



Statements and Speeches

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NATO AFTER THIRTY YEARS

A Statement Issued by Prime Minister Trudeau on April 4, 1979, to Mark the Thirtieth Anniversary of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

Thirty years ago today, Canada and 11 other founding nations signed the North Atlantic Treaty, the essential document of the Atlantic Alliance. This treaty enshrines the basic principle on which NATO rests, the indivisibility of allied defence. Through three decades, the Alliance has helped to keep the peace in Europe by maintaining a credible Western defence and deterrent based on partnership between Western Europe and North America. Canada's participation in the Alliance is a continuing affirmation that today, no less than in 1949, our country's security is closely linked to that of both Europe and the United States and that the collective approach to Western defence has contributed much to the peace and prosperity we have enjoyed for so long.

While our security interests and the protection of Canada's national sovereignty have been central to our membership in NATO, the Alliance has assumed an even broader dimension in our foreign relations. Our NATO partners attach great importance to our contribution to the collective defence effort and Canadian commitment to the Atlantic Alliance has been an important factor in the expansion of our political and economic ties with Western Europe. Similarly, Canada sets great store by the Alliance as an essential forum for free and frank consultation among the nations of the Atlantic community.

The value of NATO's consultative mechanisms are nowhere better illustrated than by the immense variety of questions involved in East-West relations. Members of the Alliance have long recognized that collective security is best guaranteed by a combined pursuit of an adequate defence capability and of a general climate of confidence and mutual respect in the broad spectrum of relations between East and West. Canada and other NATO members are working individually and collectively to achieve that goal through their commitment to a policy of *détente*.

It is fitting on this anniversary to recall the creative role played by Canadians in the building of NATO, beginning with Prime Minister Louis St Laurent's original formulation of the fundamental conception of the Alliance in the House of Commons on April 28, 1948. This founding vision of NATO has served us well for 30 years and will continue to guide us in an ever-changing world.