

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION - NATO

Membership in NATO has played a major part in Canada's foreign policy for thirty years. NATO is both a collective defence organization and a forum for political consultation. Successive Canadian governments have recognized that the country's security remains linked to the security of both Europe and the United States -- a view shared by other members of the Alliance. Canada therefore supports the idea of collective defence. It is similarly convinced of NATO's important political role in the reduction and eventual removal of the underlying causes of potential East-West conflict through negotiation, reconciliation and settlement. In addition to Canada's participation in the collective security effort of the Alliance, increasing attention has been devoted to consultations on East-West issues such as the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE), the Strategic Arms Limitation Talks (SALT) between the United States and the Soviet Union, and the Vienna negotiations on Mutual and Balanced Force Reductions (MBFR).

The Canadian Government is fully committed to the Alliance, and, in spite of spending constraints, maintains a large capital expenditure program to obtain up-to-date equipment for the Canadian Forces. In 1978, with most other NATO partners, Canada signed agreements to acquire and operate the Airborne Early Warning and Control System. Canada's mechanized brigade has now been outfitted with Leopard I main-battle tanks and the first of 18 CP140 Aurora long-range patrol aircraft will be delivered in May 1980.