

extent that there is a braking influence, it can have a positive value in restraining a member country from taking precipitate action which could have an adverse effect on the alliance as a whole. When one is dealing with issues of war and peace (and particularly nuclear war), this could be vital. Secondly, while progress toward political solutions may appear slow when approached on a collective basis, otherwise there might well be no progress at all.

NATO, like any large and complex organization, has its imperfections. For each member the question is simple - do the advantages of belonging to NATO outweigh the disadvantages? Unlike the members of the Warsaw Pact, the members of NATO are free to withdraw if they should wish, but the fact that after 20 years none of them has so far chosen to do so suggests clearly where the balance of advantage or disadvantage lies.

Looking at NATO in today's world, we must ask ourselves: What is its role in the immediate future and where does Canada fit in?

It seems to me that a durable solution to the problems which continue to plague Europe and threaten world peace must contain two elements: a lasting settlement, on a generally acceptable basis, of the political issues of Central Europe, including the division of Germany; and the creation of some type of European security arrangement which would adequately meet the needs of all the countries concerned, both East and West.

The issues involved are complex and this goal will not be achieved quickly or easily. If any progress is to be made, there must be some mechanism to keep the peace and at the same time contribute to the creation of a climate in which movement toward a durable solution is possible. Does NATO satisfy these dual requirements?

NATO's main emphasis in the early years was on providing a defensive shield against possible Soviet aggression in Western Europe. This continues to be a fundamental purpose of the alliance, but the emphasis is shifting as Europe's political and military circumstances change. The alliance is now devoting its energies and attention to the twin objectives of deterrence, which is the prevention of war, and of détente, which is concerned with improving relations between the Eastern and Western nations.

The objective of deterrence is to prevent war. To do this, the Alliance must try to maintain a situation in which Soviet military adventure is obviously unrewarding and the likelihood of war breaking out in Europe is minimized. At the same time, if a conflict should occur, NATO must have the ability to respond effectively and prevent escalation to all-out nuclear war.

To achieve these objectives, NATO has developed the capacity for "flexible response". This requires NATO to have available enough military forces, both conventional and nuclear, to convince the Soviet Union that any type of armed attack on its part would be unprofitable. Above all, the strategy of flexible response attempts to avoid a situation in which NATO would be faced with the stark choice of yielding to a conventional attack or resorting to nuclear war. It is also designed to contain an incident started by accident or miscalculation long enough to make a political solution possible without resort to tactical or strategic nuclear weapons. In such a situation, days or even hours could be crucial. This is why NATO is correctly described as a peacekeeping force.