

Canada is a partner in two collective defence arrangements, which, though distinct, are complementary. These are the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and the North American Air Defence Command. For 20 years NATO has contributed to the maintenance of world peace through its stabilizing influence in Europe. NATO continues to contribute to peace by reducing the likelihood of a major conflict breaking out in Europe, where, because the vital interests of the two major powers are involved, any outbreak of hostilities could easily escalate into a war of world proportions. At the same time, it is the declared aim of NATO to foster improvements in East-West relations.

NATO itself is continuously reassessing the role it plays in the light of changing world conditions. Perhaps the major development affecting NATO in Europe since the Organization was founded is the magnificent recovery of the economic strength of Western Europe. There has been a very great change in the ability of European countries themselves to provide necessary conventional defence forces and armaments to be deployed by the alliance in Europe.

It was, therefore, in our view entirely appropriate for Canada to review and re-examine the necessity in present circumstances for maintaining Canadian forces in Western Europe. Canadian forces are now committed to NATO until the end of the present year. The Canadian force commitment for deployment with NATO in Europe beyond this period will be discussed with our allies at the meeting of the Defence Planning Committee of NATO in May. The Canadian Government intends, in consultation with Canada's allies, to take early steps to bring about a planned and phased reduction of the size of the Canadian forces in Europe.

We intend, as well, to continue to co-operate effectively with the United States in the defence of North America. We shall, accordingly, seek early occasions for detailed discussions with the United States Government of the whole range of problems involved in our mutual co-operation in defence matters on this continent. To the extent that it is feasible, we shall endeavour to have those activities within Canada which are essential to North American defence performed by Canadian forces.

In summary, Canada will continue to be a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and to co-operate closely with the United States within NORAD and in other ways in defensive arrangements. We shall maintain appropriate defence forces, which will be designed to undertake the following roles:

- (a) the surveillance of our own territory and coast-lines - i.e., the protection of our sovereignty;
- (b) the defence of North America in co-operation with United States forces;
- (c) the fulfilment of such NATO commitments as may be agreed upon; and
- (d) the performance of such international peacekeeping roles as we may, from time to time, assume.

The kind of forces and armaments most suitable for these roles is now being assessed in greater detail in preparation for discussion with our allies.