

achieved on a collective basis. Mr. St. Laurent was the first Western statesman to express this conclusion, when he said on July 11, 1948: "We believe that it must be made clear to the rulers of the totalitarian Communist states that, if they attempt by direct or indirect aggression to extend their police states beyond their present bounds by subduing any more free nations, they will not succeed unless they can overcome us all."

All this was 20 years ago, and perhaps the most telling answer to the question of whether NATO has been worthwhile is to be found in the simple fact that since its establishment no further European countries have fallen under Soviet domination - either through direct military intervention or by subversion. The nations of Western Europe have grown and prospered. In a period marked by violence and conflict in other parts of the world, Europe has enjoyed a unique degree of stability. NATO's success is often taken for granted these days, but this fact should not be allowed to detract from its achievements. Paradoxically, it is the fact of NATO's success that permits the luxury of questioning the need for it. I am often asked how one can be sure that the 20 years of peace Europe has enjoyed are due to the existence of NATO. I suppose in the end there is no substantive proof, but I can tell you this. The question is one which is easily asked in Calgary, 6,000 miles from the Iron Curtain. But it is a question that simply is not asked by those who live their daily lives in the shadow of massive Soviet forces.

NATO is unique in the sense that it is the only example of a formal alliance that operates effectively in peace-time. Fifteen countries, despite their inevitable conflicts in national interest, have been able to continue to co-operate for two decades. This is a major accomplishment, and something to celebrate. It also bears on the contention that the members of NATO have not, in fact, faced a real threat from the Soviet Union - that the danger they see is imaginary. If 15 independent states have been prepared to make the effort required to maintain an effective alliance arrangement for 20 years, there must be a commonly perceived danger to which they consider a collective response the best answer. The danger is quite clear. The Soviet Union continues to increase and streamline its enormous military potential; its intentions remain uncertain; and there are unsolved problems in Europe which could ignite a nuclear war because they involve the vital interests of the super-powers. Canada cannot remain indifferent to this danger.

To deal with this situation, NATO had developed features which distinguish it from old-time alliances and make it a uniquely modern instrument of collective security:

First, it provides effective defence on a relatively economical basis. By a pooling of resources under a unified command rather than reliance on individual effort, the members of the alliance help to ensure that in times of crisis or actual conflict there will be a quick and effective response. In an age of split-second timing and enormously complex and expensive weapons systems, the security which NATO provides to its members could not be attained in any other way.

Secondly, NATO is the instrument whereby the protection afforded by the United States nuclear deterrent is extended to Europe. By co-operating with the United States in continental defence, Canada contributes to the overall deterrent strength of the alliance.