

Ministerial meetings, attended by Ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, Finance, and so on, are held twice a year or more, while the Council in permanent session meets once a week or as often as required. Special meetings of Heads of Government are also held at particularly important junctures in Alliance affairs.

Under the Council, there is a range of committees and commands, such as the Political Committee, the Defence Planning Committee, the Military Committee, the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe (SHAPE) and the Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Atlantic. The Secretary General of NATO is the civilian head of the organization, and he chairs the Council and other such key bodies as the Nuclear Planning Group.

At present, Canada's military commitments to NATO consist of:

- a mechanized brigade group of about 4,100 men, stationed in Lahr, Germany;
- 3 squadrons of tactical fighter aircraft plus related maintenance and headquarters elements with 1 Canadian Air Group at Lahr and Baden-Soellingen;
- other headquarters and support elements in Lahr;
- the Canadian Air/Sea Transportable (CAST) Brigade Group, based in Canada and committed to reinforcing northern Norway when required in time of crisis;
- 2 Rapid Reinforcement fighter squadrons, also committed to North Norway;
- a battalion group committed to the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Land) (AMF(L)), and a fighter squadron committed to the Allied Command Europe Mobile Force (Air) (AMF(A)), for deployment to NATO's Northern Region. (Both the battalion group and the fighter squadron are stationed in Canada. The latter is one of the two squadrons already