



Bulletin

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NATO IN CANADIAN PERSPECTIVE

The following passages are from an address by Mr. Mitchell Sharp, Secretary of State for External Affairs, to the Canadian Institute of International Affairs conference at the University of Calgary on March 1:

...Regardless of any review, the whole thrust of Canada's foreign policy is directed toward the twin objectives of world order and world prosperity. This means that, for its own self-interest and its own self-respect, Canada must make its proper contribution to the maintenance of world peace and the raising of the world standard of living. These are political objectives and are pursued in the United Nations and NATO, by means of other groupings such as the Commonwealth and the newly-founded *Francophonie*, and bilaterally with the nations of the world....

The purpose of the current review of foreign and defence policy is not to question whether Canada should be engaged in political activity, keeping the peace and foreign aid. And it is not to question the value of NATO as such, for NATO is going to continue for some time to come with the support of its European members and the United States, no matter what we do.

The review of our foreign and defence policies is designed to find out if we are serving our own interests best and making our most effective contribution to world order and world prosperity under our present arrangements. If not, these arrangements will be changed. Coming to NATO, the questions the review asks are the same: is membership in NATO in Canada's national interest?; does membership in NATO represent an effective Canadian contribution to the maintenance of world peace?

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I can't answer these questions for you today, since the Government has not yet arrived at any conclusion. I can however, discuss with you the background against which the decision will be made and some of the considerations that will bear upon it....

While the immediate threat which led to the establishment of NATO was to the Western European democracies, it was seen in Canada and the United States as directly affecting North American security. The lesson of two world wars had been learned, and we accepted that we could hardly remain uninvolved if a third such war should break out. At the same time, however, Canada shared the general feeling that it is possible to benefit by past mistakes; that, by taking the right action at the right time, it should be possible to prevent a war rather than have to fight it. Gradually, it came to be accepted that the effective action which was required could only be achieved on a collective basis. Mr. St. Laurent was the first Western statesman to express this conclusion, when he said on July 11, 1948: "We believe that it must be made clear to the rulers of the totalitarian Communist states that, if they attempt by