

may join, or not, in accordance with their own priorities. Given the growing concerns related to the environment, the CCMS may take on a higher profile in the coming years.

Why Canada is a Member of NATO

The national well-being of Canada and North America is inextricably linked to the strategic defence and political integrity of Western Europe.

We believe in NATO because it is the best way to ensure Canada's security and indeed our sovereignty.

— Brian Mulroney, Prime Minister of Canada, NATO Summit Meeting, March 1988.

Canada is a member of NATO because we believe our democratic traditions and values are worth preserving and protecting. Collective defence is the most effective and efficient way of doing this. That is why successive Canadian governments have continued to place major importance on our membership in NATO and our continued contribution to collective defence and the shared political values of the Alliance. They have stated clearly that the cost of the Canadian contribution to NATO is well worth the price, particularly when compared to the alternatives which might well have brought less security at greater cost. Indeed, Canada participates fully in all important activities of the Alliance.

Membership in NATO assists Canada in achieving several of its most important foreign policy objectives:

- It provides the essential collective security framework for enhancing the security of Canada.
- Through the Alliance's efforts to foster dialogue with the Warsaw Pact, Canada assists in advancing arms control and disarmament, reducing regional tensions and thereby improving international peace and security.

- Canada's active pursuit of meaningful consultations within the Alliance, particularly on arms control and disarmament issues, serves not only the objective of enhancing national security and international peace, but also the objective of reinforcing sovereignty, by ensuring that Canadian views and policies are clearly understood by the Allies and taken into account in Alliance decision-making.

Canada has a particularly strong interest in further improving East/West relations. Membership in NATO allows Canada and its other NATO allies to consult closely on details of negotiations between the Soviet Union and the United States, and thus the opportunity to influence these negotiations.

The Alliance is a vital link for Canada in promoting transatlantic co-operation in many fields including economic, social, scientific, and environmental. It also provides Canada with important levels of contact with its most significant trading partners. NATO countries account for up to 90 per cent of Canada's imports and exports.

Participating in the Alliance's common-funded programs, and in the Alliance's efforts to foster armaments co-operation, improves the access of Canadian firms to Alliance defence and defence-related markets and enhances their opportunities for co-operation and contacts with other Alliance firms, particularly those involved in high-technology areas.

In assessing the importance of NATO, it is worth noting Europe, which erupted into violence twice in the forty years before NATO was established, has known no war since that time. So the debate is not between warmongers and peacekeepers. The debate is about the best way to keep peace and expand freedom.

— Joe Clark, Secretary of State for External Affairs, October 31, 1988.

Canada