

government, but it continued to be a particularly useful agency for the informal discussion of ideas before any formal approach was made, for negotiating defence matters in a setting where both military and diplomatic viewpoints were represented, for collecting and exchanging information, and for hastening executive action, smoothing out difficulties, eliminating delays, following up on decisions already taken and ensuring that important projects were not sidetracked in the press of departmental business. The valuable work done by the Board during the war convinced both governments that it could play a useful role in the postwar period. On February 12, 1947, Canada and the United States issued a joint statement to the effect that military co-operation between them would continue and that the Permanent Joint Board on Defence would be continued in existence.

Since the end of the war, the Board, established originally for the primary purpose of co-ordinating the plans of the two governments for the wartime defence of North America, has gradually come to assume a somewhat different role, partly because of the changing nature of the task and partly because of the emergence of other bilateral consultative bodies in the defence field. Among these are the Military Co-operation Committee, established in 1946, the Senior Policy Committee on the Canada-United States Defence Production and Development Sharing Program, and the Canada-United States Ministerial Committee on Joint Defence, both formed in 1958.

The emergence of the Soviet threat to Western Europe in the late 1940s, and the consequent creation of NATO, brought Canada and the United States for the first time into formal alliance in peacetime. While actively supporting this multinational defensive alliance, the two countries continued to provide for the defence of North America on a bilateral basis, paralleling the joint defence organization established collectively by the NATO countries in Europe. In the early 1950s, the Board was directly involved in much of the planning for North American defence but, as the threat to North America became more direct, with the development first of bomber aircraft of intercontinental range and later of long-range missiles, such planning was increasingly carried out by the military staffs of the two governments. The Board was closely involved in the planning of the three radar lines (the Pinetree Line, the Mid-Canada Line, and the Distant Early Warning Line) successively constructed across the continent at increasingly northerly latitudes to give warning of attack across the Arctic. Its role was more indirect in the construction by the United States of the Ballistic Missile Early Warning System (BMEWS), with sites in Alaska, Greenland, and Britain, in the establishment of NORAD