

In addition to the important non-military initiatives Canada has taken and the ongoing political consultation, there is also the Canadian contribution to common allied defence.

Canadian forces in Europe are "assigned" forces and constitute a mechanized brigade group, as well as an air group of three jet fighter bomber attack squadrons - some 5,000 troops in all, based in Lahr, West Germany. In the Atlantic, a Canadian warship is at all times attached to the SACLANT sub-command, the Standing Naval Force Atlantic, which is the only naval formation permanently under NATO command operating in these waters.

The rest of the Canadian Atlantic fleet and the maritime air squadrons serving with it are "earmarked" for NATO. So is one of the three land formations stationed in Canada, the Special Service Force in Petawawa, Ontario. Known as the "CAST Brigade Group", it is trained and equipped to operate under extreme winter conditions - as are two CF-5 tactical air support squadrons. One of these squadrons and one battalion of the "CAST Combat Group" are also assigned to the multinational Allied Command Europe (ACE) Mobile Force, NATO's quick reaction deterrent force.

In addition, Canada's role in North American air defence constitutes a contribution to the collective defence of the Canada-United States region of NATO.

All in all, about half of Canada's regular military forces of just under 80,000 are available directly or indirectly, or if need be, to NATO.