



## NEWS RELEASE

---

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

May 3, 2024

### **Statement of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association on the 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Canada's NATO Membership**

The Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association – which consists of 31 senators and 163 members of Parliament from various parliamentary groups and political parties – is celebrating the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Canada's membership in the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO).

Canadians – including then Secretary of State for External Affairs, Lester B. Pearson, and Canada's ambassador to the United States, Humphrey Hume Wrong – played a [key role](#) in the negotiation of the [North Atlantic Treaty](#). On 4 April 1949, Canada and the 11 other founding members signed the treaty, enshrining their shared commitment to collective defence. Canada was the [first](#) of these signatories to deposit its [instrument of ratification](#) in Washington, on 3 May 1949.

The rationale for this commitment was affirmed by Parliament. The motion that the House of Commons [adopted](#) on 28 March 1949, [followed](#) by the Senate on 31 March 1949, recognized that the conclusion of such a treaty was “of vital importance for the protection of Canada, the preservation of peace, and the development of political, social and economic co-operation among North Atlantic democracies.” During the debate, Pearson [expressed](#) the treaty's essence in simple terms – in it, he said, the nations of the North Atlantic community were agreeing “to pool their resources in the face of common danger.” By doing so, they would “greatly increase world stability and the chance of lasting peace,” because, once agreed, the treaty would ensure that “further aggression against any of its members cannot be undertaken with any hope of success.”

Today, NATO's [32 members](#) are contending with an international security environment that has deteriorated, including as a result of Russia's full-scale war of aggression against Ukraine. The complexity of the strategic environment is made clear in the Alliance's [2022 Strategic Concept](#), which describes an era of strategic competition, pervasive instability, and recurrent shocks, while declaring that authoritarian actors are challenging “our interests, values and democratic way of life.”

As NATO responds with resolve, our parliamentary association is equally united in the belief that the Alliance will meet these new challenges, just as it adapted throughout the years of the Cold War and [following](#) the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. The Allies

are [making](#) a generational investment in collective defence, including through the development of new regional defence plans, the adoption of an enduring commitment to defence spending, and the reinforcement of the Alliance's eastern flank.

Fully supportive of these investments and the steps that are being taken to uphold deterrence, our parliamentary association recognizes that NATO has been a cornerstone of Canadian defence and security since 1949. Over these 75 years, Canada has [stood](#) with its Allies by contributing to NATO's deployments and institutional structures. Canadians continue to [serve](#) in the air, on land, and at sea, while also participating actively in the deliberations of the North Atlantic Council.

Moreover, since its establishment as an independent body in 1955, the NATO Parliamentary Assembly (NATO PA) has [helped](#) to consolidate the transatlantic relationship that makes NATO a political and military alliance. The NATO PA is where we debate, enhance our knowledge of security and defence issues, build consensus, and come together around policy recommendations.

Over the years, Canadians parliamentarians have played leadership roles within the NATO PA, including Senator Wishart McLea Robertson who [served](#) as the first NATO PA President from 1955–1956. Today, Canadian parliamentarians contribute to the NATO PA's ongoing success through their work as committee chairs, vice-chairs and rapporteurs.

With state and non-state actors seeking to disrupt and reshape the international rules-based order, the need to ensure the collective defence of our freedom is as vital as it has ever been. In recognizing the historic significance of the *North Atlantic Treaty*, our Parliamentary Association expresses its unwavering support for NATO and Canada's enduring role therein.

-30-

**To learn more, follow us on our X account:**

X: [@ParlDiplomacy](#)

Hashtag: #CANA

**For further information:**

Julie Dzerowicz, MP

Chair of the Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

+1 613-992-2576

Céline Ethier

Association Secretary

Canadian NATO Parliamentary Association

[CANA@parl.gc.ca](mailto:CANA@parl.gc.ca)