Military alliances were not the only way that Canada worked to bring world peace and security.

Canada also took part in the United Nations, which began when 50 nations came together in April, 1945, working to meet these goals:

- To work collectively to bring an end to war
- To encourage cooperation among nations
- To improve the standard of living in all nations
- To promote basic human rights

Canada took an active role in the United Nations from the beginning:

- Lester B Pearson, who later became Prime Minister, was elected president of the 7th General Assembly
- Brock Chisholm, a doctor from Ontario, was the first head of the World Health Organization
- In 1948, a McGill University professor, John Humphrey created the original draft of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Canada gave support to the UN in many ways: humanitarian, social and economic. But their biggest contribution to the UN were Peacekeepers.
Canada’s first significant contribution to the United Nations and its actions around the world was the Korean War, fought between 1950 and 1953.

After WW2, Korea, which had been occupied by Japan, was split into two countries, North and South Korea. North Korea became Communist, while South Korea became Democratic. On June 25, 1950, North Korean forces invaded South Korea and quickly over-ran the South Korean forces. South Korea pleaded for help from the United Nations.

The United Nations sent a military force to Korea, comprised of troops from 16 nations. Canada sent the 3rd largest contingent of troops, numbering over 26,000. Of these 26,000, 400 troops were killed and over 1000 were wounded.

The Communist North Korean forces were supported by the Soviet Union, who sent money and supplies to help the war-effort. Later on in the war Communist China also sent an army to support the North Korean forces.
In 1953 the war bogged down in a stalemate, with the UN forces having superior weapons and technology, and the Communist forces having superior numbers of troops. Due to this stalemate a cease-fire was signed between the two groups.

A “demilitarized zone” or buffer-zone was set up between the North and South Korean border in order to stop future conflict. Within these areas no military activity is permitted, except by those troops guarding the border.

The ceasefire is still in place today.
The Suez Crisis

- In 1956 a crisis arose involving the Suez Canal in Egypt, which was owned by a British-French company and happened to be the world's busiest ocean-to-ocean waterway. Britain and France believed that control of this canal was vital to world trade.
- At the same time, the Egyptian government wanted to control the canal. In 1956 they "nationalized" the canal, meaning that they took control of the canal away from the private British and French owners of the canal.
Britain and France came up with a plan to take back control of the canal: they would encourage Israel to attack Egypt, those two countries, being Jewish and Arab, having a long running hatred of each other. The French and British would then “intervene” in the conflict and restore order and retake control of the canal.

The Soviet Union condemned the actions of Britain and France and threatened nuclear strikes on London and Paris if the aggression continued.

This situation worried the United States. They had not been informed of the British and French plan, but they would be bound by NATO to defend them in the event of Soviet attack.

Lester B Pearson, External Affairs Minister of Canada, came up with a plan to cool down the situation. The UN would form an “international peace and police force”, later known as Peacekeepers. 10 nations sent these “peacekeepers”, who would set up positions between the two sides of the war and keep them apart while a peace settlement could be agreed on.
End of the Suez Crisis

- The peacekeeping plan in Egypt worked
- The role of peacekeepers in world affairs had been firmly established
- Lester B Pearson would win the Nobel Peace Prize in 1957 due to his invention of Peacekeeping
- Canada has been an active participant in Peacekeeping missions around the world ever since

Canada & Peacekeeping

- The majority of Canadians support our role as Peacekeepers because:
  - Canadian soldiers are well trained
  - Canadians gain prestige and influence in the world by performing UN duties. At the same time they can make a positive impact on other countries.
  - Canada is a “middle power” and peacekeeping is a good role for middle-powers. A “middle power” is a country that is not quite a super-power, but still has some influence on the world stage.
  - Canadians gain a sense of pride due to the fact that we believe these actions make us good global citizens.

Canada and the UN

Canada has been an active participant in Peacekeeping missions around the world since 1957.
Canada and the UN (con’t)

Presently, Canada is the 7th largest provider of funds to the UN. In 2004 it provided over $53 Million. But, Canada’s role as a peacekeeping nation has lessened over the years, where we now rank 34th in the number of Peacekeepers in missions around the world. We have been less able to respond with aid requests by the United Nations. Why is this the case?

Canada and other International Organizations

Canada also plays a significant role in many other organizations, such as:
- The G20, the 20 greatest economic powers in the world, who meet to deal with issues such as world trade and economic development
- The Commonwealth, a collection of 53 countries who once belonged to the British Empire
- The Organization of American States (OAS), which brings together the nations of the Western Hemisphere
- The World Trade Organization (WTO), which helps trade negotiations between 130 countries

Canada and International Organizations

Canada usually acts in a bilateral or multilateral way with respect to world affairs. This means that Canada almost always acts in cooperation with another country (bilateral), or in cooperation with a number of other countries (multilateral).
- Only in very rare cases does Canada make decisions on their own, known as unilateral decisions, with respect to world affairs.