine the consequent arrangements that would be necessary in such a case.

(vi) Defence: Besides the Ministries noted above, there are a number of others also with which the Ministry of External Affairs requires to maintain co-ordination in the conduct of foreign relations. The Ministry of Defence is one of the most important of these. The inter-relationship between defence and foreign policy is obvious. It is usually said that foreign policy is the country's first line of defence. In the case of India also this is no different. More specifically, the inter-relationship between the defence and the foreign policies of the country are to be seen in the case of the Kashmir and the Sino-Indian border disputes. Co-ordination between the two Ministries has also been necessitated on account of the employment of the defence forces of the country in pursuit of the country's foreign policy, as

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In its fifth report the Estimates Committee discouraged the opening of new branches of the Council on account of the need for financial stringency and suggested that the work of disseminating the knowledge of Indian culture should be entrusted to the missions abroad.

/* Estimates Committee 1957-58, Fifth Report, n. 60, page 26, para 104.*/
in Indo-China, the Gaza Strip and Congo. Purchase of aircrafts and armaments or negotiations with a foreign country for technical or other assistance for their manufacture in the country may sometimes develop into major issues of foreign policy. (66) Moreover, the Ministry of Defence has also been responsible for India's participation in certain international organizations and conferences like the World Veterans' Federation, Paris; the Commonwealth Advisory Aeronautical Research Committee; the Commonwealth Defence Minister's Conference etc. Officers of the Indian Defence Forces have often been sent on goodwill visits or loans to other countries and vice versa. Some of the bigger Indian missions abroad like those in London, Washington, Paris etc. have also been provided with specialists from the Ministry of Defence. From their posts they report and negotiate on matters of defence.

The requirements of co-ordination between the Ministries of Defence and External Affairs are mostly at the policy-making levels and are achieved, as noted above, at the level of the Ministers responsible for the two portfolios and the Cabinet and its Committees on Foreign Affairs and on Defence. The needs of regular consultation between the two Ministries have arisen only with reference to particular questions like Kashmir, the Sino-Indian border dispute, the engagements of Indian troops for U.N.

(66) The controversy on the proposed negotiations with the Soviet Union on the manufacture of MIG planes in the country with Soviet assistance demonstrates this.
purposes in foreign lands etc. When specific situations of this kind arise officers responsible for the particular territorial division dealing with the question keep themselves in contact with officers at appropriate levels in the Defence Ministry. A separate section in the Ministry of Defence deals with questions relating to Military Attaches in the missions abroad and the military contingents serving in foreign countries. The Joint Intelligence Organization of the three Services maintains liaison with corresponding units in the External Affairs Ministry. Apart from these the requirements for co-ordination between the two Ministries are mostly met on the basis of ad hoc arrangements.
Participation in international conferences and organizations

Perhaps the most important factor necessitating participation of the various branches of government in international relations has been the large-scale association of the country with a number of international organizations and conferences. For example, in 1961-62 India was a member of 72 international organizations. (67) These international organizations and conferences are related to a variety of subjects and come under the administrative sphere of different Ministries in the government. A very large number of delegations are sent abroad each year to participate in the meetings of these various international bodies and conferences. (68) The delegations proceed abroad for different purposes. Some of these delegations are political; others are quasi-political; more often, they are

(67) See Appendix III: List of international organizations of which India was a member in 1961-62.

(68) During 1956-57 to 1959-60 the number of delegations sent abroad were as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1956-57</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1957-58</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1958-59</td>
<td>204</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959-60</td>
<td>180</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is not known whether these include the delegations sent by public undertakings.

non-political. (69) But even when they are of an apparently non-political nature they might carry political implications. In general, they represent different forms of contact or relations with the rest of the world and are, therefore, part of 'foreign relations.' Participation in international organizations and conferences may, sometimes, have a more specific political implication. For example, the election of the office-bearers of an apparently non-political body like the UNESCO or the ECAFÉ carries important political implications and are often conducted after protracted political negotiations among member states. In every form of international activity of this kind the External Affairs Ministry is or should be closely associated.

The main problem of administration in this respect is that of reconciling the overall responsibility of the External Affairs Ministry for foreign policy with the responsibility of other Ministries in the government for problems relating to their specific fields. The technical Ministries are undoubtedly better qualified to do the technical part of such work, while the External Affairs Ministry is more competent to take decisions on the political and diplomatic aspects. Attempts on the part of the External Affairs Ministry to exercise control over the policies and actions of other Ministries are naturally

(69) An illustrative list of the purposes for which delegations were sent in some of the previous years is given in ibid., page 19, para 52.
resented by them, though such control often becomes necessary. The problem, therefore, is one of maintaining a delicate balance of authority and responsibility between the External Affairs Ministry and other Ministries concerned and of securing the maximum amount of co-ordination between them.

Problems of co-ordination regarding delegations to international organizations and conferences are aggravated by the fact that, unlike the missions and posts abroad which are under the unified control of the Ministry of External Affairs, delegations to international organizations and conferences are sponsored by different Ministries/Department. The question of developing co-ordinated and uniform policies by these different delegations becomes, therefore, a matter of some difficulty. The importance and generality of this problem was emphasized by the UN General Assembly which at its Second Session in 1947 called upon member states "to take measures to ensure on the national level a coordinated policy of their delegations to the United Nations and to their Specialized Agencies." (70) Three years later, the Economic and Social Council at its Eleventh Session reminded Member Governments that "the coordination of the projects of the United Nations and Specialized Agencies at the point of their initiation is essential to the effective concentration of effort and available resources" within the total

system. (71) The Secretary-General of the Council submitted in his report that "systematic briefing of delegates to all meetings should be aimed at avoiding the taking of contrary positions, as for example, between technical representatives and financial representatives of the same country, at the different meetings. There are also many instances of government representatives voting differently on similar problems at different agencies." He also noted that "there was a disposition on the part of some governments to request advice or services on similar problems from two or more agencies, as well as from other bodies. In certain cases, moreover, separate requests have been addressed by different departments of the same government to the same agency." (72)

The difficulties of coping with the challenges on the machinery of government as a result of the proliferation of international organizations and conferences and participation in them are all the more greater in the case of the new states due to their lack of experience and shortage of funds and personnel. (73) Certain aspects of the problem of co-ordination confronted by the Government of India in this context was pointed out by the Prime Minister when he said:


(72) Ibid., E/1683, 10 May 1950.

(73) These problems have been discussed in: National Administration and International Organisation: A Comparative Survey of Fourteen Countries, Report of an Inquiry jointly conducted by the International Institute of Administrative Sciences and Unesco (Brussels, 1951).
Each Ministry chooses its Delegations, gives it a brief and that Delegation goes to a particular Conference. Often enough, the briefs of two Delegations do not fit in with each other and there is a slight conflict, so much so that the two Delegations speak with two different voices. Frequently also, the choice made of people who are sent abroad is not too good. So there is this conflict and lack of coordination. (74)

Within the government, the Ministry of External Affairs has or should have the primary responsibility for realizing this very vital co-ordination.

Ministries which have been entrusted with responsibilities relating to international organizations and conferences on a permanent and regular basis have specific administrative units and arrangements within themselves for the purpose. It was noted above that such units are in existence in the Ministries of Commerce and Industry, Finance, Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs, and Defence. Similarly, the UNESCO and Higher Education Division in the Ministry of Education co-ordinates the various activities of the Ministry in relation to UNESCO and the Indian

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Roger Gregorie, National Administration and International Organisations, Conclusion of an enquiry made on behalf of the International Institute of Administrative Sciences (Brussels, ?)


(74) Constituent Assembly of India (Legislative) Debates, I II (1948) 1770.
National Commission for UNESCO. (75) It also works in co-ordination with the External Affairs and other interested Ministries in the Government. The ILO and Indian Labour Conferences Section in the Ministry of Labour and Employment is responsible for all work relating to the ILO in the Ministry. The Ministry works in co-ordination with State Governments, Labour and Employers' Organizations and other concerned Ministries in the government, including the Ministry of External Affairs, in its work relating to ILO. Similarly other Ministries/Departments like those of Health, Transport and Communications, Food and Agriculture, Atomic Energy etc. which are also responsible for work relating to international organizations and conferences have also special units of administration within their secretariat to deal with such work.

(75) The Indian National Commission for UNESCO was set up by the Government of India in 1949 with the Minister for Education as its President and the Secretary and Educational Adviser in the Ministry of Education as the ex-officio chairman of the Executive Board. The Commission is divided into three sub-commissions of Education, Science and Culture. The objectives of the Commission are:

(a) to promote the understanding of the objects and purposes of UNESCO among the people of the republic of India;

(b) to serve as a liaison agency between the UNESCO and the institutions concerned with and working for the progress of education, science and culture; and

(c) to act in an advisory capacity to the Government of India in matters relating to UNESCO.

The Commission is composed of the representatives of various educational, scientific and cultural institutions, other eminent persons nominated by the Government and the representatives of concerned Ministries/Departments including the Ministry of External Affairs. Details regarding the organization and working of the Commission are available from the various publications of the Ministry of Education on the matter.
Within the Ministry of External Affairs, the Economic and Co-ordination Division is specially responsible for co-ordination with other Ministries in matters relating to India's membership of international organizations and conferences related to economics, finance, trade and commerce etc. The UN and Conference Division similarly bears general responsibility for co-ordination in relation to India's participation in international organizations and conferences of a political nature. This is in particular with regard to the various organs of the UN and its Specialized Agencies and their Commissions and Committees. As work relating to UN might involve any country or territory situated in any part of the world the division seeks to maintain co-ordination with all territorial and specialized divisions within the External Affairs Ministry as well with other Ministries. The division is divided into the UN I, UN II and UN III sections. The UN I section is primarily concerned with inter-ministerial co-ordination with regard to international organizations and conferences and the UN II section with work in relation to international organizations for which the External Affairs Ministry is itself responsible. The UN III section is primarily concerned with research and the staff work in relation to other two sections.

For every international organization or conference of which India is a member or participant a Ministry in the Government of India is designated as the operative Ministry. The choice of the operative Ministry for a particular organization or conference is made on the basis of its nature
and scope as well as the allocation of work among the various Ministries within the Government. For all international organizations of a political character the Ministry of External Affairs is itself the operative Ministry. It is responsible for the United Nations, its principal organs like the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council, the Security Council, the Trusteeship Council and the International Court of Justice and some of their specialized commissions and committees. This is also true of all ad hoc conferences of a political nature like the Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference. In the same way, other Ministries are also designated as operative Ministries for other international organizations and conferences. For example, for the various Specialized Agencies of the United Nations and other bodies various Ministries in the government are made operative Ministries. The Labour Ministry is the operative Ministry for ILO; the Food and Agriculture Ministry for FAO; the Finance Ministry for IMF, IBRD and the Commonwealth Economic Consultative Council; the Ministry of Education for UNESCO etc. In the same way, for participation in the various ad hoc international conferences or for the delegations or missions sent abroad, particular Ministries of the Government of India are made operative Ministries. This is also true of delegations and missions visiting India or of conferences held in this country.

Difficulties may sometimes arise on account of the overlapping jurisdictions of some of the Ministries or of the
difficulties of defining the nature of a conference or organization as within the exclusive jurisdiction of a particular Ministry. Such a difficulty is, for example, experienced in the case of the UNESCO, the scope of which falls within the administrative competence of two Ministries - Education, and Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs. (76)

In such cases, the final decision is arrived at by consultation between the two Ministries or by the Cabinet. At various stages of the proposal to send a delegation, the selection of its personnel and its briefing there is need for consultation among various Ministries. The Ministry of External Affairs is considered to be an interested Ministry in all such matters and is required to be consulted at every stage of this process. All proposals for sending missions or delegations are required to obtain the clearance of the Secretaries Committee. This

(76) Till 1958 when the two Ministries were part of the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research this problem was not in existence. It was decided in 1958 to bifurcate the Ministry of Education and Scientific Research into the two existing Ministries. From 1958 to 1962 the Ministers in charge of them had only the Minister of State status. Since 1962 they have been made members of the Cabinet. (See also footnote 59 above.)

The division of work between the two Ministries made in 1958 left a number of things to be desired. The bifurcation itself was not as much necessitated by considerations of administrative efficiency as by political and personal factors. It was not surprising, therefore, that in the division of work that ensued administrative considerations had also only a secondary significance. Much of the work handed over to the Ministry of Scientific Research and Cultural Affairs are essentially part of the work of the Ministry of Education by any standard. There has consequently been much confusion in the working of the two Ministries, evidenced for example in the case of the administration of various scholarship schemes for study and research from and to India.
Committee consists of the Cabinet Secretary as Chairman and the Secretary to Department of Expenditure (Ministry of Finance), the Secretary to the Ministry sponsoring the delegation and a Secretary in any other Ministry appointed from time to time as its members. The Cabinet Secretariat renders secretarial assistance to the Committee. On receiving the approval of this Committee the proposal is submitted to the Minister in charge of the sponsoring Ministry. A reference to the Ministry of External Affairs is then made. Thereafter, if the proposal is complete in all respects, it is submitted for consideration to the Cabinet. This procedure is applicable to all the Ministries in the Government of India, including the External Affairs Ministry itself. Reference to the External Affairs Ministry can, however, be made by another Ministry at an earlier stage if it wishes so, but the opinions expressed by the Ministry at this stage are only at the officials level and are given without prejudice to the final views.

Before the setting up of the Secretaries' Committee in 1958, all such proposals used to be forwarded to the Ministries of Finance and External Affairs by the sponsoring Ministry, before the Cabinet took up the matter. The purpose of setting up the Secretaries Committee was to bring about some economy and system into the practice of sending delegations and deputations abroad by the various Ministries.

The second stage is of selecting the delegation. Proposals regarding the personnel are first made by the technical
Ministry and are forwarded to the External Affairs Ministry. If the External Affairs Ministry is so interested, it might decide to attach a representative of its own to the delegation. In selecting personnel, the special knowledge of the members on the specific problems that are involved, and their experience of similar conferences in the past is counted.

The third stage is of preparing briefs. The technical Ministry prepares the preliminary briefs. If any political issues are involved the External Affairs Ministry is also consulted in the preparation of briefs. The final draft would then go to the Minister of the technical Ministry for approval. The members of the delegation are now given the briefing and other instructions. The delegation, on proceeding abroad, would keep itself in continuous contact with the technical Ministry. In case questions of political importance come up in the course of its work the matter is referred for advice by the delegation to the sponsoring Ministry, which sends instructions in consultation with the External Affairs Ministry. (77)

In all these respects there is scope for considerable improvement for co-ordination between the External Affairs

(77) For more details on the selection of personnel, briefing of the delegations and their organization of work during international conferences see A. Appadorai, "India's participation in international organizations - Administrative aspects," India Quarterly (New Delhi) 6 (July-September 1950) 255-6.
Ministry and other Ministries. The Special Secretary in the External Affairs Ministry stated before the Estimates Committee that though the proposals for sponsoring delegations were referred to the Ministry of External Affairs for their approval before being referred to the Cabinet, in actual practice that was only a formality. The Ministry of External Affairs could not turn down a proposal made by a technical Ministry. (78)

The technical Ministries have, in other words, come to exercise a virtual discretion in the matter. The Estimates Committee pointed out in this context:

> It is obviously desirable that no delegation should be sent abroad for purposes which can be carried out by the Missions/Posts abroad. The Committee feel that the External Affairs Ministry may not treat a reference by the Ministry sponsoring the delegation as a mere formality and that it may bring to bear its own considered thought on the necessity of the delegation before the proposal is placed before the Cabinet. (79)

Regarding the selection of personnel also, proper consultations between the Ministry of External Affairs and other Ministries can, in certain cases at least, result in the saving of expenditure. (80)

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(80) It was reported that an inter-ministry committee consisting of some non-officials was set up in February 1958 for the selection of delegations to be sent abroad.

Some of the more important of the missions abroad have been provided with specialists in particular fields and the possibilities of including such persons in the delegations sent abroad could be fully explored before the final selections are made. This would be desirable specially because it may be expected that persons serving abroad might already have acquired some experience of similar work. The present method of co-ordination between Indian missions/posts abroad and visiting delegations are also very unsatisfactory. (81) Adequate co-ordination between the External Affairs Ministry and other technical Ministries is also handicapped on account of the fact that the External Affairs Ministry does not possess the necessary expertise on technical questions to enable it effectively to co-ordinate its own international work. The suggestion for the creation of a small Technical Co-ordination Section in the External Affairs Ministry which could supply the necessary knowledge and direction in technical matters is well-worth consideration, for it might go a long way to get over the present handicaps of the Ministry in this respect. (82)

(81) This is discussed below in Chapter VII.

(82) Appadorai, n. 77, 261.
VI

Co-ordination through committees

For purposes of inter-departmental co-ordination, the system of inter-departmental committees has been very well developed in certain countries, but the provisions in this respect are very meagre in India. An elaborate net-work of such committees is in existence in the United Kingdom to deal with questions concerning more than a Department. (83) The committees primarily aim to resolve differences of view between Departments before they reach the Cabinet level. They function under "the general acceptance in Whitehall of the view that all civil servants are working for the same ultimate master, and are therefore ready to pool their knowledge and seek for agreed solutions without trying as it were to score points off each other." (84) The result has been that "the committee system is efficient and does produce agreed positions, which give Britain an advantage compared with countries where the administrative machine is less highly integrated." (85) The utility of this committee system has been particularly in evidence with regard to problems of co-ordination between foreign and economic affairs and between the Ministries dealing with them. The work of the committee of the main departments, with the Treasury, the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade

(83) For details see Beloff, n. 23, Chapter VII.

(84) Ibid., 164.

(85) Ibid., 164-5.
as the three essential ones, has been found to be greatly useful in co-ordinating international economic policies, particularly in relation to British participation in international organizations. A net-work of other committees under Treasury non-departmental chairmanship are responsible for co-ordinating policy in relation to international economic bodies. (86) Consequently, "it was possible to claim that, at any rate in the economic field, British foreign policy could be looked at as an operation carried out by government as a whole, with no single department claiming priority." (87) Problems of inter-departmental rivalry had also largely disappeared. But, at the same time, it is a well-established principle that in matters of economic policy as a whole the Chancellor of the Exchequer is in charge. The inter-departmental committee system on economic affairs operates under the leadership of the Treasury. But, at the same time, methods of inter-departmental co-ordination have become sufficiently effective to ensure that the Foreign Office point of view is also taken into account at every stage. When the head of the British delegation to OEEC sends a telegram to the Foreign Office its prefix ensures distribution to about 100 persons. The matters raised in the telegram are taken up by the inter-departmental committee organization in the Treasury and the European Economic Organizations Department in the

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(86) Ibid., 37-8, 41-3, 166.
(87) Ibid., 23-4.
Foreign Office. The former sees that necessary action is taken in the way of getting inter-departmental agreement on the next step to be taken, while it is the business of the latter to see that the answer to the telegram is forthcoming. (88)

The general principle employed in this procedure seems to be appropriate to the requirements of this country also. In order to avoid the present practices of inter-departmental rivalry and to establish more effective means of co-ordination it is necessary, on the one hand, to have a definite understanding of the extent of responsibility of the Ministry of External Affairs and each of the other Ministries in respect of the external policies of the country in the various fields and, on the other hand, to evolve effective means of inter-departmental co-ordination through different means like the committees. The inter-departmental committee system has yet to be introduced in India. In matters of international organizations the only such committee at present in existence is the Secretaries Committee, but the scope of this committee relates only to considering proposals for sending delegations abroad and does not involve any important policy-dealing questions. Till 1949 when the responsibility for external publicity was taken over from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting by the External Affairs Ministry, there used to be a Joint Co-ordination Committee of the two Ministries to decide on policies of external publicity and

(88) Ibid., 167.
an operational committee for its execution, but these have since been wound up. (89)

But the functioning of this inter-departmental committee system should fulfil certain conditions before it can be successful. Max Beloff has stated some of these on the basis of suggestions made by people who have been operating this machinery in Britain. In his words,

One of these is that either no department must be regarded as being in the lead, or the department primarily concerned must accept its responsibility. The chairman must not be regarded as committed to the views of a single department, and other members of the committee must be at policy-making level and attend as individuals, not allowing themselves to be represented by deputies who might have to refer back for instructions. Finally, it must keep to its task of co-ordination and take care lest it should be tempted to substitute itself for the departments, since in the last resort, the departmental Minister is the person answerable for the policy decision arrived at. (90)

In order to prevent the committee system from taking up too much of time of important officials it has been further suggested by Max Beloff that considerable variation in the active membership of a committee as compared with its formal membership may be allowed; that is to say that a department can

(89) The Joint Co-ordination Committee consisted of the Secretaries in the Ministries of External Affairs and Information and Broadcasting. The operational committee consisted of the Deputy Secretary (Pub) from the External Affairs Ministry and the Deputy Secretary (Pub), Director, All India Radio; Principal Information Officer; Director, Publicity Division; and Controller of Film Publicity from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting. The Publicity Co-ordination Officer, Ministry of Information and Broadcasting was the Secretary of the Committee.

(90) Beloff, n. 23, 167-8.
choose to be represented by some one on a different level from the officer formally assigned to that committee if it is a question of a particular topic upon which some other officer has more information, and is better able to represent the department's point of view. (91)

However, useful it might be to have the system of inter-departmental committees for purposes of co-ordination there are also certain inherent weaknesses about it. The formality of the committee meetings takes away from its meetings advantages of flexibility in its working. A good deal of secretarial work, and consequently time, has to be expended on convening meetings suitable to the convenience of all its members, preparing and distributing the agenda, circulating and approving the minutes etc. This would require an expansion of the present staff requirements in the Ministry. Moreover, as representatives of Ministries come with definite instructions and as discussions are open and likely to be recorded, they are likely to take rigid positions which would naturally affect the chances of easy agreements. It may also take up too much of time of the officials. A high official concerned with the Board of Trade's external responsibilities in Britain is reported to have estimated that committee meetings took up about a third of his working time. (92)

(91) Ibid., 165.
(92) Ibid.
In a number of situations, therefore, more informal procedure as that of personal discussions between the officers concerned might produce better results. In other words, the committee system is not necessarily suited to deal with all kinds of problems and situations. In general, it may be said that while the committee system has its definite advantages in dealing with cases of policy and long-range programmes, more informal methods should be employed for matters of urgency and short-term action.

Even though the device of inter-departmental committees is not very successfully employed in the central administration of this country, other means have been sought to be evolved. Ad hoc inter-departmental meetings of officials are held at different levels appropriate to the subject under discussion between the External Affairs Ministry and other Ministries, whenever it is felt that such meetings would be desirable. The Ministry initiating the proposal for a meeting draws up an agenda setting out the points for discussion and allowing a reasonable time for holding the meeting. In case of urgency shorter methods for convening the meeting are adopted. Officers attending the meeting are normally of enough seniority to take decisions on behalf of the Ministries. A minute showing a record of the meeting, conclusions arrived at and the steps to be taken by each Ministry, is prepared and is circulated to the concerned Ministries soon after the meeting. (93)

But such *ad hoc* inter-departmental meetings can be employed only as a supplement to other regular means of effecting co-ordination between Ministries. Difficulties of the same kind as were noted in the case of the permanent inter-departmental committees are applicable to them also. They increase paper work, consume considerable time, demand more staff for secretarial assistance, cause delay and lead to the adoption of rigid attitudes by departments.

Measures for strengthening co-ordination in the conduct of foreign affairs is called for in a further respect also. One of the weakest points in the organization of the Ministry of External Affairs is the total absence of any definite provisions for co-ordination between long-term objectives and immediate policies. The former becomes, in course of time, to be nothing but the inevitable outcome of a series of improvised steps. Lord Amery once wrote,

> It is a commonplace of scientific organisation, long since recognised in all the fighting services, that where the same body is responsible for the day to day conduct of administration, as well as for the planning of policy for the future, the latter function is bound to be neglected. (94)

This problem is common to all large-scale administrative organizations. The foreign offices are confronted with it in a more pressing form because of the constant flux of international relations and the need for quick decisions and speedy action which leave little time for reflecting on them in

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the background of long-range objectives before taking action. Sir Edward Grey once remarked that during his term of office as Foreign Secretary he was so hard-pressed that he could not remember having taken any step that was not of immediate urgency and for the solving of a problem directly in front of him. (95) Sir Victor Wellesley has argued out the case for a "thinking shop" for foreign affairs, as the Cabinet and the Minister are not able to devote as much attention to the question of long-range policy as would be desirable. (96)

Various attempts have been made in the British Foreign Office towards this end. The Research Department, which had come into existence in wartime, was strengthened by recruiting specialists and bringing in senior experts concerned with areas which were thought to be of special importance. The department had no policy-making functions, but it produced forward looking papers and these were sought to be given proper attention in the making of policy. (97) Another experiment in this direction

(95) Hugh Wilson, Education of a Diplomat, 47, cited in ibid., 190.

(96) The organization of the thinking shop should, according to Wellesley, consist of the following parts.

1. Within the Foreign Office: a politico-economic intelligence department; an organization for the study of foreign policy literature; and an advisory board

2. Outside the Foreign Office: a parliamentary committee for foreign affairs.

Wellesley, n. 94, 186-203.

(97) Beloff, n. 23, 126-7.
was sought to be introduced by Ernest Bevin in 1949 when he was the Foreign Secretary. This was the creation of the Permanent Under-Secretary's Steering Committee. The Permanent Under-Secretary was to be the Chairman of the Committee and one of the junior ministers and the Under-Secretaries were to be the members. Its duty was "to try to identify the longer term trends in international affairs and to prepare studies on the possible bearings of these trends upon the future formulations of British policy." These studies were not concerned with current policy, but were of great utility because it 'compelled the Under-Secretaries to give their minds to problems relating to other regions than those for which they were responsible,' and because from them 'there emerged a body of thought on foreign policy, jointly formulated, upon which the senior officers were all in substantial agreement.' (98)

Under the supervision of this Steering Committee, a small planning and co-ordination section in the Permanent Under-Secretary's Department carried out policy planning and other duties, independently of the Research Department. (99) The Western Organisations and Planning Department also deals with planning and co-ordination and the Permanent Under-Secretary's Steering Committee.

The importance of these long-term studies on the basis of the basic needs of the country and the principles of its

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(99) Beloff, n. 23, 127.
foreign policy, and of such periodic assessments of international problems in terms of these are obvious in an office where "the most important decisions are often made, not as part of a connected and far-sighted policy, but under the urgent pressure of some immediate crisis." (100) It is true that due to the flux in international relations, "it is rarely possible to plan a foreign policy very far ahead except on the very broadest lines, and it is rarely possible to plan its execution except in the very shortest term." (101) In spite of this limitation, there is still place for a policy-planning cell in the Ministry consisting of the senior officials in the Ministry as well as the junior Ministers to review periodically the trends in policy of the Ministry and to advise the Minister on the broad directions of policy formulation.

While, on the one hand, departmental committees of officials, as exist in Britain, could meet the question partly, the difficulty is still confronted that these officials constituting these committees are themselves responsible for the day-to-day administration also and may not, therefore, be able to find the time or to develop the detachment that might be required for the purpose. Sir Victor Wellesley suggested the setting up of "a standing Parliamentary Committee, presided over by the Foreign Secretary and on which all parties and both

(100) Sir James Headlam-Morley, a former Historical Adviser to the Foreign Office. Quoted by Strang, n. 1, 21.

(101) Strang, n. 1, 20.
houses of Parliament would be represented." (102) As noted earlier, such a Committee is already in existence in India, though under the present circumstances it has not functioned as effectively as could have been desired. Similar committees in other countries have not also been very effective. (103) This proposal has the advantage that as the committees are constituted of all major parties in Parliament, it might be effective to relate public opinion to policy planning. But, for the efficient performance of its work the committee will need more information than what is ordinarily made available to Parliament and the press, and this might in turn raise recurring problems of deciding how much of information could be safely imparted to such a multi-party committee without imperilling secrecy and security. The idea is still worth entertaining, at least because it would be a further means of associating Parliament more closely with foreign affairs and of training up a cadre of parliamentarians for future leadership in foreign affairs.

(102) Wellesley, n. 94, 203.

(103) See above Chapters III and IV.