

Lately peace-keeping has enjoyed a more favourable press in this country than continued participation in NATO, to the extent that the exclusive participation in peace-keeping functions has been suggested as a substitute for our NATO functions. This line of thinking shows certain weaknesses on several counts. In the first place, it rests on the faulty premise that NATO membership is incompatible with peace-keeping functions elsewhere. Our previously successful combination of the two roles alone would tend to impair this argument. In fact, it may be argued that it is precisely our membership in NATO which has enhanced our peace-keeping role insofar as "representatives" from the various power and ideological groupings are being called upon to participate in these missions in order to preserve a balanced distribution in this force.¹⁴

Secondly, the argument treats peace-keeping as a substitute for our "NATO obligations rather than a complementary function. A conflict in the "third world" may have the most serious implications for the prospects of peace, it does not however, involve our most vital and immediate security needs as would an attack anywhere in Europe. The strategic real estate value of West Europe is second to no other area, nor is our interdependence with the "third world" as immediate and complete as it is with Europe. It was this realization which promoted Canada's active role in the creation of NATO in the first place while we have avoided similar alliance commitments elsewhere. Finally, the argument tends to imply a preference for a neutral role for Canada. Our identification with Western spiritual, cultural, and political traditions is too complete to support the practice of neutrality in the form of non-alignment which is based on the partial non-identification with these values, if not their rejection. Even neutrality in the legal-technical sense, as for example practised by Sweden, clashed with the strategic reality of our Siamese-twin relation to the principal power of the Alliance. It must also be realized that Sweden supports her neutrality with an impressive defence posture. In view of the size of Canada's territory in relation to her population, an adequate system of self-defence in support of a position of neutrality would make exorbitant demands on our resources.

Our attachment to NATO rests on a pragmatic foundation and evokes less of an emotional response than do our ties with the Commonwealth or the international community as symbolized by the United Nations. However, it is difficult to deny that without the Alliance Canada would be less secure, less informed, and less influential in world affairs than we are as active members of NATO. The Alliance assists in deterring aggression to a greater degree than could be achieved by the mere passive reliance on the factors of uncertainty. It can also serve as an instrument of stabilization during phases of renewed social and political unrest in Europe.

Despite the military significance which Canada attaches to NATO, the political aspects of the Alliance are regarded as having greater consequence. It is therefore not surprising that our military commitments have, in part at least, been determined with a view to our political role in the Alliance. As a member

14. Also the high technical quality of the Canadian forces, which made them such a valuable adjunct to peace-keeping missions, is to be a large degree the result of our NATO commitment.