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THE NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANIZATION

I. The North Atlantic Council

The North Atlantic Council continued in permanent session at Paris under the chairmanship of the Secretary-General, Lord Ismay. Mr. L. D. Wilgress remained the Permanent Representative of Canada to the Council in 1955.

Four ministerial meetings of the North Atlantic Council were held in Paris during the year. In May the foreign ministers met to welcome the Federal Republic of Germany into NATO and to review international political problems of common concern to the Atlantic community. On July 16 and October 25 meetings were arranged to provide an opportunity for the foreign ministers of France, the United Kingdom, and the United States to exchange views with their colleagues on the eve of meetings at Geneva of heads of government and foreign ministers of France, the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, the United Kingdom and the United States. Moreover, during the negotiations at Geneva, the governments of all the allied NATO countries not participating in the conference were kept informed and consulted as the situation developed, through the permanent representatives to the Council. These discussions constituted a most significant proof of the solidarity of the alliance and showed the great value of the Council as a forum for political consultation on matters of common interest.

On December 15, 16, and 17 foreign, defence, and finance ministers met for their annual stock-taking session, at which they completed the 1955 annual review of member countries' defence programmes and consulted together on the current international situation.

Besides dealing with such questions as expenditure of funds on commonly-financed military installations, civil defence problems, and the wide variety of other matters involved in the day-to-day co-operation between the members of NATO, the Council, with the assistance of its subordinate committees and of the International Staff, devoted considerable attention to some of the longer-term problems facing the community in the political and economic fields.

2. Germany and Western Defence

The ratification by all NATO member parliaments of the Paris agreements, prior to the May ministerial meeting, marked the culmination of the steps taken to broaden and strengthen the basis of the NATO association in accordance with the terms of the settlement arrived at by the 1954 London Nine-Power Conference, which was ratified by the NATO Council in October 1954.