

This past decade the superpowers have not ratified a single significant arms control agreement. In the preceding decade they had ratified a dozen. Gestures are needed to lift the clouds of suspicion. A useful step would be for both sides to ratify an agreement which they observe already: the Threshold Test Ban Treaty.

I have been giving considerable attention so far to five-power relationships, to the bilateral environment of the superpowers, to multilateral talks and conferences. Much of our own contribution to this work is enhanced by the consultative process open to us in NATO. NATO is a significant forum for Canada, whether in terms of national policy, of collective security, or of basic approaches to East-West relations.

When NATO was formed in 1949, Canada insisted that it be a political alliance, as well as a military one. And Canada continues on that basis loyally to maintain our long-standing commitment to NATO and to its policies.

But all institutions tend, by their very nature, towards inertia unless their members give them energy and a renewed sense of direction. Thus I was gratified that NATO ministers decided, at their December meeting in Brussels, to commission a full review of the steps NATO can take to improve East-West relations. Canada had been urging such an approach at successive NATO summits.

The last such review, in 1967, took place at the initiative of Pierre Harmel, Foreign Minister of Belgium. Then, as now, there was a sense that things ought to change. There was a need for the alliance to develop a vision of the future, and a political strategy to achieve it. The document which resulted, known as *The Future Tasks of the Alliance*, was a landmark in NATO thinking. It came to terms, as in this period we also must come to terms, with the need for a broad policy which governs, and gives purpose to, our military security.

The Harmel report's most profound conclusions were:

- that military security and a policy of *détente* are not contradictory — on the contrary, they must be complementary;
- that work towards a balanced reduction of military forces should be intensified, as well as efforts to overcome instability and insecurity;
- that the world had changed since the formation of NATO in 1949, and that there was a need to look ahead — to gain sightlines on the future and to work along them;
- and that each member of the NATO alliance had a contribution to make, not in subordination to, but in consultation with, the other members of the NATO alliance.

Despite frequent setbacks, the results of that policy are impressive, especially when viewed from today's perspective: the inter-German settlements of the late Sixties; the bilateral promotion of ties with the USSR by many Western countries, including my own visit in 1971; elements of rapprochement in the superpower relationship — and the Helsinki Final Act of 1975.