

in October, and a wide range of East-West arms control and disarmament issues (see below) including the ongoing MBFR negotiations in Vienna and negotiations concerning the reduction of intermediate-range nuclear forces in Europe. NATO also served as a meeting place for national experts to discuss developments in a number of areas of the world.

The continuing validity and viability of NATO's role in collective defence was recognized and reaffirmed in connection with Spain's desire to join NATO. In December, the NATO foreign ministers signed a Protocol of accession which, when ratified by all members, will authorize the Secretary-General to invite Spain to become a member of the alliance. Canada, for its part, has offered support and encouragement to Spain in its interest in becoming a member.

In September 1981, Secretary of State for External Affairs Mark MacGuigan assumed for a period of one year the position of honorary chairman of the North Atlantic Council, the governing body of NATO. In this capacity, he delivered a keynote address at the opening ceremony of the alliance's ministerial meeting in December.

In the military sphere, Canada continued its program of re-equipping its forces. The CF-18 fighter aircraft underwent advanced testing to prepare for its delivery to the Canadian Forces in the fall of 1982; the delivery to the Forces of the Aurora long-range patrol aircraft was completed; and further progress was made in the process to select a design for a new patrol frigate. Canada also reaffirmed its commitment to increase the amount of equipment pre-stocked in Norway for the Canadian Air-Sea Transportable Brigade Group, whose rapid deployment to northern Norway at times of rising tension or conflict is one of Canada's NATO commitments.

Bilateral defence co-operation

Canada has bilateral defence arrangements with several NATO partners. Issues dealing with the defence of the Canada-United States region of NATO necessitate the closest consultation and co-operation between the two countries. Canada's primary aim is the maintenance of sovereignty and security by contributing to the collective defence of North America.

The principal consultative body dealing with continental defence is the Canada-United States Permanent Joint Board on Defence, which is jointly presided over by two national chairmen who report directly to their respective heads of government. During 1981, the Board examined such issues as the improvement of North American air defence systems, possible increased use by the United States of military test ranges in Canada, and the continuing value of the bilateral defence production and development-sharing programs.

The agreement establishing NORAD is examined periodically to ensure its continued effectiveness under changing circumstances. In May 1980, the agreement was extended for one year to enable the House of Commons Standing