



STATEMENTS AND SPEECHES

INFORMATION DIVISION

DEPARTMENT OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

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A DEFENCE POLICY FOR CANADA

Statement to the Press by Prime Minister
Pierre Elliott Trudeau on April 3, 1969.

A Canadian defence policy, employing in an effective fashion the highly skilled and professional Canadian Armed Forces, will contribute to the maintenance of world peace. It will also add to our own sense of purpose as a nation and give renewed enthusiasm and a feeling of direction to the members of the armed forces. It will provide the key to the flexible employment of Canadian forces in a way which will permit them to make their best contribution in accordance with Canada's particular needs and requirements.

The Government has rejected any suggestion that Canada assume a non-aligned or neutral role in world affairs. Such an option would have meant the withdrawal by Canada from its present alliances and the termination of all co-operative military arrangements with other countries. We have decided in this fashion because we think it necessary and wise to continue to participate in an appropriate way in collective security arrangements with other states in the interests of Canada's national security and in defence of the values we share with our friends.

Canada requires armed forces within Canada in order to carry out a wide range of activities involving the defence of the country, and also supplementing the civil authorities and contributing to national development. Properly equipped and deployed, our forces will provide an effective multi-purpose maritime coastal shield and they will carry out operations necessary for the defence of North American airspace in co-operation with the United States. Abroad, our forces will be capable of playing important roles in collective security and in peace-keeping activities.

The structure, equipment and training of our forces must be compatible with these roles, and it is the intention of the Government that they shall be. Our eventual forces will be highly mobile and will be the best-equipped and best-trained forces of their kind in the world.

The precise military role which we shall endeavour to assume in these collective arrangements will be a matter for discussion and consultation with our allies, and will depend in part on the role assigned to Canadian forces in the surveillance of our own territory and coast-lines in the interests of protecting our own sovereignty. As a responsible member of the international community, it is our desire to have forces available for peacekeeping roles as well as for participation in defensive alliances.