

The North Atlantic Council

The North Atlantic Council is the principal agency through which the governments achieve the purposes of the North Atlantic Treaty. The direct responsibility to further the aims of the Treaty rests with the national governments, but it is the business of the Council to initiate, stimulate and co-ordinate the work of the organization and to ensure that the experience of the respective members is pooled.

The North Atlantic Council is organized to operate continuously. In addition to the periodic Ministerial meetings - a series of which has just been concluded - the terms of reference of the Council require that each government should appoint a Permanent Representative to represent his government on the Council when Ministers are not present "in order to enable the Council to function in permanent session with effective powers of decision". Canada's Permanent Representative is Mr. L. D. Wilgress.

The Council has four principal functions.

- (1) It provides a forum where all questions of policy directly and indirectly affecting NATO can be discussed.
- (2) The Council has continuing administrative and financial responsibilities. It controls the budgets of both the military and civilian agencies of NATO. Through it governments agree upon the proportionate expenditure which should be borne by each member country, not only to finance NATO headquarters, but also for common infrastructure.
- (3) The Council has considerable responsibility towards the military authorities of NATO. Thus, it is responsible for giving political guidance to the military authorities. Also, through the Council, governments provide the military authorities, so far as economic capabilities permit, with the men, equipment and the infrastructure which they require for the discharge of their responsibilities to defend the NATO area. This is done through the medium of the Annual Review.
- (4) The Council encourages proper civil defence arrangements and emergency plans in the non-military fields, such as the allocation of food, of raw materials, of shipping, and of inland transport.

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