

CHAPTER 6: ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS

88. The Committee considers that NATO in its present form is capable of discharging the non-military functions required of it. Structural changes are not needed. The machine is basically satisfactory. It is for governments to make use of it.

89. At the same time, certain improvements in the procedures and functioning of the Organization will be required if the recommendations of this report are to be fully implemented. The proposals in this Chapter are submitted for this purpose.

A. Meetings of the Council

90. More time should be allowed for Ministerial Meetings. Experience has shown that, without more time, important issues on the agenda cannot be adequately considered. Decisions concerning some of them will not be reached at all, or will be reached only in an unclear form.

91. Efforts should be made to encourage discussion rather than simply declarations of policy prepared in advance. Arrangements for meetings should be made with this aim in view. For most sessions, the numbers present should be sharply restricted. In order to facilitate free discussion, when Ministers wish to speak in a language other than French or English, consecutive translation into one of these official languages should be provided by interpreters from their own delegations.

92. Meetings of Foreign Ministers should be held whenever required, and occasionally in locations other than NATO headquarters. Ministers might also participate more frequently in regular Council meetings, even though not all of them may find it possible to attend such meetings at the same time. The Council of Permanent Representatives has powers of effective decision: in other words, the authority of the Council as such is the same whether governments are represented by Ministers or by their Permanent Representatives. Thus there should be no firm or formal line between Ministerial and other meetings of the Council.

B. Strengthening the Links Between the Council and Member Governments

93. It is indispensable to the kind of consultations envisaged in this report that Permanent Representatives should be in a position to speak authoritatively and to reflect the current thinking of their governments. Differences in location and in constitutional organization make impossible any uniform arrangements in all member governments. In some cases it might be desirable to designate a high official in the national capital to be concerned primarily with NATO affairs. The purpose would be to help both in fostering NATO consultations whenever national policies impinge on the common interests of the Atlantic Community, and in translating the results of such consultations into effective action within the national governments.