America that common defensive action was needed.

While several Western leaders had considered the idea of a defensive alliance within the framework of the United Nations, the Europeans were the first to take concrete action. In early 1948, Belgium, France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom signed the Brussels Treaty, and pledged to build up a common defence system and to strengthen their economic and cultural ties.

But it was apparent that, in Winston Churchill's words, it was still necessary to bring in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. During the summer of 1948, representatives of the Brussels Treaty signatories and of Canada and the United States began discussions that ultimately led to the signing of the North Atlantic Treaty of April 4, 1949. In 1952, Greece and Turkey joined the 12 original signatory countries and in 1955, the Federal Republic of Germany also acceded to the Treaty.

In 1982, Spain joined the Alliance, although like France its forces are not part of the Integrated Military Structure of NATO (France withdrew its forces from the Integrated Military Structure in 1966).

"I think that the main problems facing the Alliance are the problems of success. We have kept the peace for thirty-five years; and the generation now being elected to the parliaments of Western Europe and North America have not known war. That is exactly what the founding fathers hoped and worked so hard to achieve. But the very extent of this achievement can make it more difficult to demonstrate the need for continuing effort."

— *Lord Carrington, Secretary-General of NATO**

*Speech to Society of British Aerospace Companies Farnbourgh International in September 1984.

The Canadian Role in the Birth of NATO

Canada played a key role in the formation of NATO. Two wars had taught Canada that it could not remain detached from developments in Europe and that it was infinitely more costly to fight a war than to act collectively to prevent or deter one.

Convinced that democratic societies on both sides of the Atlantic had to work together in peace as they had in wartime, the then secretary of state for External Affairs (and subsequent prime minister), Louis St. Laurent, put forward the idea of a single mutual defence system in the House of Commons in April, 1948. Mr. St. Laurent envisaged a transatlantic alliance that would link its members not only defensively, but also politically, economically, socially and culturally. This concept was pursued vigorously by Canadian representatives at the negotiations which followed that summer with the United States and Europe and helped Canada make an important contribution to shaping the form and nature of the Alliance. The broader Canadian vision of the Alliance was reflected in Article 2 of the Treaty which provides for non-military forms of co-operation.

The North Atlantic Treaty: Its Terms and Goals

The terms of the NATO Treaty set out the goals of the Alliance and the obligations of each member state. In both the preamble and the first article of the North Atlantic Treaty, members emphasize their support for the United Nations and the peaceful settlement of international disputes. Subsequent articles of the Treaty dealing with collective defence are also set within the framework of the United Nations Charter, which gives states the right to individual and collective defence.

NATO members are committed to consult each other whenever "the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened." Each member retains full status as an independent nation free to decide on the best means of providing mutual support. In Article 5, members have agreed to treat an