

Pending greater progress towards disarmament or a more effective world collective security system under the United Nations, the present balance of deterrence is our best safeguard for peace. In short, NATO's primary security purpose is deterrence.

Its second main purpose is to pursue all realistic avenues of *détente*. At NATO headquarters in Brussels, there is a highly-effective mechanism for inter-allied consultation on a whole range of international political and defence questions of common interest. It is headed by the North Atlantic Council, which meets at least twice a year at ministerial level; but the Council is permanently in session and can be convened in a matter of hours to deal with crises as they arise. Canada and the 14 other nations are represented at senior ambassador level. The Council is assisted by a complex network of committees, including a Committee of Economic Advisers, a Committee of Political Advisers and a Science Committee.

In addition to their traditional functions, these committees now have to adapt themselves to new forms, as well as to the increased pace of consultations, in order to provide the necessary co-ordination of Western positions on subjects on the agenda of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe and Mutual Balanced Force Reductions preparatory talks in Helsinki and Vienna. Specialized NATO sub-committees, drawing on legal, economic, political and cultural expertise from capitals, are busily engaged in elaborating NATO's positions on these and many other issues for use in the negotiations themselves. It is clear that a full and careful preparation of these negotiations is necessary in order to ensure their success.

NATO has also embarked on a program to stimulate co-operation in another area of non-military activity. Comprising nearly all the major industrial states of the world, NATO has successfully promoted an exchange of views and experience on environmental and ecological problems under the auspices of the NATO Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society. You will be aware that Canada was host to the plenary session of this committee last week. It was generally agreed that this had been a very useful meeting.

In *Foreign Policy for Canadians*, a primary aim of Canadian policy was defined as follows: "Canada should continue secure as an independent political entity". For a country of Canada's size and geographical location, membership in the alliance provides a high degree of security at a relatively low cost in terms of resources devoted to defence. Even though we contribute forces to all three areas of the alliance, the proportion of our gross national product devoted to defence is considerably lower than that of several other members.

In defence, as well as in political terms, participation in the wider collective defence arrangements of NATO is helpful in projecting our national identity. The Canadian land and air forces in Europe are now combined in one headquarters and, although relatively small, have achieved a deservedly high reputation for effectiveness. They represent in European eyes the visible evidence of Canada's continuing commitment to the alliance.

Participation in NATO's common defence effort does not prejudice the Government's freedom of decision or involve an automatic commitment as to the means of providing mutual support. Article V of the NATO treaty requires that each member take "such action as it deems necessary" in the event of aggression in the treaty area. We can be satisfied that Canadian troops in Europe cannot be ordered into