

Since those early days, Canada has actively participated in the work of NATO, especially at the military and political levels. Canada has maintained forces in Germany, and also contributed other naval, land and air units to the defence of the North Atlantic and North America. This country has also played a very active role in the management of inter-allied relationships, and in the collective work of expanding diplomatic contacts with the East. In addition, in pursuit of its interest in Article 2 of the North Atlantic Treaty - which advocates enhanced co-operation among the members at the non-military level - Canada has played its full part in NATO's work on economic issues, environmental concerns, and scientific and technological exchanges.

This forty years of work in NATO constitutes a major Canadian contribution to international peace and security. It has promoted the stability and prosperity of Western Europe, and helped to bring about the political changes in Central and Eastern Europe which now promise an entirely new future of East-West co-operation.

At the same time, participating in NATO has been beneficial for Canada. It has assured Canada's own defence - across the Atlantic and also directly for our own territory - and it has provided Canada with a pole of inter-relationships which help this country to reaffirm its own distinctness. In NATO, Canada has maintained linkages with the West European countries which have helped to counter-balance, to some degree, its very close and intense relationship with the United States.

So when we look at the future of Atlantic affairs, East-West relations, and world order, we need to recall that there is already in existence this whole body of experience and knowledge built up over almost half a century. It is important to examine the record, as well as staring into the future.

We also need to recall that this history of Canadian involvement in NATO and NATO-related issues is, above all, a human enterprise. Canadian people pursued Canadian policies - hacked out collective positions with other allied diplomats in NATO Headquarters, negotiated with their Warsaw Pact counterparts, or flew planes off aircraft carriers in the mid-Atlantic. The story of Canada's contribution to NATO is a record of great endeavour by government ministers and many dedicated and hard-working public servants, diplomats, military officers and service personnel.

Little of this story is publicly known. Some public figures and a few former ambassadors write autobiographies or comments on their work, but the vast majority of public servants and military personnel do not. They do their work and then hand over to their successors, leaving no formal record even after half a lifetime of activity.

The present transcripts aim at capturing a small part of this experience. They set out the recollections and perceptions of more than a dozen Canadians about the major events in NATO's history, and about Canada's efforts in such related fields as defence policy, East-West relations, and the pursuit of world order.

The group are all former public servants, diplomats or senior military officers. They do not include former ministers, although there were plans to do so at one stage if the work had proceeded into a second round of interviews. A second round would also have included, hopefully, a senior air force officer, the current Ambassador to the North Atlantic Council, and additional senior officials involved in Canadian defence planning.