

pledging continuing Canadian support for the Alliance. In December, the solidarity of the Alliance was again demonstrated when member nations, some of which had to take into account serious national political objections, decided unanimously to modernize NATO's theatre nuclear forces and to put forward a concrete proposal for arms control negotiations with the Soviet Union. The decision was taken at a special meeting of Foreign Affairs and Defence Ministers attended by the Secretary of State for External Affairs and the Minister of National Defence.

The North Atlantic Assembly, the interparliamentary organization of member countries of the Alliance, held its annual session in Ottawa in October. The Secretary General of NATO took the opportunity of his attendance at the session to pay official calls on members of the Government.

Bilateral defence co-operation

Canada has bilateral defence arrangements with a number of its NATO partners. Those that deal with the defence of the Canada/United States region of NATO necessitate the closest consultation and co-operation between the two countries. Our primary aims are the maintenance of Canadian sovereignty and security through our contribution to the collective defence of North America.

The principal consultative body dealing with continental defence is the Permanent Joint Board on Defence, Canada/United States, which is jointly presided over by two national chairmen who report directly to their respective heads of government. During 1979, the Board examined such issues as the improvement of North American air-defence systems, contingency plans for the storage of U.S. strategic petroleum reserves in Canada and the continuing value of the bilateral defence-production and development-sharing programs.

The agreement establishing the North American Air Defence Command is examined periodically to ensure its continued effectiveness under changing circumstances. A Canada-U.S. study, agreed to in 1978 and completed during October 1979, presented for consideration by both governments a range of policy alternatives for ensuring the adequate air defence of North America over the next 20 years.

While military preparedness is an obvious priority of Canada's bilateral defence relations with the United States, military and civilian teamwork in peacetime tasks such as search-and-rescue, weather prediction and reporting, civil emergency planning and northern research are continuing activities. Anticipating civil emergencies such as the re-entry of the American Skylab which fell from orbit in mid-1979 was one such co-operative effort between civilians and members of the Canadian Forces.

Military training assistance

An interdepartmental committee chaired by the Department of External Affairs administers the Military Training

Assistance Program. Where positions are available, training is provided on request for armed forces personnel of certain non-NATO countries. The program provides a wide range of training including basic officer, junior-staff and military-trades training courses. In 1979, 53 candidates from Africa and the Caribbean were trained in Canada, of whom the great majority attended officer courses.

Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT)

Ten years of difficult negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union were rewarded by the signature in Vienna on June 18, 1979 of the second strategic arms limitation agreement, SALT II, a major advance in the vitally important task of seeking agreement to curtail the strategic nuclear arms race and begin the process of reducing nuclear arsenals. In 1972, the U.S. and U.S.S.R. signed an interim agreement on the limitation of strategic nuclear arms (SALT I), and in 1974 at Vladivostok, they reached an understanding on the outlines of what was to become the definitive agreement, SALT II.

The treaty must be ratified by the United States Senate, and the process of ratification was expected to be a protracted and difficult one. The first step in the procedure was completed in November 1979 when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, after four months of hearings, forwarded the treaty to the full Senate with the recommendation that it be approved. At year's end, however, the deterioration in the East-West political climate which followed the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan suggested that early ratification was not to be expected.

As a strong advocate of the SALT process, Canada continued during the year, both in NATO and through bilateral channels, to endorse fully and to support the search for early agreement on measures that would help to limit the further growth and refinement of strategic nuclear arms and so preserve and increase the stability of the strategic balance and lessen the risk of war.

Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR)

Next to SALT, perhaps the most important East-West continuing arms control negotiations are those of the Conference on the Mutual Reduction of Forces and Armaments and Associated Measures in Central Europe (MBFR), which began in Vienna in 1973. In these negotiations, NATO and the Warsaw Pact have been seeking agreement on ways to reduce the level of the opposing forces in central Europe. As had been anticipated from the outset, many difficulties have been encountered and progress has been slow. A principal obstacle has been the failure to agree on the present size of the Eastern forces in the area which would be subject to reductions. At the end of 1979, NATO put forward a new and simplified reduction proposal, but agreement was not yet in sight.

Canada continues to believe that a mutual reduction of forces in central Europe would ease East-West tensions and