

CONTRIBUTING TO A SAFER AND MORE SECURE WORLD

proposals put forward by Secretary-General Kofi Annan in his March 2005 Report entitled *In Larger Freedom: Towards Development, Security and Human Rights for All*.

Finally, Canada will take a lead role in the Multinational Standby High Readiness Brigade for United Nations Operations (SHIRBRIG). The brigade, deployed for the first time in Ethiopia and Eritrea in 2000, will remain critical to the United Nations' ability to undertake peace support operations in the coming years. Canada held the SHIRBRIG presidency in 2003, and has command of the brigade until mid-2006.

The North Atlantic Treaty Organization

NATO is an essential collective defence structure and embodies the transatlantic link that continues to be critical to the security of our country. It remains a strong political institution where allies with shared values and interests can address issues that threaten regional and international stability. Over the past decade, the Alliance has moved steadily away from its Cold War roots to stay relevant in the emerging security environment. It has welcomed 10 new members from eastern and central Europe since 1999, and has also reached out to other partner countries in eastern Europe, central Asia and the Mediterranean. It has shown that it is a key regional organization with the will and capabilities to contribute in a concrete fashion to international security. NATO has played a leadership role in stabilization operations in the Balkans and undertook the first offensive operations in its history to halt ethnic cleansing in that region.

The Alliance is also front and centre in the fight against terrorism. In the immediate aftermath of September 11, NATO invoked the collective defence article of the Washington Treaty and dispatched airborne early-warning aircraft to help monitor U.S. airspace. Since then, at the urging of Germany and Canada, it has conducted operations outside of its traditional area of responsibility by taking command of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan. We will continue to encourage NATO to make similar contributions to global security.



Kabul, Afghanistan—A doctor at the Chardehi Poly Medical Clinic with a Canadian Forces sergeant.

NATO is currently in the midst of an ambitious transformation process to ensure that it possesses the modern forces needed to operate in the future security environment. The Prague Capabilities Commitment is a key part of this process, and Alliance countries have pledged to improve their collective capabilities to defend against attacks involving weapons of mass destruction, maintain effective command and control structures, remain interoperable and combat-effective, and rapidly deploy and sustain forces. We fully support this initiative, and will meet our national commitments under it, which include helping to develop multinational solutions for strategic sea and air lift.

Another key aspect of Alliance transformation is the creation of the NATO Response Force, the goal of which is to provide the organization with a global power projection capability to manage crises and respond to threats. An initial force of approximately 8,000 troops was formed in 2003, which will serve as the prototype for the complete force of approximately 20,000 personnel, made up of sea, land and air components. The Government believes that the NATO Response Force is critical to the continued relevance of the Alliance. We are negotiating our specific commitments, which we anticipate will include a combination of sea, land and air elements, as well as specialized training facilities.

In the interim, Canada will maintain other specific commitments to the Alliance, including personnel serving in the Airborne Early Warning Force and

