



CANADA

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CANADA AND NATO

Canada was one of the original 12 (now 15) nations signatory to the North Atlantic Treaty in April 1949, and played a leading role in the formation of the Alliance, the members of which are, in the words of the Treaty, "determined to safeguard the freedom, common heritage and civilization of their peoples ... (and) are resolved to unite their efforts for collective defence and for the preservation of peace and security". NATO continues to provide an essential foundation for present and future Canadian foreign and defence policies. Prime Minister Lester B. Pearson has described the challenges that lie ahead of the Alliance in the following terms: "We appear to be approaching another of those periods in the West when the basic forces that keep us together confront the forces that divide us. Military technology has made such swift progress, particularly in the development of thermonuclear missiles, that there is a danger of coming to believe that the military links between the two sides of the Atlantic are no longer vital. There is also the danger that we may forget the lessons of the first part of this century and give up our search for an Atlantic community based on common beliefs and common heritage for the illusory advantages of outmoded nationalism.... I support those who seek to improve co-operation and mutual awareness between both sides of the Atlantic. If the West is to develop as a partnership of free sovereign nations united in a common approach to the problems of the thermonuclear and space age, we must accept the fact that the Atlantic Ocean is a two-way street and that the countries of Europe and North America must learn to practice consultative partnership."

NATO was formed in response to Communist expansion in Europe after the Second World War, and to the impasse that arose in the United Nations when, by use of its veto in the Security Council, the Soviet Union obstructed Western efforts to make the organization an effective instrument for peace. Faced with the threat to their security and to the basis of their civilization, the Western powers resolved to group themselves in an alliance that would indicate clearly their determination to resist aggression, from whatever quarter it might come, and to maintain peace.

As Article 51 of the United Nations Charter gives member nations the right of individual or collective self-defence, the proposal for an association of nations for this purpose accorded with the principles of the