



# Statements and Speeches

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No. 79/21

## CANADA AND NATO

An Address by the Prime Minister of Canada, the Right Honourable Joe Clark, to the Twenty-fifth Session of the North Atlantic Assembly, Ottawa, October 26, 1979

I would like to thank you...for this opportunity to speak about the importance my Government attaches to the North Atlantic Alliance. This twenty-fifth annual session of the North Atlantic Assembly is the first occasion for me to outline to you, the elected representatives of NATO countries, my Government's views on the Alliance as it enters its fourth decade.

But first of all, I should like to extend a warm welcome to Ottawa to my parliamentary colleagues attending this meeting. My Government is intent on increasing the participation of parliamentary groups and others in the study of general policies, including defence policy. Consequently, a group such as this, which shares the same objective in all member countries of the Alliance, is even more welcome in our capital.

For 30 years now, the Alliance has been of great service to its members when peace was at stake. No one can say with certainty what would have happened in the absence of a collective defence structure such as NATO. Nonetheless, I am convinced, as most Canadians are, I am sure, that Western European stability and security and, consequently, Canadian security owe much to the existence of NATO. Since its inception, the Alliance has been based on the principle of association between European member nations, the United States and Canada, as well as on the indivisibility of defence of its two continental sectors. Basically then, NATO plays an essential role in Canada's security.

Canada is not on the sidelines in the conflict of values and goals between the nations of NATO and the Warsaw Pact. As I have publicly declared before, there is no question about our full commitment to the Alliance.

On this positive note, let me take this opportunity of confirming that my government has every expectation of achieving a 3 per cent real growth in defence expenditure in the coming financial year. Under the difficult economic conditions facing Canada and other member nations, I think this serves to demonstrate both the priority we place on making our own forces more effective and the importance we give to our role in the Alliance.

As most of you will know, we are embarked on major — and too-long delayed — re-equipment programs involving a new tank, a new maritime patrol aircraft, a new fighter aircraft and a new frigate program. These will involve a major expenditure of funds.

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