

## Canada pledges to maintain contribution to NATO's collective defence

Canada will continue to maintain an average growth of 3 per cent in its defence budget in line with North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) guidelines, Minister of National Defence Gilles Lamontagne told representatives at a NATO meeting in Brussels last month.

Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan, who is honorary president of the North Atlantic Council, led the Canadian delegation at the meeting.

Speaking to NATO defence ministers, Mr. Lamontagne said that Canada would provide \$7 billion for defence expenditures in 1982-83, an increase of about 18 per cent over the figure for the previous year. A further increase of about 15 per cent is planned for 1983-84.

### Re-equipment on schedule

Reporting on Canada's re-equipment program, the Canadian defence minister confirmed that the first *CF-18* jet fighter aircraft ordered from McDonnell-Douglas would be delivered to the Canadian forces this year and the first squadron would be in operation in 1983.

"We will maintain our commitment of 54 aircraft to SACEUR (Supreme Allied Command Europe) and will improve their readiness by increasing the number of those aircraft which will be operationally manned in peacetime," said Mr. Lamontagne. The Canadian frigate program is progressing on schedule, he added.

Mr. Lamontagne told his NATO colleagues that Canada "will be striving to maintain the momentum of our re-equipment programs and to keep our

contribution to collective defence of high quality and appropriate size".

During his stay in Brussels, the Canadian defence minister held bilateral talks with Norwegian Defence Minister Anders Sjaastad. Mr. Lamontagne informed Mr. Sjaastad that Canada would proceed with positioning of equipment, stores and ammunition in northern Norway for the lead battalion group of the Canadian Air/Sea Transportable Brigade Group. The equipment, sufficient for a 980-man battalion group, meets NATO criteria and will provide for enhanced training of the brigade group in Norway, said Mr. Lamontagne.

### Critical time

In his capacity as honorary president, Dr. MacGuigan delivered the main address at the meeting's opening ceremony. The Canadian external affairs minister told the members of NATO that the alliance was at a critical period in its history with the maintenance of an effective deterrent being of utmost importance.

"We, in this alliance, have been able to preserve peace until now because we have maintained a credible deterrent capability and the transatlantic bridge on which the essential solidarity of this alliance rests. These ingredients of success in the past will continue to be the keys to the success of our enterprise in the future," he said.

Dr. MacGuigan stressed that the NATO allies must communicate to the public that the alliance's main goal is to prevent war. "As leaders of the alliance, we all



*A Canadian team competes in NATO small arms trials at Hammelburg, Federal Republic of Germany.*

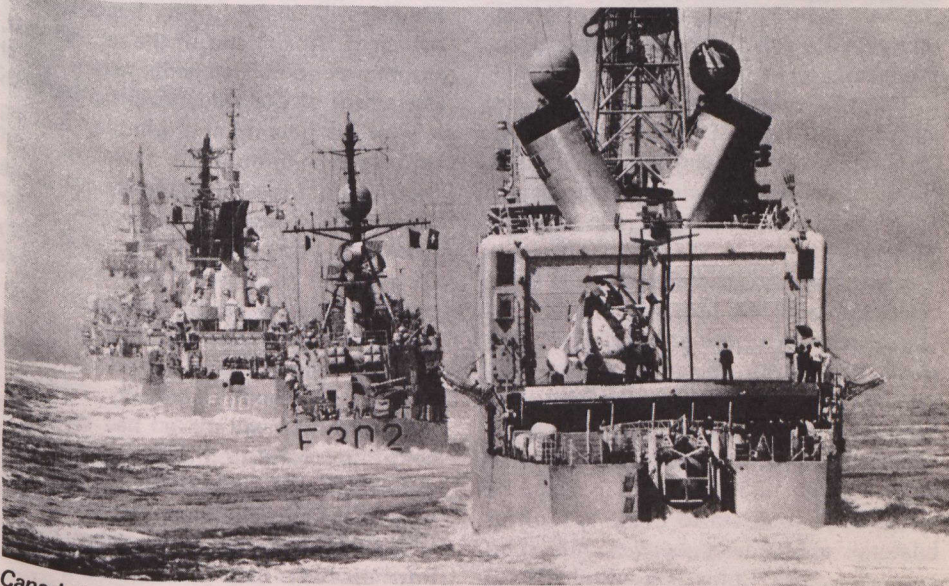
need to exercise great care lest there be misunderstanding of our fundamental desire to avoid war. Our peoples need reassurance that for us all war is anathema — not just nuclear war, but all war," said Dr. MacGuigan.

The alliance needs to maintain a sense of momentum in arms control as an integral part of its efforts to improve its security, Dr. MacGuigan told the meeting. He added that it is important for NATO allies and the Soviet Union to establish "a sufficient degree of shared interests based on mutual confidence" in the arms control negotiations. "It will take both sides to establish the basis but we must be sure to do everything in our power to bridge that gap rather than to widen it," said the Canadian external affairs minister.

### Common objectives sought

"We can also do more to demonstrate that ours is not just a military alliance — that it is a community of like-minded peoples defending commonly held principles, pursuing common objectives and promoting the widest possible co-operation in the interests of greater stability and welfare," said Dr. MacGuigan.

Following the NATO meeting, Dr. MacGuigan travelled to Ireland where he met with Irish Minister of Foreign Affairs J.C.I. Dooge. The two discussed international issues such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe, North-South relations, the Middle East, Namibia and Afghanistan. They also discussed bilateral issues, as well as questions relating to the European Economic Community (EEC).



*Canada is represented in NATO's Standing Naval Force Atlantic.*

Department of National Defence photos