

biological warfare. On all these questions the Council held detailed consultations which proved most useful in preparing the ground for the negotiations taking place elsewhere. The Ministers invited the Council in Permanent Session to continue to examine these problems, and reaffirmed the importance of any genuine disarmament measure, consistent with the security of all states and guaranteed by adequate international control, for the reduction of tension and the consolidation of peace in Europe and the world.

6. The Ministers also studied a report by the Secretary General on the situation in the Mediterranean. Recalling the Communiqués issued on 27th June, 1968, and 16th November, 1968, they expressed the concern of their governments with regard to the situation in that area. The Ministers reaffirmed the value of full consultations among the Allies on this question. Accordingly, they requested the Council in Permanent Session to pursue with the greatest attention its examination of the situation in the Mediterranean and to report to Ministers at their Spring Meeting.

7. In April 1969, Ministers called attention to the rôle the Alliance might play in tackling common environmental problems that could imperil the welfare and progress of modern societies. Consequently, the Council in Permanent Session established a Committee on the Challenges of Modern Society. The new Committee, beginning with its first meeting on 8th December, will address these urgent problems with the aim of stimulating action by members of the Alliance, either singly, jointly or in international organizations. The Ministers at their Spring Meeting will receive the Committee's first report on the newest task of the Alliance.

8. Ministers of countries participating in NATO's integrated defence programme met as the Defence Planning Committee on 3rd December, 1969. As an introduction to their discussions the Secretary General and the Chairman of the Military Committee gave overall appraisals of the state of defence planning within the Alliance. Ministers thereafter reviewed the work accomplished since their previous meeting on 28th May, 1969, and gave directions for future work.

9. They agreed that the effectiveness of NATO's defensive posture continues to be an essential stabilizing factor in support of the search for meaningful *détente*. Therefore, until agreement can be reached on East-West mutual force reductions, balanced in scope and timing so as to maintain the present degree of security, NATO will continue to ensure that there is no reduction in its overall military capability.

10. In reviewing Force Plans for 1970, Ministers were conscious of the necessity to maintain adequate and readily available forces both conventional and nuclear, in accordance with the NATO strategy for the defence of the mainland of Europe and the whole NATO area. They took note of the positive outcome of consultations with the Canadian Authorities, concerning their forces for NATO, which were initiated following the Defence Planning Committee of 28th May, 1969. Ministers committed forces for the year 1970